

THE ROMANCE OF  
A GREAT SINGER  
A MEMOIR OF MARIO

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**THE ROMANCE OF A GREAT SINGER**







*Marino*

From the drawing by Lord Leighton

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from the drawing by Lord Leighton



THE ROMANCE OF A  
GREAT SINGER   
 A MEMOIR OF MARIO

By MRS. GODFREY PEARSE  
*and* FRANK HIRD

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

London: SMITH, ELDER & CO.  
15 WATERLOO PLACE. 1910

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*One summer afternoon, eighty years ago, a handsome and brilliant young officer of the King of Sardinia's Guards—the Cacciatori delle Guardie—was lying fast asleep in the white-washed bedroom of his quarters at Turin. Whilst he slept the young man had a strange dream. He dreamed that he was in a vast hall filled from floor to ceiling with men and women who were cheering and applauding a singer upon the stage. The face of the singer seemed familiar to the sleeper, and, suddenly, he recognised himself. In place of his glittering uniform he was dressed in doublet and hose, and instead of his big cavalry sabre, a light rapier hung by his side. But the enraptured audience were calling him by a name he did not know, and with their cheers ringing in his ears the sleeper awoke.*

*Years afterwards the dream came true, for it was this young officer, Count Giovanni de Candia, who delighted the world during three generations as the famous tenor Mario.*

1910.

1865258



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# THE ROMANCE OF A GREAT SINGER

## INTRODUCTION

“ His life was gentle and the elements  
So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up  
And say to all the world, This was a man.”

MANY have asked that in commemoration of the centenary of the birth of my father, Mario, the world-famed tenor of the nineteenth century, some record of his life should be written. I have, therefore, decided to attempt this record. Few lives have been more romantic than Mario's, and although it is now many years since he passed on to the Master of all music (in 1883), his glorious voice still sounds in the memory of those who loved him.

Mario's patriotic love for his country was the cause of his exile, and it was his exile that led to his remarkable operatic career. As every tiny stream helps to swell a large river, so my

father's devotion to the dream of his countrymen was a small help towards the accomplishment of one of the greatest achievements of the South—the unification of Italy. Among his numerous friends and admirers were many whose names United Italy can never forget.

My father's real name was Don Giovanni de Candia. Mario was the name he adopted for the stage. His theatrical life can be easily told, but it is difficult to convey any adequate idea of his wonderful personality, a personality which gained for him a widespread affection, and gave him a unique place in the annals of the stage as well as in private life. His magnificent figure, his beautiful smile, his frank manner of speaking and vivid imagination gave him a charm peculiarly his own, which, combined with the genius that inspired his singing and unrivalled acting, made him a central figure in society and in the musical world. My father thought nobly, and his life reflected his thoughts. With a heart full of gratitude to the Giver of every good and perfect gift, he gave freely as he had received bountifully.

His keen sense of honour, and his intense anxiety that no word or action of his should hurt a friend, or indeed a foe—if he had one—made him over-scrupulous, and he destroyed nearly all his papers and documents. He himself sorted out all those

he thought it wise to destroy, and, not content with this, he asked a trusted and intimate friend, Prince Ladislas Odescalchi, to go over those that he had left in case he should have overlooked anything. Very little besides his children's letters were spared the bonfire, which is a matter of great regret, seeing that many of the papers and documents would have been of great interest to the world. This story of my father's life, therefore, will be mainly drawn from old diaries and from anecdotes told by himself or by his intimate friends and relations. I venture to hope that the story of his curious early life and surroundings and of his wonderful theatrical career may interest those who never knew him, and endear his memory still more to those who did. Few will ever rival him, whether as a parent, a patriot, or a friend.

One of the chief characteristics that struck everyone who came in contact with my father, no matter in what relation, whether social or professional, was his wonderful simplicity and almost childlike candour. No man was more humble-minded or of a more retiring disposition, and even at the height of his artistic fame, when pressed to go hither and thither, his inclination was always to "get out of it." A quiet home life (with his invariable cigar) pleased him best, and

being very well read he always had some special topic of interest to occupy him. It was with the greatest difficulty at all times that he could be persuaded to go to anything in the nature of a social gathering. Dinners and evening parties were a great trial to him ; the very fact of having to don, as he used to say, "*cette cravate blanche*" instead of his comfortable smoking suit, being a nuisance to him. He thought that one of his daughters going in his place would do equally well, never realising his own personal attractiveness. Incapable of thinking evil himself, he never suspected evil in others, and although his too generous and trusting nature was cruelly taken advantage of on more than one occasion, he never lost the trusting innocence of thought of a little child. This unusual outlook upon life, accompanied as it was by the polished manners of a man of the world, gave Mario a curious fascination of which he himself was entirely ignorant.

Unhappily some of the greatest careers upon the operatic stage have been marred by jealousy of other singers or of rising talent, and so frequently does this occur that "professional" jealousy has come to be regarded as an unavoidable weakness in the singer's temperament. From this defect Mario was entirely free, and so far from being jealous of younger and rising men he went out of

his way to help them, taking infinite pains and trouble to advance their interests if they had genuine ability; amongst singers themselves his lack of jealousy was proverbial.

Apart from his matchless singing and splendid acting, Mario's impersonations were remarkable for the historical fidelity of his costumes—a matter that in those days received but scant attention either in opera or on the dramatic stage. He insisted that every detail of a dress should be correct, and to obtain this correctness he himself studied for hours at the British Museum, when in London, and at the Bibliothèque Nationale when in Paris. He made collections of old drawings of costume, and it was from his own sketches that his dresses were made. I mention this fact because my father's insistence upon correctness—which arose from his love and knowledge of archaeology—had a lasting effect upon the English stage. The late Sir Henry Irving carried historical accuracy into every detail of his plays: it was the effect of Mario's costumes that showed Sir Henry what could be done if the same spirit were applied to a whole play, and thus Mario may be said to have been the indirect inspirer of those wonderful stage pictures with which Sir Henry Irving made the Lyceum Theatre famous. Sir Henry set a standard of perfection which has revolutionised

stage production in England, a standard which is still closely followed. His conception of that standard arose entirely from his admiration of Mario's fidelity to history.

Although this is a sketch of my father's life, it would be only half complete without mention of my dear mother, Giulia Grisi, whose name is inseparable from that of Mario. "They were an incomparable pair more liberally endowed by nature with personal beauty, vocal power and dramatic genius than any others"—so once wrote a critic. Their union was an inestimable gain to art, and their attachment to one another as romantic and devoted as that of any hero or heroine they ever impersonated. Their attachment was at once passionate and faithful: it hallowed and was hallowed by their mutual pursuit in life; it sanctified their home. Giulia Grisi in her youth protested against the conduct of a despotic manager and fled to Paris. Mario disputed the right of the King of Sardinia to punish patriots;—he also fled to Paris, but they did not meet until many years later, and although singing in the same capital, they were strangers until Mario appeared with Grisi in "Lucrezia Borgia" at the King's Theatre in London in 1839.

C. M. P.

## CHAPTER I

THE birth of Mario is thus recorded in the baptismal register of the Cathedral of Santa Cecilia at Cagliari :

“ On the 18th October 1810, I, curate of this parish, solemnly baptized, according to the rites of the Holy Church, a child born yesterday, the legitimate son of the Illustrious Signor Cavaliere Don Stefano de Candia of Alghero (Captain and Adjutant of His Royal Highness <sup>1</sup>) and Donna Caterina Grixoni of Otzieri, having given him the names of Giovanni Matteo. In faith, etc., etc.  
ANTONIO CAO.”

A tablet on the wall of the de Candia palace (now 33 Via La Marmora) also records this event.

“ In this house was born, of noble birth, Giovanni Mario de Candia. Great in the noble art of song, he was a delight to the world and an honour to his country.” (“ In questa casa ebbe nobili natali Giovanni Mario de Candia. Sommo del gentile arte del Canto, delizzio il mondo, honorando la patria.”)

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards King Charles Felix of Sardinia.

Sardinia is so very little known to the ordinary tourist that it may be worth while to give a brief account of this interesting island in the Mediterranean, which was the birthplace of Mario.

According to some historians, parts of Sardinia were cultivated and civilised in 1600 B.C., and discoveries continually made by excavation would suggest an even earlier date of occupation. At one part of the coast, near Cagliari, there is a curious crust of shells from which scientists argue that the island was inhabited as far back as the year 10,000 B.C. There are also many indications of Phoenician and Greek occupation of the island, and of its passing from the possession of the Genoese into that of the Pisans. Sardinia was held by the Spanish Kings of Aragon until the Peace of Utrecht gave it to Austria. In 1720 Austria exchanged the island for Sicily, which had been given to Duke Victor Amadeus II of Savoy, who when the exchange was effected took the title of King of Sardinia. Piedmont, which had belonged to the Savoy family since 1048, thus became part of the kingdom of Sardinia, the capital of which was Turin.

The Sardinians can boast that their little island is the only place in Italy which successfully resisted the troops of the French revolution. The island was attacked three times—twice by Trochu,



who was routed at Cagliari with heavy loss. Nobles, peasants and townspeople joined as brothers, regardless of all rank, in fierce defence of their native island. The third attack was made, as we shall see, by Napoleon. A chapel at Cagliari dedicated to Our Lady commemorates the Sardinian victories on the spot where Trochu was twice repulsed. Close to this chapel is the beautiful Campo Santo where, in the vault of the de Candia family, lies all that is mortal of Mario. The family vault was built by him in 1845, and the remains of his father Don Stefano were transferred thither from his temporary grave. The vault is surrounded by flower-decked graves and private chapels. There is a suggestion of brotherhood in this beautiful cemetery from the fact that the same plant grows over the graves of rich and poor alike—a sweet-scented geranium which is seen on all sides, twining round pillars, urns and crosses, or covering whole graves.

As one enters its quiet portals the cemetery speaks of a fraternity and an equality amongst the departed which one would like to find amongst the living.

The inhabitants of Sardinia are of a mixed race, but the life is mainly Eastern in character. The lower classes of both sexes wear neither shoes nor stockings. They have well-made figures,

dark complexions and sometimes the Spanish olive skin and almond-shaped eyes. The women, as in most Eastern countries, are noted both for their beauty and their ugliness. The Sardinians marry very young and generally have from fifteen to twenty children, a family of six being considered quite a small one. The language—which is incomprehensible to an Italian—is based mainly on Arabic and Spanish, although it contains an admixture of the tongues spoken by the many conquerors of Sardinia.

The *Castrum Kallaris*, from which the name of Cagliari is derived, was a fortress on a high hill fronting the sea, surrounded by fertile country. Within its still standing walls is the old town with its dingy palaces; outside the walls is the ever-growing modern city. The castle was begun in 1217 when Princess Benedetta di Mossa was ruling the island. She was then in great favour with the Republic of Pisa, who sent the architect Fraterno to construct the castle-fortress. The designs are now in the archives of the city of Barcelona. Fraterno having died before its completion the castle was finished by Giovanni Capula in 1300. Its three big towers were named after the three acknowledged champions of the animal world, the lion, the eagle and the elephant; of these, only the Tower of the Elephant is left.

The Lion Tower is now called San Pancrazio, a church named after that saint being built into its walls. Between the Towers of the Elephant and San Pancrazio is the old house of the de Candias, and near it on a small piazza is the cathedral dedicated to Saint Cecilia, where Mario and all his family were baptized. The cathedral, which is in the early Gothic style, was built in 1255 by Guglielmo, and took four years to complete. Under the dominion of the house of Aragon several additions were made to the original fabric, and in 1676 Monsignor Vico carried out important alterations and repairs, which gave the building its present form.

Santa Cecilia contains many sculptures and paintings, but none of these are of particular artistic importance. Some of the cadet members of the House of Savoy are buried in the crypt.

The country round Cagliari is richly cultivated, there being a very large number of vineyards, and dotted here and there are the prehistoric buildings known as Nuraghi, of which about five thousand are said to exist on the island. The Nuraghi are almost entirely built of unworked stone in the shape of a truncated cone, from about thirty to forty feet in height. They usually contain two chambers, sometimes three, arranged one above the other and communicating by a staircase

built in the thickness of the wall. These curious buildings have attracted the attention and interest of archaeologists the whole world over, but nobody has yet been able to determine the period of history to which they belong. A considerable amount of excavation has been done in the island, and not only have Egyptian and Roman tombs been discovered, but also tombs of a much earlier period containing beautiful glass urns, unique in colour and shape, enclosed in terra-cotta vases.

Flocks of scarlet flamingoes are often seen in the island, also red-legged partridges, woodcock, snipe and quails. Sardinia is one of the few remaining places in Europe where moufflon can be found. Among the many trees which give an Oriental appearance to the towns and villages, such as palms and pepper trees, is one called the carob tree, which also grows in Malta. Its bark resembles that of the oak, but it has not the same serrated leaves. It bears a fruit like a long bean which is used for food for the cattle and horses in winter. This bean of the carob tree is supposed to have been "the husks" with which the Prodigal Son fed the swine and which he himself longed to eat. The prickly pear serves as hedges throughout the island; it grows to a great height, and the fruit is so plentiful that the pigs are mostly fed upon it. Bougainvillea, oleander, stephanotis and sweet-scented

verbena and roses of all kinds grow in wild profusion round every village and in many of the courtyards of the town houses as well.

The road that now winds up from the church of San Pancrazio to the narrow Via La Marmora is called Via Mario de Candia in honour of my father. At the left as you ascend is the Opera House, and on the right a road leads to the new promenade which has been built upon the ramparts. A colonnade, in the niches of which stand busts of Italian celebrities, and amongst these one of Mario done by Marochetti, has been erected beneath this promenade.

Near one of the old gates, which opens now on to the new part of the town, is the church of San Basilio, built on the site of a pagan temple, in which, according to local tradition, Saint Paul preached. The club most frequented by the inhabitants of Cagliari is a musical one called "The Mario": it is situated in the main street of the town.

Some of the Sardinian costumes are very quaint, and on occasions of festivals, very ornate and rich dresses, which have been passed down from one generation to another, may be seen; but at Cagliari the local costumes are becoming very uncommon, and one must go into the interior of the island to see them worn habitually.

The Sardinian nobles, as is indicated by their

names, derived many of their patronymics and customs from Spain. The courtesy title of Don before the Christian name denotes their nobility, but the title is not used in Italy except in some Roman and Neapolitan families, and consequently Mario was known as Count Giovanni de Candia, this being considered equivalent to Don; but when he was dying he told a great friend that he should like to have only Don Giovanni de Candia written upon his coffin; Mario was added upon his tombstone by his relations.

The origin of Mario's family is lost in antiquity; there is only one family known of that name, although several branches have sprung from it. It is conjectured that the first de Candia came from Dalmatia, and settled in Savoy, where in the sixteenth century they divided into two branches. They are mentioned as distinguishing themselves in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and in the fourteenth century François de Candia received from the head of the house of Savoy, whose vassal he was, the permission to bear in his coat-of-arms the Count of Savoy's own symbol of the Eagle, as a mark of distinction for his valour in winning a battle against Humbert II, the last dauphin of Vienne.<sup>1</sup> François de Candia in 1338

<sup>1</sup> Humbert II sold this dauphiné in 1347 to Philippe de Valois, 1313-1358.



N° 13576.



PAR ORDONNANCE RENDUE  
le 20<sup>e</sup> du mois de Nov<sup>bre</sup> de l'an 1696. par  
M<sup>rs</sup> les Commissaires Généraux du Conseil  
députés sur le fait des Armoiries.

*Celles de la Famille de Candia*

*Originaires de Dalmatie passés en Savoie et en Bresse  
Ancien Vicomte de Genève Seigneurs de la Derruyère,  
de Zoze, de Zoel et autres lieux*

*Telles qu'elles sont ici peintes & figurées, après avoir été  
reçues, ont été enrégistrées à l'Armorial Général, dans le Ré-  
gistre couté Dalmatie en conséquence du paiement des droits  
réglés par les Tarif & Arrest du Conseil, du 20<sup>e</sup> de Novembre  
de l'an 1696. en foi de quoi, le présent Brevet a été délivré  
par Nous CHARLES D'HOZIER, Conseiller du ROI, &  
Garde de l'Armorial Général de France, &c.*

*A Paris le 11<sup>e</sup> du mois de Aoust de l'an 1697.*

POUR EXTRAIT CONFORME R<sup>e</sup> Dalmatie F<sup>o</sup> 586 N<sup>o</sup> 13576

*Chambertin Montbousin  
Général Secrétaire des Armes*

CONTRÔLE REGISTRÉ A LA G<sup>ra</sup> MAITRISE

*Paris le 22<sup>e</sup> de Mars 1707.*

*1707 N<sup>o</sup> 13576*



BREVET CONFIRMING THE COAT OF ARMS BORNE BY THE HOUSE  
OF DE CANDIA.





bore on his arms the eagle of Savoy tearing at a dolphin, the symbol of the dauphin of Vienne, with the addition of a shield semé with fleur-de-lys, at a great tournament at Chambéry. In the same year he was created Vidame of the town of Geneva,<sup>1</sup> in which office he was succeeded by many of his name.

In 1720, when Duke Victor Amadeus II of Savoy received the island of Sardinia in exchange for Sicily, and became its first king, many Spanish families followed him there, and amongst them was Giovanni's great-great-grandfather. He came from Torre del Greco near Naples, then Spanish territory. The Sardinian branch of the family settled in Alghero and Cagliari, and in the latter town Mario's great-grandfather Don Serafino, was granted his patent of nobility. He and his wife, Donna Theresa Simon, were most loyal to their king, and were officially attached to the Court of Turin, as were their sons and grandsons after them. Their eldest son, Don Antonio, married Donna Marianna Montepagano, of a Corsican family. They had five sons, who all served at Court and with great distinction in the Army, where all five became generals. One of these sons—Don Stefano—was Mario's father.

<sup>1</sup> A Vidame of Seigneurs in the middle ages represented the Bishop temporally and commanded his troops.

He was born in 1768 and entered the Army, like his four brothers, at an early age. He fought against Napoleon, and was wounded in 1790 in Piedmont while serving under Victor Amadeus III with the Austrians. He rapidly gained distinction and was still young when promoted to the rank of general. It was whilst he was attached to the Court, in 1793, of the Princess of Piedmont (Clotilde de France), the wife of Charles Emmanuel, afterwards King of Sardinia,<sup>1</sup> that he witnessed one of the most gruesome and revolting actions perpetrated by the French revolutionists. The news of her brother Louis XVI's death was made known to the Princess Clotilde by a box being sent to her from Paris which, when opened, was found to contain a piece of the King's heart cut from the body before it was put into quicklime.

After serving as aide-de-camp to Victor Emmanuel I, and his brother Charles Felix, who was his most devoted friend and benefactor, and taking part in another campaign against Napoleon, Don Stefano returned to Sardinia in 1798 and married the beautiful and only daughter of Count Grixoni. Amongst the many rewards Don Stefano received for his services to his sovereign

<sup>1</sup> The Bourbons and the Savoy family were doubly related. Two of Louis XVI's brothers married two sisters of Charles Emmanuel IV, Monsieur, afterwards Louis XVIII, and the Comte d'Artois.

was the Grand Order with cross and ribbon of SS. Maurice and Lazarus, the highest order the Sardinian monarch could bestow. When he married Donna Caterina Grixoni she had scarcely entered her fifteenth year, and she was his constant companion in his varied career. Her own family history was interesting. Her maternal grandmother was a Greek, noted both for her beauty and for her musical talents. On her father's side she was descended from the fiery-tempered Giacomo Sciarra Colonna, who is said to have struck Pope Boniface VIII, thus causing the whole house of Colonna to be banished for a time from Rome. Sciarra, who fled to the Court of the French king, Philip le Bel, was always dressed in grey, and tradition says that as he roamed from place to place on the Continent, he became known as the "Messer en gris," and that this name in time became Grixoni. Similar instances are frequently met with in Italian history; ancient nicknames, of which the origin is entirely lost, now standing for family names. The Colonna coat-of-arms bears a column, from which the family derives its name, Pope Celestinus III having created the Duke of Marino, Prince Colonna in reward for his bringing to Rome, after the crusade of 1197, a column, said to be from the Praetorium in Jerusalem. This column now stands on a pedestal at the

end of a gallery in the splendid Colonna palace in Rome. At the foot of a small flight of steps that leads to the column is a cannon-ball embedded in the stone, which was fired from a French gun in the bombardment of Rome in 1849.

Donna Caterina was the mother of fourteen children; the eldest of whom, Don Carlo, eventually became General and Commandant of the Military Academy at Turin, and afterwards Commander-in-Chief of the Sardinian Army. He married the daughter of the Marquis de Laconie, and his eldest son, Don Stefano, is the present head of the Sardinian branch of the de Candia family. Don Carlo died in harness in 1862. The second son, Don Angostino, left the army and became a learned preacher. When the Jesuits were expelled from Sardinia in 1848, he returned to Cagliari, where he died. Four other sons died young; after them came Giovanni (Mario), then two more sons, Serafino and Severino. Serafino, like his brothers, entered the army, but after a short time he retired in order to enter the diplomatic service. Soon after Angostino's death, however, he became blind, and having on that account to give up his work, he too returned to his old home. He was considered a clever painter and a man of letters, and wrote a text-book on the political and historical aspect of geography, which was adopted

in many of the elementary schools in Italy. Severino died young. Of Mario's six sisters, two died as babies, Angelina married Don Guerisi; Cecilia and Teresa were his playmates, but Cecilia, being nearer his own age, was his favourite sister. She died when she was only five or six years old.

Giovanni was about a year old when his father was appointed Governor of Nice, which then belonged to the King of Sardinia, and his parents were therefore obliged to leave him with his nurse, and he remained with her till he was nearly four. All the houses in the country in Sardinia are built close together, each group of houses or village being surrounded by a high wall; and even now the farmers and workmen ride out to their labour in the morning and back again in the evening. The houses themselves are distinctly Moorish in character, the rooms all opening out of one another, lighted only by windows looking upon an inner courtyard. There are no windows in the outer walls, which are whitewashed. The courtyard serves as a living room. The women sit there all day long making sweets from fruit or flowers, listening to the endless tales of a storyteller which rival in wonder and imagination the Arabian Nights. The women rarely go out of doors, and when they do, either to work or to market, the true Sardinian keeps her face covered.

In Giovanni's childhood this rule was even more strictly observed than it is to-day. In the interior of the island women are never seen except on Sunday when they meet in some open space in their town or village. The space is surrounded by palm and pine trees and high hedges of prickly pears. The women stand on one side, the men on the other. A man begins to pipe on a wooden flute similar to that used by the ancient Egyptians, walking up and down between the two rows. Gradually the men and women begin to dance. The dance has no particular steps, being a quick shuffling of feet backwards and forwards, the dancers holding one another's hands. The two lines gradually move round, and as they meet the women sometimes join hands with the men, but as a rule the women dance with the women, and the men with the men.

The marriage customs in Sardinia are very curious. If a father has a marriageable daughter the would-be suitor applies to him for permission to see her as she goes to church, or in the event of her not wishing to be seen he communicates with her by means of a species of telephone which has been in use since time immemorial. It is a long string with a wooden knob at each end. The father's permission having been given, the lady drops one knob out of the window, and the shutters



GENERAL DON STEFANO  
(Marchese de Candia)



DONNA CATERINA  
(Marchesa de Candia)





being closed places the other knob to her ear, whilst down below her would-be lover pours his protestations into the knob she has thrown into the street. Sometimes this curious form of courtship continues for two or three years, the man never seeing the face of his *innamorata*. In the towns they are now taking to more modern methods of courtship, but in the villages and remote places this custom still obtains. At Cagliari, Sassari and other places, the girls and women now appear in public when the band plays, but there is more stiffness and conventionality than in any other part of Italy, and in Cagliari itself the women of the upper classes are so jealously guarded that, except at official receptions, they are rarely seen. The Sardinian families never entertain. Mario's mother, however, was obliged to break away from this semi-Oriental seclusion to follow her husband in his various commands. At Nice and Novaro they entertained largely, and she consequently gained a wider outlook upon life than was usual with ladies of her rank in Sardinia.

Offended lovers in Sardinia resort to a strange method of revenge. Spoken abuse is not permitted by law, but anything may be sung until eleven o'clock at night. The offended lover generally comes about nine o'clock accompanied by male

friends, all of whom have guitars. The lover sings a song which has neither rhythm nor time, shouting out the most virulent abuse in a series of scales and sustained high and low notes. At the end of each phrase of abuse his companions join in a chorus of "Oh! Oh! Oh!" with exactly the same intonation and the same manner of singing that one hears in Egypt. As the clock strikes eleven the singers depart, leaving the lady to her reflections. This serenade turns a woman into public ridicule, and as a rule it is many weeks before she is seen in public again. Sometimes women so treated fall ill through sheer mortification.

Mario was born at a period of great political upheaval. Napoleon was practically the master of Europe. Cagliari prided itself on being one of the few places which had successfully repulsed the all-conquering Corsican; this was in 1795.

A party of French troops having effected a landing by night on the adjoining island of San Stefano and having erected a battery, a heavy fire was opened in the morning on the town and its defences. They were opposed by a garrison of five hundred men, and their fire was returned with equal fury. At the same time the opposite shore of the mainland was lined with mountaineers, who, when the French frigate had been dismasted by the fire from the town, took to their boats and

attacked San Stefano. The assault was so well prosecuted and vigorous that Bonaparte was compelled to make a hasty retreat, leaving two hundred of his men prisoners, and all his artillery and baggage. While Bonaparte was superintending the firing and watching the effect through his telescope, he observed the people going to Mass, and exclaimed: "I should like to fire at the church just to frighten the women." The shot was fired; the shell entered the church window and fell at the foot of the crucifix on the altar; it failed to burst, and this marvellous instance of religious respect was regarded as a miracle by the islanders, who for a long time preserved the shell amongst the sacred curiosities of the town. The actual cause of the shell failing to burst was due to the fact that it was filled with sand.

One of Mario's uncles took part in this successful defence of his native town.

Only five years before Mario's birth, Lord Nelson had made Cagliari his headquarters whilst watching the French fleet in Toulon, and it was from there that he sailed—when he had succeeded in enticing the French Admiral out of harbour—on a pursuit that ended with the battle of Trafalgar. Nelson's name is still remembered and revered in Sardinia. Before he left on his great mission he presented two solid silver candlesticks and a silver

crucifix with a figure of Our Saviour in gold to the church of La Maddalena. When he was publicly thanked for the gift and assured that prayers would be offered up for his victory over the French, he said that if they would only pray to the Madonna that the French fleet would come out of Toulon, he "would undertake to do the rest," and thank them with the value of a French frigate in silver with which to build a church.

When Giovanni was five or six years old he joined his parents at Nice. He remembered his mother once taking Cecilia and himself downstairs to see "*Il gran poeta Inglese, Lord Byron,*" who was paying her a visit and wanted to see all the family. The poet was particularly interested in the little Cecilia, and patting her on the head he called her "*Cara angeluccia.*" When, soon afterwards, she died, Donna Caterina said she was sure Lord Byron's words were a prediction. Mario, on whom the English poet made a vivid impression, remembered that he was dressed in loose clothes, with a big turn-down collar and loose tie, that his hair was parted on one side, and that he walked slightly lame.

Louis Philippe was also a frequent guest of Mario's father. Years after, when Mario reached Paris as an exile and Louis Philippe was King of the French, he sent for him and asked many

questions about his "beautiful mother." When Mario expressed surprise that the king should have remembered her after so many years, he replied: "On ne peut oublier une telle beauté."

They were a united and happy family in the old de Candia palace, the mother especially exerting a happy influence over her children. The palace was in a narrow steep street, such as one may see at Seville or Cordova, the houses almost meeting in the centre. The dark entrance, closed with a heavy iron-studded door, leads into a courtyard with an open staircase leading to a loggia which gives entrance to the rooms. All the rooms are large, with heavily decorated ceilings, but they are dark and gloomy, and there are no fireplaces. There were no means of heating these old palaces in Cagliari, and the discomfort must have been extreme. But the palace did not seem gloomy to Don Stefano and his family.

Amongst all the changes and stress of those eventful years Don Stefano remained most devotedly loyal to his sovereign and to the old ideas of intense conservatism. He regarded Napoleon as the arch-enemy of mankind, and the principles which he represented as anathema. Liberalism and freedom in politics were beyond his comprehension. To a man of his birth and order the Court was the fountain-head. A retinue

of three hundred and thirty courtiers, all of whom were nobles, surrounded the King of Sardinia, and from these were chosen the Ministers and officers of State. The highest positions in the Church were given to noblemen. Two thousand five hundred members of the aristocracy served in the Army, and it was for them that the various officers' ranks were reserved. In such consideration were the aristocrats held that no one not of noble birth could occupy a box on the first two tiers of the Opera at Turin, these being in the gift of the Queen. But in return for all these privileges the nobility were bound by absolute obedience to the Sovereign, and this even in matters affecting their private life. Such rigorous dependence was all the more irksome inasmuch as in a miniature kingdom like Sardinia the monarch could keep himself accurately informed as to the affairs of his subjects.

Don Stefano regarded this condition of affairs as the only right and possible method by which a State could be governed, and, as we shall see, his rigid conservatism brought about the lifelong separation between him and his son Giovanni.

## CHAPTER II

DONNA CATERINA was an accomplished musician and singer, and she delighted in making her children, who were nearly all musical, sing also. Don Angostino had a lovely tenor voice and Donna Teresa an extraordinarily flexible contralto, which Mario often said would have created a *furore* had she been upon the stage. Mario filled any vacancy in the quintets and sextets which the de Candias enjoyed singing—baritone, soprano or anything; and although he himself declared his voice was not equal to those of his brothers, his mother loved to hear him, and his relations always agreed that his was the softest and the most touching of them all.

At the age of twelve he was sent to the Military College in Turin (1822-29), where most of the sons of the Sardinian and Piedmontese nobles were educated, and it was here undoubtedly that those aspirations were first awakened in his mind for the freedom and unity of Italy, aspirations which a few years later developed into a passion

under the influence of Cavour and Mazzini's lofty patriotism.

Although only a child, the events that had occurred shortly before Mario entered the college—events in which some of the elder pupils had participated—made a profound impression upon his mind, and it was then that the seeds of his sympathy with the patriots were first sown.

A short account of the revolution in Turin in 1821 may help the reader to understand the world of political disquiet into which young de Candia was suddenly plunged.

“On the second of March 1821,” said Charles Albert<sup>1</sup> (then Prince of Carignan Savoy), “Carail, Collegno and Santa Rosa came to me from Lisio and revealed the secret of an important event, namely the insurrection of the Army. They all belonged to a society working for the independence of Italy. . . . They showed me the list of conspirators, and I was stupefied to see that most of the officers of artillery were members of this society. . . . I dismissed my tempters and hastily sent orders, which prevented the first plot from being carried through.”

Whether the Prince himself was a member

<sup>1</sup> *La jeunesse de Charles Albert*, by the Marquis Costa de Beauregard.



of this society is a mystery which has never been solved. He has, however, always been credited with having been in full sympathy with the objects of the insurrection, with being in close touch with its organisers and then losing courage at the last moment, and with having betrayed his fellow-conspirators to his cousin, King Victor Emanuel I.

It was arranged that the revolution should break out on the day that King Victor Emanuel went to Moncalieri, his estate near Turin. On the 7th of March the King left, and Collegno, Carail and Santa Rosa were again closeted with Charles Albert, a fact which throws still further doubt on the Prince's denial of any participation in the plot. On the 10th of March three cannon-shots from the citadel announced to the Army that the revolt had begun. Colonel de Genaye, who was in command at the Citadel, was murdered, and a captain from an insurgent regiment took his place. The King sent for Charles Albert to proceed to the Citadel to restore order, and on his way there with the King's aide-de-camp, the Marquis de Villamarina, the latter was pulled off his horse by the mob and made prisoner, amidst universal cries of "Long live the Constitution." Charles Albert, failing to stem the tide of revolt or hush the clamour of the mob, retired, but shortly afterwards returned followed by a crowd

of students and women wearing red caps ; some of these women occupied high positions in society. They gathered round the Prince imploring and urging him to use his influence with the King that he should grant them a Constitution such as had been given to the people of Spain.

Turin was in the power of the revolutionists, and Victor Emanuel, weak, good-natured, and above all things hating bloodshed—a character it was said that “makes Saints but dethrones Kings”—abdicated on March 13, Charles Albert being appointed Regent until the King’s brother, Charles Felix, arrived in the city.

Charles Felix received the news with great anger, and, declaring his brother’s abdication to be an “abominable violence,” he hastened to Turin. Charles Felix was a very different type of man from his brother. The revolution was put down with an iron hand, and when the dethroned Victor Emanuel wrote pleading that those revolutionists who had been condemned to death should not be executed, Charles Felix sent this characteristic reply : “As long as I was Prince I respected your orders. I am ready to give you back the crown and sceptre to-day or in ten years, but as long as I am King I beg of you not to interfere with my Government.”

When order was restored the strictest rules

were enforced. People of the highest rank were sent to prison for mere expression of political opinion: "One could not even speak of what one was not allowed to do." Charles Albert was immediately exiled to the Court of his father-in-law, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, in Florence, where his wife gave birth to the first King of United Italy, Victor Emanuel II. Of the three conspirators who, Charles Albert declared, had made him first cognisant of the insurrection, one, Carail, was the son of an aide-de-camp to King Victor Emanuel, the Marquis de Saint Marsen; and another, Count Collegno, was the Prince's own equerry. The third, Count Santa Rosa, after a brilliant military career, was a colonel at the age of thirty-eight and one of the principal movers in the insurrection. He was hung in effigy after the repression. He fled first to Switzerland, then to England, and finally was killed at the battle of Navarino. Carail and Collegno also escaped, Carail to England, where he died in 1838; Collegno spent twenty years in exile, returning to Turin under the amnesty in 1843. He became a Senator, and in 1848 Minister for War; later he was the Sardinian Ambassador in Paris. He died in 1856.

Amongst Mario's companions at the Military College were La Marmora and Camillo Cavour.

The latter was Mario's age, having been born in the same year, and the friendship that began at the College lasted throughout their lives.

Count Camillo Cavour, born August 1, 1810, was the second son of the Marquis Michel Benso de Cavour, the head of an old Piedmontese family. His was a frank open character, full of life and intelligence. In 1820 he was sent to the Military College, but being appointed page to Prince Carignan (Charles Albert) he left in 1826. At eighteen years of age he was a sub-lieutenant of Engineers, serving with his regiment at Ventimiglia, Turin and Genoa; but he gave up his military life at the age of twenty-two.

Cavour's feelings and support were entirely with the patriots who were working for the political freedom of their country, and having openly expressed his sympathy with the Italian exiles and the French revolutionists of 1830, he was arrested and imprisoned in the fortress of Bord, and later was exiled to a little village in the Alps. His exile over, Cavour took to agriculture, society, and travels. Twice he visited France and England, in 1835 and 1843. In England he was particularly struck by its Constitution and also by its parliamentary struggles. On both of these visits he met his old College friend Mario. On his first visit he helped Mario with his advice as to his career,

and on the second visit was most interested in Mario's rapid rise to artistic fame.

Cavour eventually bought a large property in the neighbourhood of Vercelli and worked at agriculture, his favourite hobby. He was the first to employ new inventions for bettering the conditions of the people and the land. From 1830 to 1845 Cavour was also working for the great achievement that has made his name famous as a statesman and patriot—the unification of Italy. In all his advancements to fame he ever remained the same frank comrade of Mario, and it was through his intercession that the first King of Italy, Victor Emanuel II, consented to forgive the singer's desertion from the army, on the ground that Mario had given such signal service to the cause of unity.

Lord Palmerston spoke of Cavour as one "whose memory will live embalmed in the grateful recollection of mankind as long as history records his deeds"; Lord John Russell alluded to him as "A man destined to stand conspicuous in history"; while Sir Robert Peel declared him to be "The most conspicuous statesman that ever directed the destinies of any nation on the Continent in the path of constitutional liberty."

La Marmora, too, achieved greatness. After a brilliant military career he became Minister for

War, in which capacity he entirely re-organised the Sardinian Army and placed it upon such a footing of efficiency that its alliance was sought by Great Britain and France in the war against Russia in the Crimea. La Marmora himself took the command of the seventeen thousand men sent by Sardinia, and on his return from the war, in which he and his men covered themselves with distinction, he was made a Field-Marshal. He took a prominent part in the fighting that followed immediately upon the unification, and stands high in the Italian Valhalla of national heroes. He was ever a good and true friend to Mario.

Of all his studies at the Academy at Turin young de Candia loved fencing the best. He became an expert swordsman, and often in later years, as the great singer Mario, proved his mastery of sword or rapier to the admiration of enraptured audiences. Drawing and painting came next in his interest, and after these mathematics. Music was little taught and he never thought of studying it, as his whole ambition was to become a good soldier like his father, his uncle, and his brothers.

Speaking of those days at the Military College, Mario in after-years often used to say that two incidents had left an indelible impression upon his mind. One was a dream so vivid and appalling in its reality that to a great extent it changed his

character and taught him to control his passionate temper. One night he had a hot altercation with a comrade, and was so enraged that but for the interposition of others there would have been bloodshed. During the whole of the next day de Candia burned with rage and anger. That night he dreamed that he had set out in pursuit of his comrade. He sped on and on, faster and faster, until he found himself upon the banks of a vast lake. Without a moment's hesitation he plunged into its waters, but, to his horror, he found that, although he swam with all his strength and vigour, he made no progress. When he had dived into the lake it was dark, but as he struggled the skies lightened and he saw that he was swimming in a sea of blood, and at the same moment he realised that this ghostly water was sucking him down. He awoke in a spasm of horror and terror. So vivid was the impression of this dream that he made a vow that he would recall it to his mind whenever he felt tempted to lose his temper. He kept that vow to the end of his life, although his temper was often tried severely during his eventful career.

The other incident was as extraordinary as it was sad. On the nights when the moon shone brightest one of the students who shared Giovanni's dormitory would get out of bed, and, going to the

window, throw it open and, raising his head, would howl like a dog for a considerable time. Then he would shut the window and return to bed, still asleep, and absolutely unconscious of what he had been doing. His companions were warned by the doctor not to awaken him, as the shock would either kill him or drive him mad. Eventually Giovanni was obliged to change his dormitory, for, although he had the keenest sympathy with the unfortunate youth—who, whilst he was unconscious of his sleep-walking, nevertheless seemed always to be oppressed by some secret sorrow—the distressing spectacle began to affect his health. He lost sight of his unhappy comrade after he left the Academy and never knew whether he outlived his ghastly affliction, but for all his life afterwards the sight of the full moon always recalled the sad story to Mario's mind.

Mario left the Academy in 1829 with the rank of sub-lieutenant in the Cacciatori della Guardia, and joined his regiment at Genoa, where he first met Mazzini and the unfortunate Ruffini. As we have already seen, despite the severity with which all political discussion was repressed at Turin, the desire for justice, for political freedom, grew stronger and stronger each year amongst the rising generation. None of his companions became more strongly imbued with what were



called "the new ideas" than Giovanni de Candia. His friendship with Mazzini—destined to last until the end of their lives—gave a new impulse to these desires, and ultimately brought about his disgrace and exile.

Giuseppe Mazzini was born at Genoa in 1805, and was thus five years Mario's senior. His father, Giacomo Mazzini, was a distinguished professor of medicine. His mother (*née* Drago) was one of the most beautiful women of her time, and of all her children Giuseppe was the favourite. He was very delicate and weakly, and at an age when other children can walk he could not stand upon his little legs. The first six years of his life were passed in his mother's room lying on a tiny sofa specially constructed for him by his father.

The first time he toddled out a curious incident occurred, an incident so prophetic of the future that in after-years his mother could never allude to it without tears.

Giuseppe had managed to get beyond his father's grounds into the street. Immediately opposite the house was a church, upon the steps of which a beggar with long white hair and beard was seated. At the sight of the old man the child stopped suddenly and stood looking at him intently. His mother, who had followed him, thinking he was tired, took him up in her arms, but Giuseppe

wriggled himself free, and going up to the beggar caressed him tenderly, at the same time beseeching his mother to give the poor old man some money. The beggar was deeply moved, and, turning to Signora Mazzini, said: "Love him dearly, Signora, for he will love the people."

Whenever the child heard the servants sending away any of the numerous beggars who in those times swarmed in the streets of all Italian cities, he would cry out: "No, no, Mother, give them something"; and when his mother had complied with his request he would shew his gratitude by kissing her hands and her dress, the tears running down his pale little face.

