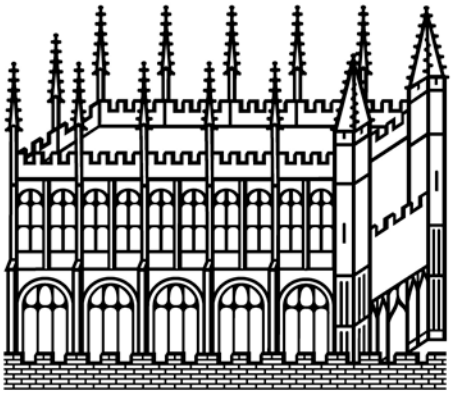

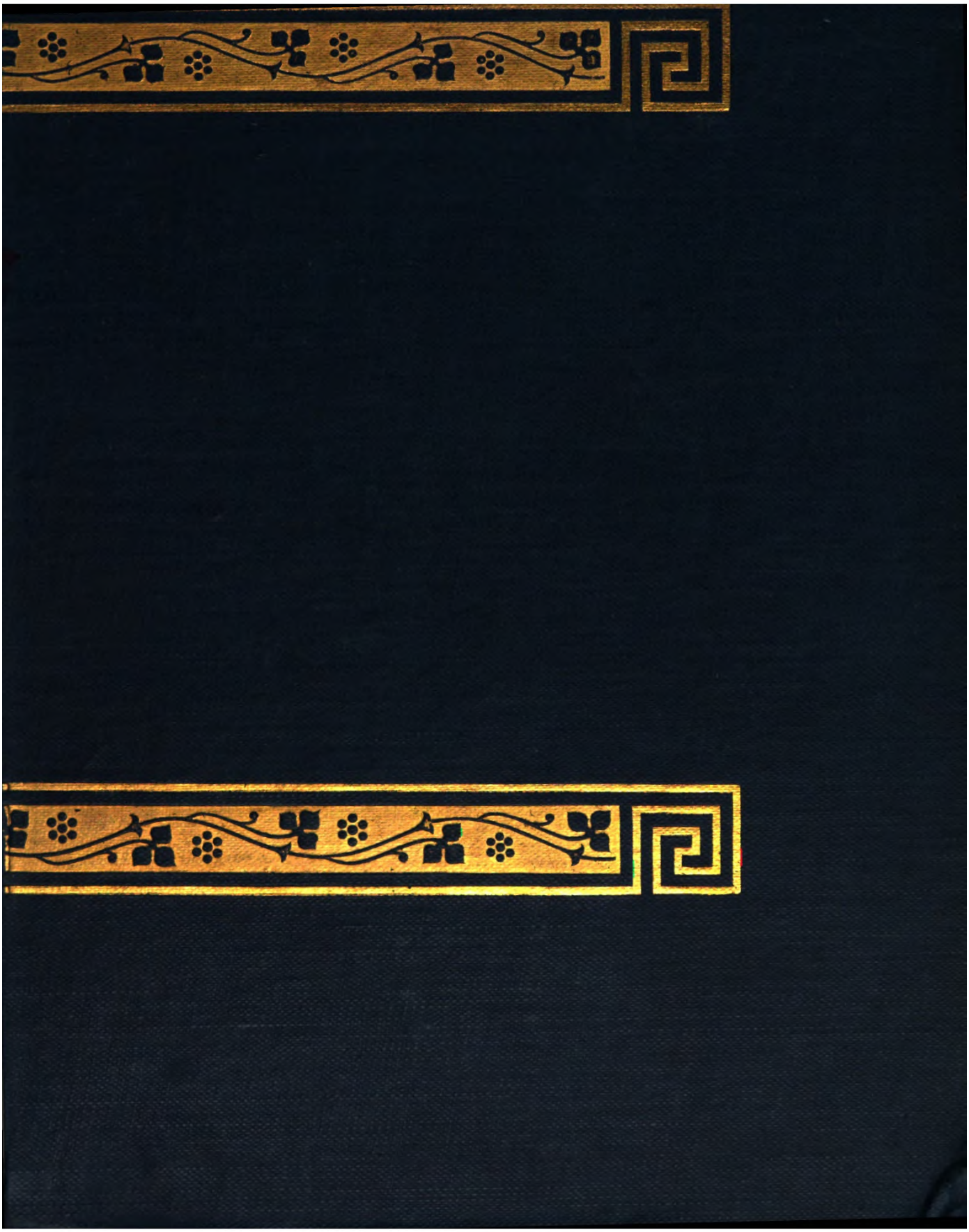

MENDELSSOHN.


BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

HANHART LITH.

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Frankfurt d. 15 September 1842

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MENDELSSOHN.

LETTERS AND RECOLLECTIONS

BY

DR. FERDINAND HILLER.

WITH

THE CONSENT AND CO-OPERATION OF THE FAMILY

BY M. D. V. [illegible]

SECOND EDITION.

London:
MACMILLAN AND CO.
1874.

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MENDELSSOHN.

LETTERS AND RECOLLECTIONS.

BY

DR. FERDINAND HILLER.

TRANSLATED,

WITH THE CONSENT AND REVISION OF THE AUTHOR,

BY M. E. VON GLEHN.

SECOND EDITION.

London:
MACMILLAN AND CO.
1874.

TO HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY,

THE QUEEN,

THIS BOOK IS BY PERMISSION

HUMBLY AND RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

TO THE QUEEN.

MADAM,

The great nation which has the happiness of living in the freedom of the law under your Majesty's glorious sceptre shows its continuous mental relationship to the people of Germany, who owe their origin to the same race, in nothing perhaps more plainly than in the ardour with which for upwards of a century it has appropriated the creations of our great composers. Just as Shakespeare has become to the Germans a national poet, so to the English is Handel a national composer. The immortal works of Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn, and Weber met with enthusiastic reception and lasting admiration in England, as did Haydn and Weber themselves. But it was genuine affection which the people of

Britain bestowed upon our great and youthful master, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy. Hardly more than a boy when he began his artistic career in London, he soon won all hearts. Everyone watched with fond and eager interest the steady progress of the youth and the man whose greatest work, his "Elijah," the ripest fruit of his genius, was first presented to the world at an English festival. He well deserves the honour bestowed upon him of a place amongst the chosen spirits whose portraits adorn the monument which Your Majesty, as a wife and as a Queen, has erected to a Prince who occupies so prominent a position amongst the noblest promoters of human culture.