From his earliest years his greatest interest was literature, and from the moment that he could read he was immersed in books. When he was thirteen he entered the University at Genoa, it being his father's desire that he should follow the profession of medicine. But dissection and the study of anatomy were so repulsive to his gentle nature that he was obliged to give up the idea, and instead of becoming a doctor he qualified for the Bar, and at an age when most barristers are still learning the application of laws Mazzini was pleading in the Courts. Here, again, the passionate interest which had been awakened in his childish mind by poverty showed itself. He always took

the cases of poor people, studying with infinite patience the smallest details of their cause and sparing no pains to bring about its success. He was much beloved for his gentleness and kind heart and for the many sacrifices he made of time and talent. From his earliest youth he had strong religious feelings, which were the foundation of that noble patriotism with which his name will ever be associated. Mazzini says in his autobiography that the first time he seriously thought of the great and patriotic work of freeing his fellow-countrymen from their political thralldom, a work to which he was to consecrate his life—"a life so full of sadness and little joy"—was in 1821, when he was sixteen.

One Sunday, a month after the abortive insurrection in Turin, so sternly repressed by Charles Felix, Mazzini was walking with his mother and a friend. The exiles were pouring into Genoa from Turin, some trying to find friends who would shelter them, others seeking ships to go into Spain, where the revolution had been successful. Only a few days previously the execution of two revolutionists in Genoa had filled him with horror. He therefore regarded the sad faces and tattered condition of these exiles with a sensitive interest. Suddenly one of the refugees, an ex-officer of the army named Rini, stopped in front

of the little group. He held open a white pocket-handkerchief and begged in the most pathetic terms for help for the exiled Italians. Signora Mazzini dropped a coin into the handkerchief and Rini moved on through the crowded street making the same request to all who would listen to him.

For some time Mazzini had been gradually arriving at the conclusion that all Italians should help in any way that was possible for the freedom of their country. The sight of the execution and of the exiles from Turin, and Rini's pathetic request, changed this opinion into a fixed idea. The thought haunted him by night and day, waking and in dreams, until he was wrought up to such a state of despairing excitement that his mother feared he would either lose his reason or commit suicide. He studied every detail of the causes that led to the Piedmontese revolt, and chancing to find some old papers dealing with the French Revolution hidden behind his father's medicine cupboards, he read them with avidity. The result of his studies was that he became a fervent republican; and a fervent republican he lived ever after, and so he died.

Mazzini possessed one of those natures which cannot keep silent in the face of great wrong. He talked to his friends of what he had read, and by degrees gathered round him a small number of

intelligent youths to whom he poured forth his dreams of the future. "The people have no other master but God, no other legislation but His laws," he used to say. Ruffini, an old friend of the Mazzinis, was a member of this small circle. As the years passed Mazzini became more and more imbued with the republican idea, and eventually was enlisted in a secret society called the Carbonari, the objects of which were so subversive of existing authority as almost to come under the designation of anarchical. In all parties and all countries it would seem that political tyranny creates the *agent provocateur*. Mazzini was enlisted in the Carbonari by a man who was actually a spy in the pay of the Piedmontese Government, and by this man he was betrayed. He was arrested and imprisoned in the fortress of Savona, to the south of Genoa, where for six months he was shut up in a cell from which he could see nothing but the sea and the sky—the sky that was symbolical to him of eternity.

On hearing of Giuseppe's arrest, Professor Mazzini hurried off to the Governor of Genoa, and asked him for what crime his son had been condemned to prison. The Governor replied that Giuseppe Mazzini was a young man of talent, that he had fallen into the habit of solitary nocturnal rambles, and that the Government mistrusted

young men of talent who gave themselves up to mysterious walks and mysterious dreams.

But when Mazzini left his prison he had done with dreams. During those six months of solitary confinement he had realised his mistake in joining the Carbonari, and had thought out a plan for the founding of a society which should be wholly patriotic, to be called "Young Italy." He decided that there should be no grotesque ceremony of initiation as with the Carbonari, who used to kneel and swear fidelity on a raised dagger, but they swore fidelity to an unknown purpose. Every man should know for what cause he was joining the "Young Italy" party; that he was to do all in his power to bring about the freedom of his compatriots and to get recruits for the party, so that all Italians might join in working for the cause of the unity of Italy under a Republican Government, seeking aid from neither princes nor ministers either in their own country or abroad. The following was the oath signed by the members of the "Young Italy" party :—

"In the name of God and the People.

"For duty's sake which ties me to the earth on which God has placed me and my brothers that God gave me.

"For Love—innate in all men.

“For my country—where my mother was born and which will be the home of my children.

“For hatred—against evil, injustice, arbitrary usurpation. With shame I face other countries and say: ‘I have no duties, no country, no flag.’

“By the sufferings of thousands of human creatures, I, ‘A. B.,’ having confidence in the mission God has imposed upon Italy and being convinced that it is the duty of all Italians to fight in order that this mission may be fulfilled; knowing God has ordained a country to be and will give it strength to exist, that the people are the holders and trustees of this strength, that virtue consists in action, in sacrifice, in unity and perseverance, I join my name to the Association of Young Italy, in which all members share the same faith, and I swear to consecrate myself entirely to Italy, to fight for her freedom, unity and independence and republicanism, and to work by every means in my power, in word and deed, for the education of my brothers, and to show them the aims of the Association of Young Italy, and to obey the instructions which I may receive from our representative; to keep the secret of the same, even at the cost of my life, and to help my brothers by my action and advice.

“Now and always.

“This is what I swear, and may God’s anger

strike me with the hatred of men and the shame of perjury, if I betray any part of my oath."

It was perhaps a Utopian dream this idea of Mazzini's to educate the whole Italian people in the tenets of political freedom. At the outset his idea was taken up with enthusiasm, and the "Young Italy" party gradually became one of the strongest forces with which the several Italian Governments had to reckon. When Mazzini was released from his prison at Savona he was banished out of the country, and then began his long life of exile—hunted from place to place. He first went to Corsica and from thence to Marseilles, where he publicly proclaimed the existence of his "Young Italy" party by the publication of a little newspaper bearing the name of the association as its title and having for a crest a branch of a cypress tree—a fit emblem for those who were to die for their country—and a motto: "Now and Always." This newspaper passed secretly into many towns in Italy. Mazzini's fervent words, his religious patriotism, came at a moment when his countrymen were most prepared to receive them. Insurrections were taking place in many parts of the peninsula—the Romans had risen against the Pope, Parma against its Austrian Grand-Duchess, and Modena against its Duke,



whilst Bologna was sending help to the insurgents who had revolted against the Grand-Duke of Tuscany. Between the 2nd and 5th of February in that year of 1831, two and a half million of Italians were in revolt. When peace was patched up between the people and their various rulers, the latter took stringent precautions against the further spreading of Mazzini's views, and Charles Albert, who had just ascended the Sardinian throne, threatened the severest punishment to those who dared to circulate the forbidden newspaper. The formerly liberally inclined Prince Carignan went even further: those who would not denounce their fellow-members of the "Young Italy" party were imprisoned for two years and heavily fined; those who betrayed their comrades were promised all secrecy, a very small fine being imposed for the sake of appearances. The first to be arrested was Giacomo Ruffini, Mazzini's own friend and a friend of Mario's. Hoping to extort a confession from him, the authorities showed Ruffini a denunciation against him in Mazzini's own name; this document was forged. Ruffini kept his vow and spoke no word which could incriminate others or himself, but the moral torture was too great, and he committed suicide in his prison cell.

Such was the atmosphere into which the

young lieutenant of cavalry, Giovanni de Candia, passed from the Military Academy of Turin. Mazzini's arrest and exile aroused his keenest sympathy, and when this was followed by Cavour's arrest and incarceration in the fortress at Bord, he made no secret of his indignation, and was severely reprimanded by his commanding officer for his outspoken words on behalf of the two exiles.

That same year the Duchesse de Berri came to Genoa, and Mario was appointed her aide-de-camp.<sup>1</sup> She made her home for some time in that beautiful city, where the Bourbons flocked around her and many of the ladies of the Sardinian Court also. It was to one of these great ladies that a year or two later Mario owed his safety for some weeks.

In 1832 he went to Nice as aide-de-camp to his father, then Governor of the city for the second time. His liberal opinions were not unknown to his father, who viewed them with the horror of an old conservative and adopted the most

<sup>1</sup> The daughter of Francis IV, King of Naples, and widow of the Duc de Berri, murdered in Paris outside the Opera House in 1820, and mother of the Comte de Chambord, known afterwards as Henri V. The Duchesse had followed her father-in-law Charles X to Holyrood Palace when he was driven from the throne of France, and then went to Italy. She afterwards married the Marquis Lucchesi-Palli, who was created Duke delle Grazie. They retired to Austria, where the Duchesse died in 1870.

stringent discipline with the hope of stamping them out, but, as is generally the case, the father's attitude only increased the son's enthusiasm. Don Stefano was undoubtedly a martinet in small matters, and on one occasion Mario was severely punished for singing in uniform at an impromptu concert got up by his brother officers. His comrades loved to hear his voice, and when in garrison he would often sing to them until the early hours of the dawn. They made him sing all the popular songs out of the operas of the day. His favourite was "*Raggio d'amore*" from Donizetti's opera "*Il Furioso*," produced about that time in Rome; and also songs from "*La Straniera*," by Bellini, produced with much success in Milan in 1829, and Rossini's "*Semiramide*," which was an old favourite, having first been given at Venice in 1823. Years afterwards Mario sang in this very opera to Giulia Grisi's splendid performance of the title-rôle. But the endless reprimands only increased the young officer's sympathy with Mazzini and his advocacy of the "Young Italy" party, which, with its inspiring motto, "God and the People," was increasing in numbers daily.

Many secret papers of the society found their way to Mario and his brother officers. One of the latter suddenly disappeared, and it was rumoured in Nice that he had been arrested and imprisoned

in Genoa. Mario made no secret of his indignation, which produced a fresh scene between father and son; and so angry did Don Stefano become that he threatened to send the young man to Sardinia for punishment work in the ranks. Shortly afterwards Mario received orders to go to Genoa, where he was told he would be given important despatches; but on arriving in that city he found that these "important despatches" were to be taken to Cagliari. When he discovered that the brother officer who had been arrested, and whom he and his comrades believed to be in prison in Genoa, was actually in prison at Cagliari, Mario became suspicious that he was destined for a similar punishment, especially after the threat made by his father. A warning to this effect being conveyed to him by General Le Maître, to whom he had been aide-de-camp, his suspicions were confirmed, and he at once went to see his uncle, who held an official position at Court. The latter received him with some emotion and cautioned him to be very careful both in speech and action. Mario, deeply affected, asked what could he do if he did not obey the King's order. Before his uncle could reply a message was delivered from the Governor of Genoa, the Marchese Paolucci (he eventually got the name of "The Terrible" because of his severe punishments of the Mazzini party

and other republicans), ordering Mario to come to see him immediately. The Governor was a personal friend of General de Candia, and for his sake he tried to persuade and coerce the young officer into obeying the order. Mario temporised, saying that he was surprised that an officer of his rank should have been given such work. Paolucci warned him sternly that if he refused to carry these despatches to Sardinia he would have to consider himself at the disposal of the general in command, which was in fact equivalent to his being placed under arrest.

Mario left the Governor convinced that his sympathy with Mazzini's growing creed would be his doom, but hoping against hope he determined to see the King.

He obtained an interview almost at once, but, as had been the experience of so many others, he found in Charles Albert, King of Sardinia, a very different person from Charles Albert, Prince of Carignan-Savoy. There was no sympathy, no understanding of his position, and although the King made no definite statement, his manner, and above all what he left unsaid, made it only too clear to Mario that he was destined to the same fate that had befallen his brother officer; he realised also that his father's threats of banishment and imprisonment had not

been, as he always thought, mere outbursts of temper.

It is easy to imagine Mario's state of mind when he left the King. If he obeyed orders and carried the despatches to Cagliari, a fortress cell would await him at the end of the journey. How long would he be imprisoned? Who could say? And even if he was only confined for a few months as a "salutary warning" he would be a marked man for ever afterwards. As he was leaving the Palace he met a friend who gave him further warning. Mario now knew for a certainty that his position was hopeless. This last warning decided his course of action and the whole of his future life. No sooner was it given than he determined to escape. He went to another friend at whose house he changed his lieutenant's uniform for civilian attire. He burnt all compromising papers and documents, and sent in his resignation, although he knew that it would not be accepted.

Mario's position was now one of extreme peril. By declining to carry the despatches to Sardinia he had not only disobeyed the orders of the Governor-General of Genoa, but those of the King himself. The fact that he was his father's son was no help or protection. Charles Albert would not have been unwilling to seize such an opportunity of showing his determination to root out

the "Mazzini poison" by making an example of the son of one of the most loyal supporters of his throne. If he had been caught, Mario would have been shot. Escape was difficult, as the roads to the port were closely watched. One of the ladies of the Sardinian Court, whom he had met when aide-de-camp to the Duchesse de Berri, now came to his assistance and with the help of a friend hid him in the royal Palace itself. For a whole month Mario lay hidden, the police meanwhile searching every inch of Genoa, never dreaming that the man they sought was in the King's own Palace hidden in the rooms of his own immediate *entourage*. He was publicly proclaimed, and Don Stefano declared that if ever he saw his son again he would shoot him as a deserter. When the police search was relaxed, Mario disguised himself as a fisherman, and with the help of his kind friends in the Palace got on board a fishing-smack which was leaving Genoa for Marseilles. They were seventeen days at sea, encountering very bad weather, and as the boat was packed with emigrants and refugees they all endured great hardships. Amongst the emigrants was a gypsy woman who, to while away the time, told some of her companions their fortunes. When she looked at Mario's hand she said he was "No fisherman, but a noble," and that one day he

“ would wear the laurels of fame.” The woman’s words at the moment filled Mario with apprehension for fear they had been overheard by others; in later years he recalled them when her prophecy had come true. On his arrival at Marseilles, from whence Mazzini had just gone to Switzerland, Mario again narrowly escaped arrest. His Spanish type and gentlemanly appearance caused the French spies to mistake him for Don Carlos II, son of Charles IV of Spain, who was expected to make an undesired landing in France at that time. But when he disclosed his identity to the authorities Mario was received with the greatest consideration by the Chief of the Police, who strongly advised him not to go to Spain, as had been his intention, but to proceed to Paris, which advice he ultimately took.

Don Francesco Roych (the husband of Mario’s sister Donna Teresa) gives a short account in his diary of his brother-in-law’s disappearance, and the obstinacy of Mario’s father, who, loyal to his King, could not understand that his son had any justification for his political opinions. The terms of pardon mentioned by the King—the betrayal of those who had aided his escape—were apparently repeated by the father. Mario’s sense of honour compelled him to refuse those terms; and at what a sacrifice? Exile from his



country, separation from his mother whom he dearly loved, and to be branded as a deserter. Roych says :—

“ October 1835. Giovannico’s disappearance has caused his family great grief. His father said ‘ in dishonouring himself he has dishonoured his family.’ ”

In the following December they heard he was at Marseilles, and Roych decided to go there and plead with the young man to return. He arrived at Marseilles about Christmas-time and at once inquired for Mario of the Sardinian Consul, Cavaliere Peppino Pogano, who said that Giovannico had dined with him at four o’clock that day and was staying at the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs. On going to the hotel Roych was told that Mario had gone to the theatre to hear the opera “ Il Gustavo Adolfo, Re di Svezzia,” and there he found him. Mario was surprised to see his brother-in-law, but he immediately left his place and embraced him tenderly. They at once returned to the hotel, where they had a long talk about Giovanni’s position, Roych appealing to him to accept his father’s and the King’s terms of free pardon if he would disclose the names of those who had helped him to escape. Roych returned again early the next morning, repeating his appeal

with even greater fervency and insistence than the night before, but Mario was firm. He would not and could not give up the names of his friends. He expressed himself as being quite willing to join the ranks as a cavalry soldier if that would please the King or his father. Finding that he himself could not move Mario from his position, Roych begged him to come with him as far as the Italian frontier to see his mother, hoping that she would succeed where he had failed. Mario gladly accepted, especially as Roych held out hopes that he might have the opportunity also of seeing his father and talking to him. They started from Marseilles in very bad weather, and were obliged to stop for two days at a little village *en route*, and whilst they were there news reached them that Mario's courier had been arrested and that their letters to the Marchese and Marchesa de Candia had been taken from him. Nevertheless, they continued their journey in a post-chaise until the heavy snow compelled them to abandon the carriage and walk to St. Laurent, where an Englishman called David, who had known Mario in Nice, took them in and gave them hospitality. After a short rest Roych went on to Nice, where Mario's family were waiting anxiously for news. His mother and sister (Roych's wife) immediately started for St. Laurent, where Mario met them.

It was a distressing meeting. Mario had written a long, tender letter to his father, begging him to meet him, but, as we have seen, the letter was intercepted. Roych, however, gave the General the tenor of his son's letter. In reply the Marchese said to Roych that he could not allow his son to rebel against his orders, for, both as a Governor and as a General in the Army of the King, he must inflict punishment upon any subject breaking the law, whether that subject was his own son or not. Roych adds: "How much it cost him to say those words—and to Giovannico—God only knows."

After bidding his mother and sister a sad farewell, Mario remained a few days longer on the frontier hoping against hope that his father would still come or write to him. It was a vain hope, *vane speranze*, says Roych, and then adds:—

"Of the career of Mario de Candia enough was said and is still said in the newspapers of France, England, Italy and Russia, therefore I will not write further about him."

During that winter the Governor of Nice continued to give brilliant balls and dinners, at which the Grand-Duke Michael of Russia, brother of the Emperor Nicolas, was a frequent guest.

But never again did the Marchese allow anyone to speak of Giovannico. He never mentioned his name and looked upon him as dead. Mario on his return to Marseilles from the frontier started at once for Paris.

This is the true account of Giovanni de Candia's exile as he related it himself to his intimate friend Prince Ladislas Odescalchi. Many stories have been told which give a different complexion to the causes that led to his desertion and exile; but the untruthfulness of these stories is plainly shown by their utter inconsistency with the great artist's character; and all his life Mario loyally withheld the names of those who had helped him to escape, although their betrayal would have restored him to the good graces of King Charles Albert, and to his position in the Army.

### CHAPTER III

“ Friendship of itself a holy tie  
Is made more sacred by adversity.”

ON his arrival in Paris Giovanni de Candia immediately made his presence known to the Marchese de Brême (afterwards Duke of Sartirana), and to Prince Belgioioso. To both noblemen he owed everlasting friendship, and it was to them that he owed his career upon the lyric stage. The Prince and Princess Belgioioso were exiles because of their devotion to the ideal of their country's freedom. The Princess was one of the great female figures of the Italian *risorgimento*. Her *salon* in Paris, which was swept away by the revolution in 1848, is historically famous for its brilliancy. The Princess, *née* Cristina Trivulzio, was born in 1808. She was an only child and a great heiress. Her father died when she was four years old, and her mother shortly afterwards married the liberal-minded patriot, the Marchese Alessandro, Visconti d'Aragona. Her stepfather was compromised in the abortive risings in Milan

and Turin in 1821—which as we have seen had so profound an effect in shaping Mario's political opinions—and was imprisoned for three years. The Princess's girlhood, therefore, was passed amidst the early struggles and sufferings of the Milanese patriots. She married Prince Belgioioso in 1824.

Both husband and wife possessed great natural talent, both were devoted to music, both sang beautifully and were highly cultured, and above all both were inspired with the most patriotic feelings for their country. Yet, in spite of these similarities of tastes and interests, they could not live together. Both were headstrong and self-willed, and at the outset of their married life dissension seems to have sprung up between them. However, they lived together for five years, when the daily misery of being watched by Austrian spies, added to the increasing difficulties caused by their differences of opinion, led them to separate. They both fled to Switzerland to avoid imprisonment. They never lived together again, but remained the best of friends. The Princess was deeply involved in the insurrection promoted by Mazzini in Savoy, and in consequence her property in Italy was confiscated by the Austrian Government. The agents of the same Government made her position in Switzerland

so difficult that she was obliged to take refuge in Paris, where she became the leader and source of inspiration to the Italian exiles who were pouring into the French capital in increasing numbers.

In her early days in Paris, the confiscation of her Italian estates reduced the Princess almost to penury, and Thiers, who became her devoted slave from the moment he saw her, was often to be found in her little flat cooking eggs for her luncheon. Mario often met the great French statesman at the Princess's house, and became his friend. The support that Thiers gave to the cause of Italian unity was undoubtedly inspired by his enthusiastic friendship for the Princess Belgioioso. It is said that on one occasion, being present at a sitting of the French Chamber of Deputies when Italian affairs were being discussed, the Princess rose from her place and spoke passionately on behalf of her beloved country. The spectacle of a woman addressing the House at first startled the members; but the Princess's beauty, the eloquence and the fervour with which she pleaded the cause of a united Italy, not only silenced her audience, but finally moved it to enthusiastic applause. Heine, speaking of Italy, said: "It has produced Raphael, Rossini and the Princess Belgioioso."

With the accession of the Emperor Ferdinand of Austria to the throne of his father Francis I, the Prince and Princess's proscriptions were removed, and the Princess's confiscated property was restored to her. The Emperor saw that to persecute nobles of their high rank and importance in this manner only brought their names more prominently before the public and created sympathy for them. When the ban of proscription was removed the Prince joined his wife, and, although they did not live together, they occupied two flats in the same house in the Rue de Mont Parnasse, where they lived in the greatest harmony and friendliness, the Prince appearing at his wife's receptions as a guest. The physical differences of husband and wife were not less marked than their mental differences: "Physically they were in marked contrast," says Mrs. Whitaker in her book "Sicily and England." "The husband, tall, fair, with blue eyes, debonair and easy in manner; the wife, with raven black hair, deep dark eyes, a dead white complexion, and an expression of intensity and strenuousness never to be forgotten."

Princess Belgioioso paid only one visit to England. It was very brief, but not useless, as she had an interview with the future Napoleon III, immediately after his escape from Ham, in which



he promised most fervently to settle the affairs of Italy when he had arranged those of France. Although his personality was not so compelling as that of his wife, Prince Belgioioso was no less charming, but in a different way, and his kindness to the poorer Italian exiles was boundless. He spared the pride of the exiles, which was as great as their poverty, but, in order to give them the help they so sorely needed, the Prince used to frequent the Quartier Latin, where the exiles mostly lived, and would make bets, knowing himself to be absolutely in the wrong, the payment of which was to be a dinner or a luncheon.

Prince Belgioioso frittered away his life and his great talents in a succession of *amours*. He was the *ami intime* of the Countess Guiccioli after Byron's death, notwithstanding the fact that she was then married to her second husband, the Marquis de Boissy. Later on he became enamoured of the Duchesse de Plaisance, living with her for many years at his villa, La Pliniana, on the Lake of Como in a seclusion so absolute that the great patriotic movement in Italy in 1848 could not rouse him to fulfil his obvious duty. He died in 1858 at the age of fifty-four, a sad example of great talents wasted in what is called a life of pleasure.

The Princess Belgioioso showed Giovanni de Candia the greatest kindness and hospitality, and

at her house he met many celebrities of the time: Lady Blessington, George Sand, Alfred de Musset, Balzac, Alessandro Manzoni, the Italian patriot, and Heinrich Heine.

The Marchese de Brême, whom I have mentioned as one of my father's most helpful friends, was of an old noble Piedmontese family. His sister married the Prince della Cisterna, whose only daughter was heiress to her uncle the Cardinal Cisterna. The Cardinal, by skilfully buying large tracts of house property in Rome, when political events showed that the incorporation of the papal city in the kingdom of Italy was inevitable, made a very large fortune as soon as the new streets such as the Via Nazionale and the Via Venti-Settembre necessitated the clearing away of many houses—and the majority of these houses belonged to the Cardinal. His heiress married the Duke of Aosta, brother of the late King Humbert of Italy, and for some time King of Spain. She was the mother of the present Duke of Aosta, the Count of Turin, and the Duke of the Abruzzi.

Mario's position after his arrival in Paris was extremely difficult. Although his allowance from his father had not been a large one, it had been sufficient to provide him with all the necessities of a young man of his birth and position. Now he found himself actually penniless. With

characteristic kindness both the Marchese de Brême and Prince Belgioioso offered him assistance. All Italian exiles with means considered it their first duty to help their less fortunate fellow-exiles and such help was never regarded as a charity by either giver or recipient. But Mario was too sensitively proud either to seek or to accept such help. Both the Marchese and the Prince suggested with a touching kindness and consideration that he should regard such help merely as a loan, but, realising that there was no possibility of his ever being able to repay them, he resolutely declined their kind offers. But he had to live. He therefore resolutely swept away the prejudice—one might almost call it an article of belief inherited with his blood—that a man of noble birth cannot possibly earn his living. This prejudice happily no longer exists, but at the period of which I write work was considered to degrade a nobleman. He had some talent in modelling, with which he had amused himself at the Academy at Turin and in his leisure moments after he joined the Army. This talent he now turned to account, making small busts and figures and painting them in the style of the *Tanagra figurini*. In addition he gave fencing and riding lessons. But all his efforts notwithstanding, he gained only the most meagre living, and it was with the greatest difficulty

that he appeared properly dressed at the houses where he was made so welcome.

In these early days in Paris Mario had an odd adventure which shows the fearlessness which was his characteristic. At that time the Champs-Élysées was dangerous after dark, being lighted only by oil lamps hung from ropes strung across the roadway here and there. Mario was passing through one of the dark alleys one evening; as he crossed a space where there was no light he was accosted by a masked footpad, who, pistol in hand, demanded money, with many threats. Mario stopped and laughingly challenged his assailant to do his worst, saying that he himself was "*un pauvre diable sans un sou,*" only earning by very hard work just enough to prevent him from being a burden on two generous friends. He told the man that he was welcome to the few pence that he had in his pocket, as he himself was so often without money that their loss would make no difference to him, and they might be of some benefit to the other. To Mario's surprise the thief hesitated; they began to talk, Mario being eager to know why this man, whose voice and manner both showed refinement, was reduced to such a cowardly trade. The footpad's tale was a sad one.

He had been engaged in a Government office,

and after years of money difficulties caused by his wife's extravagance, had finally been made bankrupt, and in consequence had lost his post. His wife left him, and after going through every phase of poverty he was at length reduced to starvation. A blind rage against his evil fate turned the man into what would now be called an anarchist, and he determined to live upon the society that refused him a livelihood. Stealing whatever he could, he pawned the goods until he had a sufficient amount with which to buy a pistol, and, armed with this, he preyed nightly upon passers-by in the Champs-Élysées. Mario was deeply touched by the man's story and pressed the little money he had in his pockets upon him. This the foot-pad refused. Mario appealed to the man's better nature, begging him to give up the life of crime. The man listened for a little while, then, crying "It is too late! It is too late!" ran away into the darkness.

The life Mario led in Paris was most unsatisfactory to a man of his active temperament, and with the hope of obtaining a commission in the British Army from the Duke of Wellington (who was a friend of Rear-Admiral Fielding, with whom Mario had been acquainted at Nice) he went to London. The Iron Duke received him kindly, but when Mario expressed his anxiety to go to Spain

the Duke assured him it was a country in which he could make no progress, that the more energy he displayed the more enemies he would make, and that the only thing he could hope for with any certainty was a *coup de fusil*. "Amusez-vous," the Duke said as he dismissed him, "et je ferai quelque chose pour vous plus tard." Mario followed his advice for a time, but the Duke had no opportunity of fulfilling his promise, for the young man fell dangerously ill with typhoid fever. Immediately he received the news Prince Belgioioso hastened to London, and nursed Mario throughout his illness with the greatest devotion, taking him back to Paris when he was sufficiently strong to travel.

During all these months Mario had heard no word from his relations, and he now ventured to write to beg his mother to intercede on his behalf. The King would in all probability have pardoned him if so devoted a servant as his father Don Stefano had pleaded for him. But the old General refused even to hear his son's name mentioned. The waiting was long and tedious, and Mario went to London a second time hoping to obtain an appointment of some kind, and failing that he thought of trying to collect some money to go to America. He had many friends both in London and Paris, and everywhere was made welcome because of his good looks and his beautiful voice.

In London he frequently sang in quartets, which were much the fashion in those days, and at Bridgwater House he constantly sang with Mr. Mitford, the father of "handsome Berty Mitford," now Lord Redesdale. The latter became one of Mario's most intimate friends, as were also Charles and Henry Greville.

It was whilst he was in London this time that Mario, hearing that the niece of the famous Madame Grassini, the Giulia Grisi for whom Rossini had predicted a great future, was to appear at the King's Theatre, went to hear her. While standing in the *queue* outside the pit door, Mario found that he was standing behind Prince Napoleon, who was afterwards Emperor of the French, and who, like the young Italian nobleman, was forced to practise economy. After waiting for some time they were told that the bill was changed and that the singer whom they had both come to hear would not appear that night. Mario never heard Grisi sing until he himself was on the stage. In after-years Mario and Grisi often sang at the Tuileries and were always most warmly received by the Emperor and the Empress.

Mario became disheartened by his repeated failures to earn a living in London, and after a short time his French friends urged him to return to Paris. He was weary of the idle life he was

compelled to lead, and although he was very popular he had higher ambitions than those of the mere social favourite. The solution of his difficulties was suggested shortly after his return to Paris, and apparently by chance.

He had been discussing his position with some friends at a party. Later in the evening the Marchese de Brême asked Mario to sing. His voice was indeed beautiful—a pure, soft tenor, reaching without the slightest effort from F below the stave to B natural above it. When they left the house they found a large crowd had collected outside, attracted and entranced by the sweetest voice that the century had produced. As they walked away de Brême suggested that with such an instance of the effect of his singing, it was clear that he would have a great success if he sang to public audiences. Mario did not attach any serious importance to his friend's words, but very shortly afterwards he, de Brême, and others of his friends were at a musical party given by the Comtesse de Merlin, where Meyerbeer and Duchâtel, then director of the Grand Opera in Paris, were the chief guests of the evening. Meyerbeer asked Mario to sing some songs from his new opera, "The Huguenots," which had been produced at the Académie Royale de Musique on February 2, 1836. Mario sang and everybody was enthusiastic



over the beauty of his voice, Meyerbeer leading the applause, and crying out, "What a pity you are not on the stage!"

At that time such an idea was more than startling to a man of the birth and position of Don Giovanni de Candia. He ridiculed the idea, although Prince Belgioioso went so far as to say, "Had I your voice and physique I would not hesitate, although I am a Prince." The more the matter was discussed, the more his friends became convinced that a great career awaited him upon the operatic stage.

The following extract from Henry Greville's Memoirs throws an interesting light upon Mario's career :—

"October 15, 1837.

"I live a great deal with de Candia, with whom I formed a close acquaintance in London, and saw almost daily, and which, from a similarity of tastes and perhaps from a great *dissimilarity* of opinions, and still more from the interest which his unfortunate position excited in me, has quickly ripened into friendship. He has a good deal of talent and facility, particularly for music, having one of the finest voices I ever heard and a good deal of imagination (of this indeed too much for his own welfare), and I think he is worthy of a

better lot than that which has fallen upon him. As it is, it seems probable that, for want of other means of gaining to himself an independence, he will be obliged to resort to the stage as a profession, and I think it not improbable but that, with study and with his remarkable advantages of looks and voice, he may rise to great eminence in this very thorny career. I have endeavoured to persuade him that independence should be his first object and that, notwithstanding all the scruples which a man of birth and education may justly entertain against embracing a profession which is considered as more or less inferior to any other, still there is nothing, or there need be nothing, degrading in it, of which a man to whom no other mode of gaining an independence is open should be ashamed."

Urged on, therefore, by such constant friends as Prince Belgioioso, the Marchese de Brême and Henry Greville, and not knowing what to do for a livelihood, Mario with the greatest reluctance consented to take a step which to a man of his birth and education was most repugnant. He agreed to study for the stage.

Mario's hesitation and reluctance are easily understood when the condition of the stage in those days is remembered. Actors and singers

upon the Continent were not received in society ; they formed a class apart, and a person of birth and position becoming either an actor or singer was unheard of. Giovanni de Candia was the first gentleman to go upon the stage, and in doing so he broke every convention and rule of his order. But, having at length made up his mind to take the step, Mario wasted no time. He began to work hard for his *début*, studying with Michelot of the Comédie Française for declamation, with Bordogni of the Conservatoire for voice production, and with Ponchard of the Opéra Comique for singing ; Meyerbeer also gave him an occasional lesson. These eminent masters found him a quick and intelligent pupil, and Michelot of the Comédie Française offered to train him for the stage of that historic house, an honour Mario appreciated but refused, feeling that he could never speak the language sufficiently fluently to become a French actor. Besides, he knew that it was on his voice, not his acting, that the success of his new venture depended.

“ I often visited the opera houses ”—said Mario, referring to that time—“ to hear the popular artistes of the period. Rubini, the idol of the patrons of the Salle Ventadour, produced the deepest impression upon me. I could not refrain from repeating his

arias in the open streets after the representations were ended, and more than once did this proceeding draw down upon my head remonstrances from the police, who—wretched *dilettanti* without the slightest presentiment of my future triumphs!—would prosaically tax me with a ‘breach of the public peace’!”

The news that Mario contemplated going upon the stage reached King Charles Albert, probably through one of the many spies by whom the Italian exiles in Paris were continually watched. So perturbed was the King by this intelligence that, acting on his instructions, a member of the Sardinian Embassy in Paris went to see Mario, and urged him in the King’s name to abandon the idea, hinting at the probability of pardon and readmission to the Army if he complied with Charles Albert’s wishes. The King, through his messenger, pointed out the bitter blow it would be to his father, whose services as a good soldier and loyal servant of the throne were so highly valued by the King, as they had been by his predecessor. But Mario knew that no pardon would be granted unless he gave up the names of those who had sheltered him; therefore he resolutely refused—although he was yearning to see his mother again—to reconsider his decision to go upon the stage.

Upon his friends' suggestion, and also to conceal his identity, Giovanni decided to take a stage name, choosing that of Mario from Caius Marius, called the third founder of Rome, whose biography the young man greatly admired. He wrote to his mother telling her of his intention and of the King's message, and further promised never to sing professionally in Italy. This promise was made to spare the fastidious feelings of his family and any of those who knew him at Court, who need never know that Giovanni de Candia and Mario were the same person, though many years later it was the pride of that family and of his compatriots to call him by that professional name. All his life he faithfully kept the promise given to his mother, and, in spite of the most tempting offers, his native country never heard that glorious voice in any of its opera houses.

When he was living in Rome after his final farewell to the stage, he frequently sang at the Quirinal Palace with Queen Margherita, herself an artist and a great lover of music.

Mario was soon ready to appear before the public, and it was decided that he should make his *début* as the Duke of Normandy in a revival of Meyerbeer's "Robert le Diable," which was given at the theatre in the Rue Lepelletier on December 5, 1838.

Meyerbeer composed an air expressly for him in the second act which was so extremely difficult that none of his successors in the part ever attempted it. Mario relates that Rubini, the great tenor, looking at the manuscript of this song, asked with an air of evident astonishment: "Do you propose to sing this?" "I shall have to sing it as the Master has written it for me," was Mario's answer. "Well, youth is rash," replied Rubini. Later, when the opera was translated into Italian, Meyerbeer again added an extra song for Mario.

Mario, in relating the experiences of his *début*, used to say that when he stepped on to the stage that night he felt as if he were ascending the scaffold. Wherever he looked he saw nothing but a multitude of eyes—eyes everywhere. He seemed to be under the influence of a fearful nightmare. As he moved into the full glare of the lights he heard an exclamation from a stage box, which in those days were actually on the stage itself, and looking up he recognised a young lady, a friend of his family, with whom he had often danced at Nice. The lady had no idea that Mario, the *débutant* singer, and Giovanni de Candia were one and the same person, and could not repress her astonishment. She was afterwards, however, begged to keep the secret from Don Stefano, which she did, and the old man died unaware that the

young tenor whose name was already beginning to reach Italy was his own son.

I will here quote from an article written in French by Francis Roch, an eye-witness of this *début*, which gives an interesting account of how Mario first faced the footlights and of the impression he made upon the public :—

“ It was in the character of the Duke of Normandy that the tenor Mario was heard for the first time on the boards of the theatre in the Rue Lepelletier. He is quite a young man, with a most prepossessing appearance, very aristocratic, his manner elegant and courteous, his carriage a little military.

“ It soon became known that the young man had left Italy hastily, under the pressure of a twofold danger, the anger of his noble father and that of his King. Besides the interest attaching generally to a *début*, the adventures of young de Candia had made enough noise in the Parisian world for everyone to wish to be in the hero's immediate presence, and, therefore, the rare thing happened, of every box, every stall, every corner of the house being filled, before the raising of the curtain. King Louis Philippe and Queen Amélie, with other members of the royal family, were early in their seats.

“Mario is most happily endowed with an exceptionally admirable voice, such a voice as Italy alone can produce or cultivate, and that only in a few individual cases. He spoke our language with great ease and almost without accent, and although he was suffering from the weight of a crushing emotion it was in a firmly modulated, irreproachably correct voice, that the young artist began his first verse: ‘Illustrious Knights, to your good health I drink, long life to you.’

“Before he had finished the whole house broke into deep and prolonged applause. If the young artist could have had a moment’s doubt of his success, this reception, thoroughly deserved as it was in every way, must have caused even the shadow of it to disappear. Completely reassured by the encouraging sympathy of which he found himself the object, he triumphantly attacked ‘La Sicilienne,’ ‘O capricious Fortune,’ and sang the rest of his part with a success increasing with each new song. The bravos which had never ceased throughout the opera, at the last fall of the curtain rivalled peals of thunder, and, recalled by the enthusiastic acclamations of the whole audience, the happy young artist must have understood that a magnificent career was opening before him, and that he had only to march onwards over carpets of flowers.



“I had the good fortune to be present at this *début*.”<sup>1</sup>

His masters and friends were all jubilant at the instant and genuine success of their *protégé*, and as they all crowded round him with congratulations as he left the stage, Mario modestly answered, “Well, I hope I have won my spurs.” The next day the Parisian newspapers were full of glowing accounts of the new tenor. I give a quotation from one of them :—

“Parisian opera-goers will not be able to appreciate at its full value the treasure of which we have only had a glimpse. The style which obtains on the stage at the Rue Lepelletier is not one suitable to Mario. He is not made for German music, still less for French. The howls that our musicians exact from the singers of our operas will never harmonise with the exquisitely pure voice, the fresh intonation, the energetic sweetness, the charming art and vocalisation which makes each note of a *cantilena* or of a *fioritura* fall on the ear as a drop of dew falls on the burning forehead of an exhausted traveller. At the Opera this treasure would be most assuredly wasted. It is

<sup>1</sup> Extrait de *l'Encyclopédie Critique et Biographique du 19 Siècle*.

for the Italiens that he is destined ; it is towards being the successor of Rubini rather than of Duprez that the young Mario must aim."

Mario often said that it was Fanny Elsler who taught him to walk the boards. "I shall never forget her kindness. Dancers generally have brains only in their feet, but she was a woman of great intelligence. She began by caricaturing the way I walked, and in this way showed me my defects and taught me more than anybody else."

Among his mother Donna Caterina's proudly cherished possessions were some newspaper articles describing the *début* of her beloved Giovanni. She kept the secret of her son's proceedings during Don Stefano's lifetime, but when the general amnesty was granted after the revolution in Italy in 1848, Mario was one of the first of the exiles to avail himself of the power of being able to return to his country, and his mother again clasped him in her arms.

## CHAPTER IV

“ A cette époque le public de l'opéra était une famille, aujourd'hui ce n'est plus qu'une foule.”

MADAME DE GIBARDIN.

IN the following year the prediction of the newspaper critic was fulfilled, and Mario appeared at the Théâtre des Italiens as Nemorino in “L'Elisir d'Amore” with Madame Persiani and Lablache, the great bass singer. Shortly afterwards both Duprez and Rubini fell ill, and for a month Mario sang each night alternately at the Italian and at the French Opera, which was considered a marvellous feat.

“It was the morning after my *début* in ‘L'Elisir d'Amore,’” Mario once told a friend, “that I was sleeping the deep sleep of a man who had gone to bed at an awfully late hour, after having experienced a variety of intense emotions. A loud shout of ‘Bravo! Mario, bravissimo!’ wakened me, and I saw the kind, smiling face of Rubini peeping through the curtains of my bed. This great

artist, who had honoured me with his friendship and had given me his priceless counsel without the least thought of jealousy, entered my house at any hour he pleased, and he who was then the idol of the public at the Italiens, now came with outstretched hands to press mine. After many congratulations he uttered these words, which made an unforgettable impression upon my mind: 'It is thou, Mario, who shalt fill the place of Jean Baptiste Rubini.'"