The rare distinction bestowed upon this little book, of being allowed to bear the victorious name of Your Majesty, is due above all to the memory of the glorious master to whom it is consecrated. My thanks are doubly heartfelt.

May a reflection of the gracious reception which my noble friend enjoyed from Your Majesty be granted to the following pages, consecrated as they are to his memory, and also partly emanating from him.

I have the honour to subscribe myself,

Madam,

Your Majesty's humble and devoted servant,

FERDINAND HILLER.

PREFACE.

PHOTOGRAPHY often gives us the most different likenesses of the same man, each one recognizable, but none exhaustive; and it is only the painter provided he be a real artist—who, out of the manifold reflections photographed on his brain, can produce a portrait in which everyone may read what he himself saw in the original, and which everyone will acknowledge to be a representation of the *whole* man. In the same way the traits which different people seize in giving their personal recollections of a famous man will always be somewhat one-sided, in spite of the most truthful intention, and it is only the biographer—and he the right one—who, by putting everything together, all that he has seen and heard, or even guessed, can bring to light

the individuality of the man, in all its completeness and fulness of meaning. Even in letters and conversations, where everyone depicts himself, there is a certain photographic one-sidedness, because they are intended only for a single individual; and most people, however true they may be to themselves, always modify their mental physiognomy to a certain extent, according to the different individualities with which they come into contact. I have endeavoured in these pages to give a picture of Mendelssohn as he is reflected in my remembrance; they may therefore, perhaps, supply material to his future biographer, giving as they do a new aspect of that richly-gifted man, or at any rate, a more complete picture of one side of him than has hitherto been supplied to us in the valuable writings and letters already published, namely, in his relations to a true-hearted artist-friend and comrade, if I may be allowed thus to style myself. The peculiarity of his relations to me, even at the early age at which his genius had ripened and he became celebrated, was, that they were those not only

of friendly affection, but of real fellowship. I very much regret that I was not in the habit of putting down my experiences, during the years in which, from time to time, I enjoyed such intimate intercourse with him. Many precious details have escaped me, though I still have a perfectly clear picture of my friend before me. However, all that I have told may be received with the most implicit confidence.

Music cannot be described; language is totally incapable of giving even the most distant idea of a musical composition. And in the same way, very little can be told of the actual communications which go to make up the intimate intercourse of two musicians. The hours which I spent with Mendelssohn at the piano, in the interchange of our views on music and compositions of all kinds, our own and other people's, were, in a certain sense, the best which I had the happiness of enjoying with him; but it would be impossible for me to give more than the most general account of them. If, on the other hand, I have tried to preserve many of my

dear friend's remarks, that are perhaps trivial, or insignificant traits of speech or action, I have done so with the conviction that the merest trifle is interesting, when a great man is concerned. Mendelssohn's admirers have reproached me for not coming forward long ago with my communications. Various reasons withheld me, and one above all others, namely, that I might not give occasion to the very slightest accusation of trying to gain popularity through his friendship. Proud of it as I was and am, it was too sacred to me to be made use of. Now however, I come forward all the more boldly with these pages, so full of admirable traits of the departed, because he, one of the brightest and most beautiful stars in the firmament of German art, is experiencing, in his own country, the attacks of envy, of want of comprehension and judgment, which can only bring dishonour on those from whom they proceed, for they will never succeed in detracting from the glory which surrounds his name. Gold cannot be tarnished.

Thus, with fond devotion, I add this simple

garland to the unfading laurel wreath which adorns the open brow of the youthful master, and will adorn it so long as reason and feeling, clearness and depth, freedom and beauty are held to be the conditions of the highest creations of art.

FERDINAND HILLER.

COLOGNE, *September* 19, 1873.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

My part in this work has been confined to the pleasant task of passing an excellent translation through the press, and adding a few notes of date or place to the text, since its appearance in "Macmillan's Magazine."

The volume has had the advantage of Dr. Hiller's revision, and for this and his permission to make use of the portrait, the best thanks of the publishers and myself are due to him.

As a lover of music and of Mendelssohn, however, I owe him a much deeper debt, which I gladly acknowledge. This book is undoubtedly the most important contribution to the biography of Mendelssohn that has appeared since the publication of the two volumes of his Letters. One more volume of letters to his family, or one more

like the present, but addressed to a non-musician—a Schubring or a Hildebrandt—and, whether his Life be ever written or not, the world would be in tolerably full possession of one of the most remarkable, interesting, and many-sided characters of the century.

As I write the news arrives of the death of Paul Mendelssohn, Felix's younger brother, and the last remaining member of the family circle to which he was so fondly attached. It is a double reminder—first that but for over-work and over-excitement Felix Mendelssohn himself might have been still with us, or but recently departed; and secondly that those who knew him personally, and to whom he was not only a musician but a living, loving friend, rich beyond measure in the gifts and powers of life, are fast passing away with their recollections and traditions out of the reach of the biographer.

G. GROVE.

SYDENHAM,
June 25th, 1874.

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PRINCIPAL DATES IN MENDELSSOHN'S LIFE.

1809. Born at Hamburg, Feb. 3.

1815 or 16. Family remove to Berlin. Becomes Zelter's pupil.

1821. First visit to Goethe.

1822. Tour in Switzerland.

1825. Octett. Trumpet Overture. Journey to Paris and Cherubini.

1826. Overture to Midsummer Night's Dream.

1828. Overture, Meeresstille.

1829. First visit to London. Tour in Scotland.—Reformation Symphony.

1830-1. Third visit to Goethe. Italian journey.—Hebrides Overture: Italian Symphony: Walpurgis-night.

1832. Munich, Paris, London. G minor Concerto.

1833-4. Düsseldorf. London. Overture to Melusine. St. Paul.

1835. Düsseldorf. Leipsic. Death of his father, Nov. 19.

1836. Leipsic. Frankfort.—Betrothal. St. Paul first performed, May 22.

1837. Marriage, March 28. D minor Concerto. 42nd Psalm. Birmingham.

1838. Leipsic.—Serenade and Allegro giojoso—E flat Quartet.

1839. Leipsic.—Ruy Blas. D minor Trio. Many Songs.

1840. Leipsic. England.—Festgesang. Lobgesang.

1841. Leipsic. Berlin.—Antigone. Scotch Symphony. Variations Sèrieuses. First illness.

1842. Berlin. Leipsic. London, with his wife. Switzerland. Death of his mother, Dec.

1843. Leipsic, Berlin.—Midsummer Night's Dream Music. Athalie. Psalms.

1844. Berlin. London. Soden.—Violin Concerto. C minor Trio. Overture to Athalie. Organ Sonatas.

1845. Berlin. Frankfort.—Œdipus. B flat Quintet. Elijah begun. Resigns post at Berlin.

1846. Leipsic. Elijah at Birmingham, Aug. 25. Lauda Sion.

1847. Leipsic. London. Switzerland. Death of his sister Fanny, May 14. Christus. Loreley. F minor Quartet. Death Nov. 4.

MENDELSSOHN.