Mario used to tell another story of Rubini. During one of Mario's appearances in London Rubini was singing in Rossini's oratorio, the "Stabat Mater." "On hearing this," said Mario, "I hastened to the theatre, and the impresario, on receipt of my card, placed me in the front row of stalls. Rubini could not fail to see me, and looking at me steadily, instead of singing the Latin line, he gravely sang '*Dum flebat et non pagabat.*' No one amongst the audience, of course, saw the humorous allusion to the friend who had not paid for his seat, but I could not help smiling, thereby scandalising my neighbours, who appeared astonished that the sublimity of Rossini's sacred music and the passionate tones of Rubini's voice should move me to hilarity."

Rubini, like Rossini, was the son of a cornet-

player. He was born at Bergamo in 1795, and at the age of eight sang a solo in a *Salve Regina* at a convent so beautifully that the nuns embraced him. His father, thinking he had musical talent, put him under the care of a priest called Don Santo, who gave him music lessons. After a short time the priest sent the boy back to his father, saying he had no inclination towards music and would never make a singer. The elder Rubini, however, did not agree with Don Santo's opinion, and, to the best of his ability, gave his son lessons himself. The father was justified in his belief in Rubini's talent, for at the age of twelve he appeared at the small theatre at Rosano in the part of a woman, and was greatly applauded. Through this success he obtained an engagement at Bergamo, where he had to play the violin in the orchestra as well as sing in the chorus. But this drudgery did not last very long, for, making a great success with a song in one of Lamberti's dramas, Rubini forsook his fiddle and joined an operatic company, going with them to Fossano, Saluzzo and Vercelli. At the last place he joined forces with a clever violinist and together they made a successful concert tour. The success of these concerts in Pavia and Milan procured Rubini engagements at Brescia and at Venice, where he sang in Rossini's "*Italiana in Algeri*."

From this time his success was rapid and his great career may be said to have begun at Naples, where he met the *prima donna* Comelli, whom he married. He accompanied his wife to Vienna, where he met Lablache and Giudetta Grisi (Giulia Grisi's sister).

From Vienna he went to Paris, where he made his first appearance in "La Cenerentola," an appearance which assured his reputation.

Thenceforward his name was famous. He sang in nearly every capital of Europe. Bellini composed the "Pirata" especially for Rubini, and a year later "La Sonnambula."

Rubini's voice was a pure tenor. He could sing two octaves and a note, full from the chest, besides *falsetti* notes: the great charm of his voice was its flexibility. As an actor he could, on occasion, be very dramatic, but as a rule he paid more attention to his singing than to his acting. Mario once said that singers were always placed at a disadvantage: they must either pay such attention to the acting of their part that their singing suffered, or they must sing without attempting to act. For this reason Mario almost invariably changed the words of his parts, not only to suit his voice, but also that he might be able to act whatever he was singing.

Rubini was never ashamed of his lowly beginning

on the operatic stage, and when in 1836, during a brilliant season at the Italiens in Paris, a poor member of the chorus asked for his autograph, he wrote, "Giovanni Battista Rubini. Antico Corista" (old chorister).

He was a man of fine figure and appearance, and was much beloved by the public as a singer and by his friends as a man. Once, at Milan, he was singing in Pacini's "Talisman," and was about to take his famous *ut de poitrine* when he found that he could not do so. He missed the note, smiled and shook his head. "Try it! Try it again!" shouted the friendly audience. He was tired and knew that he should not attempt the note, but too good-natured to disappoint the audience who sympathised with his failure (and audiences in Italy generally reward such failures with prolonged hissing, even if the singer is a favourite), he made a great effort and produced the famous *ut* roundly and clearly and well sustained. But in doing so he hurt his throat. The doctor, who was called in immediately, declared he had injured the clavicle, and that he would have to abstain from singing for at least three months. "In that case," said Rubini, "as the public will not hear me for a long time, I must finish the opera." Despite the warning of the doctor he sang his part to the end, although suffering great pain.

Duprez, who was born in 1806, lived to the age of ninety. He was a pupil of the celebrated French singing-master Choron (1772-1834) and became one of the most famous tenors in France entirely through hard work and clever training. At first his voice was weak—what the French call *une voix sombrée*, but in time it became strong and dramatic.

Duprez was celebrated for the exquisite way in which he sang recitative. But he did not know how to control or husband his voice, and after he developed its full strength he strained it each time he sang. When Rossini heard him in "William Tell" he rushed round to the stage and embraced the singer, weeping meanwhile. "But why these tears?" asked Duprez. "I weep for those who heard Duprez to-night in 'William Tell,' for they will never hear anyone sing it as he has sung, and alas! alas! Duprez' voice cannot last much longer." Rossini's prophecy came true and with startling suddenness. "I have lost my voice," wrote Duprez, in despair, to Rubini. "How have you kept yours?" "My dear Duprez," Rubini answered, "you have lost your voice because you have sung with all your capital; I have kept mine because I sing only with the interest."

In addition to appearing at the Italian and at the French Opera, Mario gained valuable experience from an operatic tour through France.



During this tour he was wandering through the market-place of a big provincial town (Lyons, I think) when he noticed a woman leading a little child and singing timidly in a very poor voice. Her efforts to attract attention were in vain ; no one seemed to heed her or to give her anything, and, sitting down utterly exhausted, she looked with pleading eyes at the young man. Mario was deeply moved at the sight of her misery and the pale beauty of the child ; both mother and child showed unmistakable signs of hunger and want. To his great distress Mario found that he had no money with him.

After a moment he took off his hat, and, lifting up his voice, sang his best. Instantly he was surrounded by a great throng of people. This "cry of pity woven in song" filled his hat with money, which he emptied into the lap of the astonished woman, whose tears expressed her gratitude ; then he hurried away that he might not hear her thanks. Mario thought that no one had recognised him, but when he appeared on the stage that night the outburst of applause and the cries from the pit and gallery showed him that some of his audience had been in the market-place. The story got abroad and a recitation was written called (I think) "The Market-place," which records the incident in all its details.

Mario's heart was always soft and his judgment kindly. Pope's verse—

“ Teach me to feel another's woe,  
To hide the fault I see ;  
That mercy I to others shew,  
That mercy shew to me ”

—exactly describes my father's mental attitude and his point of view of life.

During the four years that Mario had spent on and off in Paris he had made many friends and acquaintances, some of whom were celebrities of their time. He often met Napoleon's general, Marshal Soult (who attended Queen Victoria's Coronation), and also Talleyrand Perigord, Prince of Benevento, at the houses of the Comtesse de Merlin and his friend de Brême. Talleyrand he thought too sarcastic a talker, but deeply interesting, especially in his account of the great Revolution and the rise of Napoleon, with which he was so closely concerned. He also knew Godfrey and Eugène Cavaignac, the latter of whom became President of the Council in the revolution of 1848. Théophile Gautier, critic and poet, was another friend ; he was related to Giulia Grisi's family. Alexandre Dumas and Dumas fils were amongst his literary friends, and through the latter Mario knew Alphonsine Plessis, who inspired the part of Marguerite Gautier in Dumas fils' play “ La Dame

aux Camélias." Mario afterwards believed that part of the story was the history of the celebrated author himself. My father once pointed out the grave of Alphonsine Plessis to me at Père la Chaise, but I believe he was mistaken, as she is said to be buried at Montmartre. In later years Mario created the part of Alfredo in Verdi's opera "La Traviata," which was founded on Dumas' sad story.

At the French Court the unfortunate Duke of Orléans honoured him with his close friendship, and knowing Mario's love for antiquities gave him a quaint Louis XV clock, which is now in the writer's possession. In July 1842, Mario was passing through Paris; walking down the Champs-Élysées he saw a large crowd gathered round an overturned cabriolet, and to his horror learned that it was the Duke's carriage and that he had just been carried away, dead. The horse had taken fright and had bolted down the Champs-Élysées towards the Tuileries; the Duke, in jumping out as they swerved round a corner, fell upon his head, and thus the heir to the throne of France was killed.

Mario also, amongst a million spectators, witnessed the ceremony of Napoleon's remains being taken to the Invalides on December 15, 1840. Though very young, he distinctly remembered hearing of the great Emperor's death in 1821, and was therefore particularly interested in seeing

these last honours paid to the man his father had so bitterly disliked.

The year 1839 was the most memorable in my father's life, for it was in this year that he made his *début* in London at the King's Theatre, and that he first met Giulia Grisi. The occasion upon which he made this first appearance was for Grisi's benefit when "Lucrezia Borgia," by Donizetti, was given for the first time in England. The opera met with but little success, to judge by the following account in the London *Athenaeum*:—

"On Thursday Mdlle Grisi's benefit took place with the attractions of a fresh opera, 'Lucrezia Borgia,' by Donizetti; a new tenor, M. Mario; and a new ballet, 'La Gitana.' Strange to say, in spite of these temptations the house was but moderately well attended. The ghastly and revolting story of Victor Hugo's tragedy, stripped of half its horrors, has been set to music. Grisi did her best to make her new part tell—looking in the second act more striking than we ever remember to have seen her, having put on for the character such a malicious and fascinating beauty as befits a sorceress, but the music baffled her exertion. It was a pity, too, to produce M. Mario in a composition so utterly worthless. We cannot but compliment the new Romeo of the Italian

stage upon possessing a handsome presence and a delicious voice, rather than commend him for using either as an artist should do, that is zealously and to good effect. His voice is sweet and extensive, some of its tones being not free from that slight quality of huskiness which practice would either clear away, or, as in Pasta's case, convert from a blemish into a beauty; his expression is natural. M. Mario's success was complete, but he must work hard to make it lasting."

With such qualified praise was the appearance dismissed of one of the finest tenors who has ever sung upon the English stage. The public, however, did not endorse the views of the critic, and Mario during his first season in London won a place in the admiring affection of the English people which he kept to the day of his death.

Long before they met, Giulia Grisi and Mario were interested in one another: she, because of the young tenor's romantic story and the reports that had reached her of his exquisite voice and brilliant success; he, because of the fame the young *prima donna* had achieved. Both, therefore, looked forward to their appearance together in "Lucrezia Borgia," little thinking that it would be the prelude to a double and life-long union.

It is a curious fact that singers in the position

of Grisi are often more jealous of the success of men singers than they are of women. Anyone with a knowledge of the operatic world can recall many instances in which *prime donne* of the highest standing and most assured position have descended to the pettiest tricks upon the stage in order to embarrass or spoil the performance of a tenor or baritone of whom they were jealous.

Grisi, like Mario, was wholly free from jealousy either of men or women singers. All the artist in her was roused by Mario's perfect method and his management of his matchless voice. After this appearance in "Lucrezia Borgia" and the newspaper comments, Mario realised that his acting, despite the admirable coaching he had received in Paris, was cold and stiff. This knowledge depressed him, and it was Grisi who encouraged him to persevere. She herself had a natural talent for acting, and by perpetual rehearsals and the most painstaking tuition, she taught him to bring his personality to bear upon his art and to lose the gentlemanly young officer in the individuality of the different rôles he assumed. Her talent and enthusiastic encouragement awakened in Mario the dormant capacity which eventually made him almost a greater actor than she was herself.

During this first public appearance in England of Mario the famous Eglinton tournament was

held, Mario lending his costume of Nemorino in "L'Elisir d'Amore" to Lord Elcho (now Lord Wemyss). The Eglinton tournament was given by Archibald, Earl of Eglinton, on August 29, 1839, and during the following week. It was an effort to reproduce all the features of a mediæval tournament, with its lists, jousting knights, Queen of Beauty, and other picturesque details. The Queen of Beauty was Lady Seymour, afterwards Duchess of Somerset—the daughter of Richard Brinsley Sheridan—who died in 1884. The tournament was ruined by an unending downpour of rain during the whole week, and it was said that Lord Eglinton was nearly ruined also.

Although Mario gained an instant success both in London and Paris, and although, as it was said of him, "He came, he sang, he conquered," his success was maintained only by unceasing hard work. During the first three years of his operatic career he appeared in eight different operas, and in 1841 in no less than five, "Orazi e Curiazi" (Cimarosa), "La Straniera" (Bellini), "Fausta" (Donizetti), "Barbiere di Siviglia" (Rossini), "Marino Faliero" (Donizetti). He spent practically the whole of his time in studying his parts and in rehearsal, but the experience was invaluable, and with each part his acting became stronger and his mastery of the stage more assured.

## CHAPTER V

GIULIA GRISI was the niece of the famous Josephina Grassini, one of the most celebrated singers of her day, and as it was owing to her aunt's influence that Grisi's love of music ripened into an ardent desire to follow the same career, I will give a short sketch of Josephina Grassini's life.

She was born at Varese in Lombardy in 1775. The rare beauty of her voice induced her parents to give her a musical education, and on her appearance at the Scala in Milan, during the Carnival of 1794, although she was only nineteen she achieved such a success that she immediately became a *prima donna*. Her voice was originally a soprano, but later it changed into a contralto. It was rich and full, of delightful quality and of great volume. As an actress she had many advantages, for she was a beautiful, fascinating woman, tall and commanding, and her carriage and attitude, like those of her niece Giulia Grisi, possessed a classic beauty combined with singularly individual grace. Grassini's head was beautifully shaped, her



hair and eyes of the deepest black, and her whole appearance was remarkable and majestic.

After the battle of Marengo (June 14, 1800) she sang at a concert at which Napoleon was present. He was so fascinated both by the singer and her voice that he insisted upon her coming to Paris to sing at the church of the Invalides on the 12th of July, at a great thanksgiving service given in commemoration of this battle. Grassini obeyed Napoleon's command and sang "*La Victoire est à nous*," assisted by eight hundred musicians, and at once created a *furore*.

This great success induced her to stay in Paris, singing only in concerts instead of going back to the opera, and she was appointed Court singer to the Tuileries by Napoleon. In 1804 he made her directress of the Opera, but being engaged for the London season (March to July), she did not take up her duties in Paris until she had won fresh laurels across the Channel.

When Grassini first appeared in London Madame Vigée Le Brun, then at the height of her popularity, painted three portraits of her, two of which are in the museums of Avignon and Rouen, to which they were given by Madame Vigée Le Brun herself, but it is not known what became of the third.

After her return to Paris, by the Emperor's command, Grassini sang one night in "*Giulietta e*

Romeo," by Zingarelli, in which she herself had created the title-rôle. She aroused an unusual outburst of emotion, especially during the third act, when the whole audience was in tears; even Napoleon was so completely overcome that at the end of the performance he forgot all his own rules of etiquette and shouted like a schoolboy. As she was leaving the Tuileries a slip of paper was given her, on which was written, "Good for twenty thousand francs. Napoleon"—a vast sum of money to be given to a singer for one performance in those days. Talma, her contemporary upon the dramatic stage, used to say that he had never seen any actress whose features expressed the various emotions of the parts she was singing so perfectly and with such natural changes as Grassini's. She retired from the stage in 1823 and settled with her husband, Count Ragani, afterwards Director of the Italian Opera in Paris.

In her private life Grassini was much beloved. She was a generous woman, exempt from the petty envies and jealousies which sometimes beset great singers, and she was always ready to help other artistes, and especially young *débutantes*. She was a good conversationalist and had a ready tongue, as is instanced in a remark she made to King Louis Philippe in 1838 at a party at the Tuileries. The conversation turning on Napoleon and

Louis XVIII, two of the courtiers began an imaginary dialogue between the two sovereigns. Grassini, who was standing near by, interrupted, saying archly: "I am sure the first question our great Napoleon would put to King Louis would be, 'Why did you not continue the pension I gave to my dear Grassini?'" She died at Milan in 1850, and although she was seventy-five she had preserved her beauty so well that she did not appear to be much over forty. As I have already said, it was owing to her influence and encouragement that Giulia Grisi, the daughter of her sister Giovanna, became a singer.

Giovanna Grassini married Gaetano Grisi, an engineer officer in the service of Napoleon. Although an Italian by birth, Gaetano Grisi had been educated in Paris, and one of his earliest recollections was seeing Charlotte Corday being taken to her execution. The tumbril passed so close to him that he saw her face clearly. She was a thick-set woman, with reddish hair, freckled complexion and a strong hard face, and, boy as he was, he noticed that she was totally unmoved by the cries of the huge crowd that filled the pavement, some calling blessings down upon her for the death of the tyrant Marat, others howling furiously; but she was equally indifferent to both. She was standing up with her arms tied tightly behind her,

and as the tumbril jolted along over the stony street a sudden jerk made her fall. One of the executioners, who at that moment was lighting a pipe, caught her roughly by her low cut bodice, and, swearing at her for her clumsiness, set her on her feet. My grandfather Grisi had the most vivid recollection of this incident.

Giovanna Grisi died young, and of her six children two only survived her, Giuditta and Giulia, both of whom followed in the steps of their celebrated aunt. Giuditta's professional career though successful was short, for soon after going upon the stage she married a Venetian gentleman, Count Bardi, and retired into private life.

Giulia was born in Milan in 1815, on Saint Giulia's day, hence her name, and at the age of eight was sent to the convent of Mantelatta in the small town of Gorizia. She was so delicate that her father did not wish her to study music; but she had set her heart upon it, and moved by her childish pleading and her beauty, the nuns taught her to play the piano very prettily, although she did not make much advance in musical knowledge.

At the end of five years she left the convent and went to live with her sister Giuditta, who was then singing at Milan, Parma and other cities in northern Italy. It was soon remarked that when her elder sister was practising *solfeggi* or studying

her part, Giulia listened with great attention. She had an excellent ear and a quick memory, and she could repeat fluently and correctly the most difficult passages that she had once heard. She astonished her family also by the accuracy with which she imitated the gestures, the carriage, and even the singing of the various artistes in the same company as her sister. Giuditta was delighted by this promise of so much talent, and prophesied that Giulia would be the glory of the family. "Thou wilt outshine thy aunt and thy sister," she said more than once.

Giulia entered the Conservatoire at Milan in 1828 under the direction of the composer Mariani. Her talents rapidly developed, and at the end of that year she went to Bologna, where she studied under Filippo Gugliena. In spite of her extreme youth the lovely quality of her voice was clearly manifest, and every month its tones gained depth and power and richness. Encouraged by her extraordinary progress Giulia ventured on making her *début* in the winter of 1829, although she was only fourteen years old. Her first appearance was at the Communal Theatre at Bologna, where she took the small part of Emma in Rossini's "Zelmira." Her sweet voice and the freshness of her youthful beauty made a great impression.

It was entirely by her own wish that she

made so early a *début*. She was determined to follow the career of a singer, and fearing that her father would prevent her doing so she took this opportunity of appearing in "Zelmira" to show him that she possessed the necessary qualifications. Her success, therefore, was doubly delightful to her. She took parts in other operas, but continued her studies as zealously as before. Rossini predicted a brilliant future for her, and whenever she happened to be in the same town as the composer he always became her master for the time being. She speedily became a *prima donna*, appearing in "Il Barbiere," "Torvaldo e Dorliska," etc. An opera was written expressly for her by Milolotti, in which her success was so complete and dazzling that all the impresarios and directors of theatres were anxious to secure her. One of these, an impresario at Florence, of the dishonest class who are always on the look-out for unwary singers, hurried to Bologna and induced Grisi to bind herself to him for six years at a very small salary. There was no time to consult her father, he being in Milan, and urged by the dishonest impresario the inexperienced girl signed the agreement. The following year she appeared at Florence in "I Capuletti e Montecchi," by Bellini, then a young and struggling composer; it was specially written for her to replace an opera which had been



*Giulia Grisi*  
From a portrait painted in 1840  
in the possession of Sir John Lubbock





a failure. "I Capuletti e Montecchi" became very popular in spite of its having been written in fifteen days and without any preliminary preparation. Grisi also sang in Vaccai's "Giulietta e Romeo," which had the same plot as Bellini's "I Capuletti e Montecchi," and in both operas she was considered to be the most fascinating Giulietta ever seen on the Italian stage. Indeed, young as she was, "La Bellissima Giulietta" was now hailed as "Queen of Song."

In her second season she sang in an opera composed for her by the Maestro Celli, and became still more popular. In this year, too, she took part in the Festival of the Luminare at Pisa. This festival is held every five years during the Carnival, the city being brilliantly illuminated for the three days it lasts. Giulia sang in "Semi-ramide" each morning and in "Otello" every evening.

The Florentine impresario having made a little fortune by his lucky speculation calmly transferred his young *prima donna*, for a handsome consideration, to Cruvelli, then Director of La Scala at Milan. It was there in 1831 that Giulia first met Pasta, whom she ardently admired and who took a friendly interest in her. She often performed with the great singer, whose methods she thus had the advantage of studying. Not a look, a

tone, a gesture of her great model escaped her. Pasta was deeply struck by the genius displayed by the young girl when singing as Jane Seymour in Donizetti's "Anna Bolena," and exclaimed: "I can honestly give back to you the compliment paid me by your aunt; she said I was worthy to succeed her—you will take my place."

Bellini, who was then in Milan composing "Norma," also overwhelmed Giulia with praise, and told her that he wished her to take the part of Adalgisa in the new opera. "Norma" was produced on January 1, 1832. The Scala was crowded from floor to ceiling and Bellini himself was at the director's desk, in the highest spirits. Strange to say, the reception of the opera at the outset was by no means enthusiastic. The fine chorus of the priests made no impression; even Pasta's (the Norma) rendering of *Casta Diva* was heard without applause and Bellini trembled with anxiety; then Adalgisa appeared and sang *Sgombro e la sacra salma*. The clear, resonant tones of Giulia Grisi's voice touched the hearts of the audience; the applause began, and in the second act the duet between Norma and Adalgisa, *Deh con te*, roused the whole house and gained an *encore*. Nevertheless, Bellini considered this first representation a fiasco, and wrote of it in much depression to a friend, but eventually the opera became a

success and was played forty times during the Carnival.

“How I should like to do Norma,” the young Giulia said to Bellini. “Wait twenty years and we shall see,” was his answer. “I will be Norma in spite of you, in much less than twenty years,” she returned. Bellini only smiled, murmuring, “Patience! Patience!” But Giulia kept her word.

Her genius was now fully acknowledged, and although barely eighteen years of age she had gained one of those triumphs which form the basis of a great renown. By this time she had learnt her true value and was quite aware of the harm she had done herself by foolishly signing the impresario’s agreement. Her father made repeated efforts to gain a higher salary for his daughter from the impresario, but without any success, and finally, angered at the advantage taken of her youthful ignorance and the manner in which her talents were being exploited entirely for the impresario’s benefit, Giulia suddenly resolved to break her engagement.

Her sister Giuditta and her aunt, Madame Grassini, were both in Paris, and to them Giulia resolved to go. The utmost secrecy was necessary, as the breaking of these agreements met with heavy punishment. With her father’s consent she went to her old friend and teacher at the

Conservatoire, Mariani, who gladly promised to see her across the frontier and to arrange for her to travel quickly through Switzerland into France. The fugitives started late on a Friday, the theatre being closed that night, and arrived safely at Bellinzona, where to their horror they discovered that they had forgotten their passports. Giulia did not dare to return to Milan, and it was therefore decided that she should cross the frontier alone with her maid's passport, she being somewhat of the same age, height, and complexion as her mistress. Mariani could do nothing but return for his papers. It was arranged that once across the frontier Giulia was to wait for Mariani and her maid to join her, but, dreading lest she should be pursued and taken back, she immediately resumed her flight, and for eleven days and nights journeyed alone over bad roads and mountains covered with snow, and it was only when, half dead with fatigue and terror, she threw herself into her aunt's arms, that she remembered her promise to wait for her dear old teacher. Fortunately, Mariani heard from some one who had passed Giulia on the way that she had continued her journey, and a few weeks later he and the maid arrived safely in Paris. Giulia had some reason for her terror, since the impresario would have taken any steps rather than allow so valuable a prize to escape him.

Madame Grassini and Giuditta welcomed Giulia with joy, and it now only remained to find her an engagement. It was not a matter of difficulty since Rossini, Robert, and Severini then formed a triumvirate which governed the opera in Paris. Rossini remembered his prediction of a brilliant future for Giulia Grisi some four years previously, and an arrangement was made without any difficulty for her to replace Malibran at the Favart.

Grisi appeared for the first time before a Parisian audience on October 14, 1833, in "Semiramide," and at once became a popular favourite. During the next six months her voice increased in power and she rose still higher in the opinion of the public. She and her sister sang together in Bellini's "Capuletti e Montecchi." This was followed by "Don Giovanni"; and both in this opera and in "Anna Bolena" she made a great impression. At the end of the season Giuditta married and left Paris, and Giulia's position was now assured, her name being mentioned in the same breath as those of Catalani, Pasta and Malibran. She no longer took the parts of Jane Seymour and Adalgisa, but Anna Bolena and Norma.

Giulia Grisi's beauty was as remarkable as her voice. Théophile Gautier, writing of her, says :—

“As to Mademoiselle Grisi, her beauty, her acting, and her voice leave nothing more to be desired; a magnificent trinity rarely to be seen in one person. In tragedy, such as ‘*Lucrezia Borgia*,’ her acting is sublime; in the scene where the mask is ruthlessly torn from her face it discloses features as pale as if cut in marble, and defiant, flashing eyes. Her more than statuesque figure reminded one of an antique Niobe. A thrill of admiration roused the audience to applause which one felt was inspired by her beauty.”

Again, when speaking of her as Norma, he says:—

“This great singer and admirable tragedienne holds her public in a spell when she is before them. Where can one find another head as if moulded by Phidias such as she carries so proudly and nobly on her marble-like shoulders? Her face is so pure, so correct, that the most lively passions cannot alter its outlines, and it remains beautiful even in her dramatic agonies. As for her voice, it is unique; tender in love passages, grand in anger and indignation, and in sorrow melting the hearts of those who hear her. Under her spell what was only an opera becomes a tragedy and a poem. One must go and see her in ‘*Semiramide*’

and 'Norma' to realise what this great singer and beautiful woman is."

Although Grisi used powder for coolness, she never painted for the stage, her colouring being sufficiently brilliant not to be deadened by the oil footlights which were then used; consequently her features showed the various emotions of her parts without being blurred.

Grisi made her *début* in London at the King's Theatre in 1834, in "Gazza Ladra," in which her Ninetta was considered unique. Her reputation had preceded her from Paris, and according to the newspapers the theatre was crowded, people even being seated in the wings of the stage. In London, as in Paris, her success was complete and her popularity immediate. Extracts from an article in the *Times* the day after her *début* may not be uninteresting even at this distant date:—

"The clouds which during the earlier part of the season lowered upon the King's Theatre are rapidly dispersing. To the list of performers of established reputation whose appearance we have already announced, we have now to add the name of Mademoiselle Giulietta Grisi, who last night made a most successful *début* as Ninetta in Rossini's 'Gazza Ladra.'

“So much has been said of her abilities that some might have been led to doubt lest her reputation was merely one of those which rested only on the very suspicious basis of personal partiality.

“If any such doubts existed they must be at an end. . . . Mademoiselle Grisi is of moderate stature, her features are eminently handsome, and full of intelligence. . . . Her voice is a soprano, pure, brilliant, powerful and flexible; one of the finest we have ever heard. As an actress Mademoiselle Grisi exhibits discriminative powers of no common order. Her execution of the well-known air *Di piacer* delighted the house, but it was not in this, or in any other equally celebrated part of the opera, that we specially marked the genius of the actress; we saw it in isolated points, where the beauties are less obtruded on the general eye. . . . In truth, throughout the opera, the fair *débutante's* genius shone forth most brightly, and at its conclusion the audience expressed their satisfaction most enthusiastically.”

The composer Balfe, in writing his impressions to a friend of Grisi's *début*, said:—“If I could have seen an angel from Heaven I could never have dreamed I should have seen one so beautiful.”

Grisi appeared in several other operas that season, and after her performance in “Semiramide”



it was willingly admitted that, Pasta having retired, Grisi took her place as the foremost singer of the time.

At the beginning of 1838 she was singing again in Paris, but her season was cut short in a terrible manner by the burning down of the Italian Theatre. The fire was discovered only a very short time before the performance of "Don Giovanni" was over, and Severini, in trying to escape the flames, jumped out of the top window and was killed. This terrible tragedy so greatly upset Grisi that she returned to London, thus missing Mario's *début* in Paris as he had missed hers in London. They met, however, in 1839, as I have already mentioned, and thenceforward sang together until Grisi retired from the stage.

To give an elaborate history of the years from 1834-54 within which Grisi's London career was practically included, is unnecessary. After 1835 she sang alternately in London and Paris. In that year Bellini's last opera, "I Puritani," which was specially composed for Grisi, brought her fresh triumphs. In Paris she appeared with Rubini, Tamburini and Lablache, an unrivalled quartet. The production of the opera created the utmost enthusiasm, which was repeated when it was given in London. It is interesting here to quote an entry from the diary of the late Queen

Victoria concerning the great Diva and the opera :—

“ *Tuesday, July 14, 1835.*—At eight we went to the opera with Lady Theresa and Lehzen. It was the *dear Puritani*; Grisi was in perfect voice and sang and acted *beautifully*; but I must say that she shows her many fatigues in her face, and she is certainly much thinner than when she arrived. It is a great pity, too, that she now wears her front hair so much lower than she did. It is no improvement to her appearance, though (do what she may) *spoil* her face she *never* can; it is too lovely for that. And besides, she forgot to change her dress when she came on to sing the polacca. In general she comes on to sing that as a bride attired in a white satin dress with a wreath of white roses round her head; instead of which she remained in her first dress (likewise very pretty) of blue satin with a little sort of handkerchief at the back of her head. Lablache, Tamburini, and Rubini were also all three in high good voice.

“ The exquisite quartette, *A te o cara*, and the lovely polacca, *Son vergin vezzosa*, were both encored, as was also the splendid duet *Il rival*. After the opera was over, Grisi, Rubini, Lablache, and Tamburini came out and were

loudly applauded. The two last always make a separate bow to our box, which is very amusing to see.

“ We came away immediately after the Opera was over, for the ballet is not worth seeing since La Déesse de la Danse has flown back to Paris again. She appeared for the last time on Saturday, the fourth of this month. We came home at ten minutes to twelve. I was *highly amused and pleased!* We came in while Tamburini was singing his song, which is just before the lovely duet between Grisi and Lablache.”

Eight months later Bellini died, and in his last moments he imagined that he was present at a performance of this opera at the Salle Favart with Grisi singing in the rôle she had made so famous. Giulia Grisi's gifts, like her beauty, were exceptional. She was equally admirable in lyric comedy, lyric tragedy, and lyric melodrama. As Rosina, Semiramide or Ninetta, she united the fire and energy of her aunt Grassini with Pasta's tragic inspiration and nobleness. Her voice was of the finest soprano quality, extending over two octaves. She could reach without an effort to C in alt, whilst her middle notes were particularly full and sweet. Her intonation was exquisitely true and her execution perfect in its finish. She

had all the qualities which make a great actress, and so possessed was she by the characters she played, and so entirely did she enter into their emotions, that she seldom repeated the same situation twice in the same manner.

“A LA SALLE FAVART

J'aperçu une femme. Il me semble d'abord  
La loge lui formant un cadre de son bord,  
Que c'était un tableau de Titian ou Giorgione.

Vous n'avez pas menti, mon maître, voilà bien  
Le marbre grec, doré par l'ambre Italien,  
L'œil de flamme, le tint passionnément pâle,  
Blond comme le soleil sous son voile de hâle.  
Dans sa mate blancheur les noirs sourcils marqués,  
Le nez sévère et droit, la bouche aux coins arqués,  
Les ailes de cheveux s'abattant sur ses tempes,  
Et tous les nobles traits de vos saintes estampes.

Que peuvent tous nos vers pour rendre la beauté ?  
Que peuvent de vains mots sans dessin arrêté,  
Et l'épithète creuse et la rime incolore ?  
Ah, combien je regrette, et comme je déplore  
De ne plus être peintre, en te voyant ainsi  
A ' Mosè ' dans ta loge, O Giulia Grisi."

THÉOPHILE GAUTIER.

At the end of the season of 1840 Grisi went to Milan to see her father, and this being her first

visit to Italy since she had fled in 1833 from Milan, she visited some of the other Italian towns.

It was whilst journeying to Bologna from Florence that her carriage was stopped by brigands and she and her maid were ordered to descend. Their luggage was searched, but finding nothing of value the leader of the brigands politely asked her for her pocket-handkerchief as a souvenir of "La Bellissima Diva." The singer, being only too happy to be let off so easily, handed over her fine cambric pocket-handkerchief with her initials "G.G." worked in one corner, and a fancy decoration of the leaning tower of Pisa in another. They were politely bowed into the carriage and allowed to continue their journey. As Grisi, leaning out of the window smilingly thanked them, the brigands waved their hands and cried out "*a rivederci*" (*au revoir*), a wish that Grisi and her frightened maid by no means echoed.

Ever afterwards when travelling in Italy she had an escort of Carabinieri provided by the authorities, and as she greatly preferred carriage to train she always made her journeys to Florence by road until 1865. The last brigand was caught in that year and sent to Florence tied on a *barrocino*. He passed the gates of the villa where Mario and Grisi were staying, and the two singers went out

into the road to see him. The Captain of the Carabinieri told them that sewn into the lining of the man's long cloak they found a mass of jewellery, earrings, rings and necklaces, that had been taken from all classes of travellers, including peasants.

## CHAPTER VI

“ I wondered as I passed along  
The woods were filled so full of song,  
There was no time for sense of wrong.”

TENNYSON.

WHEN Donizetti was told that Rossini had written the “ Barber of Seville ” in a fortnight, he replied : “ That does not surprise me ; he is so lazy.” Donizetti himself had written “ Don Pasquale ” for Mario in a week.

The opera was produced on the fourth of February at the Italian Opera in Paris, and in the same year in London and Dublin, with Mario, Lablache, Tamburini and Giulia Grisi. In each city it was received most warmly. Donizetti added the well-known song *Com' è gentil* on the very day of the performance, Mario learning it in a few hours. The song added much to the success of the opera.

“ Giulia Grisi was charming,” wrote a critic of the day, “ in the part of Norina ; she sang and acted with the freshness of youth and delighted

the audience with her wrath, and saucy self-willed ways." A few days later Mercadente's opera, "La Vestale," was given at the same theatre, with Grisi, Tamburini and Mario. The latter was superbly dressed in armour woven with gold and "resembled the god of Mars in person." Mario was an indefatigable worker, as is seen by the numerous parts in which he appeared in a few months. In this same year 1843 he sang in Bellini's "Sonnambula" as Elviro, in Mozart's "Don Giovanni" as Ottavio, in Rossini's "Gazza Ladra" as Gianetto, in Bellini's "I Puritani" as Arturo, as Carlo in Donizetti's "Linda di Chamounix," and as Don Ramito in Rossini's "Cenerentola." The parts of Arturo, Elviro and Carlo in particular added greatly to his popularity. At the beginning of 1844, Mario and Grisi with Lablache and Tamburini went again to Ireland, and during that season Mario appeared in further new parts, such as Paolino in Cimarosa's "Il Matrimonio Segreto," Edgardo in Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor," Don Carlos in Costa's "Don Carlos," and Roggiero in Ricci's "Corredo d'Altamura"; besides which in Paris he took over Rubini's *répertoire*, which was a small fortune for him, he said.

When the Czar Nicholas visited England in 1845, he personally engaged Mario to go to St.



Petersburg as soon as his engagements would allow. The Czar loved going about incognito and alone, and Mario was told by Rossini of an absurd incident which befell the composer. It took place in Paris after the Czar's visit to London.

“One day,” said Rossini, “I was busy *chez moi* writing and correcting music. Well, you know I am stout, and always like my clothes loose round my waist when I am working. That afternoon I was sitting as usual when I heard a knock at the door. ‘Who is there?’ said I, and a tall, handsome man appeared. ‘Who are you?’ I asked. ‘Nicholas,’ said he. ‘The Emperor,’ I cried, instantly springing to my feet, and down go my ——” (pointing to his nether garments). “*Tableau! mon cher, tableau!*”

“The Emperor drew back behind the door saying ‘*Grand maître*, I only meant to pay you an impromptu visit.’ Then, after a little pause, he asked, ‘May I come in now?’ The Emperor was intensely amused,” said Rossini, “and could scarcely control his laughter as I showered apologies upon him.”

“I shall never forget Rossini's face when he told me the story,” said Mario, “I am sure he is blushing now in heaven when he thinks of it.”

In 1841 Mario and Grisi sang again in Paris,

and Théophile Gautier in his "Histoire de l'art dramatique en France" writes of the triumph and success of both. Writing of "Beatrice di Tenda," which was given on the eighth of February in that year at the Italian Opera House, he says :—

"The honours of the evening were given to Mario, who daily makes great progress as singer and actor; he was admirable, touching and very dramatic in his romance, *Sofrii, Sofrii tortura* in the scene where, broken by the pangs of torture, he protests before the judges Beatrice di Tenda's innocence. The acquisition of this singer by the Italian Opera is a great loss to the French Opera. A charming physique, a voice with all the freshness of youth and most sympathetic, Mario makes an ideal lover. In the 'Matrimonio Segreto' (Domenico Cimarosa) Lablache was marvellous in his buffoonery in the rôle of Geronimo, and Mademoiselle Grisi dazzled one with her beauty in the simple, almost insignificant, part which she undertook to play; but in 'Semiramide' (Rossini) Mademoiselle Grisi alone recalls Babylon by her brilliantly superb gaze, the majesty of her attitudes and that sovereign expression derived from the certainty of being perfectly beautiful. 'La Semiramide' and 'Norma' are Grisi's

finest parts. She has all the air of a great Babylonian with the power to command, and the majesty needed to represent the widow of Ninus.

“For Grisi’s benefit ‘Norma’ was given, and the moment this beautiful woman appeared, armed with her golden sickle, her brow crowned with vervain, her gaze as if lost in the light of the moon, we know she alone can do this part and make it impossible for others, for Grisi and Norma are one; it is the ideal realised. It seems the irony of fate when one hears a lovely voice or thrilling accents from a distorted mouth or ugly woman, but La Grisi has the rare happiness of combining all that is beautiful in a woman. Few can sit in the golden throne left vacant by Malibran, but if you love the real Italian voice, simple, large, with a happy facility of being true on every note, with equal ease for scales (or runs) like a flute, go and listen to Giulia Grisi! It is not surprising she selected ‘Norma’ for her benefit, and she again takes possession of her favourite rôle. The beautiful Druidess sang and played it splendidly. She rendered that wonderful song *Casta Diva* with a melancholy softness that touches one like the atmosphere of a lovely summer night. She was wonderful in the duet with Adalgisa and the trio that ends the first act, and it was impossible to show greater energy and

more magnificent acting in the duet and violent *finale* of the second act. The audience gave proof on many occasions of their delight by loud applause, and when the black veil was placed on her noble head, the bombardment of flowers and bouquets began. An English lady in a box had carried on to the stage an enormous bouquet of Parma violets about the size of a round dinner table for six. These were Grisi's favourite flowers. At first it was feared the Diva's life was in danger, but it was politely placed to die at her feet. On another occasion after she had sung in 'Semiramide,' an admirer let loose a white dove in charge of a flowered *couronne* from his box, and the bird being frightened at the tumultuous cries, instead of alighting at the great Diva's feet, landed on the head of one of the enthusiastic applauders in the stalls!

For Mario's benefit in that same year (1841) he chose the opera of "Guillaume Tell."

"Mario," continues Théophile Gautier, "surpassed himself in his part, inspired by that divine music. He was pathetic, passionate, full of enthusiasm and sorrow, but keeping always that freshness of ingenuousness that *naïve* flower of sensibility that denotes particularly the character of

his talent, that charming easy voice, expressing, without effort or screams, his ardent, yet always noble passion. The audience was roused to frenzy, and a thrill of pleasure passed through the whole house, as they thundered forth their applause in appreciation of both singer and composer."