CHAPTER I.

FRANKFORT—1822 TO 1827.

In the summer of 1822 I was living in my native town of Frankfort—beautiful Frankfort—and, though barely eleven, was just beginning to be known in the town as "the little pianoforte player with the long hair." The long hair was the best known thing about me, I think, for it was very long; still, I had actually played in public once, which my school-fellows thought a great wonder. I had been taught the piano by Aloys Schmitt, in a very irregular fashion, for he was always travelling; but he was fond of me, and I had quite a passion for him. The winter before, Schmitt had been in Berlin, and on his return told us of a wonderful boy, a grandson of Moses Mendelssohn the philosopher, who was not only a splendid player, but had composed quartets, symphonies, operas! Now I had composed too—Polonaises and Rondos, and Variations on "Schöne Minka," which I thought extremely brilliant; and

I worked most diligently at harmony and counterpoint, under the venerable Vollweiler. But that a boy only two or three years older than myself,* should be conducting his own operas, seemed to me unheard of. True, I had read the same thing about Mozart; but then it was Mozart, and he was more a demigod than a musician. So I was not a little excited when Schmitt came to us one day with the news that Felix Mendelssohn was in Frankfort, with his father, mother, brother, and sisters, and that he, Schmitt, would bring him to see us the next day.

The house in which we lived really consisted of two—one tolerably modern, looking on to the river, and the other, an older one, adjoining the first, and facing a narrow street, which contained the only entrance to both. The windows at the back of the modern house overlooked the court, and one of them commanded the narrow passage leading from it to the house door. At this window I took my stand at the hour which Schmitt had named for his visit, and, after waiting for some time in the greatest impatience, was rewarded by seeing the door open and my master appear. Behind him was a boy, only a little bigger than myself, who kept leaping up till he contrived to

* Mendelssohn was born on the 3rd of February, 1809, and Hiller on the 24th October, 1811.—*Ed.*

get his hands on to Schmitt's shoulders, so as to hang on his back and be carried along for a few steps, and then slip off again. "He's jolly enough," thought I, and ran off to the sitting-room to tell my parents that the eagerly-expected visitor had arrived. But great was my astonishment when I saw this same wild boy enter the room in quite a dignified way, and, though very lively and talkative, yet all the time preserving a certain formality. He himself impressed me even more than the account of his performances had done, and I could not help feeling a little shy during the whole of the visit.

The next day Schmitt called again, to take me to the Mendelssohns. I found the whole family assembled in a great room at the "Swan" hotel, and was very kindly received. I shall never forget the impression made on me by the mother, whom I was never to see again. She was sitting at work at a little table, and inquired about all that I was doing with an infinite kindness and gentleness that won my childish confidence at once.

There was a Frankfort quartet party in the room, but besides these I remember only young Edward Devrient, who pleased me very much, not only by his good looks and graceful ways, but also by the exquisite manner in which he sang an air of

Mozart's. We had a great deal of music: Felix played one of his quartets—in *C minor, if I recollect right; but I was most struck by his sister Fanny's performance of Hummel's Rondeau brillant in A, which she played in a truly masterly style. Meantime I became more intimate with Felix, and at his second visit he astonished me immensely. I was showing him a violin sonata of Aloys Schmitt's, when he at once took up a violin which lay on the piano and asked me to play the sonata with him; he got through his part very cleverly and well, though the brilliant passages were naturally somewhat sketchy.

Having thus made Mendelssohn's acquaintance, I was constantly on the watch for news of him from the many artists who came from Berlin to Frankfort, and they were never tired of singing his praises. But it was not till some years later that his abilities made a full and permanent impression on me. The "Cæcilia" Society was then in all its freshness and vigour, under the admirable direction of Schelble. Mendelssohn happened to be present at one of the practice-meetings in the spring of 1825, as he was passing through Frankfort on a holiday tour, and was asked to play. We had been singing choruses from "Judas Maccabæus." He took some of the

* Quartet for Pianoforte and Strings (Op. 2).

principal melodies—especially "See the Conquering Hero"—and began to extemporise on them. I hardly know which was most wonderful—the skilful counterpoint, the flow and continuity of the thoughts, or the fire, expression, and extraordinary execution which characterized his playing. He must have been very full of Handel at that time, for the figures which he used were thoroughly Handelian, and the power and clearness of his passages in thirds, sixths, and octaves, were really grand; and yet it all belonged to the subject-matter, with no pretension to display, and was thoroughly true, genuine, living music. It quite carried me away, and though I often heard his wonderful playing afterwards, I do not think that it ever produced such an overpowering effect on me as it did on that occasion, when he was but a boy of sixteen. The next day, while still full of what I had heard, I met another pupil of Schmitt's, a lad of about twenty, long since dead. We talked about Mendelssohn, and he asked me how long I thought it would take to be able to do all that. I laughed. He thought that with two years' extra hard work it might be done. It was the first though by no means the last time, that I came across anyone so foolish as to think that genius can be got by practice.

His opinions on art and artists at that time, were full of the vivacity natural to his age, and had in

them something—what shall I call it?—over-ripe and almost dogmatic, which as he grew up not only became balanced, but entirely disappeared. We drove over one afternoon to see André at Offenbach. On the way, I told him that it was probable I should be sent to Weimar, to continue my studies under Hummel. With this he found no fault, but I remember his speaking of Hummel very much in the condescending sort of tone in which Zelter, in his letters to Goethe, expresses himself about God and the world. And when we got to André's, I was struck with a certain precocious positiveness in his language, though all he said was full of the most genuine enthusiasm. André—one of the liveliest, brightest, and best-informed of musicians, who retained his freshness unimpaired to the end of a long life—retorted good naturedly but very sharply. André was one of those musicians who are completely wrapt up in Mozart, and who measure everything by the standard of Mozart's beauty and finish—a standard sufficient to condemn many of the finest things. Spohr's "Jessonda" and Weber's "Freischütz" were just then making their triumphant round of the theatres, and André had much to say against them. Mendelssohn, who knew by heart what the other had only a general recollection of, agreed with him in some things, and differed in others, but was most enthusiastic about

the instrumentation. "How the orchestra is treated! and what a sound it has!" cried he. The tone of voice in which he uttered this kind of thing still rings in my ear; but I am convinced that such utterances were more the result of a natural endeavour to imitate his pet masters, than the real expression of his nature, which was always intensely modest. The discussion even got as far as Beethoven, whom André had often visited in Vienna. The worst thing he could find against him was his *manner* (so to speak) of composing, into which this learned theorist had had a glimpse. For instance, he told us that he had seen the manuscript of the A major Symphony, and that there were whole sheets left blank in it, the pages before and after which had no connection with each other. Beethoven had told him that these blanks would be filled up—but what continuity could there be in music so composed? Mendelssohn would not stand this, and kept on playing whole movements and bits of movements in his powerful orchestral style, till André was in such delight that he was obliged, for the moment, to stop his criticisms. Indeed, who could think of carping or cavilling after hearing Felix play the *Allegretto* of the A major Symphony?

A leaf from an album, containing a three-part canon, and dated "Ehrenbreitstein Valley, Sep-

tember 27th, 1827," gives me the clue to my next meeting with Mendelssohn. During the interval I had been with Hummel at Weimar, and had made a journey with him to Vienna, where I had published my "Opus 1," a pianoforte quartet. I was now again at work at home. One day as I was looking into the court, this time by chance, a young man crossed it, whom I did not recognize, in a tall shiny hat. It turned out to be Mendelssohn, but apparently much altered in looks. His figure had become broad and full, and there was a general air of smartness about him, with none of that careless ease which he sometimes adopted in later life. He was travelling with two of his fellow-students to Horchheim, near Coblenz, with the view of spending part of the holidays at his uncle's place. He stayed only a short time at Frankfort, but long enough for me to see that since our last meeting he had grown into a man.

He was staying with Schelble; and I embrace this opportunity to speak of that distinguished man and musician, more especially as he was one of the first to recognize Mendelssohn's worth, and to devote all his influence to forwarding his music. Schelble was a thoroughly cultivated musician, and remarkable as a pianist for his earnest and intelligent rendering of classical works; his voice was a splendid baritone-tenor, which he had cultivated in the same spirit as

his pianoforte playing, and he had formerly been on the stage in Vienna and Frankfort. His great musical abilities had brought him into contact with the best artists; he had had much intercourse with Beethoven, and was very intimate with Spohr. In spite however of the success which his singing had met with on the stage, he never felt at ease there—in fact, he seems to have had no talent for acting. Looking at his face, so fine, noble, and expressive, but usually so serious, and his somewhat stiff bearing, one might have taken him for a scholar or a Protestant pastor, but certainly not for an opera singer. When, as a boy, I was first introduced to him, he had long given up the theatre, had obtained a first-rate position as teacher in Frankfort, and out of small beginnings had established his most important work, the "Cæcilia" Society. Perhaps no one ever possessed the qualities and ability necessary for conducting a choral society to so great a degree as Schelble. A pianist and a singer, eloquent and impressive, inspired for his work, respected by the men, adored by the women, uniting the greatest intelligence with the most delicate ear and the purest taste, his influence was equally great as a man and a musician. His oratorio performances, as long as they were accompanied by the pianoforte alone (the orchestra interferes too much with the voices) were among the best that have ever taken

place. His spirit still pervades the Society; for many years it was conducted on the same principles by his pupil Messer; and at present Carl Müller is its efficient head.

Though Schelble wrote but little, he had gone very deeply into composition. His judgment, both in great and small things, was extraordinarily acute, and his remarks on music were as interesting as they were suggestive.

As he had introduced Felix into the Society when a boy, and Felix in his turn had won its enthusiastic goodwill by his marvellous gift of improvisation, so Schelble was the first, outside of Berlin, to perform Mendelssohn's choral works. Felix went to look him up directly after his arrival in Frankfort, and I accompanied him. The first things that Mendelssohn played to us were some of Moscheles' studies. They were but recently published, and Felix spoke of them with great warmth, and played several by heart with extraordinary energy and evident delight. But we wanted to hear something new of his own; and great was our astonishment when he played in the most lovely, tender, charming style, his string quartet in A minor,* which he had just completed. The impression it made on us pleased him all the more as the

* Quartet No. 2 (Op. 13), containing the song "Ist es wahr?"—*Ed.*

tendency of this piece had not been appreciated in his own circle, and he had a feeling of isolation in consequence. And then he played the Midsummer Night's Dream Overture! He had told me privately how long and eagerly he had been working at it—how in his spare time between the lectures at the Berlin University he had gone on extemporizing at it on the piano of a beautiful lady who lived close by. "For a whole year I hardly did anything else," he said; and certainly he had not wasted his time.

Of the failure of "Camacho's Wedding," his opera which had been produced at Berlin in the previous spring, he spoke with a mixture of fun and half-subdued vexation. He took off, for my benefit, whole dialogues between various people concerned in it, trying to give them a dramatic effect—with how much truth I do not know, but anyhow, in the most amusing and life-like manner. But I need hardly put down my own poor and uncertain recollections of these communications, since Edward Devrient, who was so closely connected with the whole thing both as a friend and an artist, has given us a detailed account of this entire episode in Mendelssohn's life.*

Felix invited me to accompany him and his

* "My Recollections of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy," &c., translated by Natalie Macfarren, page 23.

friends at least as far as Bingen, and my parents gladly gave their consent to this little excursion. At Mainz, where we stayed the night, a small boat was hired (it was still the ante-steamboat time) and stocked with all manner of eatables and drinkables, and we floated down the glorious river in great spirits. We talked, and laughed, and admired everything; and as a specimen of the sort of jokes we indulged in, I remember Mendelssohn suddenly asking one of us, "Do you know the Hebrew for snuffers?" When the "Mäusethurm" came in sight, and I said that my leave was at an end, and that I must be landed at Rüdesheim, they would not hear of my going, and I only too easily let myself be persuaded to remain. But my companions got out at Horchheim, and in the evening I found myself alone at Coblenz, in rather an uncomfortable position. The recollections of the journey home rise up so vividly before me, that my reader must kindly pardon me if I try to revive them here, more for my own satisfaction than for his.