In January 1842 Mario gained a fresh triumph in Rossini's "Otello," taking the part of the Moor. Gautier writing of this event says:—

"Mario, by an innovation we approve of and which shows his good taste and artistic talent, appeared in the costume of a Venetian general of the sixteenth century, gold armlets and gauntlets and coat of mail, over which was a damask mantle, as seen painted by Paul Veronese or Giorgione. This change from the ordinary Otello costume is most logical, for Otello, having entered the service of the Venetians, necessarily wore the costume of his rank, though in his own palace he might go back to this Oriental dress of 'Caftans' and embroidery. The first cavatina was sung by the young tenor a little effeminately, at least according to the idea one has of Otello's character, but he certainly conveyed the indolence and voluptuousness of an Oriental and made a wonderful contrast later to his anger and passion. No one can be more

gentle than a Moor when he does not wish to cut off one's head or strangle one. These tigers in repose have moments of extreme languor, so it is not necessary that Otello should at once be seen as a savage beast. Mario sang with much soul and energy the *andante*, *Il cor mio si divide* in the dramatic duet in the second act, and also shewed a vigour one hardly suspected he possessed either in soul or voice, in the tragic and ferocious moments of the play. His success was complete, and he was repeatedly encored and applauded. As for Mademoiselle Grisi as Desdemona, she was beautifully pathetic, sublime, an imperishable type of grace and sadness. It was the first time Mario attempted the part of the Moor, and both artistes seemed created for the opera. We are young now, but when old we shall still say: 'Oh, if you had only heard Mario sing the part of the Venetian Moor!'"

In this same year 1842 Mario and Grisi went to Dublin, where they sang with Tamburini and Lablache under the direction of Julius Benedict. They both became, and always remained, the favourite singers of the music-loving people of Ireland. At the end of their first season, when Grisi was leaving the theatre, the horses were unharnessed and her carriage dragged by a cheering crowd to the hotel. In response to repeated

calls she appeared on the balcony and sang song after song. This farewell was repeated each time Grisi finished her Irish season. Her dramatic rendering of "The Minstrel Boy" especially drove the Irish crazy with delight. The crowds that filled the streets adjoining the hotel were hushed in breathless silence as the clear notes rang out in the night air, and when she came to the lines, "He tore its cords asunder," and "They ne'er shall sound in slavery," the enthusiasm was unbounded, some of the men climbing up to her balcony in their excitement as they shouted for a repetition. Hats were thrown up in the air and wild Irish hurrahs brought all the sleepers to their windows to see that splendid figure standing in the moonlight and singing as few have ever sung before.

It has been said that it is impossible for anyone who never heard Grisi to realise the intense emotion she could awaken in such songs as "The Minstrel Boy" and "Home, sweet home."

The news of his father's death reached Mario on his return from Ireland. He longed intensely to go to his mother and his family in the Cagliari home, which he had not seen since he was a child of twelve; but this he was unable to do, for had he returned to Italy he would have immediately been arrested. He was forced, therefore, to wait for another six years until the amnesty was declared.

## CHAPTER VII

As the hero and heroine of opera, Mario and Grisi formed a matchless and rare combination of vocal genius, dramatic talent and physical beauty. From the time of Mario's first appearance in London in 1839 they had sung together continuously, and their union in 1845 completed the lives of both, and was a romantic fulfilment of their stage career. And from this year onwards for more than a quarter of a century my father sang every year in England. Curiously enough he never sang in Germany, and, as I have already said, he declined all offers to sing in Italy because of his promise to his mother when he went on the stage.

In 1846 Bellini's "I Pirati" was revived at the Théâtre Ventadour, Mario appearing as Gualtiero.

"Last Thursday," writes Gautier, "the revival of 'I Pirati' enabled Mario to make a veritable triumph in the part of Gualtiero. The part has



not been heard since 1832, when it was given at the Italian Opera House. Mario was encored, recalled, and applauded rapturously. It would be difficult to find a more touching and pure voice than that of the young tenor, and he has made enormous progress. However, we never doubted that his future would be a success from the first night of his *début* in 'Robert le Diable.' The horoscope cast in his favour then has been accomplished in every point. Giulia Grisi played Imogene for the first time, and, although it is slightly high for her, never was singer more sure of her voice and of her beauty. The public received her with shouts of joy and enthusiasm. Giulia Grisi in each new rôle she undertakes cannot help being as nervous and troubled about her part as a young student at the Conservatoire at her first *début*. It needs great courage to stand before the fiery circle that listens whilst it criticises the singer. It is to this feeling of nervousness which, despite its repetition, is always new, that great artistes owe their finest successes, because each night they sing for their reputation as if condemned to die. Yes, this brilliant Diya who with one look could cast a whole crowd of Assyrians and a whole college of white-bearded Druids at her feet, fears to appear before you and me, before this motley crowd that is called the public, and those golden notes

actually hesitated and trembled in her lovely throat, which looks as if made of Parian marble. So, on Thursday, this noble and beautiful singer was often seen to contract her eyebrows and wrinkle that great forehead in distress; but all the same, how beautiful she was in her part with that quivering nostril and heaving breast—tender, fiery, desperate! How she loved that pale dream with all the force of her nature; and now what lovely guidance she has left for its future repetition!”

Mario also appeared in Mozart's "Cosi fan Tutti" as Fernando and the following year as Oronte in Verdi's "I Lombardi," as well as in Donizetti's "Anna Bolena," one of Grisi's most famous parts. He also appeared as Enriquez in Donizetti's "Don Gregorio" and in Verdi's "I Due Foscari," which was produced in 1847. He was considered to be very fine as Jacopo Foscari. He again achieved great success in Rossini's "La Donna del Lago" as Uberto, showing in each part great progress in his art, both as a singer and as an actor. It was now that his name became established as one of the greatest lyric artists of his generation.

A terrible tragedy occurred in Paris about this time, the Duchess of Choiseul-Praslin being

murdered by her husband, at whose fine house in the Rue Boissy d'Anglas Mario had often been a guest ; he had often also sung at their well-known *soirées*, at which all the *beau monde* of Paris was to be found. The Duchess of Choiseul-Praslin, who was a daughter of the celebrated Marshal Sebastiani, was in her forty-first year, and was short and stout, a fact of which it was thought the Duke wished to take advantage in her murder. He had all the polite manners of his rank, but he was generally disliked, and Mario had always thought his expression cunning and that he was deceitful, as he never looked anybody fully in the face. Although the Duke had the reputation of being a Don Juan, no particular accusation of infidelity could be brought against him, and he had never given anyone reason to suspect that he disliked his wife. Mario had often remarked, however, that the Duchess seemed nervous and ill at ease when in her husband's presence, and he himself always thought that she probably suspected a truth which society only learnt by her tragic death.

Mario heard that the Duke had clearly planned the murder beforehand, the baldacchino over the Duchess's bed having been so arranged that it would fall upon her when she retired to rest. His idea, apparently, was that, smothered under the

folds of the baldacchino, her corpulence would prevent her freeing herself, and that she would be suffocated. The Duke went to her bedroom to see if his plan had succeeded, but found her still dressed. He then stabbed her at least fourteen times, for the poor lady's body was covered with wounds, and the room showed the terrible struggle she had made for her life. The Duke, foreseeing such a possibility, had cut all the bell-ropes, and as her room was out of hearing of the servants she was completely at his mercy. When he had accomplished his diabolical deed he threw open the window that looked into their garden and placed against it a ladder that he had previously concealed, trying to make it appear that the murderer had come from the outside.

France was on the eve of another revolution, and it was feared that the excitement and horror caused by this crime would increase the attacks already begun against society. When Louis Philippe heard of the murder he at once ordered the Duke's arrest, thus showing that he knew something of his private character, but the story was hushed up as much as possible.

During the arrangements for the trial it suddenly became known that the Duke had poisoned himself. The body was seen at the Conciergerie by a friend

of Mario's who knew the Duke personally. He told him that the Duke was so altered and so shrunk that he hardly recognised him. A year later Mario was crossing London Bridge on a foggy day when he jostled against a man going in the opposite direction; as he turned to apologise the stranger started and exclaimed "Mario!" in a voice of surprise; before Mario could reply the man hurried away into the yellow mist. My father was convinced by the voice and the hasty glimpse he had caught of the stranger's face that he was the Duke de Praslin.

In 1848 Mario became acquainted with Jerome Bonaparte, who had then returned to Paris after thirty-two years' exile. In February of that year the revolution broke out, and on the day of the flight of King Louis Philippe and Queen Marie Amélie, Mario, who chanced to be passing the Tuileries with Grisi's father, Gaetano, saw the Queen pulling Louis Philippe towards a cab whilst the King hung back to take off his hat and shout "Vive la France." The Queen was obviously in a great state of alarm, and one of the bystanders, moved to pity, put his hand upon her shoulder meaning to reassure her that she and the King would not be harmed. But she misunderstood the action and, turning upon him and raising her head with a defiant look, she imperiously forbade

him to touch her or the King. Mario said she might have been Grisi in the "Semiramide" at that moment; there was something so grand in the attitude of this defenceless woman as she tried to protect the King.

Giulia Grisi was terrified by the revolution, although her father, who remembered much worse episodes than those of 1848, laughed at her fears. But they could get no rest either day or night. The howling mob yelled revolutionary songs and called upon all the inhabitants to illuminate their windows on pain of being hung on the nearest lamp-posts, which so alarmed Grisi that she went hastily over to England, where, after some delay, Mario joined her.

Mario had known the unfortunate Archbishop of Paris, and was deeply grieved and shocked when he heard that he had been murdered in the streets whilst attending the dying. The next time Mario was in the French capital Louis Napoleon was Prince President.

It was in this year of revolution throughout Europe that, the amnesty being declared to the Sardinian political exiles, Mario seized the opportunity of going to his mother at Cagliari. He was received with public rejoicings, but despite the entreaties of his mother and his family he never would sing in public. He had made a vow he

would never sing in his native country, and nothing would induce him to break it. His fellow-citizens sent a deputation to beg him to sing at the theatre for the benefit of a charitable institution which was in great need of money. The deputation appealed to Mario's "goodness of heart," begging him to sing "just this once" for so deserving an object. Mario in reply asked them what was the largest sum of money they expected to take at the doors if he were to sing. A good round sum was mentioned, and, taking out his cheque-book, Mario wrote out a draft for double the amount and, handing it to the head of the deputation, he said: "Here, gentlemen, is the sum wanted; please accept it as my subscription, but never trouble me again about singing either in public or private."

Donizetti's "Favorita" was produced in London after Mario's return from Italy. Fernando was destined to become one of Mario's greatest parts both as an actor and as a singer. He chose "La Favorita" as his farewell benefit in 1873, having then sung the part for twenty-five years in England. The famous song, "*Spirito gentil*," which Donizetti took out of another opera of his called "The Duke of Albany," which had been a failure, and added to the last act of "Favorita," especially for Mario, was considered to be the great tenor's finest effort. An eye-witness of the first performance

writes in the "Gossip of a Century" that both Mario and Grisi surpassed themselves in this part. He says :—

"It was a delicious surprise to those who witnessed that passionate awaking of a hitherto latent genius, a dormant spark suddenly kindled and then fanned into a flame, a flame not to be extinguished as long as these two well-matched artistes remained before the public. The 'Favorita' has been splendidly got up, the attendance was full to overflowing, and the two unapproachable artistes, on whose powers the opera depended, rose to the occasion and seemed impelled, whether by the music or the libretto, to throw their whole souls into the performance.

"Not often has a greater enthusiasm been manifested by any audience than when the perfect art of this gifted pair culminated in the intensity of the situation in the last act; indeed nothing could be more moving than the irresistible pathos with which Mario sang the exquisite strains of '*Spirito gentil*,' and the whole house listened in breathless silence."

The "Favorita" became very popular at once, and its special beauties were soon singled out. "*Una vergine*" in the first act, Mario's thrilling



version of the sword scene with the King, the whole of the last act, and Grisi's memorable "*Ah mio Fernando*" were all gems.

"Ah mio Fernando, that was a song divine  
 And Favorita's ecstasy complete,  
 When with a passion that has conquered time  
 The broken sword fell at your noble feet.  
 King of the hearts of all, with folded arms  
 As white-robed monk by Leonora's cell  
 You stand in fancy, while the myriad charms  
 Come with love's music at your magic spell.  
 'Angiol d'amor' was the song you sung  
 In tragic torture of accented pain.  
 Mario, my master, would that we were young  
 To see enchanted women weep again."

Willert Beal tells a story of a performance of "*Favorita*" which had caused Mario the greatest annoyance :—

"In the final act Fernando indignantly spurns the honours awarded him by the King, and, drawing his sword, breaks it across his knee and throws it at the King's feet. The situation is a perilous one, as the action involved may produce an effect contrary to that intended, and by the slightest accident or exaggeration excite the laughter instead of the admiration of an audience. It was always a triumph for Mario. Upon the occasion in question it was made the means of gratifying the most malignant feeling by some 'hidden hand.' The scene was enacted as usual and had

excited the wonted interest up to the moment of the sword being unsheathed, when, upon drawing it from the scabbard, Mario found the sword was broken. He was equal to the emergency, so far as the scene effect was concerned; he changed the action and the words to suit the altered situation, so that the trick played upon him failed in its immediate object, but it completely upset him for the rest of the evening."

This incident, which so easily might have made the whole scene ridiculous, shows Mario's mastery of his art and how he always grasped the artistic situation when he was playing.

The next opera that aroused English enthusiasm was Meyerbeer's "Huguenots," with Mario as Raoul and Grisi as Valentine. The Hon. Sir Spencer Ponsonby Fane has often told me that he will never forget it. "The cast," he wrote, "was a splendid one, including Mario, Grisi and Ronconi. It was a success from the first, but the scene that caused the greatest interest was between Mario and Grisi after the meeting of the Superiors—her rush to the door to prevent his escape, the lovely air '*Tu m'ami*,' and his eventual flight through the window, produced an enthusiasm in the audience such as never before to my mind took place in a theatre."

Mario once said, "I live to sing and to love." This was endorsed by the musical critic of the *Athenaeum*, who wrote: "Mario is the best opera lover the world has ever seen."

His impersonation of Raoul was magnificent; he played with so much colour and passion that the *Times* critic of the day observed: "To see and hear Mario in the 'Huguenots' was to hear singing like Rubini's and to see acting like Edmund Kean's. In a spirited phrase at the end of the second sextet his voice rose, easily leaving the others poised in harmonising *mezza voce*, then rang out like a clarion on the high B with such volume and sweetness as was never heard before."

On one occasion Mario nearly broke his leg in the famous scene when, sword in hand, he leaped through the window. The window-frame was set rather higher than usual, and to his horror Mario saw that there was a big drop on the other side. One of the stage hands tried to catch him, but Mario was heavier than he expected and both fell to the ground, Mario twisting his ankle badly. He had to finish the last act—which is now seldom given—in great pain, and after this accident his exit was altered: Valentine, in trying to hold him back, is dragged across the stage by Raoul, whose eyes are fixed on the bright light seen through the window which, with the tolling of the bell, shows

that the massacre of St. Bartholomew has begun. When Raoul reaches the window he breaks from Valentine's embrace, and as he steps out the curtain falls. The rest is left to the imagination of the audience.

A curious incident, which might have ended seriously, once occurred in the last act of this opera. In order to make the scene more realistic, some Guardsmen were engaged to take the part of Charles IX's troopers. Their orders were, after marching on to the stage, to stop as their commander called out, "Who goes there?" (the men had been taught to understand the equivalent of the command in Italian), and when they heard Raoul's answer, "Huguenots," to point their guns straight at him and fire. This they did with such exact obedience that, instead of aiming above the heads of Raoul and Valentine, they took a deliberate and steady aim at the two unfortunate singers, who were in consequence covered with gunpowder. In spite of the fact that Mario was standing in front of Grisi, her muslin gown was nearly set on fire.

"My goodness, what you do?" cried Mario in his broken English as he fell, but the clash of the orchestra and the cheering of the audience drowned his exclamation. When the curtain was down both singers rushed to the men, saying, "It all



*Marcus Racul*  
*in Les Magiciens*



be fun ; why blow guns at us ? ” The soldiers were greatly surprised, and said they had only obeyed orders when told to fire.

During 1849 Mario appeared as the hero in Auber's "Masaniello," and as Jean, in Meyerbeer's "Prophète." Though he sang the latter part forty-five times he never cared for it, as it was very fatiguing and he thought the music not suited to his voice ; but those who saw him in it said he was splendid. Queen Victoria, writing of this opera in 1850 to the King of the Belgians, says : " We had a concert last night, and go to the Opera very regularly. The ' Prophète ' is quite beautiful and I am sure would delight you. The music in the *scène du couronnement* is, I think, finer than anything in either ' Robert ' or the ' Huguenots,' it is highly dramatic and really very touching. Mario sings and acts it quite in *perfection*. His Raoul in the ' Huguenots ' is also *most beautiful*. He means every word, and I really think his voice is the finest tenor I ever heard and he sings and acts with such intense feeling."

The impression made upon Queen Victoria by my father's performance of Raoul lasted all her life. The last time Her Majesty was in Florence she sent for me, and speaking of my parents said, " I shall never forget the singing of your dear father

and mother. It was beautiful, most beautiful. In the 'Huguenots' your father was superb; there was never anybody like him." This was over forty years after she had heard my father in that part.

Mario was always extremely particular about his costumes for all his parts, which was very unusual with the opera-singers of his time, sparing no pains in hunting up the proper dress from books and pictures. As Jean in the "Prophète" he tried to look as like the pictures of our Lord as was permissible, and having naturally a high forehead he had marked it with grease-paint so as to suggest that the parting of his hair came much lower. On one occasion he was acting with Madame Viardot, who created the part of the Prophet's mother Fides, and was a great actress. After her famous song "Oh, my son!" she took his head in her two hands and pressed a kiss upon his forehead. Mario, looking up, to his horror saw two large moustaches on Madame Viardot's upper lip. In kissing him she had taken a most lifelike impression of his parting of grease-paint! Scarcely able to control his laughter, *sotto voce* Mario told her not to turn round, and she had to get off the stage as best she could with her back to the audience.

In his notice in the *Athenaeum* of the first performance at Covent Garden of "Le



Prophète," July 9, 1849, Mr. Chorley said of Mario :—

“ As Jean of Leyden Signor Mario shares with the original Prophet (M. Roger) the disadvantage of being called to an occupation originally intended for M. Duprez, whose weight of voice and breadth of style were obviously from first to last present with M. Meyerbeer while he was writing. Moreover, like every other artist new to the London cast, Signor Mario has had small time, comparatively, to master and mature what even to a Duprez would have been no piece of mere Italian song-singing or child's play. In some passages he far excels the French Prophet. His *pastorale* in the first act is deliciously sung. The *largo*, before the final hymn of the second act, too, is finely given, and the lyric itself with great animation. It contains, however, one passage of modulation singularly ungrateful, in which no tenor could produce the effect intended by M. Meyerbeer. Signor Mario is most noble, too, and less mannered than M. Roger in the *Baccanale* which closes the opera. In the Cathedral scene his presence is splendid : nothing less than a figure which has walked out from the frame of a Van Eyck or Memling picture. His acting in the great crisis of detection and imposture is as yet less subtle than M. Roger's.

Signor Mario, however, habitually improves in a new part nightly, and already he is a most picturesque and satisfactory representative of the hero—as his success may have assured him.”

A week later Mr. Chorley wrote :—

“Signor Mario now surpasses M. Roger as Jean of Leyden. Were this part thoroughly impersonated in its threefold aspect of Son, Lover and Enthusiast, the contest between tenor and soprano for the palm of interest would be a very equal one. But it is hardly within the chances of representation that both characters should be sustained at the height at which M.M. Scribe and Meyerbeer have poised them. In Signor Mario we must not look for the enthusiastic fanaticism or the mystical reverie of the Prophet—but he gives us the tenderness of the Lover and the repentance of the Son. In regard to the brilliancy demanded by the martial scene in the second act, he still delivers the final chaunt (which is much shortened) with rare beauty of voice. Then, though uninspired in the earlier part of the Cathedral scene—where a thorough possession of the part might and should do much by the dignity of mere demeanour—he throws great agony and remorse into the by-play betwixt himself and Fides—which is a finer piece

of acting than any that we have hitherto seen from him. Lastly, the *Baccanale* at the banquet, which demands a tone of

“ ‘ Wild laughter in the throes of Death ’

to justify mirth in its situation (and this Signor Mario does not command), is nevertheless sung by him with a voluptuous *abandon* which is irresistible.”

In fulfilment of his promise to the Czar, Mario went in 1849 to St. Petersburg, where he received a great ovation and became immensely popular in that music-loving capital.

An amusing episode occurred during his first season in St. Petersburg owing to Mario's love of smoking. Until he was twenty he had touched neither wine nor tobacco, but being jeered at by his brother officers he began to take wine and to smoke, but always remained most temperate with regard to wine, filling up his tumbler, even when it contained the finest claret, with water. In England, where it is not the custom as in France and Italy to mix wine and water, Mario's full glass was often mistaken for an excessively large draught of wine. On the other hand, he became a confirmed smoker, cigars — never a pipe or cigarettes — being quite a passion with him.

In Russia at that time smoking was forbidden in the streets because of the numerous wooden houses, now replaced for the most part by buildings of stone and marble. Regardless of this law Mario went one day for a walk, cigar in mouth, turn-down collar, and his hands thrust deep into the pockets of his fur-lined pelisse, and as usual he went by unfrequented streets where he was little likely to be known. Suddenly, he saw a soldier in front of him stand at attention; there was a jingling of sleigh-bells, and, turning, Mario saw the Czar was coming. Hastily taking the cigar from his lips, he held it so that the smoke should go up his wide sleeve, and keeping that arm down by his side, he raised his fur cap and waited, bare-headed, for the Czar to pass by. But the Czar stopped the sleigh, and, calling Mario to him, began to talk. At first he discussed various stage topics, then he commented on the singer's uncovered throat, expressing surprise that Mario dared take such risks to his lovely voice in such a climate, and seemed scarcely able to believe that it was Mario's invariable practice to expose his throat to all weathers. It was clear that the Emperor thoroughly enjoyed Mario's position and growing uneasiness, and finally he remarked, "Take care, you are burning your sleeve." With crimsoning cheeks Mario produced his cigar. The Czar laughed

right out: "Oh, you thought I did not see you, but I was determined to make you feel warm." Mario confessed his weakness with many apologies, and was given the Imperial permission to smoke when and where he liked.

His incessant smoking never affected his voice, although even in his dressing-room in the theatre and during the *entr'actes* he never was without a cigar. Once he narrowly escaped being caught with a cigar in his mouth on the stage. He was ready dressed for the second act of "Faust," and was talking with friends in his dressing-room when the call boy told him the curtain was up, and Mario rushed on to the stage entirely forgetting his cigar, which was snatched out of his mouth by a scene-shifter before the audience saw him.

To return to Russia—the Italian Opera House at St. Petersburg, which is now their musical Conservatoire, was in those days under the protection of the Imperial Theatres, and belonged to the department of the Minister of the Imperial Household, an office that corresponds to that of our Lord Chamberlain, only with wider powers and functions. The Opera, therefore, was the Czar's private property, and it was he who engaged the artistes, paid the salaries, and settled what plays and operas should be given and upon what

dates, through the Maître de la Cour, who was then Count Alexander de Guedeonow.

The Czar could change any entertainment whenever he pleased even on the day of the performance, and he not unfrequently exercised this power. As society in St. Petersburg in those days consisted exclusively of the Czar and his family, the numerous Grand-Dukes and their families, and all the Court officials and their relations, the Opera was more a Court function than it is now, and the performances as well as the concerts given in the Winter Palace, or in the other palaces of the Imperial family, provided more opportunities of intimate and friendly intercourse between the Court and the singers than would have been possible under ordinary conditions.

Mario became the idol of their worship, and until the last time he sang in Russia the same love for him personally and the same admiration for his genius were shown by all, from the Czar downwards.

In 1851, when Mario was again engaged at St. Petersburg, Giulia Grisi accompanied him, and they were enthusiastically received wherever they went and whatever they sang. In the performance of "Lucrezia Borgia" Grisi surpassed herself, being recalled over twenty times. When the Opera was over the Czar sent for her and gave her a



*Giulia Grisi in 1850  
from a mezzotint after a photograph*





splendid Cashmere shawl worth four thousand roubles (eight hundred pounds). On another occasion the Czar presented her with a tiara of pearls and diamonds, and to Mario he gave a single diamond of great beauty, which, as he never wore any jewellery of any kind, he gave to Grisi; this was lost or stolen in the Imperial Palace itself. At one of the Czar's private *soirées*, Grisi, dressed as usual in a lace and muslin gown, had worn the diamond mounted on a pin in her low-cut bodice without any other ornaments except the tiara. When they were going away the Czar courteously offered his arm to the Diva and walked with her to the end of the gallery where the fur cloaks of both singers were being held ready for them to put on. Here the Czar bade them good-night and, after curtsying to him, Grisi turned to have her big cloak put over her shoulders, then arm in arm with Mario she went on to the entrance. As they were getting into the carriage she chanced to put her hand on the front of her gown and found her diamond was gone. An alarm was given at once, and they retraced their steps nearly to the Imperial apartments, but nothing could be seen of the diamond, and although the Emperor immediately ordered a strict search to be made it never was found.

The Czar was most generous in giving presents to those whom he liked, but he was also very

arbitrary with his singers, and Mario's third engagement in Russia in 1853 ended abruptly on this account. The Czar commanded Mario to sing in a little play, which would have lasted about twenty minutes. The period of the scene was that of Louis XV, and Mario, who, as I have already said, was most careful as to costume, saw that to properly present the part he was called upon to take—that of a young officer—he would have to be clean shaven. He was particularly fond of his moustache and short curly beard, and had worn them long before they became the fashion in England, which was not until after the Crimean war, although he was often jeered at by the boys in the streets and called a "French dog." In Russia, as he never wore anything around his neck he found his beard a great protection from the cold, and to be asked to sacrifice it for a twenty-minute performance seemed to him an unfair demand, and he asked to be released from the part. His request was refused by the Czar, and Mario went to the Palace to remonstrate with the Maître de la Cour. Either intentionally or by chance the Czar made his appearance just as Mario was leaving. Count Alexander de Guedeonow immediately went up to the Czar and spoke to him; what he said Mario did not hear, but the Czar's reply, given in a tone of intense anger, was: "I alone command here."

This fired Mario's hot Sardinian blood, and he went off vowing he would not be commanded by anyone. He had hardly got back to his rooms when he was sent for by the Empress Marie Feodorowna,<sup>1</sup> who was always very friendly to him. He obeyed the command at once. The Empress greeted him the moment he entered her boudoir with—"Dear Monsieur Mario, do for my sake shave, and sing in this play."

"Your Majesty," said Mario, kneeling and kissing the outstretched hand, "I would give you my life, but my beard—impossible."

The Empress was so amused that she laughed heartily, but she could not shake Mario's determination, and after a few more words he went away fearing he would again meet the Czar. Messages went backwards and forwards—commands from the Czar, respectful refusals from the singer. Finally the Czar ordered Mario either to *shave* or to *go*; Mario instantly returned his salary and left Russia. It was said that this was the only occasion on which anyone had dared to disobey or defy the Czar.

In after-years, when Mario was again at St. Petersburg, he heard from a doctor of the Court a true account of the death of this Czar, Nicholas I.

<sup>1</sup> Princess Charlotte of Prussia, who married Nicholas I, and on embracing the Greek faith took the names of Marie Feodorowna.

I give here the story told by Mario, and it was repeated to me myself some years later in Russia by an old member of the Imperial Court.

When the Russian Army was meeting with reverse after reverse in the Crimean war, the Czar sent for his doctor and demanded to know which was the quickest and most painless poison that he knew of, bluntly telling the startled physician that he had resolved to commit suicide ; he further warned the doctor, in the stern manner which was his characteristic, that if he were not obeyed the doctor's life would be worthless. He sharply silenced the man's nervous remonstrances and commanded him to bring the poison. The doctor did not dare to refuse, and a few minutes later brought a small phial containing the poison, which he assured the Czar would deprive anyone of existence in a few minutes. To be sure that he had been obeyed and that the doctor was speaking the truth, the Czar obliged him to remain in the room, warning him that if the poison failed, his life should answer for it.

The Czar took the poison without the least tremor or the movement of a muscle, and although twice told by the doctor, who had his watch in his hand, that there was time to save him by an antidote should he alter his mind, the Czar refused, answering the second entreaty by simply waving

the man away, he by that time being unable to speak. It was given out that the Czar had died from the effects of a severe chill, but those who knew the facts also knew that he had committed suicide rather than face the defeat of his Army. On hearing this story Mario realised the character of the man he had defied.

During the next year or two Mario sang in Meyerbeer's "Robert le Diable," as Lazare in Halévy's "La Juive," as Jamino in Mozart's "Magic Flute," but the greatest success he achieved in any new part was as the Duke in Verdi's "Rigoletto," which he performed in 1853, and which was one of the most popular parts he ever sung. He had a fine full-length figure of himself painted in this rôle, and sent it to a club which had been named after him in St. Petersburg, but at the Czar Alexander's death the club was broken up and the picture removed. The contents of the club were sold and with the proceeds a Mario scholarship was founded in the St. Petersburg Conservatoire.

In spite of all his stage work Mario did not forget his fellow-countrymen. He followed with the keenest interest the ebb and flow of the struggle for independence in Italy, and was in constant communication with those who were sacrificing their lives, their time, and their talent in the patriotic cause, and although he was no longer

able to share personally in their noble efforts, he and Donna Giulia—the name Grisi was known by in Italy—helped the cause by sending all the money they could spare from their actual needs, either to help the refugees, or to equip those who wished to join Garibaldi. From 1847 to 1852 many letters passed between the two singers and Mazzini, Garibaldi, and other patriots. Wherever they were, their thoughts were with those who suffered for Italy, and to whom she owed so much. Daniel Manet, the President of the Venetian Republic, who died in exile and lived in great poverty with his dying daughter in Paris, was one of the many objects of their unceasing help and compassion.

On Mario's return from Russia he heard of the cruel end of his patriot friend, Count Carlo Montanari, who was hanged on March 3, 1853, at Mantua, together with the priest Bartolommeo Grazioni and Tito Speri; all three belonged to a secret revolutionary society, and together with eight of their companions were hanged by the Austrians as an example. These patriots were proud to give their lives for their country. "The Italians know how to die," said an Austrian officer who witnessed the execution. Montanari had been imprisoned for six months before his death—six months "of hunger and thirst."

## CHAPTER VIII

“ In singing you come into sympathy with the truth as you perhaps never do under the preaching of a discourse.”

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

AFTER their brilliant season in St. Petersburg, Mario and Grisi went to Spain, Mario making his *début* at Madrid as Edgardo in Verdi's “ Lucia di Lammermoor.” His splendid acting in this dramatic part roused intense enthusiasm, and he instantly became a popular favourite. The following day the celebrated toreador Cuchares at the beginning of a bull fight called out: “ I shall kill the first bull in honour of the great tenor Mario ! ” A tumult of cheers and applause came from the vast audience.

Although Mario admired the pluck and the splendid appearance of Cuchares,<sup>1</sup> he could not appreciate Spain's popular sport. Like Mazzini, he was a great lover of animals and hated to see anything that was cowardly or cruel.

The spectacle of the bull bravely defending

<sup>1</sup> Cuchares was noted for his good-nature and generosity and for his polished manners. He gave his son Curro a good education, and the young man became a barrister after studying at the University. When his father died, however, he left the Bar and became a bull-fighter.

himself and yet with no possible chance of victory or escape, and the loathsome torture of the poor horses, filled Mario with such repugnance that but for his admiration of Cuchares he would have left the building. His description of the condition to which the horses were reduced is too disgusting to be repeated ; but Cuchares, with whom Mario had become acquainted, and who had asked him particularly to attend this bull fight, showed marvellous coolness. At one moment he stood with his back to the bull just as it was about to charge, and calmly lighted a cigarette, then turning quickly he confronted the infuriated animal, springing lightly aside as it charged. Sticking the banderillos on each side of the already bleeding shoulders, Cuchares jumped over the bull, and, turning to the tribune where Mario was sitting, asked him if he wished the bull to be killed or if he wished to see further sport. Mario hastily asked for the bull's death, amidst the cheers of those around him, who were too courteous, as are all Spaniards, to jeer or show any disapproval of his prompt wish to end the life of the wounded bull.

The *coup de grâce* was quickly given and Cuchares received a jewelled cigar-case from the singer. The toreador was doubly pleased, as the cigar-case had been given to Mario by Queen Isabella.



As he could not smoke cigarettes, the paper affecting his throat, Mario's bills for the Havana cigars he smoked perpetually were considerable, in spite of the number of boxes presented to him by his admirers, both male and female, gifts which sometimes, as in the case of Queen Isabella, included handsome cigar-cases. In a tobacco-loving country like Spain, Mario's devotion to cigars met with universal sympathy, and at Barcelona the audience begged him to smoke upon the stage when he was singing—an invitation he gladly accepted, although an Edgardo, cigar in mouth, listening to the plaint of a Lucia, or a Fernando listening to the rhapsody of a Valentine and puffing a cloud of smoke into the air, did not present a picture of strict historical accuracy. Spain was the first country which publicly gratified Mario's taste for smoking. On the night of his benefit in Madrid the stage was literally covered with cigars of the most expensive brands, and amongst them were many cigar-cases, some of which were thickly mounted with jewels.

Mario's singing, his acting, and his beauty appealed most strongly to the romance-loving Spaniards, and if other engagements had permitted the season would have been extended.

It was in 1854 that Mario and Grisi first went

to New York, where they were eagerly awaited. The *New York Tribune* gives the following account of their arrival:—

“ At a quarter to four, the *Baltic* reached her wharf, when the members of the Musical Fund Society who were present went on board and were introduced by Mr. Hacket to Madame Grisi and Signor Mario; about five o'clock these celebrities were escorted on shore, where carriages were in waiting to convey them to the St. Nicholas Hotel. During the drive from the wharf to the hotel the carriages were followed by about two hundred persons, who kept up a continual cheering. We learnt from Mr. Hacket that Madame Grisi suffered considerably from sea-sickness and was ill during the greater part of the passage. An attempt was made to get up a concert on the steamer, but Madame Grisi was too much indisposed to take part in it. The night before arrival she contributed the sum of fifty dollars (ten pounds) towards the Seamen's Fund. Madame Grisi and Signor Mario occupy a suite of very elegant rooms at St. Nicholas; the apartments, five in number, are on the first floor and front on Broadway and Spring Street.”

Both singers were warmly received, and,

describing their first appearance in New York, the *Sun* of September 4, 1854, says :—

“ Castle Garden was crowded to hear the first notes of Mario and Grisi. Grisi has been a long time getting to this country. Superstitious of the water and being always in demand in England and France, it was only a not-to-be-refused sum that lured her to New York at the age of forty. She is five years younger than her husband, a beautiful statuesque woman, the tragedy queen or Siddons of the lyric stage. Mario is one of the handsomest men ‘on the boards,’ and the owner of a voice which the word delicious alone describes. Of course Grisi played ‘Puritani.’ For her it had been written, and also ‘Norma,’ for since Pasta, for whom it was written, all Normas have to bear comparison with Grisi. Grisi’s voice is now about at its best, yet needs a little husbanding. Its beauty, breadth, majesty and charm demand no musical education to appreciate. Mario differs from all tenors in vocal refinement and distinction and sheer beauty. His style is noble, if not so robust as Salvi’s, but a quality of voice and a delivery more divine than Mario’s is not conceivable.”

Some idea of the impatience with which the

visit of Mario and Grisi was anticipated in the cities of America is given by the following notice in *Dwight's Journal of Music*, of January 6, 1855. The Boston correspondent writes :—

“Grisi and Mario at last ! By the announcement of Mr. Hockel which will be found in our advertising columns, &c., the public will rejoice to learn that the time is actually fixed for the first appearance in our city of these two unrivalled lyric artistes. This is announced for Monday evening the fifteenth instant *in opera*, and not, as has been threatened, in mere concerts, and in our sumptuous new Boston Theatre.”

Washington, however, had the felicity of hearing the two great singers before Boston, and the correspondent of the *Journal of Music* in that city somewhat unkindly emphasises the rivalry between the two centres of culture. He says, writing on January 9, 1855 :—

“Last night we had Grisi and Mario in ‘Norma,’ so *for once* we are before Boston and can ring in your ear for the millionth time, what a bounty is about to enrich you ! Whilst we were standing at the door of the National Theatre, and happening to have the *Journal*, I read to one or two who

were there your comment on the two-dollar price in Boston, and it is rather amusing, for *here* we were charged five dollars for seats in the parquet and first gallery! But there were two other galleries, one for a dollar the other for fifty cents; the dollar gallery was crowded, and the first tier pretty full; the parquet a third full. The aristocracy of wealth went down below, and the aristocracy of sense into the second gallery. Grisi sang with much enthusiasm in the first act, and in that famous ninth scene, in which she is so celebrated, we had a chance to see a piece of the best operatic action which can be seen in the world. All the enthusiasm she ever kindled anywhere was explained with the tone of her '*Fremi tu? perche?*' Her voice rings on and qualifies that awful silence, when within the three, rage, grief, desperation each is rising to blend in the whirlwind of passion which the scene is. The tradition of Grisi's '*Norma*' was indeed verified. It is a great lyrical effort, great throughout, great not merely in single lightning flashes of power and passion, as where she denounces Pollio '*Ah! non tremare o perfido!*' and in the trio that succeeds, where was shown every shade and change of feeling from the mother's tenderness to the sublime rage of the priestess, and greater still, nothing was overdone. The total impression was of the most

classical repose and harmony. If anyone wants to see Mario, let him look at the Christ head on the title-page of Chapman's books, which is the archetypal Christ head. The face is like, even to the way of trimming the beard, which must have been suggested to Mario to complete the resemblance. An English gentleman who sat by me said that it had been a subject of universal remark in London, when he came out in the 'Prophète' with his hair parted in the middle and a devout part to perform. Much of the effect of his singing was in the *voce di testa*, where the tenderness and refinement of his voice made every lady a Miss Coutts, and the gentlemen with wives and ladies very nervous. In scene six, when he said to the distracted virgin, 'Adalgisa, Adalgisa!' it revealed the secret of his success."

"The sumptuous new Boston theatre" referred to in the *Journal* was opened in 1854 under the management of Thomas Berry, the first Italian Opera company to appear there being the one headed by Mario and Grisi, with Arditi as conductor. The first opera given was "I Puritani," on January 15, 1855; performances took place on Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights and at *matinées* on Saturday.

The largest receipts (says the "History of the

Boston Theatre") for a single night in that season of 1855 were taken on January 22, when Grisi and Mario appeared in "Norma." The amount was 4225 dollars. Since those days the Boston theatre has seen many notabilities upon its stage, from grand-opera singers and tragedians to negro minstrels and variety performers, from famous orators and divines to ballet dancers and athletes.

For several months previously to their going to America, Mario had suffered from a curious form of persecution.

Wherever he went he was followed by a Miss Giles, who had conceived a passionate admiration for him. In the opera-houses she would be in the front row of stalls, at concerts she would have a seat as close to the platform as possible, always staring with the same expression of adoring rapture, and watching the tenor's every gesture and movement. She was extremely ugly, and dressed in so fantastic a manner that she attracted attention in any audience. At first both Mario and Grisi regarded this silent adoration as a joke, but after a time this ever-present figure at their performances got upon Grisi's nerves, and she declared that the woman had the evil eye, and that she could not sing when she saw Miss Giles glaring at her.

Every device was used to prevent this persistent,

although silent, admirer from having a front seat, but every device failed and matters were reaching a climax when the American engagement was entered into. When they started for New York both Mario and Grisi thought they were relieved of the nightmare of Miss Giles.

Soon after the *Baltic* left Queenstown she encountered stormy weather, and everybody remained below, with the exception of Mario, who thoroughly enjoyed the spectacle of a rough sea and facing a howling wind. He was walking up and down the deck when he stumbled against a piece of tarpaulin and, vainly struggling to maintain his balance, fell heavily upon it. There was a loud scream, and, raising the tarpaulin, Mario, to his horror, found himself face to face with Miss Giles—in a lilac silk dress!