My small store of money was very much on the decline—even in the boat I had had a vague suspicion of it—but on no account would I have borrowed from my fellow-travellers. Giving up all idea of supper I went to the post, and after I had paid for a place in the coach to Bingen, found

I had still twelve consolatory kreutzers (about 4d.). Early in the morning I got to Bingen, and proceeded to the river-bank, which still looked quite deserted; but the sun was rising, and it was beautifully cool and still. After a time a boatman came up half asleep and asked whether I wanted to go across. "If you will put me over to Rüdesheim," I said, "then may Heaven reward you, for I can't give you more than six kreutzers." The man had a feeling heart in his breast, and probably thought that something was better than nothing, so he very cheerfully took me over to the other side. It was a glorious morning; my spirits rose, and I began my wandering through the lovely Rheingau with a glad heart. My last six kreutzers I spent in bread and pears to keep me alive; but I had thought of a haven, into which, literally speaking, I hoped to run, and where I trusted my wants would be at an end. At Bieberich, then the capital of the Duchy of Nassau, lived the Court-Capellmeister Rummel, whom I knew. He was a good-natured man, and a clever composer, who rather abused his facility of producing; however, he must have had his admirers, for at every Frankfort fair his name was to be seen paraded in the music shop of the famous Schott and Co. How often, and how enviously, had I stood as a boy in front of the shop, and read the many

titles of his compositions! It was about ten in the morning when I entered his room, and received a hearty welcome. After the first greetings I went to the piano, and asked him to show me his latest compositions, which he gladly did. I played a Sonata, another Sonata, a Fantasia, a Rondo, Variations—and always went on begging for more, till the maid came in with a steaming soup-tureen. "Won't you stay dinner?" said the Capellmeister, rather, as it seemed to me in my anxiety, as if he were driven to it. "With pleasure," I answered, once more breathing freely—I was saved! After dinner he kindly accompanied me to Castel, and, as he knew all about the local arrangements, took a place for me, in a kind of stage called a *hauderer*, to Frankfort. I got home safe, the coachman was paid, I recounted my adventures, showed Mendelssohn's album-leaf, and all was well. O the happy days of youth!

CHAPTER II.

PARIS—DECEMBER, 1831, TO APRIL, 1832.

MENDELSSOHN'S published letters show how variously he was affected by his visit to the French capital—at that time also the capital of Europe. What happened to him elsewhere, when in contact with persons, performances, or circumstances against which he had a prejudice, and from which he would have preferred keeping himself at a distance, happened here also,—after some resistance, he was taken possession of by them.

The few years which followed the Revolution of July are among the best in modern French history. The impression of the "Three days" was still fresh in people's minds; everything had received a new impetus, and literature and the arts especially were full of a wonderfully stirring and exuberant life. As to our beloved music, one could hardly wish for a better state of things. The so-called Conservatoire concerts, under Habeneck, were in all their fresh-

ness; and Beethoven's Symphonies were played there with a perfection, and received with an enthusiasm, which, with few exceptions, I have never since witnessed. Cherubini was writing his Masses for the Chapel in the Tuileries; at the Grand Opera Meyerbeer was beginning his series of triumphs with "Robert the Devil;" Rossini was writing "William Tell;" Scribe and Auber were at the height of their activity, and all the best singers were collected at the Italian Opera. Artists of all degrees of distinction lived in Paris, or came there to win Parisian laurels.

Baillot, though advancing in years, still played with all the fire and poetry of youth; Paganini had given a series of twelve concerts at the Grand Opera; Kalkbrenner, with his brilliant execution, represented the Clementi school; Chopin had established himself in Paris a few months before Mendelssohn's arrival; and Liszt, still inspired by the tremendous impetus he had received from Paganini, though seldom heard in public, performed the most extraordinary feats. German chamber-music was not so much in vogue as it afterwards became, but still Baillot's quartet-party had its fanatical supporters, and in many German and French houses the most serious music was affectionately cultivated, and good players were

welcomed with delight. Under such circumstances, it may easily be imagined how warmly Mendelssohn was greeted in the best musical circles.

The first thing that I remember connected with his arrival is the "Walpurgisnacht." I still see before me the small, closely and delicately written score, as he brought it from Italy. I had it in my room for a long time, and was as delighted with it at the first reading as I have always been since. So strongly did it impress itself upon me, that the music was still perfectly familiar to me sixteen or seventeen years after, when I heard and conducted it for the first time. Another piece which he played us was the Song without Words in E (Bk. I. No. 1). He had written it in Switzerland, and evidently felt a little impatient that his friends should hear it; for immediately after his arrival he played it to Dr. Franck and myself, calling it by its newly-invented name, so often misused since. Pieces of music which one has learnt to know shortly after their composition, and which afterwards have a great popularity, are like people whom one knew as children before they became famous, and one retains through life a kind of fatherly, or at any rate godfatherly, feeling for them.

The first time I heard Mendelssohn really at

his best was one evening at the house of the Leo-Valentinis, in Beethoven's D major Trio. It was a peculiarity of his, that when he played new things of his own to intimate friends, he always did it with a certain reticence, which was evidently founded on a wish not to allow his playing to increase the impression made by the actual work itself. It was only in orchestral works, where his attention was fully occupied, that he allowed himself to be carried away. But in the music of the great masters he was all fire and glow. I heard him oftenest and at his best that winter, at Baillot's house, and at that of an old and much respected lady, Madame Kiéné, whose daughter, Madame Bigot (then dead), had given Felix a few music lessons when he was a boy. With Baillot he played Bach and Beethoven Sonatas, Mozart Concertos with quartet accompaniment, and splendid extempore cadenzas; also his own Pianoforte Quartet in B minor, and other things. Baillot's circle was small, but thoroughly musical and cultivated, and everything was listened to with a sort of religious devotion. Mendelssohn had brought with him to Paris the draught-score of the "Hebrides" Overture. He told me that not only was its general form and colour suggested to him by the sight of Fingal's Cave, but that the first few bars, containing the principal subject,

had actually occurred to him on the spot.* The same evening he and his friend Klingemann paid a visit to a Scotch family. There was a piano in the drawing-room, but being Sunday, music was utterly out of the question, and Mendelssohn had to employ all his diplomacy to get the instrument opened for a single minute, so that he and Klingemann might hear the theme which forms the germ of that original and masterly Overture, which, however, was not completed till some years later at Düsseldorf.

Among the Parisian musicians, Habeneck took a deep interest in the gifted youth, and many of the admirable players of his orchestra were devoted to him, especially the younger ones, many of them friends of my own, whom he was always glad to see, and who clung to him with all the warm feeling of Frenchmen. Amongst them I ought especially to mention Franchomme, the excellent cello

* This is strictly correct. The letter to his family, describing the passage to Staffa and the inside of the cave—for the sight of which I am indebted to the kindness of Dr. Karl Mendelssohn—is dated "Auf einer Hebride, d. 7te August, 1829," as if actually written on the island. It contains the words "to show how extraordinarily moved I was, the following occurred to me"—and then come the first ten or twelve bars of the Overture in score. Six weeks after he ends a letter home, "auf Wiedersehen

F. M. B."—*Ed.*

player, and Cuvillon and Sauzay, the gifted violin players and pupils of Baillot—the latter afterwards his son-in-law.

"Ce bon Mendelssohn," they used to say; "quel talent, quelle tête, quelle organisation!" Cuvillon poured out his whole heart to him, and Felix was quite touched in telling me of his confidences one evening—how he had come to Paris full of enthusiasm for Baillot, to have lessons from him, and had fancied that such a man must live like a prince; how he had pictured to himself his establishment and all his way of life; and then to find this king of violin players lodging *au troisième*, in almost reduced circumstances, giving lessons the whole day long, accompanying young ladies on the piano, and playing in the orchestra! It had made him quite sad, and he could not imagine the possibility of such a state of things.

It was through Habeneck and his "Société des Concerts" that Mendelssohn was introduced to the Parisian public. He played the Beethoven G major Concerto—with what success may be seen from his published letters.* The "Midsummer Night's Dream Overture" was also performed and much applauded. I was present at the first re-

* To his mother, dated Paris, 15th and 31st March, 1832.

hearsal. The second oboe was missing—which might have been overcome; but just as they were going to begin, the drummer's place was also discovered to be empty. Upon which, to everybody's amusement, Mendelssohn jumped on to the orchestra, seized the drumsticks, and beat as good a roll as any drummer in the Old Guard. For the performance a place had been given him in a box on the grand tier, with a couple of distinguished musical amateurs. During the last *forte*, after which the fairies return once more, one of these gentlemen said to the other: "C'est très-bien, très-bien, mais nous savons le reste;" and they slipped out without hearing the "reste," and without any idea that they had been sitting next the composer.

The termination of Mendelssohn's connection with that splendid orchestra was unpleasant, and hurt him much. It was proposed to give his Reformation Symphony, and a rehearsal took place. I was not present, but the only account which our young friends gave me was that the work did not please the orchestra: at any rate, it was not performed. Cuvillon's description was that it was "much too learned, too much *fugato*, too little melody," &c., &c. To a certain extent the composer probably came round to this opinion, for the Symphony was not published during his

lifetime.* But at the time I am writing of he was very fond of it, and the quiet way in which it was shelved certainly pained him. I never referred to the occurrence, and he never spoke of it to me.

A few other far more painful events took place during that Paris winter. One morning Mendelssohn came into my room in tears, and at first could find no words to tell me that his friend Edward Rietz, the violinist, was dead. Everything that he said about him, the manner in which he described his ways and his playing, all showed how deeply the loss affected him. In his published correspondence, years after, I found his grief expressing itself in a higher and calmer strain, but at first it was difficult for him to control himself in the very least.

Then came the news of Goethe's death, which touched me also very deeply, though a life of such wonderful completeness should perhaps dispose one more to admiration than to regret. Mendelssohn gave me a most detailed account of his last visit to the "alter Herr," and of the sketch he had given him on the piano of the history of modern music from Bach to Beethoven. He spoke very feelingly of the terrible loss Goethe's death would

* It remained in manuscript till 1868, and was first played in England at the Crystal Palace, under the direction of Mr. Manns, on the 30th November of that year.—*Ed.*

be to old Zelter, adding: "You will see, he will not long survive it." He was right—a few months later, and Zelter followed the friend who had granted him a little corner in his palace of immortality.

On the whole, as is evident from his published letters, Mendelssohn led a pleasant easy-going life in Paris, and gave himself up to the enjoyment of the moment without hesitation. A large part of his time was devoted to chess; he was a capital player, and his usual antagonists, Michael Beer, the poet, a brother of Meyerbeer's, and Dr. Herman Franck, only occasionally succeeded in beating him. Franck would not allow that he was inferior, and upon this Mendelssohn invented a phrase which he relentlessly repeated after every victory: "We play quite equally well—*quite equally*—only I play a very little better."

Meyerbeer, who was certainly a sincere admirer of his talent, Mendelssohn saw but seldom. A funny little incident occurred shortly after his arrival in Paris. Mendelssohn was often told that he was very like the composer of "Robert;" and at first sight his figure and general appearance did perhaps give some ground for the idea, especially as they wore their hair in the same style. I sometimes teased Mendelssohn about it, to his great annoyance, and at last one morning

he appeared with his hair absolutely cropt. The affair excited much amusement in our set, especially when Meyerbeer heard of it; but he took it up with his usual invincible good-nature, and in the nicest way.

Chopin had been at Munich at the same time with Mendelssohn, and had given concerts there, and otherwise exhibited his remarkable abilities. When he arrived in Paris, as a complete stranger, he met with a very kind reception from Kalkbrenner, who, indeed, deserved all praise as a most polished, clever, and agreeable host. Kalkbrenner fully recognized Chopin's talent, though in rather a patronizing way. For instance, he thought his *technique* not sufficiently developed, and advised him to attend a class which he had formed for advanced pupils. Chopin, always good-natured, was unwilling to refuse outright, and went a few times to see what it was like. When Mendelssohn heard of this he was furious, for he had a great opinion of Chopin's talent, while, on the other hand, he had been annoyed at Berlin by Kalkbrenner's charlatanry. One evening at the Mendelssohns' house there, Kalkbrenner played a grand Fantasia, and when Fanny asked him if it was an improvisation, he answered that it was. The next morning, however, they discovered the improvised Fantasia, published note for

note under the title of "Effusio musica." That Chopin, therefore, should submit to pass for a pupil of Kalkbrenner's seemed to Mendelssohn, and with justice, to be a perfect absurdity, and he freely expressed his opinion on the matter. Meantime, the thing soon came to its natural conclusion. Chopin gave a soirée at the Pleyel Rooms; all the musical celebrities were there; he played his E minor Concerto, some of his Mazurkas and Notturnos, and took everybody by storm. After this no more was heard of want of *technique*, and Mendelssohn had applauded triumphantly.