The presence of this infatuated woman—whom Grisi and Mario had nicknamed “the Skull”—at the performance of every opera in which Mario appeared naturally caused much comment, and one of the New York papers gave the following graphic account of the lady and her appearance:—

“Poor thing! Everybody but Grisi must pity her. There she sits, solitary and alone in her spacious box” (she paid thirty dollars each night for it), “dressed in the costliest of lace and brocades,



perfectly indifferent to everything but Mario. The ladies of the chorus look curiously at her, lorgnettes are levelled towards the place where she sits from all parts of the house, and the bearded gentlemen of the orchestra look wonderingly up at her; but she heeds nobody, and when not looking over the fringe of her splendid fan, or through the parted petals of white camellias of her bouquet, at the object of her burning passion, she sits like a sphinx, a tremendous riddle, which nobody has yet been able to solve, but we have lately had the pleasure of meeting a gentleman recently from London who knew her well, and all her antecedents, from whom we learned the following particulars. Her name is Giles, not Gyles as has been often said; she is a native of Gloucestershire, in England, and has lived some years in London, keeping house in a quiet way, at the West End, and going but little into society, though a constant attendant at the opera and theatre. Her income is but two thousand pounds a year, or ten thousand dollars, which is too small a sum on which to make a show in London. At one time she conceived a passion for Charles Kean, whom she haunted in the same way she now haunts Mario, until happening to meet the latter she transferred her affections, and he has been the idol of her idolatry ever since. What will become

of the poor lady when Mario retires into private life and goes to live on his estate in Italy, unless she should in the meanwhile find some other fascination, it is not easy to conceive. Perhaps some handsome Yankee may succeed in attracting her young affections, and put an end to her unhappy passion. It is said that while Mario was indisposed at the Metropolitan Hotel, she used to call there every morning in her carriage, and when the waiter brought her word that Mario was better, she rewarded the lucky Mercury with a double eagle. The *Musical World* says that a lady, who came over in the same steamer—the *Baltic*—with Grisi and Mario, relates that Mario's affectionate shadow (the hypothetical 'Miss Coutts') followed him on the embarkation and alighted upon the deck of the steamer arrayed in a lilac-coloured silk, with flounces embellished with feather trimming, over the whole of which was worked lace; upon her head was a fragile breath of a bonnet, trimmed with orange blossom."

The effect of the haunting presence of Miss Giles upon my father's and mother's nerves can be easily imagined. There was no escape. She followed them from America to Paris, where she covered both Mario and herself with ridicule.

“One night,” my father said, “I was singing at the Italiens, and for some reason or other I was nervous and out of humour. Before the performance began I peeped into the auditorium through a small hole in the curtain. Oh, terror! My eyes met those of ‘the Skull.’ I lost all patience and went at once to the manager; ‘Monsieur,’ said I, ‘I have just perceived in the front row of the stalls a woman with the head of a skull, a woman who has followed me to Russia and to America and back again. The mere sight of her affects my nerves! If you do not find some way of removing her to-night, I swear it will be impossible for me to sing. I cannot! I cannot sing with that skull’s eyes glaring at me.’

“‘My dear Mario, how can you suggest such a thing,’ replied the manager, ‘and to-night of all nights? The house is sold out, and the Court is expected every moment.’

“‘I would rather break my contract and pay the forfeit,’ I retorted.

“‘Come, come!’ answered the manager, endeavouring to soothe me; ‘now my dear Mario, do be sensible! How can I possibly send away a lady who has paid for her seat and whose behaviour is unexceptionable?’

“But I was not to be soothed. My agitation was too great. ‘That is no concern of

mine,' I answered. 'Either she goes or I do not sing.'

"The perplexity into which my ultimatum plunged the helpless director of the Italiens may be imagined. I was sorry to cause him this trouble, but I could not help myself. However, a few minutes later he came to me and with a great air of satisfaction told me he had succeeded in removing my 'nightmare.' It was with a feeling of intense relief that I went upon the stage.

"The opera was 'I Puritani,' the band had played the opening bars of my aria, I attacked the first notes, when suddenly from a box overlooking the stage a shower of rose-leaves fell upon me. Every glass in the house was instantly levelled upon the box; all that could be seen were fingers hastily plucking leaves from a bouquet of roses and casting them upon my head. The shower continued, suppressed laughter was heard here and there, and as the fingers continued to pluck the roses feverishly to pieces and cast them down as one throws crumbs to birds, the merriment became general; the laughter drowned my voice.

"Hoping to intimidate the rose-scatterer, I cast a glance of rage and fury at the box, and lo! I saw 'the Skull!' It required all my strength of mind to prevent an utter break-down. The

remainder of the evening was anguish, and I sang atrociously. The director, it appears, had persuaded Miss Giles to leave her place in the stalls on the plea that a mistake had been made, and that her seat was already taken. He gave her as compensation one of the upper stage boxes, trusting that there she would be hidden from my sight. The lady, however, seized the opportunity of tearing her bouquet to pieces and showering them on my unlucky head."

A few days later Miss Giles was severely burnt by the upsetting of a lamp. Despite all the annoyance she had caused him, Mario called to inquire when he heard of the accident, and left his card. The poor woman succumbed to her injuries. She was found with her hands clasped over her heart, where she had placed the visiting-card with "Mario de Candia" inscribed upon it.

Théophile Gautier again writes of Mario's appearance in 1854 in Rossini's "Barbiere":—

"Mario seems created expressly for the part of Almaviva. Under the disguise of Lindoro, the music master and the inebriate soldier, one feels he is always '*le grand seigneur*,' a man of blue blood, gentlemanly even in his amorous pranks and frolic. The charming tenor gives the exact

personage, the race, the figure, the voice. Beaumarchais and Rossini never could have dreamt of a more complete Almaviva." Again he says that Mario as the Moor in "Otello" that year created as usual an immense success. "His acting was splendid, his anxious suspicions, his furious jealousy, the savage outbursts of this black African revealed the first-class tragedian. Grace more than energy has always seemed to belong to Mario, but this time he knew how to be violent and terrible. He also sang his part splendidly and the duet at the end of the second act caused tumultuous applause."

Mario's impersonation of Manrico in Verdi's "Il Trovatore" in 1856, when it was first produced in Paris, again brought him a great triumph; and it was classed among his most popular parts.

Mario had become a universal favourite, and the *Moniteur Universel* that year gives amusing sketches of the fascination the great artist exercised over all who heard and saw him. It says:—

"The name of Mario on the boards is of such importance for the evening's receipts, that, except as an absolute necessity, nobody could advise the director to replace it by any other. Three-quarters of the public, women especially, would rather see Mario than hear any other tenor. The

less he is in good voice the more furiously he is applauded, and the more do the cajoling, caressing and flattering increase. The audience make signs to him not to take so much pains in singing, they implore him to take the greatest care of his precious throat and his person, which he ought to envelop in cotton-wool. On the least suspicion of a cold, boxes of sugared mallow and liquorice are handed to him from all sides with cries of ‘Rash artist, waste not yourself in this way! What is the piece to us? What do we care for the music? *Spare yourself*; that is the real essential. Even if you pass over a duet, a trio, or finale, *parbleu*, what does it matter? If you sing *one* note we esteem ourselves your debtors. If you even do not sing at all, we should be thankful to you for having shown yourself on the stage.’”

The next year (1857) Verdi’s “Traviata” achieved, if possible, an even greater success than “Il Trovatore,” and Mario’s Alfredo in that sad opera roused the house to overwhelming applause. The other artists on that occasion were Made-moiselle Piccolomini and Graziani.

## CHAPTER IX

MAZZINI and other well-known Italian patriots always found a kindly welcome and a resting-place in Mario's houses both in London and Paris. In his letters to Lamberti<sup>1</sup> and others, Mazzini says that thanks to the friendship of Mario he has a home in Paris, and frequently speaks of his sincere affection for the singer and for the "nobile, intelligente, bellissima Giulia." Writing on May 9, 1845, shortly after their union, he says, "Mario and G. (Giulia) are very happy together."

Although in exile, every movement of the patriots was watched closely by Italian spies. So skilfully was the espionage arranged that their letters, especially Mazzini's, were intercepted, copied, re-sealed and sent on to their destination, the information thus obtained being transmitted to the various Governments in Italy. The fact that the Sardinian Government possessed knowledge of a plan of Mazzini's to bring about a rising was made evident by a series of arrests. At first

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere inedite di Mazzini.*



treachery in their ranks was feared by the patriots, but, in that mysterious manner in which news was conveyed, even from the Council Chamber of the Palace at Turin, in those days, the patriots learnt of the espionage. Mario and his man-servant aided them in outwitting the spies. Mario received the letters, and his servant either sent them or, in cases of great danger, took them to those to whom they were addressed. A servant's handwriting on an envelope was not likely to be suspected.

"I have sent you letters by Mario's servant," says Mazzini to Lamberti. "If mislaid, or you do not receive them, go to Rue d'Astorg and ask for them"; and again: "Yesterday I sent you by Mario's man-servant letters to Bixio,<sup>1</sup> for Pelosi and Boni." In a letter from London dated May 23, 1846, Mazzini says: "I have been invited by Mario to stay with him. Does it not seem to you that I am getting on well? Write to Collino, or inform him in some way, that he must present himself to Persiani, the husband of the singer, at Madrid, and ask him to give what Mario has directed him to pay you." In another letter, dated May 8, 1847, he says: "On June 11 we

<sup>1</sup> Alessandro Bixio, a remarkable man, was the brother of Nino Bixio, famous as the aide-de-camp and faithful follower of Garibaldi. Mazzini's mother, always known as La Madre, was an intimate friend of the Bixios' mother. The family was Genoese.

shall have a concert, which I am organising. Mario, La Grisi, Salvi and Alboni—emancipated as they are now from the tyranny of the old theatre—will sing for me. *Perdio*, it will at least teach us art and how to make money for our cause.” On another occasion Mazzini sends a report of a meeting that took place before he started for the revolution in Rome. Of this report he wished a large number of copies to be printed, and amongst the names of those to whom he wished copies to be sent for distribution is Mario’s—“Una quinta a Mario che è membro” (a fifth to Mario who is a member)—which shows that the singer was actively working in Mazzini’s propaganda. Indeed, from the constant references to my father in the great patriot’s letters it is abundantly clear that, unknown to the world at large, my father worked unceasingly for the great cause of the unification of Italy.

In the forties Mario lived in the Rue d’Astorg, but at the time when he bought the Villa Salviati in Florence he had a flat in the Rue la Pérouse. Shortly after the purchase of the Villa Salviati he decided to build a house for himself in Paris, and having bought a plot of land in the Rue des Bassins, which ran from the then Avenue l’Impératrice, now the Bois de Boulogne, he built a charming house in the French style, and during its erection

he and Grisi lived at a house they hired in the Rue Pamquet. Mario used to say that builders should follow their country's style of architecture, and he thought that English houses in France, or Italian villas in England, were not only incongruous, but domestically unsuitable. The new house, No. 19 Rue des Bassins, was therefore built in the French style.

Mario and Grisi were both fond of Paris, where they had numerous friends. It was soon after they had established themselves in their new home, in 1863, that one day, whilst taking her usual long walk in the Bois with her children and their nurses, Grisi met the Czar Alexander.

"Are these your little grisettes?" the Emperor asked.

"No, Sire, they are my marionettes," was the prompt reply.

Hume, the well-known medium, was in Paris at this time, and among the many houses at which he held his *séances* was Mario's. These *séances* took place in the drawing-room, a room on the ground floor with high French windows opening into a small garden. On one occasion—it was a summer evening—Hume caused the company much alarm and wonder. He apparently threw himself into a trance, and then his body, quite stiff and rigid, rose from the ground and floated out of one of

the windows and came back through another. I believe he did the same thing at a house in England.

Grisi delighted in going to see her old master, Rossini, and in taking her daughters with her. The old composer was equally delighted in receiving the visits of his famous pupil, and always asked her to sing some of his songs, or airs from his operas. On one of these visits, when Rossini was playing the "Stabat Mater" and a cold prevented Grisi singing except under her breath, one of her little listeners offered to sing the "*Inflammatuſ*," and promptly sang it through, with all the vigour she could put into her small soprano voice, in imitation of her mother, whom she had heard studying the air at home. Rossini was delighted and thanked her quite seriously; then adding, "Je paye toujours mes artistes," he left the room and came back with a newly coined fifty-centime piece, which he handed to the child with an air as if it were a hundred-pound bank-note. He also gave her a photograph, on the back of which he wrote, "Offert à ma vaillante interprète Cecilia de Candia. G. Rossini, 4th Mai, 1867." (I have the photograph still, but I cannot remember what I did with the money.) Apart from these frequent visits, Grisi made a point of attending her old master's Saturday receptions, when he kept her

at his side, invariably treating her as the guest of greatest honour.

Rossini was born in 1792 at Pesaro, his father being a trumpeter and his mother a singer. When he was only twelve he showed signs of musical genius and began to compose, his first opera being produced in Venice in 1810, when he was only eighteen. Rossini was credited with being the first composer to develop, if he was not the actual originator of, the *crescendo*, an effect in orchestration rarely if ever attempted by any of his predecessors. He wrote the "Barbieri di Siviglia" in fourteen days, and he used to relate that he wrote the prison scene in "La Gazza Ladra" in the back shop of a music publisher while the copyists were waiting. The well-known prayer in "Mosè" was jotted down at a crowded party in about an hour, and sent off to the theatre to be tried. Madame Rossini was a handsome but hard-featured woman, extremely passionate and impulsive, and devoted to "*le grand Maître*," as she always called her husband. She was very fond of Madame Grisi and her children, and gave the latter *bons-bons* and sweets, which was a great condescension on her part. Her bad temper and her oddities made her the subject of many stories. She had an extraordinary devotion for her dog, for whose benefits he spent large sums of money, although in other matters she had the

reputation of being mean and close-fisted. She hired a *bonne* who, with frilled cap and long streamers, had to take the dog out walking in the Bois de Boulogne, and when the animal grew too old to walk alone he was held up by a band and leading-strings like a toddling baby. A well turned-out brougham, with a large soft cushion for the dog to lie upon, would drive it to and from the Bois for its daily walk.

One day the well-known Horace Vernet was painting Madame Rossini as Herodias in his famous picture *Holofernes*, now, I believe, in the Louvre. She took offence at some trifle: immediately there was a sharp outburst of temper, and a little later, when the painter went to get something in his garden, she flung the lay figure out of the window on the top of him.

Vernet thought it was his sitter herself, and as he scrambled to his feet he said: "Ah, la malheureuse, c'est tuée!" "Imbécile," came a loud voice from above, "croyez-vous que je me tuerais pour vous?"

It was a great delight to Madame Grisi whenever her little ones were admired. "Children, dears," she used to say, "study anything that is pretty and good, be it in song or deed"; and when they shouted or screamed in the nursery she often told them that it would be better to do a scale or

a trill instead, so as to accustom their ears to harmony. She was strongly opposed to their attempting anything in dancing or singing that they could not do easily and naturally. When they were singing exercises they had to look in a mirror to see that they did not make grimaces, a thing Grisi had a horror of—both she and Mario were noted for the beauty of their expression when singing. The children had dancing lessons both in Paris and London, and Grisi always used to be present, noting at once any clumsiness or ugly movements. They were taught to dance like a real *ballerina* in order to learn to be light and graceful.

In Judith Gautier's interesting memoirs, called "Le Second Rang du Collier," there is an amusing and graphic account of a dinner-party given by Mario and Grisi in 1862 at which she was present. I will translate as nearly as possible her own words:—

"We dined with the illustrious Giulia Grisi, my mother's cousin. My mother, who cared little at other times how we looked, was on these occasions very particular, and used to dress us and do our hair herself. My sister and myself would laugh at our appearance . . . but our cousins were so *chic*. When we arrived at Giulia's hôtel—rather early, so as to see them before the arrival of their other guests—we heard the piano in the drawing-room

as we entered. The door into the vestibule was half open, and we glided in without being seen. Giulia and Mario were standing at the piano *déchiffrant* a duet, which Alary, composer and pianist, was accompanying. The scene was original. These great artists, whose marvellous voices are still arousing enthusiasm all over Europe, did not seem to read at first sight very easily! Alary was beating time with his foot, and to indicate the melody was singing in a loud and very flat voice, but the singers preferred to play it themselves, so each one with one finger was strumming out the tune over the hands of the pianist, producing an indescribable confusion, through which occasional magnificent notes were heard, not *always* when wanted. With difficulty I controlled a loud laugh, and my mother announced our presence by crying out 'Bravo!' Alary hastily twisted round on the music-stool, then got up—tall, thin, with a small fair beard, his long hair entangled in the string of his eyeglasses. Then the harmonious Italian language was heard in the exchange of most cordial greetings.

"Giulia Grisi is still beautiful—she does not seem to allow time to overcome her. Perhaps now she is not quite the perfect statue that inspired my father to write an enthusiastic hymn to Beauty when, for the first time, he saw her at the Salle



Favart, during the representation of 'Moses,' and wished he had not abandoned the paint-brush for the pen. The Diva is a little stout, her features have fattened, and the destructive finger of time has drawn the corners of her mouth; but the whole is noble and superb. The pose of the head, the warm colouring, the soft blue eyes under the heavy bands of waving black hair, have still an extreme charm. Mario, also, is a type of remarkable beauty, a favourite with dowagers and absolutely fatal to young hearts. This dominion he does not renounce, but still holds it with a graceful hand. Grand seigneur, Comte de C., and officer of the Chasseurs Sardes, a *coup de tête* flung him from their ranks, and pushed him towards an artistic career, in which he found glory. He has none of the customary conceit of tenors, and shows supreme distinction. With his sparse beard that seemed never to have been cut, his lightly curling hair, and his beautiful dark eyes, so soft under their long fringe of eyelashes, he reminds me of Raphael Sanzio. When I found it possible I took him apart, as I had a secret to tell him. A student of Madame Liotard's institute, where we go sometimes as daily pupils, was in love with the illustrious singer and wanted him to write a few words on a photograph of himself that she had bought.

“‘Do you know,’ I said, ‘she saw you *aux Italiens* in the rôle of “Almaviva” and found you so beautiful that she thinks only of you, and keeps your picture in her pocket to look at all day!’

“Mario was interested in my story, his lips broke into a smile. ‘Is she pretty, your friend?’

“‘Oh yes! tall and elegant and at least twenty years old. She wears a big skirt like this . . . a real grown-up lady; I do not know why she is still a student.’

“‘You have that photograph?’

“‘Of course! She made me swear at least ten times that I would bring it to you.’

“With a side glance at Giulia, who was not paying attention to him, Mario said, ‘Go up and see the little ones, and afterwards go to my library; I will write these few words you want.’

“The house, a *hôtel* that they rented furnished, is very large and comfortable, but rather commonplace. It was like an English house inside, and on the second floor was the nursery, where the children were very much at home, under the close supervision of governess and English nurse. The three girls ran to meet us with cries and laughter. They are charming, with their hair curling down their backs, and their fresh white frocks, big sashes with long ends as their only ornaments. Rita, very brown and very white . . . with marked

eyebrows is already grown up, but the other two, the gentle, timid Cecilia, and the deliciously saucy Clelia, are still quite small. Giulia in her magnificent autumn, near the age when one may be a grandmother, has still quite a young nest. The fourth and last girl, Maria, when not yet three years old, was brutally snatched away by death, not so very long ago, and that is why the sashes of the three little sisters are black. The poem of 'Emaux et Camées' called 'Les joujoux de la mort' ('The playthings of death') begins with these verses :—

“ ‘ La petite Marie est morte  
 Et son cercueil est si peu long  
 Qu'il tient sous le bras qui l'emporte  
 Comme un étui de violon.’

These verses were inspired by a tomb that was carved as a cradle.

“ I heard Mario singing as he mounted the stairs, and I hastened to meet him in his study. This room had more character than the rest of the house. There was a big bookcase, the lower part of which turned into a table, surrounded by statuettes and covered with *bibelots*. The numerous books were richly bound, for the Comte de C. was a book-lover and took great care of his library, but the wreaths, palms, and laurel-branches in gold and in silver which hung here and there, trophies of

triumphs gathered from every corner of the world, were a reminder of what the illustrious singer owed to his art, and showed that he had not as much time as he would have wished to turn the leaves of his books.

“ ‘ Give me the photograph.’ I took it out of my pocket and released it from its two envelopes. ‘ What a beautiful man,’ said Mario, laughingly examining his image. ‘ I am not surprised that he still turns the heads of the schoolgirls.’ He put on his eyeglasses and, sitting down, wrote a few words on the back of the card, sighing ‘ Ah ! pauvre ’ . . .

“ While he was drying the writing with *poudre d’or* dust his manservant came in. ‘ Monsieur,’ said he, ‘ there is a lady downstairs who wishes to see monsieur for a minute.’

“ ‘ What is her name ? ’

“ ‘ Monsieur does not know her. She says she has taken a long journey to obtain an interview of a few moments, and begs monsieur to grant it.’

“ ‘ Is she young, or at least good-looking ? ’

“ ‘ Her *tournure* is good, but the lady hides her face under a thick veil.’

“ ‘ A bad sign,’ said Mario.

“ ‘ However, before going downstairs, Mario approached the looking-glass and arranged his

hair. Standing in the vestibule was a woman, slight and tall, her head covered with a black veil. She watched the approach of the handsome singer, clasping her hands in ecstasy. When he reached the lowest step, the unknown lady fell upon her knees, raised her arms towards the sky, and intoned in a grave and vibrating voice the '*Miserere*' of the '*Trovatore*.' Mario stopped, and tried to interrupt the singer, but quickly recognising the voice, cried out with annoyance: 'Now, then, mad one, have done with this stupidity.' A burst of hearty laughter, long suppressed, was his answer, and La Borghi-Mano, tossing away her veil, threw her arms round his neck. 'You were taken in! You were taken in!' she cried. 'You thought I was an *amoureuse*.'

"Mario would not admit it: on the contrary, he pretended that he guessed at once who she was, and that he made her pose.

"In the drawing-room the guests are now assembled and talk in groups, some sitting, some standing. They are not there by invitation, the house is hospitable and the table lengthens indefinitely. Numerous Italian singers, young, ambitious or aspiring, are satellites of the great artistes, many living in their atmosphere, attracting to themselves some of its brightness and basking in its rays. Many well-known people, famous

even in those days, are intimate friends of the two artistes, and form round them a small court. That evening I saw the handsome black beard of Gaetano Braga, the exquisite 'cellist, who is also a composer. His three-act opera was being given at the Italiens—'Marghélite la Mendicante'—also his 'Sérénade,' for voices, with 'cello and piano accompaniment, which had a *furore*.

"We joined Giulia Grisi in her little drawing-room. She was sitting on the sofa caressing her little ones, who had already dined, and had come to say 'good-night' before going to bed. Everyone made a great fuss about them to please the devoted mother, but she was jealous and would not allow them to be embraced. 'It's horrible,' she cried; 'I do not understand how anyone can allow their children to be kissed, especially by men . . . their skin so delicate, so tender, so fresh! . . . they are flowers and they wither . . . I do not wish it.' I agreed with her heartily . . . every mother ought to be like Giulia. Those around her rebelled, however; but, while maintaining her beautiful placid smile, she did not change her resolution. My admiration of her grew deeper, the calm gentleness of her manner, her noble and simple movements, her penetrating voice, those long meditative silences when her

glistening eyes seemed to deepen—she interested me profoundly. . . . My father then arrived—he is *directeur* of the *Moniteur*, and had just finished his *feuilleton* for Sunday. Evidently it was for him that they were waiting, as the doors between the drawing-room and dining-room were opened at once and dinner was announced.”

The winter of 1868 was very severe and there was much sleighing in the Bois de Boulogne, to the great delight of Grisi and her girls. The Emperor and Empress used frequently to stop in their drive and take the little ones in their sledge. It was the last winter the singers spent in Paris, for in May, 1869, the pretty hôtel in the Rue des Bassins was sold to a Russian princess. During Mario and Grisi's occupancy it was only let twice, and both times to Adelina Patti.

Paris had a double hold upon Mario and Grisi, because in the cemetery of Père la Chaise lay the remains of their beloved little ones, Giulia, Angiolina and Bella Maria. It was in Paris that they had the grief of losing the first two named of their children within a few weeks of one another. Shortly afterwards the baby of a few months old was taken ill, and the mother was beside herself with the fear that she would lose it as well as the others. One night on her return from the Opera,

finding its condition serious, Grisi frantically caught the baby to her breast and dashed out of the house without hat or cloak, feeling only that if she could reach England the baby's life would be saved. Mario, who was in despair, followed her and tried to stop her, but she utterly refused to listen to him or to her friends, and persisted in starting at once. As she stood on the deck of the steamer with her baby in her arms and saw the white cliffs of England she was convinced that the child would be saved.

On landing at Dover she rushed to the Lord Warden Hotel—not the present fine structure—where she knew the kind-hearted landlady, who relieved the distracted mother of her burden and spoke words of comfort in answer to her agonised appeal, "Save her! Save her!" Between them the almost lifeless baby was put in a hot bath; her tiny body was soon violently shaken by whooping-cough, the illness that had carried off her sisters. Grisi was in despair, but the kind landlady assured her that all was right. After staying two days and being convinced of the child's safety, Grisi left her in the landlady's care and returned to Paris, where her sudden flight to England had caused the greatest consternation at the Opera.

On another occasion, a few years later, the same child owed her life to the loving devotion



of her mother. The two singers were touring in England when the little girl, who, with a baby sister, had been left at Plymouth, became seriously ill; indeed she was supposed to be dead, and was laid out and covered over. When the news of the child's danger reached Madame Grisi, she hurried at once to Plymouth and sent for Doctor Isabell, who was considered particularly good for children. To all appearance the child was dead, and Doctor Isabell feared he could do nothing; but seeing that Grisi was nearly mad with grief, in order to soothe her he tried to reanimate the little girl. Hot friction was applied, and it is said a whole bottle of brandy was poured down her throat. There was a slight pulsation behind one of the ears and the doctor then knew that life was not extinct. Grisi's gratitude was unbounded; there and then she took from her finger a valuable ring, the gift of a Rajah, a large oval-shaped ruby with the reclining figure of a woman carved upon it, and gave it to the doctor. The child whom she saw again restored to her is the writer of these memoirs.

When Mario and Grisi were singing in London they always took a house in the country within easy driving distance of Covent Garden, for the sake of quiet and for the children's health. For several years they occupied a large house called Mulgrave House, which stood in a park on the

banks of the Thames next to Ranelagh House, now the Ranelagh Club. Then they had Fairfax House at Putney, a fine old oak-panelled mansion, named after Cromwell's famous general, to whom it originally belonged. They also lived at Gothic Lodge, Clapham Park, and at Arlington House, Turnham Green. None of these houses, with perhaps the exception of the first, is now in the country, the pleasant fields with which they were formerly surrounded being entirely covered by suburbs. In those days there was nothing in front of Arlington House except Turnham Green, with its picturesque old church. On the right was Chiswick Park, where the then Prince and Princess of Wales gave garden parties. On the left there were a few straggling country cottages, and here and there a tiny village shop. All this beauty and quiet have vanished and a small town has taken their place.

Willert Beale, who was an old friend, and one of the singers' impresarios, gives a delightful picture of the happy life led by Mario and Grisi in their English home. "Would you see them," he says, "as I can in memory in the full enjoyment of domestic happiness? Come with me and we will call upon them at Mulgrave House, Fulham, one of their most favourite places of abode. It is a hot day in the middle of June, the sun pours down its fierce rays from a cloudless sky, the

trees are in full leaf, and the pleasant tepid air is fragrant with the perfume of sweetest flowers. On our way to Fulham we see Hyde Park swarming with fashionable life. Could we detect the subject of the buzz of conversation among the moving crowd of *flaneurs*, it would probably prove to be Grisi and Mario at the Italian Opera the night before, for they are the talk of London, having just appeared in the 'Huguenots.' It is past midday when we reach Mulgrave House. The door is opened by an Italian servant—Martino—who receives us with a broad grin of welcome and says that the Signora is in the garden, but that the Signore has not yet come down to breakfast. We enter without further inquiry, and passing through the dining-room, from which daylight is carefully excluded by closely drawn sun-blinds, we find Donna Giulia seated on the lawn under a spreading tree, watching the children play around her. She wears a prodigiously large garden hat, which by no stretch of politeness can be called becoming, and a snow-white summer costume, which certainly displays her raven-black hair and Southern complexion to more advantage than the hat. She must know that nothing can impair the beauty of her expressive face, or surely she would never put on such a head-gear. Were you or I ungallant enough to express such an opinion, it would be

taken very good-naturedly, and we should be told with a kindly shrug of the shoulders that she never dressed for show, but always for comfort and convenience. We are received with radiant smiles, and I am certain you will never forget those laughter-loving eyes that beam upon you from under the far-reaching brim of the ugly hat. 'Did you see Mario as you came through the house?' asks Donna Giulia, when the first words of greeting are over; we reply in the negative, and say that we believe he has not yet breakfasted. 'It will be cold,' she exclaims, and making a hurried excuse she runs away from us across the lawn to go and see that the breakfast is properly attended to. I introduce you to the children and their governess, and we are invited to take part in a game at *La Grâce*, in which we both distinguish ourselves, but each in a different way. You are declared an expert at the game, while I am laughed at as a decided failure. Presently Donna Giulia returns, saying Mario will be with us in a few minutes. She has half a dozen of those small red account-books in her hand, and, placing them on a garden seat, explains to us that she has brought them from the kitchen and that they are her weekly household accounts, which she has to examine and correct during the day. A prosaic duty for 'Valentina' of the 'Huguenots'!

“Mario at length comes on to the lawn, of course smoking a cigar; I never knew him without one, and have seen him take a sponge bath with a lighted cigar in his mouth while holding an enormous sponge with both hands over his head. He always bought the very best of cigars to be obtained, but would put up with any kind rather than be deprived of his favourite luxury. ‘How-do-you-do, will-you-smoke?’ he slowly exclaims, in very broken English, which he will continue to try and speak out of compliment to you unless you happen to be proficient in French and Italian, saluting us courteously and offering his cigar-case. He is most plainly dressed—a slouch hat, loose shirt, necktie, shooting jacket and trousers, completing his attire. He is, nevertheless, one of the most picturesque figures you ever saw; his skin, tawny with the sun, long dark eyelashes, thin black pointed beard, and exceptionally handsome features, forming an *ensemble* as effective as any painter could dream of. He invites us to stay to lunch, and the invitation is repeated by Donna Giulia, but as you seem to think we have already exceeded the limits of a morning call, we decline, and assure them we must return to town. Friends were received by Grisi and Mario with true hospitality, frankly and without ceremony. They never denied themselves to those who had once had

the *entrée* to their house, except on days when they had to sing in the evening. Mulgrave House was not accessible to all comers; it was beset by visitors, to some of whom it puzzled the servants to refuse admittance. The strangers that came were numberless; they were of all nationalities and of all classes, and made every possible excuse for calling. Some were wealthy and claimed the right of placing Mulgrave House on their visiting list by reason of their position in society; others were poor and sought relief there which they failed to find elsewhere. And of these latter a deserving case never went from the door empty-handed. The amount of money thus disbursed by Grisi and Mario must have been immense, although it was never recorded, being generally given with the understanding that their names should not be published. I say from personal knowledge of facts at different times when they were under engagement to me, I have distributed for them in the aggregate a large sum, made up of donations varying from one to a hundred pounds, the recipients frequently being perfect strangers to the donors. I never knew of any application for assistance being made to them in vain, and can call to mind many instances in which the relief afforded by them was spontaneous and of a nature truly princely."

Lord Redesdale, who when quite a young man was a constant visitor at the singers' house, remembers such an act of generosity. He was at Mulgrave House one day when an aged Italian doctor, called Beggi, brought an old manuscript to Mario, who was constantly buying such things, as well as bric-a-brac. "Ah, Beggi, what is this?" said Mario, as he took the paper. The doctor described the manuscript and mentioned its value. Mario was greatly interested and looked it carefully over. "How much do you ask for it?" "Twenty pounds," answered the doctor. "*Va bene,*" said Mario. "Go to my study, and in the left-hand drawer of the writing-table you will find some bank-notes; take the twenty pounds from them." Off went Doctor Beggi, and then, turning to Lord Redesdale, Mario said, "It is not worth a pound, but poor old Beggi is so badly off that I must pretend it is genuine for his sake so that he may have the money." One such unfortunate exile would hardly be gone before another would come with an almost similar appeal, and he also would obtain from the large-hearted singer a round sum for some trifle, Mario thinking it the best way to give help to the owner.

It was at Mulgrave House that Mazzini and other Italian patriots used to assemble. Among them may be mentioned Luigi and Rafaello

Settembrini, Panizzi, Castro Mediano, and Baron Carlo Poerio. Sigismondo Castro Mediano, Duke of Marciano, had suffered eleven years' imprisonment for his political opinions in the Neapolitan gaols, chained night and day to some miscreant from the slums. When he died in 1895 he ordered the red shirt, which was the Neapolitan convict dress, and his prison chains to be placed upon his coffin as its only decoration. Carlo Poerio also suffered seven years' imprisonment, chained to a common malefactor, for the love of his country. The history of the sufferings of the Italian patriots is inexhaustible. It may interest my readers to hear how the brave action of Rafaello Settembrini enabled those whose names I have mentioned above, and others, to come to England in 1859.

Luigi Settembrini was among five hundred other patriots who were confined in chains near Naples, in a convict prison. Twice before he had been torn from his wife and children and flung into prison for advocating the freedom of his country, and twice had he been liberated owing to the urgent appeals of Mr. Gladstone and the English Government. In 1851 he was again arrested, and this time, together with S. Faucitano and Filippo Agresti, was sentenced to death; but after three days of mental and bodily torture, chained



together in the condemned cell, they were reprieved through the intervention of the British Government, and sent to lifelong imprisonment in the galleys. Eight years later, King Ferdinand, weary of the remonstrances and the attacks of England's great statesman—remonstrances and attacks which attracted the attention of the whole of Europe to the hideous tyranny of the Neapolitan Government—decided to liberate sixty-six of the most noted among the patriots and banish them to America. An arrangement was made with an American captain, who took the sixty-six patriots from Naples to New York, part of the undertaking being that they should be treated as prisoners until they landed. The prisoners were embarked upon an old sailing vessel called the *Stromboli* at the *ergastolo* or convict prison. It chanced that Luigi Settembrini's son Rafaello, who had left the Sardinian Navy, in which he had served for some years, and was then employed in the Peninsular North African Company, was on board one of that company's liners which called at Cadiz on the very day the *Stromboli* had arrived there. The English Consul informed Rafaello of the nature of the *Stromboli's* errand, and that his father was amongst the prisoners on board. Rafaello instantly conceived the plan by which he could rescue, not only his father, but all of

the patriots. He managed to get on board the *Stromboli* in shabby clothes, and under a Spanish name was engaged to help to wait on the convicts. When the ship had sailed some way beyond Cape St. Vincent, Raffaello appeared on deck dressed in the uniform of the English merchant service, and walking straight up to the captain he summoned him to resign his command. Utterly taken aback by this audacious order, and fearing that the sixty-six Neapolitans were armed, the captain, after a slight resistance, surrendered, and amidst the cheers of the rescued patriots young Settembrini took the helm and turned the ship's bow in the direction of Queenstown, which was safely reached a fortnight later. The patriots landed there and proceeded some time afterwards to London. Luigi Settembrini and Carlo Poerio were both suffering from bad health and from wounds in the legs caused by their chains. Nevertheless, when the call came in the following year to finish the work of freedom which they themselves had helped to inaugurate, health was of no consideration and they were amongst the first to join Garibaldi.

Antonio Panizzi, who was born near Modena in 1797, was a man of good family. He was implicated in the revolutionary rising in Naples in 1820 and in similar risings at Milan and Turin in the following year. In 1823 he was condemned to death, but

fled to Switzerland, whence with other Italian refugees he came to England. Through his friendship with Ugo Foscoli, the writer Shepherd, and Lord Brougham, he succeeded in getting a professorship of Italian in the University of Oxford ; afterwards he became an assistant in the British Museum Library. It was a position which gave his great talents their full scope, and in 1856 he was made general director. Queen Victoria conferred a K.C.B. upon him and he was made a Senator of United Italy by King Victor Emmanuel in 1868.

There was a stirring and historic scene at Mulgrave House shortly before Garibaldi's famous expedition of the Mille to Sicily, when the English Garibaldians met their Italian comrades. On the lawn and under its beautiful trees several hundred red-shirts were assembled. Stirring speeches were made and many patriotic songs were sung, led by Mario and Grisi with the full vigour of their magnificent voices. Four years later, when Garibaldi paid his famous visit to England, a sword and address were presented to him at a great gathering at the Crystal Palace, and Signor Arditì's national song, "*La Garibaldina*," was sung amidst a scene of indescribable enthusiasm. Almost all the great singers, including Mario and Grisi, took part. Speaking of this great gathering in his

“Reminiscences,” Arditi mentions a funny incident which occurred. He was always much excited when conducting, and turning quickly to the chorus he brought his *bâton* down rather sharply on Mario’s head. “Mario,” says Arditi, “behaved most admirably, and without even uttering a murmur laughed the matter off as if nothing had happened.”

Away from the theatre Mario and Grisi led a most tranquil life, and an evening spent quietly at home was a particular joy to both. Donna Giulia would knit, and Mario, who was an accomplished draughtsman, would model in clay or paint. One of his favourite amusements was the designing of borders for picture-frames. One of his designs for Millais’ picture of “The Huguenots” was very effective. A serpent coiled round the frame looked up into the picture, and at the side a monk peered out of a cell, as if threatening the Huguenots. Mario read deeply. Archaeology and history especially interested him, and his library of books on those subjects was extensive. Patience was Mario’s only game of cards, the “Grand Napoleon” being his favourite.

In studying any new composition, whether the most important opera or the simplest ballad, Mario and Grisi followed a set plan. The words were first considered, and when the intention

and meaning of the text had been clearly ascertained and fully understood, then, and not till then, was the music learnt by heart. Every salient feature and opportunity for effect was most carefully thought over and decided upon. It was one of Mario's maxims that a singer could never do himself justice unless "he had all he was singing about thoroughly in his head as well as in his throat." He used to say, "If you get as familiar as you should be with your work, then when you are in the humour and in good voice you can let yourself go with almost a certainty of producing the effect you intend upon your audience, that is to say, if ever you have any moments of inspiration." Mario and Grisi pursued the same method with their English songs, studying the words first and then the music and words combined. Once an absurd mistake was averted only just in time. Frederick Clay had composed "The Shades of Evening" especially for Mario. The words, by Charles B. Stephenson, ran: "Whisper in my ear dost thou know how to love." Before going on the platform Mario sang it over to the librettist; it was lucky that he did so, for he sang: "Whisper in my *eye* dost thou know how to love!" He knew that the phrase had something to do with the head, but he did not know English well enough to understand his mistake. Such a system

of study was indispensable to Grisi, who was one of the most impulsive singers ever known, and without this discipline she would have probably changed her renderings of her parts according to her moods. For instance, her rendering of the "*Miserere*" scene in "*Trovatore*" was most carefully studied. It created a sensation and has since been adopted by other singers. Before Grisi sang the part Leonora would walk down to the footlights and sing without any attempt to realise the dramatic nature of the situation. Grisi used to wander round the stage despairingly, as though seeking to discover from which part of the prison walls came the voice of her lover. She clung to the tower and sang the thrilling passages in answer to Manrico with gestures and expression which kept the audience spellbound. As I have said before, Mario bestowed scrupulous care and study on the dresses in which he and Grisi appeared. No trouble was too great, no research too laborious, in order to make their representation as historically correct and perfect as possible.

"Mario," continues Willert Beale in his account of the artistes, "would sometimes write over lines of Gounod's '*Faust*' as the original translation into Italian was not sufficiently singable. To those who have given no attention to the subject

it may appear a matter of supreme indifference whether, in words intended to be sung, consonants, sibilants or vowels predominate, whether the sentences chiefly commence or terminate with hard or soft letters. To Mario's sensitive and fastidious taste, such points were of the utmost importance, and he altered the versification of 'Faust' and other operas accordingly. As regards costumes, no actor could be more particular than Mario as to what should be worn upon the stage, and he was as careful in the selection of costumes for Giulia Grisi as he was about his own. Cotton velvet was an object of special abhorrence to him; he used to declare that the touch of it was enough to give him an '*attaque des nerfs*.' In some of his engagements he would stipulate for a certain sum being allowed for his dresses, in order that he might exercise his discretion in providing them. The amount agreed upon was almost always exceeded at his own expense, the costumier's bill being increased by the purchase of costly bizarre ornaments, perhaps very useless in the opinion of a manager, but indispensable from Mario's point of view to complete a living picture of the character he intended to impersonate. As Romeo he began wearing a fair, curly wig, but he soon discontinued it, as he said he looked '*un tel imbécile*' in it, and preferred having curls fastened to his own hair

instead. He sketched out his dress himself, and was most particular, even down to the gloves, and looked very handsome. On the stage, to give height to his figure he wore high heels, but discontinued them on retiring. They unquestionably gave him that peculiar jaunty walk by which he was so easily recognised. It was a suggestion of his to have sidesprings made to boots, in order to afford the ankle more support than it has without such a contrivance. The springs were at first made of metal and had a clumsy appearance. Mario, however, insisted upon ordering pair after pair, until at length his Paris bootmaker hit upon the brilliant notion of improving the metal springs, as an Irish servant might say, by making them of india-rubber—a plan that has since been universally adopted.

“When at the height of his popularity in Paris a firm of Lyons silk manufacturers offered him a very large sum if he would set the fashion of silk coats and trousers; but Mario was no coxcomb, and declined the offer. His dress in private was as simple as it could be, unless loose ruffles on wristbands and shirt-front be considered signs of dandyism. These he wore for many years, being of opinion that they are admissible in modern costume, as they break the otherwise harsh lines of male attire. He never wore jewellery of any description. If rings or other trinkets were given



him, as for example in Russia, the gifts invariably found their way to Donna Giulia's jewel-case, and were ultimately converted into ornaments for her use. The Diva sold a large portion of her jewels to build the house in the Rue des Bassins in Paris. She used to wear a chatelaine from which hung, with other baubles, an old-fashioned gold watch set with innumerable diamonds and other precious stones. Once at Ventnor, upon returning to the hotel from a stroll on the sands, Donna Giulia discovered she had lost her chatelaine. Great was the dismay caused by the discovery. 'Are you sure you had it when you went out?' asked Mario. 'I think so, but am not quite certain,' was the reply. Search was made in the hotel, and then they went back to the beach, but the rising tide had covered the part of the sands where they had been walking. 'It will be washed away.' 'Not with the sea so calm as it is at present,' replied Mario. 'The worst chance is that, being so heavy, it may sink into the sand; we must not lose sight of the spot where it may have fallen.' So it was decided that Martino, Mario's valet, should be placed on guard while they were at dinner; by moonlight they returned and walked up and down the beach. Luckily Mario was right: the missing chatelaine had sunk in the sand. Suddenly a bright speck glittered

at their feet, one of the diamonds on the watch gleamed in the moonlight, and proved a guiding star to the hiding-place of all its highly prized companions."

Discussing the stage and acting, Mario said that the English stage afforded a striking contrast to that of the French in having no recognised school of acting. "You have no school, so-called," said Mario to Mr. Beale, "but there is more individuality among your actors than the Frenchmen display. The latter are slaves to their school, which imparts a stiffness and conventionality to their dramatic delivery and action. They have a style for tragedy and a style for comedy, with rigid rules for each, and but little if any variety in either. If at all familiar with the French school of acting you can tell the reading, the very gestures, that will be given to any particular part by any disciple of the school, so strict are the rules laid down, and so scrupulously are they obeyed. Occasionally the genius of an actor will force him or her to break through the firmly established conventionalities, and strike out a new path. That is, however, very much more rarely the case on the French than on the English stage, where, so far as I have been able to observe, individuality takes the place of a school. For instance, to illustrate my meaning, a Macready appears upon your stage,

and immediately he is set up as the model to be copied in tragedy, and he has accordingly a crowd of followers. I admire Macready, as an artist devoted to his art, immensely, but I differ from him in his view of some of the characters I have seen him represent. His Othello, for example, is much too savage throughout, his black looks, growling voice, harsh and repulsive manner, would render it impossible for any Desdemona, however susceptible, to fall in love with him. Othello, to my mind, in the earlier scenes of the play at any rate, should be shown as an irresistibly attractive man to women-kind, to account for Desdemona's passion and undoubted devotion to him. Macready makes him a murderer from the very commencement and anticipates the tragic scene in Act V by almost every look, every tone of voice and gesture. . . . Human nature after all must be our guide in all dramatic representations, and if the Othello of Macready would be repellent to a woman as a lover in real life, it must be just as much so on the stage, and the reading of the part therefore is open to objection."<sup>1</sup> "I asked Mario," continues Willert Beale, "if in his opinion a school of acting

<sup>1</sup> In the preceding pages we see how Théophile Gautier admired Mario's Othello; how he acted the smooth and easy manner of the Oriental, showing, however, beneath that manner, the cruel, savage nature that, when once roused, turned him into a brutal murderer.

was not the means of ensuring a good *ensemble* on the French stage. 'That is certainly one of its advantages,' he replied, 'but the *ensemble*, although formed of pupils of the same school, may not be always perfect, and even when it is perfect it may be the perfection of monotony, or its level the level of mediocrity. The time will probably come when the *ensemble* upon your stage will be of a higher order than that upon the French, for, having no school, your dramatic artists study from the leading actors with whom they may be associated, and it depends upon the models studied whether progress be made or not. From what I have seen since I came to England, I believe the models have increased in number and in ability, and hence my faith in the *ensemble* that will ultimately be met with in this country. The only danger in such a system of study is that the stage may be pervaded by individualities, that the models may be too servilely copied; but that is a danger common to every branch of art, and is only averted by copyists gaining experience, and at last learning to think and work for themselves, becoming in their turn models for those who follow in their footsteps. The affinity of the arts is really very close. Take the obstacle which it is so difficult for all young actors to conquer—restlessness. I remember well when it was as impossible

for me to stand still upon the stage as it was to know what to do with my arms and legs when before the public. And in music, painting, literature, all the arts in fact, restlessness is the chief difficulty to be overcome by every beginner. The compositions of a young musician are generally full of abstruse modulations, as though a change of key were the greatest effect to be achieved in music. The efforts of a youthful painter are almost invariably wanting in the repose which experience alone can give; a tyro in painting will load his palette with more colours than a more experienced hand requires. The poet, dramatist, and *littérateur* in their early works are never content without constant change of scene. And as the actor who has overcome restlessness upon the stage may be said to have made some progress in his vocation, so may the composer, painter, writer, and every other follower of art be satisfied that he has studied to some good purpose when he has become convinced of the necessity of expressing his thoughts by the simplest means, and is able to do so with the least exertion.'"

The everyday life of Mario and Grisi was very regular. Giulia Grisi was always an early riser. As soon as she had had her bath she would put on a *peignoir* and go to the nursery to see to the children's various wants, their clothes and

everything, after which she dressed and attended to her household duties. She was very particular about the dinners, and always made a point of having some favourite dish prepared for Mario. Then she would sing for a little while, for even when she had left the stage it pleased her to keep her voice in good order, as she used to say—in case she should be asked to sing for any charity concert or other benefit. When her eldest girls were about twelve and fourteen she used to make them practise with her. Then she wrote her letters. She had double work to do in that particular, for Mario could never bear writing, and she had to answer for him as well as herself on all matters, social or professional, and even about business. She was as particular in her dress as in other things, and had lovely gowns and laces, not minding what price she gave for them. The flounces of her *peignoirs* were always trimmed with valuable lace. She lost a great many things at the laundries, as she travelled from place to place, and often returned home with only half her underlinen. The *déjeuner à la fourchette* at 12.30 being over, she would go for a long walk, followed by the carriage, which she seldom entered till she had walked for two hours. Mario, on the other hand, rose late, and would sit smoking and reading his letters and the newspapers—the *Times*

always in England—and come down to the *déjeuner* in his smoking-jacket. The days he sang at the Opera he took a light breakfast at ten o'clock, walked from one to three, and dined at four o'clock, having only one dish and a glass of claret and water, or tea in the Russian fashion. He generally tried his voice shortly before leaving for the Opera, his favourite and almost usual exercise being the duet between Almaviva and Figaro in the "Barber of Seville," "*All' idea di quel metallo,*" doing the runs of *ecco propizio* in different keys, doing them rapidly and easily one after another, and working up to the highest note—*ut*. Throughout their career neither of them ever lost the nervousness they experienced in appearing before the public, and it was never quite overcome until after the first act. If his scales pleased him he would stop and begin smoking again. His throat was sensitive to the slightest change of temperature, and he always said that smoking prevented him catching cold or sore-throats, troubles he rarely suffered from, and would smoke even while driving to the Opera. Both singers had good quick horses which would go fast and get them to Covent Garden in time to dress. Some operas were more fatiguing than others, and he would rest more during the day on those occasions.

Covent Garden was rebuilt in the reign of

George II and was opened to the public on December 7, 1732, being used indiscriminately for operas, plays, political meetings and mixed entertainments. In 1808 it was burnt down, but rebuilt in the following year. It was Willert Beale's father who named Covent Garden the Royal Italian Opera, when he, together with Signor B. Albano, an architect, Persiani, husband of the celebrated singer of that name, and Sir Michael Costa undertook its direction. On March 31, 1847, the following advertisement appeared in the *Times* :—

“ Royal Italian Opera,  
Covent Garden.

“ The nobility, gentry, subscribers and patrons of music are respectfully informed that the new theatre will open on Tuesday, April 6, under the direction and management of Mr. Beale, when will be performed Rossini's *opera seria* of ‘ Semi-ramide,’ in which Madame Grisi, Mlle. Alboni (from La Scala at Milan and the Imperial Theatre, Vienna), her first appearance in this country, Signor Lavia (from the Imperial Theatre, St. Petersburg), Signor Polonini (from the Imperial Theatre, Vienna), and Signor Tamburini (his first appearance in London for four years) will sustain the principal characters. In the course of the



evening the National Anthem will be performed by the entire strength of the Company. To conclude with a new ballet in two tableaux by M. Albert entitled 'L'Odalisque,' the music composed by Signor Carmi from the San Carlo at Naples. *Premières danseuses* Mlle. Fleury, Mlle. Bertin, Mlle. Neodat, also M. Mabile, M. Gentie, etc., etc. Director of music, composer and conductor, M. Costa, etc."

<sup>1</sup> "The rehearsals of 'Semiramide' took place before the scaffolding was removed and while the workmen were still employed in completing the decorations of the house. I was on the stage when Alboni came to a rehearsal for the first time. She had not been heard by anyone in the theatre, and did not display the full power of her voice, but her singing *sotto voce* produced a sensation; the band and chorus applauded involuntarily. The recitative '*Eccomi alfin in Babylonia*' made a deep impression upon Grisi, who listened to the new contralto with evident astonishment. After going through the duet '*Giorno d'orrore*,' Donna Giulia resumed her seat, next to which I was standing. 'What a glorious voice, and what singing!' she exclaimed to me in excitement. The enthusiasm became general and the unexpected

<sup>1</sup> *Light of Other Days.*

revelation of a star of the first magnitude raised the hopes of all concerned in the prospects of the Royal Italian Opera.

“Marietta Alboni was tall and somewhat colossal in form. Her head, well poised on faultless neck and shoulders, was small in proportion to her figure. Glossy black hair, cut short like that of a boy, harmonised well with her Southern complexion. Her voice, of a marvellously rich quality and the most extensive compass, was wonderfully flexible and extremely correct in intonation, and she sang without the slightest effort. It was this easy control of her vocal powers that ensured Alboni's great success the first night she appeared at Covent Garden Theatre. Her name being previously unknown, she was coldly received.

“Her tall figure did not look well in the costume of Arsace, owing to the long tunic she insisted on wearing, but when she declaimed the recitative ‘*Eccomi alfin in Babylonia*’ the audience were aroused. Thunders of applause greeted her at the end of the recitative before the aria commenced. The excitement increased with every phrase she sang, and after the duet with Grisi it culminated in a genuine *furore*, the unknown singer of an hour before having suddenly become a popular favourite.”

Her *début* on April 6, 1847, was one of three

remarkable events in vocal music that year, for on May 4 Jenny Lind appeared at Her Majesty's and on December 6 Sims Reeves at Drury Lane. Alboni became a great friend of both Mario and Grisi, and when she retired from the stage, which she did early in her career upon her marriage with Count Pepoli, she passed the rest of her life in Paris, where the three singers constantly met. In spite of the enthusiasm evoked by the performance of "Semiramide," matters did not go well at the Royal Italian Opera, notwithstanding the fact that Grisi was then in her zenith, and that Alboni's sudden successes and the splendour of the *mise en scène* were drawing all London. Persiani mismanaged the money affairs, and finally fled from London. Willert Beale was then called upon to take the manager's chair, and if possible to disentangle the confusion. He found the theatre in revolt. "A deputation from the band" awaited him, he writes, members of the chorus came to him for special information, "carpenters and scene-shifters asked me furtively for news as I paced the stage, and ballet dancers crowded round the door of the manager's room. . . . The malcontents continued to murmur at every possible opportunity until evening, and even during the performance of 'Lucrezia Borgia.' Among them were more than one of the leading artistes. Costa, between the

acts of the opera, in his chair on the stage, was unusually sullen. He gave no assistance to the management. On the contrary, he advised the band and chorus to press their claims. I was occupied in drawing up the advertisement to be issued next day when Elena D'Angri, who was doing the part of Maffio Orsini, entered the manager's room and addressed me in a most excited manner. It was not the *segreto per essere felice* I had to listen to by any means!—that was confided to the audience later on, and none who heard it could have imagined the *segreto* that had been imparted to me a short time previously from the same lips. Maffio Orsini, in doublet and hose, paced the apartment furiously. I remained perfectly tranquil, and probably incensed Maffio more than ever by so doing. Presently, in a fit of what appeared to be uncontrollable passion, she rushed to the desk at which I was sitting, and, flourishing a dagger over my head, exclaimed, '*Tu paghi per Dio—se no—!*' ('By God, you shall pay—if not—!') The dramatic situation was interrupted by Mario strolling into the room in the costume of Gennaro. His *entrée* brought about a most rapid change of scene. The storm of verbal thunder and dagger lightning ceased as though by magic and gave place to the brightest rays of sunshine. The angry threats were suddenly lost in radiant smiles and peals of laughter."

“The understudy,” continues Mr. Beale, “although included in every Italian opera company, is rarely required in this country, a change of opera generally taking place should the *prima donna* or *tenore* be ill. An instance, though, once occurred when the second tenor or understudy was wickedly persuaded by his comrades that at the manager’s request he was to stand at the wing and sing a high note Mario wished to avoid. He agreed, believing the monstrous request to be genuine. The high note was sung by the great tenor and the second tenor as well, with astounding effect. Mario was always slow to take offence, nevertheless the scene that followed the high note was not flattering to the second tenor!”

Mr. Beale gives an amusing account of an ambitious baritone, the dream of whose life was to sing a leading part with Grisi. On one occasion when “*Il Trovatore*” was to be performed, Graziani was unable to sing, and to prevent a change of opera the ambitious and obliging baritone, Kinni, volunteered to appear as the Comte de Luna. “The audience decidedly objected to the deputy,” writes Mr. Beale. “During the first scene he was received with shouts of derision; I thought, of course, he would decline to continue the opera. Not at all. Kinni was gratified, he said, if he could do a service to his impresario. He came and went on

and off the stage, saluting the audience respectfully and with supreme indifference, amid a deafening storm of howling and hooting. No one heard a note of '*Il Balen*' the Count's famous song, owing to the clamour in pit and gallery. It was sung nevertheless all through, and the singer at the conclusion bowed gracefully as though in acknowledgment of the most rapturous applause. He came to me at the wings, his face beaming with smiles. 'You are contented?' he asked, with extended hand. 'Certainly,' I said; 'and you?' 'I am delighted,' he replied. 'As for the audience,' he continued, shrugging his shoulders, 'well, they express themselves in a manner that amuses them and does me no harm.' I never met with such unconcern as Kinni's; but he had sung with Giulia Grisi, though under trying circumstances." Grisi's feelings on this occasion are not recorded.

At the end of the opera season in London concert tours were arranged to the different towns. The party generally travelled by stage coach or in private carriages. On one of the earliest of these tours Grisi, Mario, Lablache and Tamburini were lost for a day and a night on the Derbyshire hills, the postillions having missed their way owing to a dense fog. The singers suffered serious privations, besides being greatly alarmed. They were travelling to Sheffield and did not reach their destination until

some time after the audience that had assembled to hear them had been dismissed.

The last time that Chopin was in England he accompanied Mario and Grisi on one of these concert tours organised by Willert Beale. Chopin's father was a Frenchman, settled in Italy, where the musician was born in the same year as Mario, 1810. No!  
 He and Mario were old acquaintances, having frequently met at the house of Georges Sand in Paris. Always delicate, in the last three years of his life Chopin became so weak that he had to be carried up and down stairs, a task his valet accomplished without much difficulty owing to the emaciated condition of the invalid. "Chopin's pianoforte playing was exquisitely delicate and brilliant," says Willert Beale, "full of sentiment and colour even as his nocturnes, valse and other compositions indicate. In a drawing-room he was to all a delight to hear, but in a larger space, before a more numerous audience, it gave more pain than pleasure. His appearance was so attenuated and his touch so enfeebled by long suffering."

At Mario's suggestion, in August 1856, Willert Beale made the innovation of performing complete operas upon the concert stage without costumes, scenery or dramatic action, an epitome of the plot of the opera being printed on the programme.

Mario took the keenest interest in these "opera recitals" as they were called, and they proved a great success. People whose opinions prevented them from going to a theatre went in crowds to concert-halls to hear the two famous singers in their most celebrated rôles. The *répertoire* included "Don Giovanni," "Lucrezia Borgia," "La Sonnambula," "Norma," "Don Pasquale," and "Il Barbiere." Besides Grisi and Mario, the singers included M. and Madame Grassier, Madame Amadée, Madame Lorini, and Signor Rovere, together with a full band and chorus under the direction of Signor Calsi. So successful were these recitals that later Alboni, Graziani, Formes and Bottesini were engaged. These opera recitals were held in concert-rooms throughout the kingdom, and also in London. They caused the keenest interest and excitement, and I was told recently by a friend who had met an old lady between eighty and ninety, that she had a most vivid recollection of the excitement caused in Bath in her youth by the announcement that Grisi and Mario were going to sing; she said people were standing in crowds outside the hall for hours before the doors were opened. This old lady also said that Mario's voice was unforgettable.

In November 1856 Beale gave a series of Italian operas at Drury Lane Theatre, the first time that Grisi and Mario were heard in London out of the



season and at moderate prices of admission. It was at one of these performances that the baritone Kinni distinguished himself in the "Trovatore."

To show what vicissitudes sometimes befall great singers, a funny story is told by Arditì in his reminiscences. "The first time Mario and Grisi were in America it was a terribly hard winter. The theatre at Washington was bitterly cold, and part of the roof having given way under the weight of a heavy fall of snow, the heat of the gas melted the frozen snow and it streamed down through the aperture upon the unfortunate singers. The opera was 'Norma,' and Grisi, instead of appearing in her traditional flowing white robe with heavy folds, was compelled to come upon the stage huddled up almost to her eyes in a great fur cloak, but the audience only perceived that something was wrong when Mario entered holding a coachman's umbrella over his head. The house burst into roars of laughter as Pallio and Norma had their tragic meeting under this prosaic safeguard. Mario held the umbrella over both of them while they sang the great duet."

Both Arditì and his wife were intimate friends of Mario and Grisi, who in 1859 stood sponsor to Arditì's first child. "As Mario had never, within the memory of man, been known to arrive in good time at any function whatever," writes Arditì, "we

anticipated his advent with anxiety, not unmixed with apprehension. Imagine, then, our surprise and delight when, at a quarter of an hour before the time appointed for the ceremony, Grisi and Mario arrived together, laden with flowers for my wife and several beautiful silver presents of unusual splendour for my firstborn. Grisi sailed into the room with a face like a sunbeam and gave us each a hearty kiss. 'There,' she said triumphantly, pointing to her husband, who stood at the door, beaming all over his face with evident self-satisfaction—what a handsome, splendid-looking fellow he was!—'there, this is the first time Mario has ever been known to be punctual. I hope you appreciate such an unheard-of event, for I feel sure it will never happen again!' I really do believe that never before or since that occasion was Mario known to have been positively up to time."

All the suffering Madame Grisi had gone through in the loss of her children unnerved her for public work, and in 1861 she issued the following farewell address to the English public:—

"Having made my last appearance in London, I have determined to bring my professional career to a close by a final visit to the principal towns of Great Britain and Ireland.

"In so doing I believe I am acting consistently,

and endeavouring to show how deeply I have treasured the welcome that for many years has been so lavishly bestowed upon me in this country.

“There is something inexpressibly affecting to me in addressing the word ‘farewell’ to an English audience, for that farewell is an adieu—and for ever—to the land of my adoption as an artiste, to the land in which have been centred all my hopes, in which have been realised all my brightest wishes. It is a farewell to a career which by unexampled generosity and unparalleled kindness has far surpassed my expectations and exceeded my deserts.

“To say *adieu*, therefore, to this country inspires me with the deepest regret. That this regret is shared by the English public I venture to believe; for to think otherwise would be to do violence to a support that has never failed me—to a partiality on which I have had but too often to depend. It is this consciousness that mitigates the pain inseparable from such an occasion, and that will always be a source of pleasure to me in my retirement, enhancing the remembrance of these countless acts of favour, for which the thousands who have bestowed them will have the heartfelt gratitude of—Giulia Grisi.”

*Written across the paper is,—*

“Dear Willert, you have my full consent to publish this in my name—Giulia Grisi.—July 25, 1861.”

Towards the close of this final tour her last-born, Bella Maria, who was not then three years old, died at Brighton after six months' illness. She had been born on a Christmas Day, and she died on a Christmas Eve. Grisi never really rallied from the shock. Being earnestly pressed to make a final effort and to sing "Norma" once more in London some months later, she consented, but when it came to the part where Norma has to stab the two sleeping children, the sight of them recalled her own great loss, and casting the dagger away she broke down in a passion of tears, which for the moment completely overwhelmed her. The low murmur that rose from the audience, followed by a touching silence, showed how all hearts were with the Diva at that moment—poor mother! With a colossal effort her art conquered her maternal feelings, and pulling herself together she finished the opera as grandly as she had always done, her voice showing no signs of diminution in power or beauty. She felt, however, that she could not sing again upon the stage, so this was practically her farewell night. She sang in "Norma" for a charity later on, but her professional career was ended. Her farewell concert at the Crystal Palace on July 31, 1861, is thus described by J. W. Davidson in the *Times* :—

“The Grisi farewell at the Crystal Palace was as successful as could have been desired . . . The pieces set down for Grisi herself naturally absorbed the largest share of attention, and were listened to with an interest doubtless rendered all the more intense by the conviction that they would never be heard again in the same place from the same lips. The most genuine excitement was evidently created by the grand duet (with M. Didiée) from ‘Semiramide,’ an opera in which the genius of Grisi both as a singer and actress shone perhaps most conspicuously, although not one of those most frequently brought forward in the latest stage of her career. No sooner was the loud and prolonged applause that followed at the end of the duet hushed into silence, than the eloquent tones of Signor Mario in the English ballad ‘Goodbye, sweetheart, goodbye,’ conveyed in earnest, though homely language, what, on the other hand, the audience might have felt inclined to say, had it been etiquette to speak. After ‘La Carita,’ in which the last notes of the universal favourite were heard, hats and handkerchiefs waved, hands applauded, and voices cheered tumultuously. It was a hearty leave-taking on both sides, a demonstration of sympathy, in short, befitting the occasion. To add another word would be superfluous. *Finis coronat opus!*”

Mario and Grisi, like many other singers, were somewhat superstitious, disliking to begin any undertaking on a Friday, and the number thirteen. If they came upon any supposed unlucky omen they crossed themselves to avert its evil influence. Under one of these supposed bad influences Mario witnessed an accident that occurred at a dress rehearsal of "Masaniello" at Paris in 1862, and in consequence had the strongest dislike for the opera ever afterwards. During the rehearsal Mademoiselle Livry, who performed the part of Fenella, went too near the footlights and her dress caught fire. In an instant she became a mass of flames and rushed frantically round the stage, to the horror of the spectators, who seemed paralysed with alarm. Mario alone retained sufficient presence of mind to seize the unhappy girl and try to crush out the flames, though without avail; he himself was severely burnt and the injuries poor Mademoiselle Livry received were fatal. This catastrophe was inseparably associated in his mind with "Masaniello," and he never took part in the opera with any ease of mind, although the principal character was one of his most picturesque and effective impersonations.

The last *tournee* he made in England was after Grisi's death, but he resolutely refused to visit scenes that would recall their happy days together.

“During the *tournée*,” writes Mr. Beale, “Mario gave repeated evidence of his amiable and charming disposition. The arrangements of the tour were placed in the hands of an agent who was then learning his business and whose inexperience caused all concerned the greatest inconvenience. The distances we had to travel were unreasonable and increased the expenses considerably. In one instance a concert was announced to be given on Friday at Cardiff, another the next day (Saturday) at Aberystwith, and one on the following Monday at Newton Abbot in Devonshire. A glance at the map will show the travelling such arrangements involved. When we discovered the route laid down for us, it was suggested that the concert at Aberystwith should be abandoned. Mario, however, objected to this and declared he would fulfil the announcement made, but left it to the others to decide as they might feel inclined. Of course we all followed him. We left Cardiff after the evening concert for Carmarthen, where we supped and slept. The next morning we started for Aberystwith, gave the concert, dined, and left again for Carmarthen in the evening. . . . It was then proposed that we should cross the Bristol Channel, but that intention had to be given up for the very good reason that we found upon enquiry there was no steamer to serve our purpose.

“On Sunday we made for Bristol, and arrived there by the slow stages of a Sunday train in time for dinner. Newton Abbot was reached the next day, and the three concerts, so far apart, were thus given as announced.

“Throughout this long and tedious journeying not a murmur was heard among the small band of tourists. Mario, cigar in mouth, the embodiment of good nature and amiability, was nominally and practically our leader. He set us the example of always being up to time and encouraged and rallied the faint-hearted by kindly words of sympathy and remonstrance. The Chevalier de Koutski, our pianist, told us lively anecdotes, of which he revealed an inexhaustible store, as available at five o'clock in the morning as at any time after dinner or supper. Sivori, our violinist, continued to practise difficult passages at every possible opportunity, and opened his eyes wider than ever, while the ladies, Mademoiselle Liebhart and Miss Henriquez, smiled graciously and repudiated any notion of fatigue, such as they must have felt, although their voices never gave the slightest indication of it.”

On one occasion the announcement of their concerts by the *Birmingham Daily Post* was made in a rather mystifying form. It ran something like this: “Signor Mario’s Benefit Concert. This



concert will take place to-night, Friday, not yesterday, as was erroneously announced."

The visits to Dublin were frequent, and many a rough passage had Grisi and Mario encountered crossing the Irish Channel. They would face the worst weather to fulfil their engagements and keep their faith with the public. Once on a stormy night at Holyhead, when the rain was coming down in torrents, the wind howling, and the waves roaring, the company suggested waiting there and starting the next morning. "Certainly not," replied Mario, and alighting from the railway carriage, he offered his arm to Donna Giulia, and, cigar in mouth, picked his way among the coils of rope and other obstacles on the pier, smiling and cheerful as though he were before the footlights. At once they were followed by the rest of the party, who would gladly have returned, but were ashamed to do so with such an example before them. The gallery of the Dublin Theatre was always a source of amusement and surprise to both singers. Occasionally it indulged in chorus singing between the acts, always in tune and harmoniously together, sometimes with a solo, and once when the amateur soloist hesitated in his song, remarks such as "Sing up! Mario's listening," were heard. No personal or objectionable remarks were ever made, or any vindictive feeling expressed. On one

occasion when a Mr. Tennant, a leading amateur society tenor, made his *début* in "Don Pasquale" while Grisi and Mario, Alboni and others were present, a cabal was organised against him, but was unexpectedly defeated by the friendly gallery gods, who shouted, "Give him a chance, boys, sure he's only a *weakly tenant!*" On returning from Dublin in 1857 the party met with a slight railway accident as they were nearing Stafford. No one sustained any injury beyond a shaking, but Willert Beale, who was opposite Grisi, suddenly found himself in the Diva's lap, while Mr. Tennant was precipitated on to Madame Grassier.

It was on July 29, 1868, that Mademoiselle Adelina Patti was married to the Marquis de Caux. As she had not previously been baptized, Giulia Grisi stood godmother for her and she took the name of Giulia in addition to that of Adelina; two days before the wedding Grisi attended Patti's confirmation. Mario gave her a pair of coral earrings that had once belonged to Maria Carolina, Queen of Naples, and Grisi gave her a diamond locket. The wedding took place at Clapham, where the Pattis then lived, in a small Roman Catholic church which was crammed with guests. The bride was given away by her father, who was old and very nervous. She was beautifully dressed in a white satin gown from Worth, but looked pale

and sad. De Caux also seemed out of sorts, for he had lost a diamond out of a favourite ring and took it as an omen of bad luck. As the bridal party left the church some one shouted, "There is old Grisi," and the Diva was most warmly cheered. After the wedding breakfast the whole party were photographed in the garden. Mario and Grisi's eldest daughter, Rita de Candia, was one of the bridesmaids.

A curious incident, showing the fascination Mario exercised over his listeners, occurred once at a concert. He was singing Alary's charming romance, "*La Chanson de l'Amoureux*," which in those days was very popular. As he sang the second verse with passionate feeling—

"Ah, viens au bois, folle maîtresse,  
 Au bois sombre et mystérieux ;  
 Ah, viens au bois,"

—a young lady rose from her seat and in a dreamy ecstatic voice exclaimed "*Je viens, je viens.*"

In England Mario's most popular songs were Hatton's "Goodbye, sweetheart, goodbye," "I strive to forget thee," and "*Spirito gentil.*" They were sung as only he could sing them, and like Grisi's ballads, "Home, sweet home," "The Minstrel Boy," and "The Last Rose of Summer," they never could be sung too often.

To chronicle all their successes would be an impossible task, but the most important event in Mario's career, after the "Huguenots" and the "Favorita," was the creation of two original parts—Faust and Romeo. Mario was the very realisation of the poet's dream. His first performance of the part of Faust was at the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden, in May 1864, with Pauline Lucca as Marguerite and Faure as Mephistopheles, and his last on July 11, 1871, with Faure again as Mephistopheles and Mialon Carvalho as Marguerite. He played Faust fifty-nine times, and always showed himself the *beau idéal* of Goethe's hero, and a most perfect interpreter of Gounod's tender and lovely music. In "Romeo and Juliet," which was first produced in London in the summer of 1867, Mario took the part of the young, winsome, and chivalrous Veronese eleven times. He only sang once as Viscardo in Mercadanti's "Il Giuramento," eleven times in "Don Giovanni" and "Lionello," but in Flotow's "Marta" thirty times. Altogether he performed in over forty-seven operas.

Pagani, who was Mario and Grisi's cook for many years, when he left their service started a restaurant in Great Portland Street, which has now become the well-known rendezvous—Pagani's—for singers and Italians.

## CHAPTER X

### VILLA SALVIATI.

“ Our dear Florence ! That great Pitti  
With its steady shadow fills  
Half the town up, its unwinking  
Cold white windows, as they glare  
Down the long streets, set one thinking  
Of the old dukes who lived there.”

*An Evening in Tuscany.*—OWEN MEREDITH.

So many of Mario and Grisi's happiest hours were spent in their beautiful Florentine home, so many celebrities of the Italian Risorgimento and well-known people of all countries visited them there, that I will devote a chapter entirely to Villa Salviati and its guests.

Mario and Grisi were both very fond of Florence, especially Grisi, who delighted in returning at every opportunity to the scene of her early triumphs. When Mario heard that Mr. Vansittart, the then owner, wished to sell the Villa, he agreed to buy it on the condition that the sale should be concluded only if Grisi would like to live there. He and

Grisi went to Florence (then the capital of the Grand-Duchy of Tuscany) and both were delighted with the interesting old house, its splendid position, and the magnificent views it commanded on every side. Mario, with his strong antiquarian bent, was particularly interested in its numerous historical associations, among which is one of the most notorious crimes<sup>1</sup> in the history of Florence. Both singers became devoted to the place and spent considerable sums of money in restoring the Villa and decorating it in the style of the century in which it was built. Mario would allow no one to superintend the work except himself, consequently ten years passed before its completion.

Since it stands upon the summit of a hill the views from the Villa can never be shut out by other buildings, but all the surroundings have changed vastly since Mario bought it in 1849. In those days it commanded a unique view of Florence and the surrounding country. Olive-woods and vineyards spread like a green carpet right up to the walls of Dante's beloved city; the Duomo, Giotto's Campanile, and the tower of the Palazzo Vecchio stood out, three jewels of architecture, and the silver Arno—the Thames of Tuscany—could be seen flowing between the Palazzo Vecchio and the Pitti, disappearing from sight in the folds of

<sup>1</sup> The murder of Catherine Canacci.

the southern hills on its way to the fertile plains beyond.

“Through the midst of Tuscany  
There runs a stream which rises in Falterone  
And a course of a hundred miles wearies it not.”—DANTE.

Ancient villas here and there peeped from glades of pine and cypress, the sun would light up Galileo's tower on the Arcetri hill, or one of the lovely Florentine sunsets would be reflected on the marble walls of San Miniato, which, with the imposing cemetery round it, stands a little below Galileo's prison. From the broad garden terraces, which were laid out by Jacopo Salviati in 1510 and looked directly down upon Florence, one saw to the left the church of San Domenico, halfway up a wooded hill, and still further to the left the hill of Fiesole with its famous church and monastery. To the right, beyond a labyrinth of pines, acacias, and cypresses, in which the terrace walks ended, were the large gates opening into the main road between Florence and Bologna, and it was by this road that Mario and Grisi generally travelled when returning to their Florentine home, Grisi to the last preferring her carriage to the railroad.

At the back of the Villa a narrow road branched from the highway ; running between the wall of the Villa garden and a wooded hill called Capolino, it

then went down a steep incline to a pile of stones which formed a bridge ; then mounting a precipitous ascent on the side of a stream, it led to the Piazza of San Domenico. Beyond the Piazza several paths up the steep hillside led to Fiesole, where one looked down upon the stately building which was Mario and Grisi's home.

The Mugnione, one of the thousand rivulets that feed the Arno, flows past the principal entrance to the Villa, to the Porta San Gallo, about a mile and a-half further on, where a drawbridge enabled one to reach the old gate with its high stone arches and so enter Florence.

But now all is changed, except the old house itself and its immediate surroundings. The railway from Bologna to Florence runs by the side of the Mugnione and through the grounds of the Villa ; and a modern iron bridge spans the river in place of the old drawbridge. Nearly all the old walls of the city have been pulled down, boulevards and streets taking their place. Innumerable villas, and even some factory chimneys, interrupt the view of Florence, and from the Villa windows the whole countryside seems to be pitted with houses and covered with a network of tram and railway lines. Galileo's old tower is gone—a new one standing in its place. A broad drive called the Viale dei Colli wends a serpentine way to the fort



on the Arcetri hill, on the top of which still stands the renovated remains of the house in which Galileo lived. Electric trams go even beyond the fine Piazza of San Miniato on which Michael Angelo's bronze statue of David has been placed. Fiesole is now a small town surrounding the old amphitheatre adjoining the church; and the electric trams which start from the streets of Florence meet on the Piazza San Domenico, and then wind round the hill to a terminus close to the old Fiesole monastery.

Time and the builder have altered Florence more than any other city in Italy, even more than Milan and Rome; but in the days when the two happy singers made it their home and a place of rest from their arduous stage labours, they could rejoice in its quiet and find repose amidst its peaceful surroundings. So deep was the quiet that the horrible crimes committed in this lovely house were forgotten unless some curious guest persuaded Mario to relate the histories and legends attached to the various rooms.

The Villa Salviati is mentioned in the Florentine archives as belonging to the Montegonzi family in the year 1100. It remained in their possession until 1450, when it was sold to Messer Alemanno Salviati, being described as a "strong castle with towers and battlements." Vasari tells us that

it was besieged by the Florentine mob in 1529 and partly burnt. This partial destruction presumably ended its existence as a fortress, the battlements of the massive tower which forms the main portion of the Villa having been roofed over. The Villa as it appeared in the days of the Montegonzi is shown in one of Botticelli's Annunciations, where it occupies a prominent place in the background.

The great and powerful family of the Salviati, who inhabited the Villa for three hundred years and gave it its name, were descended from a doctor, Messer Salvi, whose son Cassabio was a Prior and Gonfaloniere of Florence. Sixty-three of his descendants and those of his brother Lotto followed him as Priors, and twenty-one as Gonfalonieri. Lotto was a great lawyer, and his descendant, Jacopo Salviati, married Lucrezia, daughter of Lorenzo the Magnificent and sister of Pope Leo X. He played an important part in Florence during the fifteenth century, and was the one man who, upon the death of Leo X, stood forth as the advocate of religious liberty, thus forfeiting the favour of Clement VIII. His daughter, Maria, married the famous Captain of Condottieri, Giovanni delle Bande Nere, and became the mother of Cosimo, who was created the first Grand-Duke of Tuscany in 1569.

The wealth and power of the Salviati increased rapidly, and in 1620 the Jacopo of that day married Donna Veronica Cybo, daughter of the Duke of Massa and Carrara, and was created Duke of San Giuliano. A letter exists, written by one of his contemporaries, describing the wedding festivities and presents, among which was a picture by Raphael. "Donna Veronica," says the letter, "is endowed with but small beauty, and hath a most violent and imperious temper." Duke Jacopo was a gay and gallant soldier, handsome, and no mean poet. Ten years after his marriage he met the beautiful Catherine Canacci, called the "Fair Cherubin," because of her golden hair and beautiful colouring, and fell desperately in love with her. She was the second wife of Giustino Canacci, who was over seventy years old when he married her, and had grown-up sons. One of these sons, Bartolomeo, made dishonourable advances to his beautiful stepmother and, being repulsed, revenged himself by informing Duchess Veronica of her husband's attachment to his father's wife. The two women met for the first time in the church of San Pietro Maggiore, and at the end of the service the Duchess went up to her rival and, making herself known, gave vent to a furious tirade of jealousy.

The haughty disdain with which she was answered still further inflamed her jealousy, and

she determined to be revenged. Working upon Bartolomeo's hatred of his stepmother, she finally persuaded him and his brother Francesco to hire four assassins to murder her.

On the night of December 31, 1638, Bartolomeo knocked at his stepmother's door, and when it was opened to him, the four assassins rushed upstairs and murdered the unfortunate lady and her maid. The bodies were cut up, some of the pieces being thrown down a well, the rest into the Arno, with the exception of Catherine's head, which, according to the diabolical scheme arranged by the Duchess Veronica, was sent to her at Villa Salviati.

It was the custom then for ladies of high rank to wash the fair linen shirt-sleeves which their lords and masters wore at Mass on New Year's Day, and also to take the linen themselves to their husbands when they were dressing. When the Duchess received Catherine's head, the golden hair surrounding it like a halo, she placed it in a silver basin and covered it with her husband's linen. She then ordered her little eight-year-old son to "present her New Year's gift to his father." The child, all unconscious of its ghastly burden, passed through the numerous big rooms and at last reached the Duke and gave him the basin with his mother's message. The Duke was agreeably surprised to see his son instead of his wife, from

whom recent events had alienated him. As he stooped to kiss the child he raised the linen in the basin and with a cry of horror saw the face of his beloved Catherine.

Drawing his sword, he rushed to the Duchess's room, followed by the terrified child and his attendants. But the Duchess, foreseeing what would happen when her horrible New Year's gift reached her husband, had ordered swift horses to be ready at the door leading from the chapel into the wood behind the Villa, and as soon as the child had started she had fled down a small back staircase and galloped in all haste towards her father's domains. The Duke was prevented from following her by his friends. She spent the rest of her life at Massa, haunted by her horrible crime.

Bartolomeo Canacci eventually confessed to the part he had taken in the murder, and was beheaded in the doorway of the Bargello. The rooms occupied by Mario at Villa Salviati were always supposed to have been those occupied by Duke Jacopo, and those by Grisi to have been those belonging to the terrible Duchess, as a winding staircase led from her dressing-room to a corridor below, from which another flight of stairs descended to the courtyard, and it is down these staircases the Duchess is said to have fled to the waiting horses.

The famous Pazzi conspiracy against Lorenzo

and Giuliano de' Medici is believed to have been planned at the Villa Salviati. The Pazzi family arranged to murder the two Medici brothers at Giuliano's country residence at Fiesole (which in Mario's time belonged to an old English friend of his, Mr. Spence), but an accident made the plan impossible, and the crime was committed during Mass in the Duomo at Florence, at the moment when the officiating priest was elevating the Host. Giuliano was stabbed to death, but Lorenzo escaped, and in remembrance of that day added a dagger to his coat-of-arms—three golden balls.

It may not be generally known that the three balls hanging outside the pawnbrokers' shops originally came from the Medici coat-of-arms. During the wars in Lombardy and France, Lorenzo advanced large sums of money to Italian nobles, who wished to buy arms and munitions for their followers, upon pictures and other treasures of art, charging interest also upon the loans. The documents all bore the Medici seal, showing their crest. The later Medici always averred that the three golden balls represented pills, and signified the profession of their first known ancestor, a doctor. This may have been the origin of the coat, but Lorenzo's pawnbroking instincts gave the golden balls an entirely different significance.