The relations between Kalkbrenner and Mendelssohn were always somewhat insecure, but Kalkbrenner's advances were such that Mendelssohn could not altogether decline them. We dined there together a few times, and everything went quite smoothly, though no entreaties could ever persuade Felix to touch the keys of Kalkbrenner's piano. Indeed, we were none of us very grateful for Kalkbrenner's civilities, and took a wicked pleasure in worrying him. I remember that one day, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Liszt, and I, had established ourselves in front of a café on the Boulevard des Italiens, at a season and an hour when our presence there was very exceptional. Suddenly we saw Kalkbrenner coming along. It was his great ambition always

to represent the perfect gentleman, and knowing how extremely disagreeable it would be to him to meet such a noisy company, we surrounded him in the friendliest manner, and assailed him with such a volley of talk that he was nearly driven to despair, which of course delighted us. Youth has no mercy.

I must here tell a little story, if indeed it deserves the name, to show what mad spirits Mendelssohn was capable of at that time. One night as we were coming home across the deserted boulevard at a late hour, in earnest conversation, Mendelssohn suddenly stops and calls out:—"We *must* do some of our jumps in Paris! our jumps, I tell you! Now for it! one!—two!—three!—" I don't think my jumps were very brilliant, for I was rather taken aback by the suggestion, but I shall never forget the moment.

Soon after Mendelssohn's arrival in Paris, Dr. Franck and I were waiting for him in his room, when he came in with a beaming face and declared that he had just seen "a miracle, a real miracle;" and in answer to our questions he continued, "Well, isn't it a miracle? I was at Erard's with Liszt, showing him the manuscript of my Concerto,* and though it is hardly

* Pianoforte Concerto in G minor, Op. 25.

legible, he played it off at sight in the most perfect manner, better than anybody else could possibly play it—quite marvellously!" I confess I was not so much surprised, having long known from experience, that Liszt played most things best the first time, because they gave him enough to do. The second time he always had to add something, for his own satisfaction.

I must not forget to speak of Ole Bull, the violin player, afterwards so famous. He had just escaped from the theological schools, and was in Paris for the first time. His enthusiasm for music was boundless, but of his own special talent he gave no sign whatever. He was the pleasantest listener imaginable, and his views about music and musicians, expressed in very questionable but not the less amusing German, were a real treat to us. We often invited him to dinner, and played to him endlessly. A few years later, I saw him again as the celebrated virtuoso, but the Swedish element which so delighted me at first, had become rather a mannerism.

Mendelssohn went occasionally to see Cherubini. "What an extraordinary creature he is!" he said to me one day. "You would fancy that a man could not be a great composer without sentiment, heart, feeling, or whatever

else you call it; but I declare I believe that Cherubini makes everything out of his head alone." On another occasion he told me that he had been showing him an eight-part composition, *a capella* (I think it his was "Tu *es Petrus"), and added, "The old fellow is really too pedantic: in one place I had a suspended third in two parts, and he wouldn't pass it on any condition." Some years later, happening to speak of this incident, Mendelssohn said: "The old man was right after all; one ought not to write them."

Felix's wonderful musical memory was a great source of enjoyment to us all as well as to himself. It was not learning by heart, so much as retention—and to what an extent! When we were together, a small party of musical people, and the conversation flagged, he would sit down to the piano, play some out-of-the-way piece, and make us guess the composer. On one occasion he played an air from Haydn's "Seasons."

> "The trav'ller stands perplexed,
> Uncertain and forlorn—"

in which not a note of the elaborate violin accompaniment was wanting. It sounded like a regular pianoforte piece, and we stood there

* Op. 111, posthumous work for voices and orchestra.

a long time as "perplexed" as the traveller himself.

The Abbé Bardin, a great musical amateur, used to get together a number of musicians and amateurs at his house once a week in the afternoons, and a great deal of music was gone through very seriously and thoroughly, even without rehearsals. I had just been playing Beethoven's E flat Concerto in public, and they asked for it again on one of these afternoons. The parts were all there, and the string quartet too, but no players for the wind. "I will do the wind," said Mendelssohn, and sitting down to a small piano which stood near the grand one, he filled in the wind parts from memory, so completely, that I don't believe even a note of the second horn was wanting, and all as simply and naturally done as if it were nothing.

It was a famous time. When we had no engagements we generally met in the afternoons. We willingly gave up lunch, so as not to have to go out in the mornings, but a little before dinner-time we used to get so frightfully hungry that a visit to the confectioner's was absolutely necessary. I believe we fasted simply to get an excuse for indulging our passion for pastry. In the evening we often went to the theatre—oftenest to the Gymnase Dramatique, for which

Scribe at that time wrote almost exclusively, and where a charming actress, Léontine Fay, had completely taken possession of us. She acted in Scribe's plays, and took the parts of young wives in doubtful situations, which call into play all their grace and sensibility. She was a slender brunette with wonderful dark eyes, an indescribable grace in her movements, and a voice that went straight to your heart. The celebrated Taglioni, the first to make that great name famous through the world, was also one of our great favourites. No one ever made me feel the poetry of dancing and pantomime as she did; it is impossible to imagine anything more beautiful and touching than her performance of the Sylphide. Börne says of her somewhere, "She flutters around herself, and is at once the butterfly and the flower," but this pretty picture conveys only a part of her charms.

I had written a pianoforte Concerto not long before, and played it in public, but the last movement did not please me, and having to play it again during this Mendelssohn winter, I determined to write a new Finale, which I secretly intended to be a picture of Léontine Fay. I had begun it, but the concert was fixed for an early day, and Mendelssohn declared I should not get my work done in time. This of course I denied,

so we made a bet of a supper upon it. My friend's opposition excited me to make a real trial of skill, and I scored the orchestral part of the whole movement without putting down a note of the solo part. The copyist too did his best, and the result was that I contrived to play the Concerto with the new Finale on the appointed day. Felix paid for the supper, and Labarre, the well-known harpist, a handsome, clever, amusing fellow, was invited to join us. How far the portrait of Léontine Fay was successful, I leave to be decided by its own merits, though Felix confessed that it was not unlike her.

In the midst of all these distractions, Mendelssohn seized every quiet hour for work, much of which was a complete contrast to his actual life at the time. It consisted generally of putting the finishing touches to former pieces, such as church music, his String Quintet in A, &c. Of music absolutely new, he did not write much to speak of during those months, but I remember his playing me some new songs, and some short pianoforte pieces. I had just completed my first three Trios, and the very warm and friendly interest which he took in them was often a great help to me. When he liked a thing he liked it with his whole heart, but if it did not please him, he would sometimes use the most

singular language. One day when I had been playing him some composition of mine, long since destroyed, he threw himself down on the floor and rolled about all over the room. Happily there was a carpet! Many an evening we spent quite quietly together talking about art and artists over the cheerful blazing fire. On great things we always agreed, but our views on Italian and French composers differed considerably, I being a stronger partizan for them than he. He sometimes did not spare even the masters whom he thought most highly of. He once said of Handel that one might imagine he had had his different musical drawers for his choruses, one labelled "warlike," another "heathen," a third "religious," and so on.