There is one tragedy—for tragedy it must have

been—connected with the Villa Salviati which is veiled in mystery. When the extensive alterations made by Mario were being carried out, the workmen declared that they often saw the ghostly figure of a woman appear from a door in the wall of one of the large upper rooms. Behind this door was a steep narrow staircase which led to the battlements surrounding the whole of the roof of the Villa, where two hundred men at least could have been lodged, and where, in all probability, the troops and retainers of the Salviati were quartered. When Mario was having an old guard-room converted into a theatre, the workers came upon a wall which, when knocked down, disclosed a dark room, in the further corner of which was a small black oak door. On being touched, this door swung round, showing a cupboard with two shelves, upon one of which was a plate of Florentine pottery decorated with the Salviati arms.

The door was taken down and a light held in the opening. On the floor of the cupboard the form of a woman was seen, but only for an instant. As the air penetrated into the secret room the body fell into dust, and only a few bones remained. Whether the woman had been imprisoned and left to starve to death, or whether she had been hidden in the cupboard and forgotten, can never be known. The body must have lain there for some

hundreds of years, and after its discovery the ghost was never seen again.

Amongst Mario and Grisi's earliest guests at Villa Salviati was Frederick Leighton, afterwards Lord Leighton and President of the Royal Academy. As a young man he studied painting in Italy for many years, and was constantly in Florence, and whenever he was in Florence he came to the Villa. In a letter to his mother in January 1858 he wrote: "Mario's *étrenne* cost me a pound; it was the least I could do. Let me assure you, dear Mama, about my behaviour to this amiable creature. I have been at his house often since, and am sure he is not the least hurt! As for his thinking I am proud (he being an actor), that is so out of the question I could not help laughing when I read the passage in your letter. In the first place I could never dream of his suspecting me of such a piece of vulgarity; and in the next, actor or not, he is still *Comte de Candia*, and therefore more than my equal in rank."

This letter shows how strong was the prejudice in those days against members of the theatrical and operatic professions, and which Mario, exalted as was his professional position, was occasionally obliged to face.

Lord Leighton was ever a dear friend of the two singers and their children. During one of his



early visits to Villa Salviati he made a pencil drawing of Mario which he gave to Percy French, an intimate friend of the singer and himself. On another occasion Leighton painted the portrait of the nursery-maid of his hosts' children, and that entirely through the superstitious dread of the number thirteen which was shared by both Mario and Grisi, especially the latter. As they were going in to dinner one evening Grisi noticed that, owing to a guest having failed them, they were the dreaded number. No one was allowed to sit down, there was great confusion, the dinner was getting spoilt, some of the guests even began to think of taking their leave, so awkward was the situation; when somebody suggested that Fédé, the nursery-maid, should fill the vacant place. Grisi accepted the suggestion joyfully. Fédé was sent for and told that she must dine with them, and so save her master and mistress and their friends from all the evils that would arise from thirteen sitting at table. Fédé was a pretty *contadina*, the daughter of the head-workman at the Villa, and Leighton, who sat near her, was so much struck by her simple beauty that afterwards he painted a head of her. This portrait, which is still in my possession, is so unlike in its colouring the great painter's pictures of women in his later years, that it is difficult to believe that it is by the same hand.

Other guests of Mario's at Villa Salviati after 1860 were the celebrated patriots Vincenzo and Leonida Caldesi, who had suffered years of exile and had worked most nobly in the cause of Italian freedom. Vincenzo and his brother were Bolognese gentlemen who fled to London after the abortive rising in Bologna between 1831-1833. Mario was greatly interested in photography, and was chiefly instrumental in introducing the daguerreotype into England in the early fifties. He taught Vincenzo and Leonida Caldesi the art, and by this means they were not only able to earn their own living, but also to contribute to the fund which helped the poorer Italian exiles in England. They started in a small studio over Colnaghi's print-shop in Pall Mall, Mario and his family being amongst the earliest of their sitters.

Mario introduced the Caldesis' work to Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort, who took the keenest interest in this new method of portraiture. The brothers were sent for frequently to Buckingham Palace, where many groups of the royal family were taken. The daguerreotypes were developed in the Palace, the Queen often going to see how it was done and having the various processes thoroughly explained to her. A group of the Queen with the Princess Royal and Prince Frederick of Prussia (afterwards the Emperor and Empress

Frederick) was taken at Buckingham Palace immediately before the wedding of the young couple at St. James's Palace in January 1857. "But I trembled so," wrote the Queen, "my likeness has come out indistinct." These early plates were, I believe, in the late King Edward's possession.

Vincenzo Caldesi was with Mazzini and Montecchi in Rome during the short-lived Republic founded by the great idealist patriot in 1847-1848. They were the triumvirate when Rossi was murdered. He also fought with Garibaldi in the gallant but futile defence of Rome, and was wounded. He was made prisoner, but managed to effect his escape. In spite of all his troubles and exile Vincenzo Caldesi was always jolly, always laughing, never despondent over the failures of the patriots, and always sure that in the end they would triumph, and that Italy would become a united country.

Montecchi, who was the godfather of two of Mario's daughters, practically became a member of the family, and lived for many years in a cottage in the grounds of Villa Salviati given him by Mario. He was a Roman by birth, his family tracing its descent from the Montecchi (or Montague in Shakespeare's play) to which Romeo belonged. An ardent patriot, Montecchi gave up an easy position and a comfortable home to join the ranks of those who brought about the Risorgimento.

Mazzini instantly recognised the value of his steadfast calmness, and made him one of the triumvirate which governed the short-lived Roman Republic. When Rome was besieged by the French, Montecchi was wounded in the desperate defence which for twenty years destroyed every hope of Rome becoming the capital of United Italy. In the sixties he married an Englishwoman and made his home in Venice. His bust is amongst those makers of the Unity of Italy which form an avenue leading to the great equestrian statue of Garibaldi on the Janiculum at Rome.

The Marchese Massimo D'Azeglio, the great patriot and ambassador, and who was also a painter of considerable talent, was one of Mario's intimate friends. When D'Azeglio resigned his post as President of the Council he gave himself up entirely to painting. "A Cincinnatus of the easel returning to his castle as Cincinnatus returned to his fields after his public life," he wrote to Mario announcing his resignation and retirement and expressing his wish to paint a picture for him. On the 12th of July, 1856, he wrote to Mario from Turin about the picture, which he had then finished :

" Noble Knight,

Such as it is, your picture is finished. I wish that your pleasure in seeing it could be equal

to one hundredth part of the pleasure I have felt in listening to you ; but I fear this is hoping too much. I have reproduced a fashionable, although antiquated subject—namely, the struggle between temporal and spiritual power. Bernato Visconti meets the ambassadors of the Pope on the bridge which crosses the Lambro near Marignano. He reads the letters which they present him, and, finding them not to his taste, gives the ambassadors the choice between eating them—paper, seals and all—or being thrown into the Lambro. They choose the first alternative—and so would I. My picture represents this pleasant repast.

“I beg you to tell me whether you wish me to send you the picture to London, or whether you intend it for Italy. Awaiting your instructions, I commend myself to your friendship.

“M. D’AZEGLIO.”

(This picture is still at the Villa Salviati.)

The Marchese’s wife was the daughter of the Marchese Alfieri, Sardinian ambassador to France in the reign of Louis XVIII, and a relative of the great dramatic author of that name. Their son, Robert D’Azèglio, was also an ambassador, representing his country both in England and France. He, too, when in Italy, was a frequent guest at

Villa Salviati, and in London at Mario and Grisi's hospitable home in Fulham.

The visitors' book at Villa Salviati contained the names of the most famous men and women in Europe. Politicians, artists, singers, nobles and princes of all countries found their way to the Villa whenever they came to Florence. The handsome Prince Eugene of Savoy-Carignan, a member of the younger branch of King Charles Albert's family, when Governor of Florence in 1860, was constantly there. He was a grandson of Prince Eugene Mario Louis Carignan, Comte de Villefranche, brother of the unfortunate Princess de Lamballe, the friend of Marie Antoinette.

Amongst the many Italian patriots who frequented the Villa was Antonio Gallenga, the *Times* correspondent in Florence. Gallenga had a curious and moving history. As a young man he took part in the rising in Parma in 1830, and despite his youth (he was only eighteen) was condemned to death. With the help of his friends, however, and with the connivance of the officials of the prison, he managed to escape and, incredible as it may seem, a mock execution and burial were arranged to satisfy the tyrannous Grand-Duke and also to shield the officials from his wrath. Gallenga reached Marseilles, an outcast, penniless, and in utter despair.

By chance he met the patriot Melegari, who, seeing that the young man was half crazy from the sufferings he had undergone, and ready for any desperate deed, gave him money and sent him to Mazzini in London.

Mazzini and his followers hated Charles Albert. They regarded him as a traitor, since, according to them, he had broken his promises to the organisers of the insurrection of 1821 in Turin.

Gallenga reached London in an overwrought condition, and in the excitement aroused by Mazzini's fiery eloquence, a wild idea of ridding Piedmont and Italy of this "perjured tyrant" came to him, and he believed that Mazzini would sympathise with him in this idea. But Mazzini's attitude has never been known. He was reported to have given Gallenga a malachite-hilted dagger and money in order that he should return to Italy and assassinate the King; but this has never been proved. Gallenga, provided with a passport made out in the name of Mariotti, certainly went to Turin with the avowed purpose of killing Charles Albert.

Mario would never believe that Mazzini had ever encouraged or even sympathised with this project of killing the King, but always said he was convinced that Gallenga, whose terrible sufferings had practically unhinged his mind for the time

being, had either misconstrued some expression of opinion by Mazzini, or that his mandate from the patriot came entirely from his own over-excited imagination. Encouragement of assassination does not tally with Mazzini's character; his letter to Felice Orsini, written on December 30, 1847, gives the lie direct to such an assumption. "Murder is not Republican," he wrote. "Ancona is now a prey to organised assassins, who must be repressed and punished." This would scarcely have been said by a man who could stir up an already excited youth to commit deliberate murder.

Gallenga waited in Turin for a month watching for an opportunity to kill the King, but, believing he had been recognised, he fled to America.

His signature, together with those of Mazzini and Giglioli, was affixed to the proclamation issued in London in 1847, urging all Italian patriots to help in a fresh revolt against the oppressors of their country. In the following year, however, Cavour wrote to Gallenga saying that the *velo d'oblio* (veil of oblivion) had been drawn over the deeds of his youth and that he was forgiven. He returned to Italy and was actually sent by Charles Albert himself as Piedmontese envoy to Frankfort. His embassy ended, he returned to England and ultimately became correspondent of the *Times*, first at St. Petersburg and Constantinople, and



then at Florence when that city was the capital of Italy, before the occupation of Rome. Gallenga wrote a remarkable book on Russia, which gave him a high place in the literary world. He was twice married, each of his wives being an Englishwoman.

The two handsome Actons, the Admiral and his brother Harold, were also frequent guests at the Villa. They were descended from that John Acton, an Irishman, who, after serving in both the French and Tuscan services, had been summoned to Naples by King Ferdinand and given a high position in the Neapolitan Navy. In a short time Acton became the favourite of Queen Maria Carolina (the sister of Marie Antoinette), and in consequence was advanced to the highest honours. He served in both the Neapolitan Army and Navy.

The sister of Admiral and Harold Acton, Donna Laura, who was one of the most beautiful and brilliant women of her time, and who is still one of the most interesting figures in Roman society, married the great Italian Minister, Minghetti. Harold Acton married in England, and was for some time director of the old South Kensington Museum.

The musical *soirées* at Villa Salviati were famous, and amongst the most assiduous in their attendance were C. H. Andreoli, a beautiful musician and composer, and Ciro Pinsuti, the song-||  
writer. Andreoli was a nephew of that young

patriot priest, Giuseppe Andreoli, whose fellow-prisoners were compelled by order of the brutal Francis IV of Modena to witness his execution from the windows of their cells.

Ciro Pinsuti had long been a friend of Mario and Grisi, frequently helping them in their rehearsals. Once whilst in Florence he composed two songs to words written by Mario. The great tenor sang them at one of these musical evenings with such intense fervour that both his audience and the composer were moved to tears. Mario sang these two songs afterwards in London at a party at the Duchess of Cambridge's, and with immense success. They were called "*Pianti del core*" ("Tears of the Soul") and "*O Donna amata*" ("O beloved lady").

Ciro Pinsuti was more English than Italian, having been brought up in England by the Drummonds, members of the great banking family. This came about in an odd and romantic way. When Mr. Drummond was travelling with his wife in Italy in the early twenties, their carriage broke down near the village of Sinalunga in Tuscany. There was no inn, and they were most hospitably received in the house of Ciro Pinsuti's father, a small landed proprietor near by. Pinsuti would accept no money in return for his kindness, and the Drummonds, who had been much interested in one of his little sons, Ciro, who was lame, asked

if they could take the child to England to see if he could be cured. The parents accepted the offer joyfully, with the result that the Drummonds became so attached to *Ciro* that they brought him up. He chose music as his profession and eventually became a popular song-writer. *Pinsuti* was a diminutive man, very refined and gentle, and *Mario* and *Grisi* counted him amongst the most devoted and loyal of their friends. He was so frank and truthful in his speech that sometimes he placed himself and others in rather absurd situations. For instance, once when he was accompanying *Mario* and *Grisi* at a party, a lady whom he had known before with jet-black hair, but who in accordance with the fashion of the day had dyed it a bright auburn, came up to the piano to speak to him. *Pinsuti* gazed at her in surprise. His non-recognition irritated the lady.

“Surely you know me, *Mr. Pinsuti*?” she said sharply. “I am so and so.”

“What! you are so and so?” he cried; “then why are you red, red, *red*?” His voice rose upon each “red” until it ended in a shout that made everybody turn to look at the lady, much to her annoyance.

Of *Mario*'s English friends, *Percy French*, *John Woodford* and *Sir Constantine Phipps*, all of the Foreign Office, the last afterwards being British

Ambassador to Belgium and Portugal, frequently stayed at the Villa. In 1858 Mario brought Mr. Woodford from England to see his Tuscan home. At this time Baron Ricasoli, who was Prime Minister in Florence, had Mario constantly watched and spied upon, since he suspected his friendship with the exiles. Therefore, when Mario suddenly appeared at the Villa with Mr. Woodford, Baron Ricasoli was immediately informed of the fact, the police hinting that this friend of Mario's was suspected of being Mazzini himself. Ricasoli had recently banished from Tuscany Mario's friend Montecchi, who, as I have already said, lived in a cottage in the grounds of Villa Salviati. The order of banishment had been given without any trial or any reason. Now, on hearing that Mazzini might be hidden in Mario's home, the Baron immediately issued an order for his arrest. But when the police arrived to arrest the "arch-conspirator," and found only a peaceful Englishman enjoying his friend's hospitality, they looked extremely foolish. The story spread through Florence, and Baron Ricasoli was covered with ridicule.

Many were the obstacles to the progress of freedom which had to be overcome by Mario and his friends; and many were the inconveniences they suffered, both great and small. Any expression upon politics, or any expression that could be

construed as having a political meaning, instantly excited the condemnation of the authorities. Some of the restrictions were childish. Ronconi, the famous baritone and a friend of Mario's, had an experience at Genoa which was ludicrous. He was told by the police that when singing in that city he must always substitute the word "loyalty" wherever the word "liberty" occurred in his various rôles. In the excitement of singing he forgot the order and sang the word "liberty" several times in one evening. He was arrested at the fall of the curtain and imprisoned for three days, "in order to refresh his memory." A few days after his release he appeared in "Elisir d'Amore," and one of his songs described how a peasant "sold his liberty." Obedient to the police order, he changed the word to "loyalty"—a variation of the text which was received with delighted applause by the audience. The following day he was summoned before the head of the police and received a sharp reprimand for having said that "loyalty" could be sold. Ronconi replied with some indignation that only a short time before he had been taught, and in a manner he was not likely to forget, that the word "loyalty" must always be substituted for the word "liberty," and that he had only carried out the instructions of the police! With such petty and tyrannical restrictions did the

authorities strive to repress the ever-growing feeling towards a United Italy.

Amongst the most dear and the most welcome friends at the Villa were Admiral Paul Cottrau and his brothers Theodore, Felix, and Giulio. They were the sons of the celebrated composer, Cottrau, who was also a well-known musical publisher long before Ricordi was heard of. Liszt incorporated one of Cottrau's songs in one of his compositions called "From Naples to Venice." One of Mrs. Cottrau's sisters was the Madame Lina Frappe to whom Chopin dedicated four of his mazurkas. Bellini and Donizetti also dedicated some of their songs to her. Theodore Cottrau inherited his father's talent, and some of his songs, such as "*Santa Lucia*" and "*Addio mia bella Napoli*," have achieved a world-wide reputation. Giulio Cottrau, the last of this delightful family of musicians, is still alive; his songs are as popular as those of his brother Theodore and his father. It was at the house of Lablache, the singer, that Mario made the acquaintance of the Cottrau family, in the forties, an acquaintance that ripened into the closest friendship. The Cottraus adored the great singer, and Admiral Cottrau was one of those who were present when he passed away.

The Grand-Duchess Marie, daughter of the Czar Nicholas I, was an ardent admirer of Mario,

and as she had taken a house near by, she was constantly at the Villa. Her friendship was ever gracious and most kind, and when Mario went to Russia in 1869–1870, immediately after Grisi's death, to fulfil an engagement, the Grand-Duchess showed the tenderest concern for his motherless children, and had them constantly with her at her beautiful palace in St. Petersburg.

Another guest at the Villa was the famous Countess di Castiglione, whose beauty and eccentricities made her one of the most celebrated figures at the Tuileries during the Third Empire. The Countess was a cousin of Cavour, and came of an old Florentine family, her father, the handsome Count Oldoini, being first equerry to the King of Sardinia. At the age of twelve she was the reigning beauty in Florence; at fifteen she was married; and at seventeen went, or was sent, to Paris, to captivate Napoleon III. Whether she went of her own accord, or at the suggestion of her cousin Cavour, there is no doubt that the Countess's mission in France was purely political. She was brilliantly clever, and her power over Napoleon III had great effect upon the destiny of Italy. Of the Countess Castiglione it may be truly said, she came, she saw and conquered. When she first appeared at the Tuileries, at a ball she caused such a sensation, that not only the dancing, but even

the music stopped, and the Emperor, struck by her extraordinary beauty, at once led her to the Empress, who was as much fascinated by the newcomer as were her guests.

For years the Countess treated all her would-be rivals with supreme disdain. Upon a photograph she gave to her admirer, Cassagnac, she wrote: "I am their equal in birth, their superior in beauty, their judge in intellect." She flatly refused to hide her shapely figure in the steel cage and numerous petticoats then in vogue, although the Empress Eugénie herself had created the fashion. She often carried her eccentricities and vagaries to such an extreme, that only her great beauty and fascination prevented the doors of the stricter members of Parisian society being closed against her.

She loved to make rendezvous in which everything was to be treated as a profound mystery, yet, although masked or heavily veiled, there was to be no doubt as to her own identity. On one occasion she went to a Court ball as Salammbô, dressed in alarmingly transparent gauze.

Being inordinately proud of the modelling of her figure, the Countess once asked Mario to design a costume for her to wear at a fancy-dress ball at the Tuileries—a costume that would show her arms and neck, part of her leg and her feet, which had



never been pinched in French boots. Mario at first was at a loss to find something that would at once satisfy the *exigeante* Countess and yet not be too daring, but he finally settled on an Eastern costume in which her appearance roused the keenest admiration. Her beautiful head was encircled by a diadem from which a large brilliant hung upon her forehead. Her masses of golden-brown hair flowed down her back, held here and there by strings of pearls. A gold-embroidered robe hung lightly on her tall majestic figure, and she wore jewelled sandals on her bare feet. She was a perfect picture of "The Queen of the South."

At another fancy-dress ball at Court she devised a gipsy-like dress with hearts scattered all over it, some being in places where one would scarcely expect to find that organ. The Empress Eugénie congratulated her upon her dress, but added, "Surely, Countess, your heart seems a little low down."

Another curious custom of the Countess was to arrange her drawing-room to suit the dress she meant to wear, or the person who was coming to see her. On one occasion Mario found her lying on a black velvet sofa, surrounded by birds and dogs, clad in a huge tiger-skin, her feet and arms bare, the room being arranged to look like a grotto, and ornamented with palms. She became attached—if the word can be applied to one who

was so entirely engrossed in herself—to both singers, and went to see them frequently both in Paris and Florence. But quite suddenly, and for no known reason, the Countess gave up going out into society. Leaving her sumptuous home, with its numerous attendants, for a tiny flat with only one servant, she shut herself up and lived the life of a hermit. The daylight was never permitted to enter her rooms, and for years she lived by artificial light, and died almost forgotten. It was said that vanity was the cause of this seclusion; that she preferred to retire from the world in the heyday of her beauty rather than let the world see its gradual decay. Her only companion in these last years was a little dog.

Mario's kind friend of his early Paris days, the Marquis de Brême, now Duke of Sartirana, was another frequent guest. He was godfather to two of Mario's daughters, who as tiny children constantly went to see him at the Pitti Palace when he was unable to leave his room on account of the asthma from which he suffered. He was a most charming and kindly old man.

Count Cigalla, Master of the Horse to King Victor Emmanuel, was an intimate friend of Mario. His wife was an Englishwoman, the sister of the wife of the unfortunate Admiral Persano, who lost the battle of Lissa against the Austrians in

1865. A visit to the King's stables was one of the "sights" which Mario always gave his visitors. At one time King Victor Emanuel had no less than eight hundred thoroughbreds, which Count Cigalla used to show with the greatest pride. Knowing the King's love for horses, the various other sovereigns in Europe were constantly presenting him with fine animals; consequently there were breeds of all countries in the vast stables, but more especially of England, Ireland, and Hungary.

The Sicilian patriot, General Scalia, and his wife were much-loved guests. The General and his brother were descended from an old Palermitan family, and were amongst the foremost of those who worked for their country's freedom. General Scalia, after years of exile in England, took part in Garibaldi's expedition of the "Mille" in 1860.

"One fair ideal led our chieftain on,  
For evermore he burned to do his deed,  
With the fine stroke and gesture of a King'

might fitly have been written of Garibaldi, that noble "unbought warrior" who, constant to his country's welfare, consecrated his life to the attainment of the highest hopes of the Italian patriots.

In Mrs. Joseph Whitaker's interesting book, "Sicily and England," she relates how, as a child,

she went with her parents, General and Madame Scalia, to Villa Salviati.

“One of my joys,” she writes, “in childhood was the Sunday afternoons spent at the Villa Salviati, then belonging to Mario and Grisi. The two singers were great friends of my parents. Madame Grisi’s grand generous nature was especially sympathetic to them both, also Mario’s more brilliant qualities of mind as well as heart.

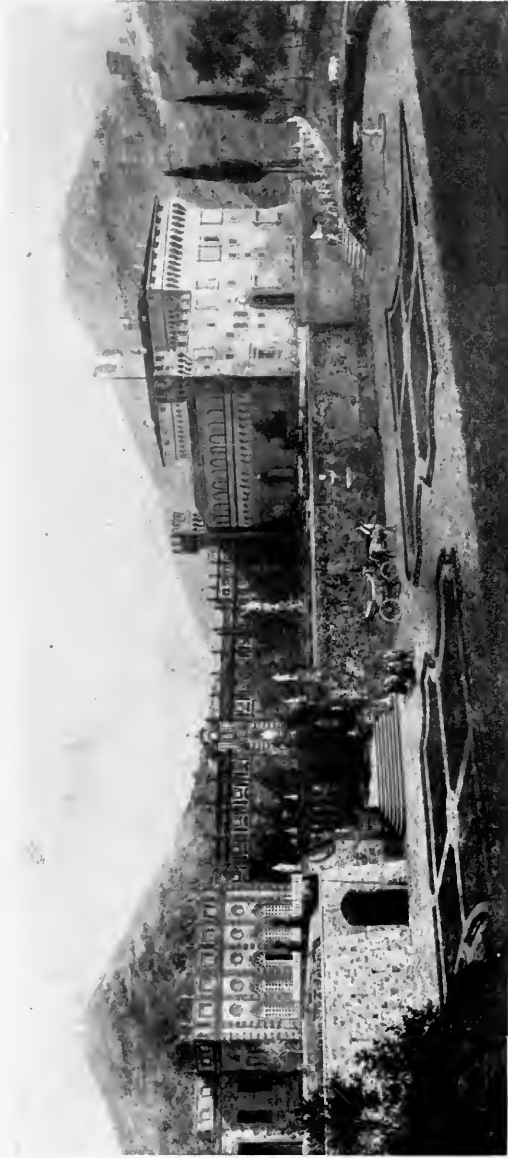
“The hospitality at the Villa was unique. It was never known how many guests would avail themselves of the general invitation to lunch or dinner given on Sundays amongst their friends. I remember on one occasion when we were lunching there, Madame Grisi drove us in her carriage from Florence. The road from the Porta San Gallo almost to the gates of the Villa was lined with beggars, gathered there to await her passing, and she threw handfuls of coppers to them all the way—a form of *largesse* that deeply impressed my childish mind! We once met an old English lady—a Mrs. Colquhoun Grant—who told us that after hearing Mario in ‘Le Prophète’ she had journeyed to his house at Twickenham the next day to pick up a few pebbles from the gravel walk, in order that she might possess some of the ground upon which he had trodden! . . . Grisi’s love for

England is touchingly expressed in one of her letters to my mother, dated April 30, 1869. ‘A me piange il cuore di non andare a Londra! Ne sono così addolorata; caro paese che adoro, e dove vorrei finire la mia vita’ (‘My heart bleeds at not going to London! I am most unhappy about it; dear country that I adore, and where I wish I might end my life’).”

Grisi had a curious presentiment that she would not see England again, and she died suddenly in November the same year. Mrs. Whitaker continues, “I remember so well one day in that winter, 1867, at Florence, how, after persuading me to sing, she kissed me enthusiastically and clasped a gold bracelet upon my arm. Then as a reward she sang ‘The Last Rose of Summer’ to me. I was only eight years old, but how well I remember the scene—the great singer, singing for the pleasure of a little child! The exquisite pathos of the words and the melody seemed to sound a lament for her own passing. I can see now the regal carriage of her head as she sang; the scene is one of the strongest impressions of my childhood.”

It was near the end of the year 1866 that Garibaldi honoured the two singers with a visit at the Villa, a visit which they always regarded as

one of the greatest events of their life at their dear Florentine home. Mario took his carriage and pair to meet the General, who was accompanied by his son Riciotti and his daughter. Donna Giulia, surrounded by the peasants and servants, waited his arrival at the upper end of the avenue which led to the Villa from the Porta San Gallo road. The excitement was intense. Many of the workers in the gardens of the Villa and upon Mario's estate had been Garibaldians, and had followed their great leader at some time or another. Without exception they had donned the "red shirt" in honour of his coming, and the oldest amongst them held the national flag. By degrees a crowd of men, women, and children collected in the avenue, and presently the sound of cheering and cries of "Viva Garibaldi! Viva Garibaldi!" gave notice to those on the terrace of the guest's approach. Then came the carriage followed by a cheering crowd of people. Mario was the first to alight, followed immediately by Garibaldi, who kissed the Diva's hand repeatedly. Grisi was so moved that her tears flowed unrestrainedly. Garibaldi's daughter having been presented to Mario and Grisi, and their eldest daughter having been presented to Garibaldi, the hero turned to those who crowded round and thanked them for their kind reception. Then Mario spoke a few words of warm welcome, and in his pure



GARIBALDI'S VISIT TO MARIO AND GRISI AT VILLA SALVIATI  
(From a *Painting* by Agnesi still in the Villa.)





ringing voice started the Garibaldian hymn, in which Grisi joined, and, finally, all the people crowding round:—

“ Si scopron le tombe, si levano i morti ;  
 I martiri nostri son tutti risorti,  
 Le spade nel pugno, gli allori alle chiome,  
 La fiamma ed il nome d'Italia sul cor !  
 Veniamo ! Veniamo ! su, O giovani schiere !  
 Su al vento per tutto le nostre bandiere !  
 Su tutti col ferro, su tutti col foco.  
 Su tutti col foco d'Italia nel cor.  
 Va fuori d'Italia, va fuori che'è l'ora !  
 Va fuori d'Italia, va fuori, O stranier ! ”

“ The tombs are uncovered, the dead come from far ;  
 The ghosts of our martyrs are rising to war,  
 With swords in their hands and with laurels of fame,  
 And dead hearts still glowing with Italy's name.  
 Come join them ! Come follow ! O youth of our land !  
 Come fling out our banner and marshal our band !  
 Come all with cold steel and come all with hot fire,  
 Come all with the flame of Italia's desire.  
 Begone from Italia, begone from our home !  
 Begone from Italia, O stranger, begone ! ”

Garibaldi, one hand clasped in that of Grisi and the other resting affectionately on Mario's shoulder, bowed repeatedly to the clamorous shouts, his sad but noble smile shewing how keenly he felt the true friendship and love around him, and that he realised from this spontaneous welcome that all at Villa Salviati were grateful for all he had done—and at what a sacrifice—for Italy.

Mario and Grisi led their guest into the Villa, where, in the splendid gallery leading out of the courtyard, their younger children were waiting. With a mother's pride, Grisi presented each child by name to Garibaldi, who kissed them all. Refreshments were served, and then the conversation turned upon Garibaldi's various battles, and the wound from which he was still lame. In a hushed silence he told us the tragic story of the death of his beloved wife Anita. It happened in 1849, whilst he was on his way to help the Venetians against the Austrians. The Austrians captured most of their vessels and his companions. I will quote the account Garibaldi afterwards wrote in his memoirs, as he used almost the same words when telling us the story that afternoon at Villa Salviati:—

“ My position in these dreadful moments can be better imagined than described. My unhappy wife was dying! but the enemy was in pursuit with that alacrity which foreshadows easy victory, and before us was the prospect of landing on a coast that was probably infested not only with our Austrian enemies, but with fierce Papal troops as well. However, we reached the land; I took my precious burden in my arms, disembarked, and laid her on the shore. I told my companions—who mutely

asked what they should do—each to set out in a different direction to seek a refuge wherever one might be found, and bade them at all events to go away from there, as the enemy's boats were likely to arrive at any moment. For me to go further was out of the question. I could not abandon my dying wife. The men to whom I spoke were my cherished comrades, Ugo Bassi and Ciceriacchio with his two sons. Bassi said to me, 'I am going to look for some little cottage where I can change my breeches, as these will certainly excite suspicion'—for he was wearing red trousers, taken I believe from the corpse of a French soldier at Rome, and given him by one of our men, days before, to replace his much-patched pair.

“Ciceriacchio bade me an affectionate farewell as he and his sons left me. Thus did these excellent men and I part, never to meet again.

“A few days later Austrian cruelty satiated its thirst for blood by the execution of these noble-minded men, and thus revenged its past fears. I remained near the sea in a field of maize with my Anita, and my inseparable follower, Lieutenant Leggiero, who had been with me in Switzerland the year before, after the affair at Marenzoni.

“The last words of my beloved were for her sons, whom she felt she should never see again. We stayed for some time in the maize-field uncertain

what to do with her. Finally, I told Leggiero to explore the neighbourhood in order to discover some house near, and with his wonted readiness he immediately set off. I waited for some little time, but soon hearing footsteps approaching I emerged from my hiding-place, to see Leggiero with a man whom I immediately recognised with delight, for his presence was in itself a consolation to me. This was Colonel Nino Bonnet, one of my most distinguished officers, wounded at Rome during the siege wherein he had lost a gallant brother. He himself had gone home to be healed of his wounds. For me nothing more fortunate than this meeting with my brother-in-arms could have happened. He was a landowner in these parts and lived in the neighbourhood. Thus it was that he had heard the cannonading and, foreseeing our arrival, had hastened to the seashore to find us and give us help. The brave and intelligent Bonnet ran great risk to himself in this search for us. Having now gained such a helper, I put myself entirely in his hands, and thus we were saved. He at once proposed that we should go to a little cabin near by to get some restorative for my unhappy wife. Thither we betook ourselves, supporting Anita between us, and with great difficulty reached a cottage whose poor inhabitants gave us some water—that first necessity for the suffering woman—I

do not remember what else. From there we went to a house belonging to Bonnet's sister, who showed us every kindness. On leaving her we crossed part of the valley of Comacchio in order to reach La Mandriola, where a doctor was to be found. When we arrived at La Mandriola Anita remained lying on a mattress in the cart in which we had travelled. I said to Doctor Zannini, who just then entered the house, 'Try to save the lady.' He answered, 'Let us put her to bed.' Then we four each took a corner of the mattress and carried her into an upstairs room. When I placed my wife on the bed I saw that Death had already marked her for his own. I felt for her pulse—it had ceased to beat! Before me, a corpse, lay the mother of my children! Directly they see me, I thought, they will ask for their mother. I wept bitterly for the loss of my Anita, for the woman who had been my constant companion in the most adventurous part of my life. I commended her remains for burial to the kind folk who surrounded me, and then at the request of the people of the house, whom I was endangering by my stay, quickly withdrew. I staggered on, ill, scarcely able to walk, in the direction of Sant' Alberto, with a guide who took me to the house of a tailor, a poor, honest, and kind-hearted man.

“Bonnet, to whom I owed my life, was but the first of a series of protectors without whom I

should never have been able to journey, as I actually did, for thirty-seven days from the mouth of the Po to the Gulf of Sterbino, where I embarked for Liguria."

All were deeply moved, especially Grisi, whose mother's heart was profoundly touched by the sad narrative.

Garibaldi promised a signed photograph of himself to all the children, then went away escorted by Mario, being as enthusiastically cheered on his departure as he had been on his arrival, the peasants crowding round the carriage to shake his hand or touch him.

Shortly afterwards Grisi received the following letter, written from his place of exile :—

"CAPRERA : *January 26, 1867.*

"DEAR AND KIND SIGNORA DE CANDIA,

"My picture by dear Clelia will be very precious to me, but even more so those of your three little ones, on whose gentle features appears the angelic reflection of their mother. You, madam, will have divined that it is more than esteem that every Italian owes you. I love you and everyone who belongs to you. With gratitude, I am for life,

"Yours,

G. GARIBALDI."

Few men in any country or period have inspired such veneration and love as Garibaldi. It is recorded by the Marquis Costa de Beauregard, the writer of historical romances, that the day after Garibaldi's death a tourist in Venice said to his guide, who had fought under the great patriot, "You loved Garibaldi?" "He was my god," was the answer. "But he is dead," the tourist said. "What does it matter? He will arise like Christ at the first call from Italy," was the answer. "But what did he do for *you*," the tourist persisted. "What did he do for me? *He was my country*," the old Garibaldian replied.

This illustrates the love with which Garibaldi's unselfish heroism inspired his fellow-countrymen.

No list of the guests at Villa Salviati would be complete without mentioning the name of Prince Joseph Michael Poniatowsky, nephew of that favourite of Catherine the Great, who was the last King of Poland. He was a member of the French Senate during the Third Empire, and became famous as a musician. He composed the operas "Don Desiderio," "Pietro Medici," and an operetta called "A Travers un Mur," all of which gained considerable success. He also composed songs, of which the most popular in England was "The Yeoman's Wedding Song."

In 1868 came the news of Rossini's death in Paris. Despite her grief at the loss of her old master, who had been her kindest friend since her early appearance in Italy, and the severing of the closest tie with her youth, Grisi bore the news with greater calmness than she would have done a year or two before. Already she had a presentiment, which gradually became an ever-present consciousness, that her own life was soon to end, and gradually she became more and more indifferent to the outer world, all her thoughts and time being absorbed by her intense devotion to Mario and her children.

Rossini was buried in Paris (twenty years later the remains were brought to Florence and buried in Santa Croce), and on the day of the funeral in Paris it was arranged by Grisi that the dead composer's "Stabat Mater" should be sung in the Duomo at Florence by herself, Mario, Alboni the great contralto, and Graziani. It was a memorable occasion, as not only was it the last time that Grisi and Mario were heard singing together, but it was the last time that Grisi sang in public. The Cathedral was crowded, and those grand voices made an impression that has never been forgotten.

I have already mentioned the beautiful manner in which both Grisi and Mario rendered Rossini's



sacred music, and what Théophile Gautier said of them when the "Stabat Mater" was first given at the Italiens in 1842. The reader can imagine what the effect of those glorious voices must have been, heard in the vast space of the Duomo in Florence. All the artistes sang their best, but to Grisi it was her swan-song, and she put all her soul into her part. Her voice was as strong and pure as it had been thirty years before, and as it rang exquisitely sweet and true through the stately building and echoed among the marble columns, all hearts were thrilled—even men were in tears.

The following winter Mario went to Russia, and from there to London for the season, returning to Florence in July to prepare for his farewell visit to St. Petersburg in the autumn. Those summer months of 1869 were the last the two singers spent together in their dear Tuscan home.

In August Grisi went to Wiesbaden and to Baden-Baden. In the latter city she was asked by the Grand-Duchess to sing at a charity concert with Madame Viardot Garcia. The whole of the Baden-Baden Court was present, including the Duchess of Hamilton, daughter of the Grand-Duchess of Baden-Baden and grandmother of the present heir to the principality of Monaco. Both

the Duchess and the handsome Duke of Hamilton were personal friends of Grisi and Mario. The Empress Augusta, then Queen of Prussia, was also present. Grisi was loudly encored, and at the request of her royal listeners she sang "The Last Rose of Summer" and "Home, sweet home."

It had been decided that Grisi and the children should accompany Mario to St. Petersburg, but as the time for departure drew near Donna Giulia grew more and more depressed and sorrowful. She was convinced she would never see her dear home again. In the spring of that year she had had a strange vision. She had seen her little daughter Bella Maria, who was dead, standing by her bedside; the child had told her they would soon be together again. Mario and her friends all tried to rally her out of her depression, and to convince her that this vision was a trick of the imagination brought about by overstrung nerves, but her belief in its reality was not to be shaken, and she was convinced that her call had come.

They left the Villa on October 25—a month to a day before Grisi's death.

During the bustle of departure Mario missed her, and fearing they would lose the train he went to look for her. He found her going slowly through

the rooms in which she had spent so many happy hours, bidding each a silent farewell. Tears trickled down her face as the carriage rolled away, and when the assembled servants cried "Buon viaggio. A rivederci!" she shook her head sadly. At the station there was a crowd of old friends, their arms filled with flowers, to say good-bye; but Grisi's last look from the window seemed to tell them what a long good-bye they and she had spoken. Few indeed of those who clasped hands that day are still alive.

So ended the twenty years of Mario and Grisi's happy life in dear Florence. In 1873 Mario sold the Villa, no longer wishing to live in a place so full of poignant memories, and nearly all its art treasures, including a collection of armour he had made, were dispersed. It was bought by Mr. Hagermann, a Swede, from whom it passed to his sister, Madame de Pourtalès. It now belongs to Signora Turri, widow of Commendatore Turri, who most worthily upholds the tradition of generous hospitality set by my father and mother. A life-sized portrait of Grisi still hangs in the Villa, and in a small room on the ground-floor is a picture showing the two singers receiving Garibaldi on the occasion of the famous visit which I have already described. These pictures and some old furniture

recall, like a faint passing dream, the time when Villa Salviati was the dear home of Mario and Grisi.

MEMORIES.

Soft waves of music rose and fell.

. . . . .  
 Obedient to the charmèd spell,  
     Thronged memories of other days,  
 Dear faces smiling thro' the gloom,  
     The gathered mists of passing years ;  
 I see you touched with vernal bloom,  
     Your eyes undimmed by earthly tears.  
 Beloved ones, who loved, all the love  
     So freely given, frank and true,  
 Should surely draw my thoughts above  
     And link my soul with Heaven and you.

## CHAPTER XI

MARIO and Grisi left Florence on October 25 for Berlin *en route* for St. Petersburg. Just before they reached the Prussian capital the train went off the line owing to the heavy snow that had fallen, and the engine ran down an embankment, dragging with it the carriage in which were Mario and Grisi's three children, their governess and nurses. Beyond a severe shaking no one was hurt, but Mario caught a bad cold, as they had to get out of the train and walk in the snow. On arriving at Berlin they went to the Hôtel du Nord in the Unter den Linden, now pulled down, a bank being built upon its site, and here Grisi collapsed.

She was more shaken and frightened by the railway accident than she would admit; she complained of a sense of suffocation, and frequently expressed her conviction that she would never leave the hotel alive. Mario did his utmost to calm her, but after a few days' stay he was obliged to go on to St. Petersburg, as he had to appear

on the first night of the opera season there. Their parting was both pathetic and painful. Grisi, calm but intensely sad, clung to Mario in a last embrace, and in answer to his entreaties that she would be cheerful and remember that they would meet again in a few days, she said, fixing her melancholy eyes upon his face, "Good-bye; we shall not meet again." Entreaties and persuasions alike were useless; nothing could move her fixed idea that this was their last parting. Mario, terribly upset, kissed her tenderly and hurried to catch his train to St. Petersburg.

Grisi's conviction was right; after the next day she never left her bed again. During the night of November 24 her children, fearing that her condition was very serious, telegraphed to Plymouth for Dr. Isabell, who they thought was the only person who might be able to rouse their mother from her melancholy condition. Doctor Isabell started at once, but arrived the third day after her death, for the great singer passed away on the morning of the 25th. Her last word was the name of her youngest child, the one who had died at Brighton. Suddenly she raised herself in her bed, stretched out her arms as if to an invisible person, murmured "Mia Bella," and then

sank back unconscious of the tears of the three children who clung round the dear mother they saw passing away. With a deep sigh she was gone.

Stunned by the suddenness of their loss, it was only by degrees that the children realised the truth. An old friend General (afterwards Sir Beauchamp) Walker, then *attaché* at the British Embassy in Berlin, came at once and took charge of them. He was quickly followed by two of the ladies-in-waiting of the Empress Augusta, and the news was telegraphed to Russia. The Czar was the first to hear of it. He sent for Mario, who was at a rehearsal and, seeing that the news had not yet reached him, with the greatest kindness and consideration told him that Madame Grisi was in a very serious condition, and that he had better go at once to Berlin. A special train was placed at Mario's disposal and he started at once, still ignorant of his beloved wife's death. On arriving at the hotel early in the morning he hurried to her room, to find it empty; her body had been removed on the evening of her death to a private vault. Then, and only then, did Mario realise the awful truth. His daughters, who were all three together in an adjoining room, learnt of their father's arrival by hearing a heavy fall. He had

fainted. After hearing the details of her sad end, Mario at once went to see her as she lay in her coffin, in the lid of which was a sheet of plate-glass through which the head was clearly seen. It was agony to Mario that after all the years of happiness passed by her side he had not been with her at the end. But the face that he saw through the glass was that of a young woman in her prime. The mouth was smiling sweetly, every line was smoothed away on the beautiful Greek forehead framed by the still dark hair.

Mario decided to take the body to Paris, and throughout the melancholy journey he was pursued in the most extraordinary way by Grisi's unlucky number, thirteen. The carriage in which he travelled was number thirteen; being delayed on the road, he reached Paris on the thirteenth of the month; and when the case in which the coffin had been brought from Berlin was opened a large card inscribed with "No. 13" was found nailed upon it.

Grisi was buried with her beloved little ones in Père la Chaise; her tomb stands in front of those of La Fontaine and Molière. A plain white stone with a simple inscription, "Giulietta de Candia," marks where what was once so lovely and lovable now lies.

The following lines from *Punch* in December



1869 are a just tribute to the great *prima donna* :—

“ ‘ Nay, no elegies nor dirges,’  
 Let thy name recall the surges,  
 Waves of song, whose magic play  
 Swept our very souls away,  
 And the memories of the days  
 When to name thee was to praise.  
 ‘ Visions of a queenly grace,’  
 Glowing of a radiant face ;  
 Perfect brow—we deemed it proud,  
 When it wore the thunder-cloud ;  
 Yet a brow might softly rest  
 On a gladdened lover’s breast.  
 Were thy song a passion-gush,  
 Were it hatred’s torrent-rush,  
 Were it burst of grieving woe,  
 Or a sorrow soft and low,  
 Were it mischief’s harmless wiles,  
 Or wild mirth and sparkling smiles,  
 Art’s high priestess ! at her shrine  
 Ne’er was truer guard than thine.  
 Were it love or were it hate,  
 It was thine, and it was great.  
 Glorious women like to thee  
 We have seen not, nor shall see.  
 Lost the love, the hate, the mirth,  
 . . . . .  
 Light upon thee lie the earth. ”

After the funeral Mario took his daughters to St. Petersburg, and there for a little time they were separated, the two youngest girls going to a lady who lived in the Czar’s Palace, the eldest girl

and the governess to another friend, and Mario himself to a hotel until an *appartement* was taken in the Grand Moskaia No. 50, not far from the Palace of the Grand-Duchess Marie of Leuchtenberg, whose kindness to Mario and his motherless children was unbounded. The Czar—who had most generously continued Mario's salary although he had not sung for three weeks—was present with the whole Court on the night of his re-appearance on December 18 in the "Ballo in Maschera," when he was most warmly received. The kind welcome touched Mario so deeply as to imperil his composure, but he sang splendidly, although at first his voice trembled with emotion. Many friends accompanied him home, as they often did, at the end of the performance. His first appearance after Grisi's death was a bitter and trying ordeal.

At the Opera House in St. Petersburg Mario was always called "The Prince," because of his generosity. A plaid shawl which he used to wrap round him when going to and from his dressing-room and the stage was soon reduced to the size of a scarf, owing to little pieces being cut from it as mementos, and even this scarf was torn to little pieces amongst those on the stage on the last night of the season. Mario never recovered the loss he sustained by Grisi's death, and he was pleased to

feel he would soon too bid farewell to the stage himself, in order that he might be more with his children, and pursue his love of Art in his own country.

In response to an invitation to attend a banquet which his numerous admirers in St. Petersburg desired to give him, he wrote in the following terms :—

“ MONSIEUR,—J’accepte avec bonheur votre aimable, gracieuse et artistique invitation ; les expressions, par lesquelles vous me le présentez, non seulement m’honorent mais me rendent ce bonheur qu’on cherche toujours et qui paraissait vouloir me fuir à jamais. Oui, plus d’un quart de siècle, j’ai travaillé à cet art que vous aimez, et je dois à la vérité de vous dire, que pendant toute cette longue et pénible carrière, votre noble pensée est la plus belle, la plus chère récompense et satisfaction, qu’a reçu mon cœur et mon amour propre d’artiste. Dites, Monsieur, à ces rudes enfants du nord, comme il vous plaît de vous qualifier, que leur indulgente sympathie m’encourage à accepter leur invitation et que je viendrai entre eux leur presser la main et les remercier.

“ Agréez mes salutations respectueuses,

“ J. MARIO DE CANDIA.”

The dinner was prolonged until the early hours,

endless speeches being made and gifts presented. Amongst the latter was a gold laurel wreath with the inscription :—

“ A MARIO.’

“ L’âme est immortelle et votre art étant l’expression fidèle de votre âme, si belle et si noble, les artistes de St. Pétersbourg vous prient d’accepter ces quelques feuilles de lauriers en témoignage de leur profonde admiration pour vos productions artistiques dont le souvenir est impérissable.

“(Signed) WIENIAWSKI, LEVI, AVER, ZABEL, DAVIDOFF, MOURER, WURM, etc.”

To raise the sum necessary for this gift Mario’s photograph was sold with the following inscription :—

“ Il nune del canto—Se vend à 3 r au lieu de souscription pour offrir à Mario une couronne de lauriers en or après la fin de sa carrière artistique.”

An ode written for the occasion was recited :—

“Gloire au nom de Mario,  
Car des siècles peut-être :  
Passeront oubliés sur l’horloge du temps  
Sans qu’un tel prodige puisse encore paraître,  
Et charmer le monde par de si doux accents.

Voix phénomale, yeux ardents, beauté, grâce,  
Tout lui fut prodigué, la suprême équité  
Veut que son souvenir à jamais ne s’efface,  
Lé génie n’a point d’âge, il a l’éternité.

Nous te remercions tous, Roi du chant et du drame,  
 Chacun de nous ravi, transporté, rajeuni,  
 Tout touché jusqu'aux larmes,  
 Heureux au fond de l'âme  
 Par ton divine talent. Cher Mario, sois béni ! ”

They also made Mario sing, and during the wild enthusiasm that followed a young page of the Czar, who had never left Mario's side all the evening, burst into tears. As the last word was spoken Wieniawski, the celebrated violinist, embraced the singer, and then Turguénieff embraced him.

Although the thermometer was always under zero, Mario's friends and admirers never allowed a day to pass without sending him fresh flowers, and numerous were the kind attentions showered upon him and his daughters. The latter were frequently asked to the Winter Palace, when they were obliged to dress in white ; deep mourning was not then allowed in the Palace.

On Saturday, March 5, 1870, Mario took his final farewell of the Russian stage. The “ Huguenots ” was the opera, and at its close some of the audience, breaking through all restraint, came on to the stage, and amongst them an excited lady who had scrambled out of a stage box. Mario, half-buried in flowers thrown to him, stood speechless at this overwhelming display of affection and admiration. Those upon the stage clasped his

hands and embraced him, then amidst renewed shouting and applause, in which the Emperor and his *entourage* joined most enthusiastically, Wieniawski placed on the bewildered singer's head a laurel wreath on the white silk ribbons of which was inscribed, "Souvenir de la soirée 1870 ; reconnaissance à Mario de la part de partisans passionnés de St. Pétersbourg." When Mario could at last get away the wreath was divided, pieces of it, as well as his clothes, handkerchiefs and anything else that could be found in his dressing-room, being kept as keepsakes. His children were awakened by the cheering of the crowd that escorted Mario to his home, bringing with him a huge bouquet on the red ribbons of which was written in gold, "Le soleil couchant eclipse encore toutes les étoiles du firmament." It was morning before the tired singer could tear himself away from his admirers. His send-off at the station was equally enthusiastic. Many clung to his hands as the train moved slowly away amidst cries of "Au revoir ! Viva Mario ! Adieu !"

In the autumn of that year, during the siege of Paris, Mario but for Willert Beale would have risked his life in order to pay a visit to Grisi's tomb. Willert Beale tells the story :—

"We were together in the provinces making his farewell tour through the United Kingdom

(his daughters were at Brighton). To avoid the trouble of correspondence he gave me, as was usual with him when we were together, his letters to read and answer for him. Among them was one in German which he received at Scarborough and which he hesitated to show me, although he was unable to decipher it without my assistance. After puzzling over the handwriting some time he handed the letter to me, and I found it came from the Prussian military authorities at Versailles. It was in reply to a request he had made, and contained a guarantee of safe escort into Paris during the month of November, 1870, and also a declaration that the guarantee of safety ceased as soon as the bearer of the letter was within the Paris lines. 'You know,' said Mario, almost apologetically, 'I have a fortnight's leave during the tour?' 'Yes, I am quite aware of that, but why go to Paris at such a time?' 'I must go,' he answered; 'you will perhaps consider it childish, but it is nevertheless a sentiment *plus fort que moi*. I must go to Père la Chaise on November 25, the anniversary of her death.' We discussed the matter at great length, I opposing the project as firmly as he insisted upon carrying it out. . . . He was firm in his resolve at first and declared there was no danger involved in the intention he had decided to carry out. I reminded him of his

daughters and what a grief it would be to them were any disaster to befall him. 'I have many friends in Paris,' he urged. 'But they cannot diminish the great risk you will incur to gratify that which after all is a romantic fancy.' He met every objection I raised to his going, but before we separated that night, or rather that morning, he promised me the fortnight's leave should be passed with his children at Brighton, and the letter from Versailles remained unanswered."

When the tour came to an end in December, 1870, Mario remained with his children at Brighton. In the following May they moved to a house in Larkhall Rise at Clapham, and he began his last season at Covent Garden.

It was generally acknowledged that he never sang or acted at any period of his career with greater power and effect than at his final appearance on July 19, 1871, in "La Favorita." All the newspapers of the date speak of it with enthusiasm. "Mario was inspired." He was deeply affected by the prolonged and heartfelt applause of his warm-hearted audience, and could only bow his thanks in answer to the tumultuous shouts of "Speech! Speech!" Few would have believed that a British audience could be roused to such a frenzy of excitement as was exhibited that night. Everyone



stood up, waved handkerchiefs and cheered lustily. The Duchess of Cambridge, the late Duchess of Teck and the Grand-Duchess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz were in the Royal box throwing wreaths and flowers. One of these wreaths he caught in his hand, to the delight of the audience. A bouquet thrown him by Ouida contained an ivory cigar-case, with these words from Dante inscribed upon it :—

“Pietosi dissero gli Dei  
Oda la terra una volta la musica  
Del ciel, e labbre toccaro di . . .  
Mario.”

(“With indulgence—quoth the gods—  
Let the earth for once hear the music  
Of Heaven. And they touched the lips of . . .  
Mario.”)

Amongst the many presents carried on to the stage was a beautiful octagonal-shaped casket ornamented at each corner with golden mounts, and in a medallion on each was engraved the following verse :—

“Mario, to thee there can be no farewell,  
Each look, each tone, in memory doth dwell.  
To those unborn not having seen thy face  
'Twere useless to describe each manly grace.  
For us 'tis but another season o'er  
Making each impress deeper than before.”

The casket contained a set of salvers with borders of frosted silver, the centres of each bearing this

inscription :—"Presented to Signor Mario on his final retirement from the stage by an admirer of his splendid talents, 19th July, 1871."

With great difficulty Mario got through the stage door and struggled to his carriage, which was surrounded by a cheering mob determined to see the departure of the singer who for over thirty years had been their idol. Not content with seeing and shouting, the crowd seized the flowers and wreaths—a small part of those gathered up from the stage which his servant was finding it hard work to carry away in a basket—as mementos.

Mario never returned to the stage again, although very many tempting offers were made him to break through his determination. He was sixty-one years old, but when "made up" had the appearance of youth, for his figure was unimpaired and not a wrinkle betrayed him, and seeing him as Romeo—his last operatic creation—no one would have guessed his age.

Resolved to quit the stage for ever, he went to Florence to arrange about the selling of his lovely home, the Villa Salviati, feeling he could not live there again without Donna Giulia. On his way to the station in London his cab was stopped by the crowds surrounding Hyde Park, the day the mob pulled down the railings. A man in the crowd recognised him, and calling out "Why, there is old

Mario," cheered lustily. Mario was delighted and handed the speaker his new box of cigars out of the window.

When he arrived in Florence he found a letter from Dr. Gorodkoff saying that his admirers in St. Petersburg were founding a club in his honour, to be called by his name. Mario sent them a full-length picture of himself in his famous part in the "Huguenots," with the following letter, the translation of which is as here given:—

" FLORENCE : *May 14*, 1872.

" MY DEAR DOCTOR AND FRIENDS,

" I feel deeply touched by what you have told me this morning of the friends of Art in St. Petersburg. The gracious project by which these kind gentlemen wish to honour the remembrance of my feeble talent fills me with a noble pride. Yes, in my long artistic career I should have thought myself too presumptuous, and have treated as wild dreams any audacious hopes of aspiring to the prize they wish to give me.

" Be kind enough, dear Doctor, to convey to these gentlemen my feelings of deep gratitude. Please tell them that if at this moment my position were more prosperous I should come at once to press their hands and thank them personally, which I am in hopes of being able to do later on. Indeed,

dear Doctor, you have been a great comfort to the soul and heart of the old singer who loves you so well.

“G. MARIO.”

Mario's youngest daughter, afterwards Mrs. A. P. Vaughan, passing through Paris to join him and her sister in Italy, was met by Strakosch, Adelina Patti's impresario, who asked her to beg her father to take a farewell concert tour in America. On arriving at the Villa Salviati she at once told her father the message and the terms, which Mario accepted, and on August 25, 1872, he embarked at Liverpool for New York, accompanied by Strakosch, Carlotta Patti, and other concert singers. During the six months that the tour lasted they visited the principal cities of the United States. It was during this tour that Mario made the acquaintance of the poet Longfellow, who gave him his photograph as a souvenir. The concert party returned to England in April, 1873, when Mario joined his daughters, who had stayed at Surbiton during his absence. In November they went with their governess to Frankfort-on-the-Main, whilst he, in accordance with a long-cherished desire to live in Rome, went to the Italian capital to find a house.

Rome was a city after his own heart, and, apart

from its endless archaeological attractions, it was especially interesting to him as having recently become the capital of United Italy, and he rejoiced in the idea of settling down upon his native soil, and of seeing the result of the many sacrifices he and Donna Giulia had voluntarily made on behalf of their country. Mario took an apartment in the Corso at the corner of the Piazza del Popolo, where his daughters joined him.<sup>1</sup> His dressing-room led into a covered balcony, which opened into the church next door to the house, and there unseen he would attend Mass *en robe de chambre*. Each day brought some fresh subject of interest to Mario in his new home. His theatrical career terminated with the closing of the stage door of Covent Garden, and he had said farewell to the platform in America. He never sang again in public. In Rome he often sang at the Quirinal with Queen Margherita, whose master was Eduardo Vera, an old friend of Mario's. On one occasion when Mario was singing a duet in "Don Pasquale" with Her Majesty he was greatly startled in the middle by two little marmosets which the Queen allowed to run loose in her room suddenly peering at him from behind the sheets of music on the piano.

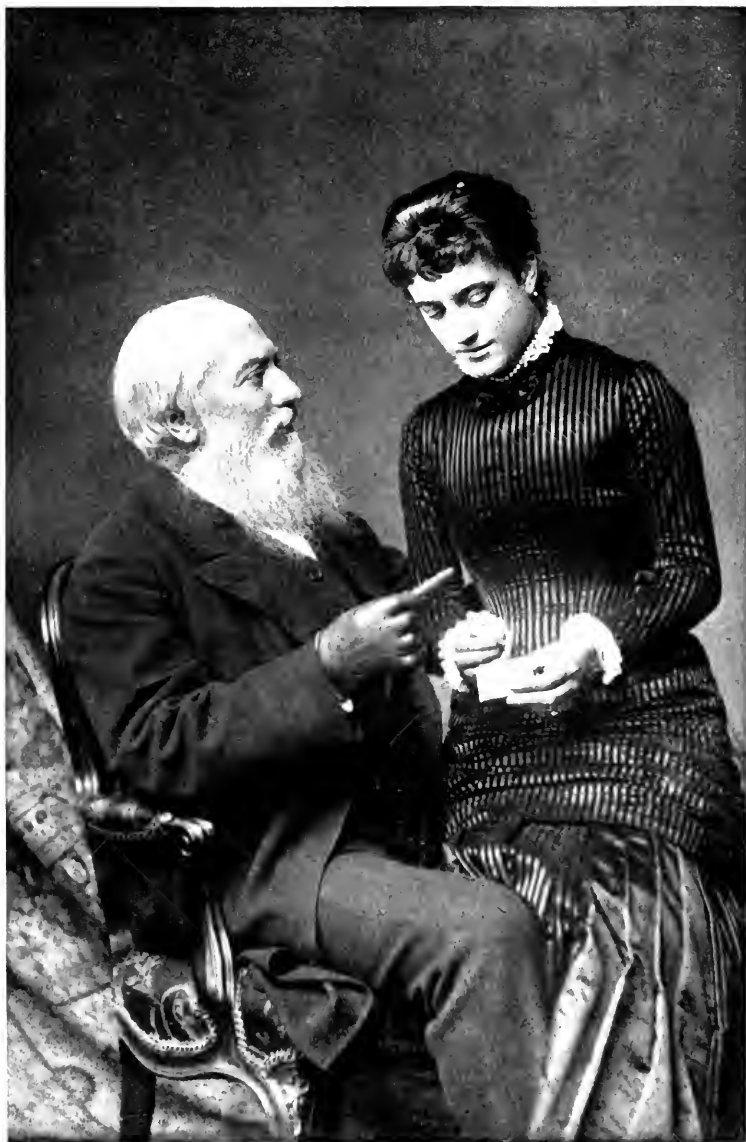
In 1874, two of his daughters being married,

<sup>1</sup> The eldest daughter lived principally in Berlin, where she died not many years ago.

Mario moved into a smaller apartment on the second floor of the Via di Ripetta overlooking the Tiber, where he died. No man was more accessible, and it would have been impossible to be long in his society without discovering that you were with a man of great intellectual aspirations and taste. A friend who visited him wrote :—

“ Indeed it would be difficult to say whether the owner was a student, sculptor, painter, musician, woodcarver or archaeologist. Books in every language, on every subject appertaining to these arts, were there, colour tubes and brushes, palettes, varnishes and pigments, gimlets, screw-drivers, and modelling tools, and—cigar-boxes ! His collection of music, including the works of many masters, lies piled on the floor above his carpenter’s shop and fills the greater part of it. ‘ I have never had time to arrange it since I have been here,’ said Mario. He long entertained the idea of preparing a history of music, the materials for which he had collected years ago and for which he had ransacked many libraries, among others that of the British Museum. ‘ All I want,’ says he, ‘ is a period of calm, that I may go on with my studies, for when one works all the troubles of life vanish.’ ”

Once when Sir Augustus Paget, then British



MARIO AND HIS DAUGHTER, MRS. GODFREY PEARSE.  
*(The last Photograph of Mario.)*





Ambassador at Rome, visited Mario, he found his clothes on the floor amongst all the above-mentioned things. On being asked what had become of his cupboards and chests of drawers, Mario laughingly answered that he had given them as a present to his man-servant, who was going to be married and was more in need of them than himself. Sir Augustus said he would like to give him a piece of furniture, and after much urging Mario accepted a chest of drawers. Shortly afterwards Sir Augustus called again and saw the clothes still on the floor and his present not there. "What had become of it?" Blushing, Mario confessed that he had not been able to resist giving it to an old woman who had nothing at all in which to keep her clothes. Once when a friend remonstrated with him for always giving money to the many beggars who waylaid him with their stories, true or false, Mario said that he preferred to give to the ninety-nine possible impostors rather than that the hundredth honest person should lose the small amounts which might be of real help to him.

White-haired and silver-bearded, with quick eye, florid colour and cheerful expression, Mario was always the centre of an eager crowd of listeners, chiefly singers and literary men, who met at the then most frequented restaurant in the Corso, the

Birreria Morteo. There he narrated episodes of his life and spoke of the subject of which he never tired, Italian Unity. It was one of the greatest joys of his old age to feel that he had lived to see it established. He did not care for going into general society, but whenever he appeared he was made welcome, and was often the guest of Madame Ristori, the famous *tragedienne*, who, as the Marchesa Capranica del Grillo, entertained most hospitably in her fine palace. Prince Baldassare and Prince Ladislas Odescalchi were his closest friends in Rome, and often succeeded in carrying him off to their houses at Civita Vecchia. On one occasion Prince Ladislas persuaded Mario to go with him to Pisa to see an old sword. The temptation was too great, and, despite his disinclination to move, Mario accompanied his friend. From Pisa Prince Ladislas succeeded in getting him to Paris, and from Paris to London to see his married daughters and his grandchildren. Mario's delight was great when he had the two little children (daughters of Mrs. Vaughan) on his knees. He used to sing French and Italian nursery ditties to them, and would call them "Leetle puddings" and "Leetle tubs," to their great amusement and joy. This was his last visit to England and the last time his daughters heard his cheery laugh, or saw his loving face. He was photographed at Downey's with

his daughters and by himself, these being the last photographs of him that were published. In spite of his white hair and beard he was still a handsome man; he would have passed for being much younger than his seventy-two years.

It is a curious fact that, notwithstanding his long residence in England, and his quick ear, my father never succeeded in mastering the language. My mother, on the contrary, spoke English extremely well.

## CHAPTER XII

“ Art reigned incarnate in thy lofty soul,  
Tuning a voice which was Rubini’s peer,  
And whose delicious accents, firm and clear,  
Could hold each changing passion in control.  
But thou wert greatest in some thrilling rôle,  
That moved the heart, or drew the rebel tear,  
And memories of thee, for ever dear,  
Will live and linger now from pole to pole.  
Death cannot ravish thy eternal fame,  
Nor can it snatch the laurel from the brow ;  
The ermine of thy life is free from stain,  
And, for all time, thy ever-glorious name  
Shrined in the future, as ’tis honoured now,  
Will pure, supreme and beautiful remain.”

AMONGST Mario’s many gifts was an extraordinary memory. On his last visit to Bradford he told his companions, “ It is twelve years since I was here, and then in that corner there was a hairdresser’s shop ; next to that a milkman’s, and then a confectioner’s ; now all these shops are different.” Owing to this gift of memory his stories of the past were most vivid and exact, and with very little study he was able to accomplish work that would have taken any ordinary person many months. In answer to a lady who asked for his autograph he wrote :—

“ L'on me dit que je fume trop. Hé! mais un bon cigare a tant de ressemblance avec ma destinée de Ténor, qu'il a pour moi une forte attraction ; un bon cigare est aussi rare qu'un bon Ténor, et coûte aussi cher, et dans sa courte durée, aussi que le Ténor, le souffle de la poitrine le fait vivre et le tue, et de deux—il ne reste qu'un peu de fumée et peut-être un bon souvenir.

“ J. MARIO.”

Alas ! he little knew how soon the puff of smoke to which he quaintly compared himself was to vanish. On his return to Italy from England he was seized with a serious illness which affected his heart, and for some time he gave up smoking cigars and had only an occasional pipe. In spite of this illness his end came as a shock, for it was not known that he was suffering from *angina pectoris*. On the night of December 10, 1883, he had a bad attack, and suffered much from breathlessness and pain. Doctor Gardarelle saw that the end was not far off and gently broke the news to his patient. Never did a man die with more resignation and calm. “Death is nothing,” he said ; “what troubles me is that I shall die without seeing the *locum vestalem* they have just discovered in the Forum.” His friend Prince Ladislas Odescalchi came at once to his bedside. The last

Englishman to see Mario was Mr. W. G. Cusins, Master of Music to Queen Victoria, who wrote the following most interesting account of Mario's last days :—

“ Last winter I was some weeks in Rome and had promised myself the pleasure of calling upon Mario, but being told he was at Palo, I for some time did not go to his house. At length, on Sunday, December 9, I heard he had been seen in Rome; I was prevented calling the next day, but went to his lodgings, No. 16 Via Leoncino, on the Tuesday, and found he had left there some six months before, and I was directed to a house in the Via di Ripetta. Arriving there, I was informed by the *portiere* or doorkeeper, that he inhabited rooms on the second floor and that he was at home, but seriously ill. It was after five in the afternoon. Ascending the staircase, his habitation was easily recognised by a large oval brass plate, with the name ‘ Candia ’ broadly engraved upon it, being affixed to the door. I rang, and the door was quickly opened by a man-servant, by whom I was told that his master was at home, but could see no one, being ill in bed. While I was making further inquiry a stranger came out of the room facing the hall-door. This proved to be the Commendatore Cottrau, an old friend of Mario. He took my card,

and asked me to walk into the dining-room, a well-furnished apartment. An easel with a canvas upon it, paint-brushes and palette in one corner, modelling implements in another, numerous books lying about in well-ordered confusion, sufficiently indicated the tastes and habits of the occupier of the room. A full-length portrait in oil decorated the wall on each side of the fireplace, a half-length life-sized portrait of Giulia Grisi hung on another wall. The two companion pictures by the fireplace were portraits of Mario's father and mother—a handsome couple, the lady especially being remarkably attractive in appearance.

“ ‘He is very ill,’ said Signor Cottrau, addressing me; ‘if you will wait a moment I will take your card to him—he may wish to see you.’ Having offered me a chair, Signor Cottrau opened the door of an adjoining room, and presently I heard Mario in a husky voice mention me by name, and request his friend Cottrau to bid me enter. I went to him and found him propped up in bed with pillows, suffering acutely from difficulty in breathing. We shook hands, and I observed that his grasp was still apparently that of a healthy man although he talked with considerable effort. His first inquiry was after Her Majesty the Queen. He spoke with gratitude of the Queen and of the English nation generally, and I felt that my visit as an

Englishman gave him intense pleasure in what he knew to be his last moments. Subsequently Commendatore Cottrau assured me he constantly spoke of his attachment to England, and often mentioned some of his fellow-artistes, such as Sims Reeves and Santley. Fearing our conversation might fatigue him, I did not prolong my visit beyond a few minutes, and then left him. I was greatly affected on reaching the street, for I felt he was dying, and indeed it appears the doctors had told him so some hours previously. When I saw him his mind was perfectly clear and he appeared to be as strong as ever apart from the affection of the lungs and heart. I had said I would call to inquire the following morning, but after dinner I could not rest, and went round to Signor Rotoli, who did not know even that he was ill, so quiet and secluded was his life in the ancient city. Rotoli and I went together to hear what news there was, and we both were greatly shocked and distressed to learn that he had been dead nearly an hour. I had seen him at half-past five—he died at seven-fifty. We went up and found one of his nephews in the bedroom where the great artiste had breathed his last, and we stayed with him nearly half an hour talking over the past of his gifted uncle. During the afternoon he had given directions respecting the disposal of his few possessions. His pictures,



books, and household furniture he distributed among his daughters. A small house belonging to him at Cagliari he left to his sister for her life, and then to his nephew (Don Stefano de Candia). His wardrobe and articles of personal use he gave to his housekeeper and her husband, who had been his valet. I telegraphed the sad news to Windsor, and on the following evening received a reply from Mr. Sahl, one of Her Majesty's secretaries, as follows: 'Her Majesty with sincere regret has heard of Signor Mario's death, and wishes you if possible to assist at the funeral, and to place a wreath upon his grave in the Queen's name.' The temporary interment, strangely enough remembering what had been his views of such matters, was arranged for Thursday, December 13, at 10 A.M. In so short a time, and at such a season of the year, I had the greatest difficulty to carry out the Queen's commands respecting the wreath. All the flowers to be had in Rome were monopolised by the English residents and by his other admirers, and it was only by mentioning that a wreath must be had for the Queen of England, that I succeeded in obtaining a wreath such as I wished, which ultimately proved to be perhaps one of the largest ever made. I attended the mournful ceremony from its commencement to the end. The small bed-chamber in which Mario died was lighted with four large

wax tapers. The last offices to the dead had been fulfilled according to custom in Italy, and he lay in his coffin in full evening dress, polished boots, white cravat, and white kid gloves, with a small crucifix in his hands, which were crossed. A wreath of fresh flowers had been placed on his breast and his countenance had assumed a much more youthful and serene expression than when I saw him in life. He almost looked like the Mario of the old and well-remembered days. We retired to the adjoining room while the coffin was conveyed below into the street, where a walking funeral procession was formed of monks, priests, and those picturesque mourners the members of the *confraternité*—they were dressed as S. Rocco himself dressed when on earth, that is, a long coat of dark green serge with a green handkerchief tied over the head—headed by Signor Mancini, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, a representative of their Majesties the King and Queen of Italy, and myself, as commanded by Her Majesty the Queen of England.”

“I was assured that his mind was quite clear almost to the end, and that he was perfectly happy and willing to go to those he had loved and lost. He grieved for his children, knowing what their sorrow would be, and several times he said

'*pauvre*—' mentioning them by name. He also mentioned Mr. Percy French, his old attached friend. Prince Odescalchi sent for a priest who, being himself an archaeologist, had known Mario personally, and had often discussed with him the treasures discovered in Rome. Mario received him cheerfully. When the Father left, he said, with tears in his eyes, that he had attended many a deathbed, but had never met with a spirit more calmly prepared to leave the world."

The Church of San Rocco, in which the funeral service was performed, faces the house in the Via di Ripetta in which Mario died, and a larger *détour* was therefore made by the procession, which numbered many hundreds of people, and all the members of the Accademia of Santa Cecilia. Amongst them were the Marchese di Villa-Marina, the husband of Queen Margherita's most attached lady-in-waiting and a relative of Mario's by marriage, and several English ladies who brought a profusion of flowers. The coffin bore the inscription "Don Giovanni de Candia."

As soon as Mario's death was known at Cagliari, strenuous measures were taken to obtain permission of his family to remove the body to the family vault in that city. The Italian Government was induced to support the appeal, and after some time the much-desired consent was obtained, the

body meanwhile remaining in a vault in the Church of San Rocco. The Government undertook the whole expense of transporting Mario's remains to Sardinia. A man-of-war took the coffin, which was guarded by his nephews, to Cagliari, where it was placed in front of the altar of the Church of San Francesco di Paolo in the *boulevard* facing the port. It remained there for twenty-four hours, during which time a constant stream of mourners—fellow-townspeople—filed through the church. The re-interment took place on Wednesday in Passion Week. All the shops were closed in respect for the great singer's memory, and the service and procession to the lovely *campo santo* were most impressive. Mario's nephews, as the nearest relatives, were pall-bearers. The band, and a contingent from his old regiment, preceded the *cortège*, and it was followed by deputations from all the charities of the town, as well as monks, nuns and peasantry, who joined in this last homage to their fellow-countryman.

By the open grave eloquent speeches were made, as is the custom in Italy, in honour of the dead, and Don Giovanni de Candia, the world-famous singer Mario, was described as a patriot, a noble-hearted patriot. Deeply as he loved his art, whose highest ideals he had upheld so superbly, Mario would have deemed the description "patriot"

the higher honour. It was not possible that he should fight for his country; one of the sorrows of his life was that he, a soldier, might not bear arms against his country's oppressors; but he had given his labours, his thoughts and his wealth, freely and most gladly, to aid and further the great national movement that liberated Italy. United Italy, her sovereign and her people, in the supreme moment when all that was mortal of the great singer was laid to rest in the geranium-clad cemetery of Cagliari, gave him a title that he would have held more dearly than all his triumphs of the stage, higher than his noble birth; they called him patriot.

By a curious irony, very few, if any, of those who followed him to the grave had ever heard his magical singing. Italy had given him his beautiful voice, at Turin and Genoa, and in his own home he had imbibed unconsciously all the best traditions of the *bel canto*; Mario's voice had been the joy and delight of Europe, yet it had never been heard, except in the Palace of the Quirinal, in his own Villa Salviati, and once in the Duomo at Florence, in the land of his birth. The promise made to his mother when he entered upon the operatic career, that he would never sing in Italy, was never broken, notwithstanding the most tempting pecuniary offers and the most touching appeals to his sentiments.

For thirty years Mario had held the world spellbound by his voice. No hero of romance was ever more fêted or applauded ; his career was a triumphal progress ; there was no painful climbing and waiting for success : success came to him immediately and remained with him to the day of his retirement. But it never touched or warped his character ; and the famous singer whose genius and whose patriotism all Italy honoured at that funeral at Cagliari, went to his grave as he had lived all his life, a simple, trusting, great-hearted gentleman, who, thinking no evil himself, could not believe evil of others.

MARIO.

Died December 11th, 1883.

From *Punch*.

“ Voice of the golden past ! the stage grows dark,  
 The end has come and slow the curtain falls,  
 Mario is dead ! It cannot be, for, hark !  
 His name is echoed in repeated calls.  
 Long we have lost him, but fond memory slips  
 Back to the days his song so glorified ;  
 His magic fame falls from a thousand lips ;  
 Music grew dumb the day that Mario died.

Knight of the silver song ! who can forget  
 Your Almaviva ? for his beauty glows  
 In recollection—ah ! that grand duet  
 With glorious Grisi in *The Huguenots*!

. . . . .  
Oh! man of the deathless voice! How they will greet  
The lost companion who returns to them—  
Rubini and Giuglini, honey-sweet,  
Will swell the chorus for your requiem.  
When the last portals to be passed by men  
Are fired with melody—amidst the glow  
Song's immortality will triumph, then  
Grisi at last will meet her Mario!"

FINIS

LIST OF THE OPERAS IN WHICH MARIO APPEARED IN  
LONDON, FROM THE DATE OF HIS DÉBUT IN 1839  
UNTIL HIS RETIREMENT IN 1871.

Gennaro.....	"Lucrezia Borgia" ( <i>Donizetti</i> ) .....	1839, London,	91 times
Pollio.....	"Norma" ( <i>Bellini</i> ).....	1839, London,	14 times
Nemorino.....	"L'Elisir d'Amore" ( <i>Donizetti</i> ) .....	1839, London,	21 times
Rodrigo.....	"La Donna del Lago" ( <i>Rossini</i> ) .....	1840, London,	3 times
Orazio.....	"Gli Orazi e Curiazi" ( <i>Cimarosa</i> ).....	1841, London,	3 times
Arturo.....	"La Straniera" ( <i>Bellini</i> ).....	1841, London,	twice
Crispus.....	"Fausta" ( <i>Donizetti</i> ) .....	1841, London,	twice
Almaviva.....	"Barbiere di Siviglia" ( <i>Rossini</i> ) .....	1841, London,	102 times
Un Gondoliere.....	"Marino Faliero" ( <i>Donizetti</i> ) .....	1841, London,	4 times
Ernesto.....	"Don Pasquale" ( <i>Donizetti</i> ) .....	1843, London,	32 times
Elviro.....	"La Sonnambula" ( <i>Bellini</i> ) .....	1843, London,	17 times
Otavio.....	"Don Giovanni" ( <i>Mozart</i> ).....	1843, London,	47 times
Gianetto.....	"Gazza Ladra" ( <i>Rossini</i> ) .....	1843, London,	13 times
Arnoldo.....	2nd Act "Guglielmo Tell" ( <i>Rossini</i> ).....	1843, London,	3 times
Lindoro.....	"L'Italiana in Algieri" ( <i>Rossini</i> ) .....	1843, London,	once
Arturo.....	"I Puritani" ( <i>Bellini</i> ).....	1843, London,	44 times
Carlo.....	"Linda de Chamounix" ( <i>Donizetti</i> ).....	1843, London,	6 times
Don Ramiro.....	"La Cenerentola" ( <i>Rossini</i> ).....	1843, London,	3 times
Paolino.....	"Il Matrimonio Segreto" ( <i>Cimarosa</i> ) .....	1844, London,	9 times
Edgardo.....	"Lucia di Lammermoor" ( <i>Donizetti</i> ) .....	1844, London,	9 times
Don Carlo.....	"Don Carlo" ( <i>Costa</i> ).....	1844, London,	5 times
Otello.....	"Otello" ( <i>Rossini</i> ).....	1844, London,	5 times
Roggero.....	"Corrado d'Altemura" ( <i>Ricci</i> ) .....	1844, London,	once
Gualtiero.....	"I Pirati" ( <i>Bellini</i> ) .....	1845, London,	5 times
Fernando.....	"Così Fan Tutti" ( <i>Mozart</i> ) .....	1845, London,	twice
Oronte.....	"I Lombardi" ( <i>Verdi</i> ) .....	1846, London,	11 times
Percy.....	"Anna Bolena" ( <i>Donizetti</i> ) .....	1846, London,	9 times
Enrico.....	"Don Gregorio" ( <i>Donizetti</i> ) .....	1846, London,	twice
Jacopo Foscari.....	"I due Foscari" ( <i>Verdi</i> ) .....	1847, London,	3 times
Uberto.....	"La Donna del Lago" ( <i>Rossini</i> ) .....	1847, London,	17 times
Fernando.....	"La Favorita" ( <i>Donizetti</i> ) .....	1848, London,	49 times
Raoul.....	"Huguenots" ( <i>Meyerbeer</i> ) .....	1848, London,	119 times
Jean.....	"Le Prophète" ( <i>Meyerbeer</i> ) .....	1849, London,	45 times
Masaniello.....	"Masaniello" ( <i>Auber</i> ) .....	1849, London,	12 times
Rambaldo.....	"Roberto il Diavolo" ( <i>Meyerbeer</i> ) .....	1850, London,	6 times
*Lazaro.....	"La Juive" ( <i>Halévy</i> ).....	1850, London,	4 times
Tamino.....	"Il Flauto Magico" ( <i>Mozart</i> ) .....	1851, London,	4 times
Il Duca.....	"Rigoletto" ( <i>Verdi</i> ) .....	1853, London,	53 times
Maurico.....	"Il Trovatore" ( <i>Verdi</i> ) .....	1856, London,	28 times
Alfredo.....	"Le Traviata" ( <i>Verdi</i> ) .....	1857, London,	9 times
Lionello.....	"Marta" ( <i>Flotow</i> ) .....	1858, London,	30 times
Don Giovanni.....	"Don Giovanni" ( <i>Mozart</i> ) .....	1858, London,	11 times
Viscardo.....	"Il Giuramento" ( <i>Mercadante</i> ) .....	1859, London,	once
Il Duca.....	"Ballo in Maschera" ( <i>Verdi</i> ) .....	1861, London,	29 times
Faust.....	"Faust" ( <i>Gounod</i> ) .....	1864, London,	59 times
Romeo.....	"Romeo e Giulietta" ( <i>Gounod</i> ) .....	1867, London,	11 times

This list gives a total of 930 performances at the Opera in London, or an average of thirty nights in every season.

On 41 occasions not included in the above Mario appeared in excerpts from operas, such as "Comte Ory," &c.

\* This was the only opera in which Mario represented an old man, Lazaro being the father of the heroine in "La Juive."



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