Speaking of the Opera in general he said that he thought it had not yet produced so perfect and complete a masterpiece as "William Tell" and others of Schiller's dramas, but that it must be capable of things equally great, whoever might accomplish them. Though fully alive to the weak points in Weber's music, he had a very strong and almost personal affection for him. He declared that when Weber came to Berlin to conduct the performance of Freischütz, he did not dare to approach him, and that once when Weber was driving to the Mendelssohns'

house after a rehearsal, and wanted to take Felix with him, he obstinately refused the honour, and then ran home by a short cut at such a pace as to be ready to open the door for the Herr Hof-Capellmeister on his arrival.

Of all Mozart's works, I think the Zauberflöte was the one he liked best. It seemed to him inexpressibly wonderful that Mozart had been able to express so exactly what he wanted, neither more nor less, with perfect artistic consciousness, and at once with simplest means, and the greatest beauty and completeness.

I was unfortunately obliged to leave Paris a few weeks before Mendelssohn, as my parents wanted me at home. He and some other young friends came to the well-known post-house in the Rue J. J. Rousseau to see me off. "I really envy you," he cried, "going off to Germany for the spring; it's the best thing in the world!" After my departure, during the latter part of his stay in Paris, he had an attack of cholera, but, fortunately, not a severe one. From Paris he went to London, and never returned to the French capital.

CHAPTER III.

AIX-LA-CHAPELLE AND DÜSSELDORF— MAY, 1834, TO MARCH, 1835.

*Felix Mendelssohn to his Mother.**

DÜSSELDORF, *23rd May*, 1834.

A WEEK ago to-day I drove to Aix-la-Chapelle with the two Woringens; an order from the Cabinet, five days before the festival, had given permission for it to be held at Whitsuntide, and this order was so worded as to render it very probable that the permission would be extended to future years. It took us eleven hours' posting, and I was frightfully bored, and arrived cross. We went straight to the rehearsal, and I heard a few numbers of "Deborah," sitting in the stalls; then I told Woringen that I must write at once to Hiller from there, the first time for two years, because he had done his task so admirably. Really his

* Vol. II. of Mendelssohn's published Letters.

work was so modest, and sounded so well, though all the time quite subordinate to Handel, and without cutting anything out; and it delighted me to find someone thinking as I do, and doing just as I should. I noticed a man with a moustache, in the front row of boxes, reading the score; and after the rehearsal, as he came down into the theatre and I went up, we met behind the scenes, and sure enough it was Ferdinand Hiller, who tumbled into my arms, ready to squeeze me to death for joy. He had come from Paris to hear the oratorio, and Chopin had cut his lessons to come with him, and so we met once more. I could now thoroughly enjoy the festival, for we three stayed together, and got a box for ourselves in the theatre where the performances took place; and the next morning of course we were all at the piano, and that was a great delight to me. They have both improved in execution, and as a pianoforte player Chopin is now one of the very first; quite a second Paganini, doing entirely new things, and all sorts of impossibilities which one never thought could be done. Hiller also is a capital player, with plenty of power, and knows how to please. They both labour a little under the Parisian love for effect and strong contrasts, and often sadly lose sight of time and calmness and real musical

feeling; perhaps I go too far the other way, so we mutually supply our deficiencies, and all three learn from each other, I think; meanwhile I felt rather like a schoolmaster, and they seemed rather like *mirliflores* or *incroyables.* After the festival we travelled together to Düsseldorf, and had a very pleasant day with music and talk; yesterday I accompanied them to Cologne, and this morning they went up to Coblenz in the steamer—I came down again, and the charming episode was at an end.

In the interest of my readers I should hardly be able to add anything to this delightful letter. But I cannot resist the temptation of going over this "charming episode" once more, pen in hand, recapitulating and dwelling on it, even where it does not especially concern the friend to whom these pages are consecrated.

In the summer of 1833 I was living in my mother's house in Frankfort, having lost my father in the spring; I was then very much taken up with Handel's Oratorios, the scores of which had been kindly put at my disposal by Ferdinand Ries. "Deborah" I never saw before, and it so pleased me that I began translating it into German, though without any definite purpose. I happened to tell Ries what I was doing, and

on my return to Paris with my mother in the autumn, I received a letter from him, asking if I felt disposed to translate the book of the oratorio, and write additional accompaniments to the music, for the next Lower Rhine Musical Festival, and have it all ready by the New Year. I accepted the proposal with the greatest delight, got my work done by the appointed time, and as a reward was invited to the Festival. Chopin, with whom I was in daily and intimate intercourse, easily let himself be persuaded to go with me, and we were busy making our travelling plans when news arrived that the Festival was not to take place at Whitsuntide, though possibly later. We had hardly reconciled ourselves to postponing our journey, when we heard that after all permission had been granted for Whitsuntide. I hurried to Chopin with the news, but with a melancholy smile he answered that it was no longer in his power to go. The fact is that Chopin's purse was always open to assist his emigrant Polish countrymen; he had put aside the necessary means for the journey; but the journey having been postponed, forty-eight hours had been quite sufficient to empty his cash-box. As I would not on any condition give up his company, he said, after much consideration, that he thought he could manage it,

produced the manuscript of his lovely E flat waltz, ran off to Pleyel's with it, and came back with 500 francs! Who was happier then than I? The journey to Aix-la-Chapelle was most successful. I had the honour of being quartered in the house of the Oberbürgermeister, and Chopin got a room close by. We went straight to the rehearsal of Deborah, and there, to my great surprise and delight, I met Mendelssohn, who immediately joined us. At that time they seemed not to have much idea of his greatness at Aix-la-Chapelle, and it was only twelve years later, the year before his death, that they made up their minds to confide the direction of the Festival to him.

With the exception of some parts of Deborah, my impressions of the performances are quite effaced. But I distinctly remember the day we spent together at Düsseldorf, where the Academy, recently revived by Schadow, was then in the full vigour of youth. Mendelssohn had conducted the Festival there in the spring, and entered on his functions as musical director in the autumn. He had a couple of pretty rooms on the ground-floor of Schadow's house, was working at "St. Paul," associated a great deal with the young painters, kept a horse, and was altogether in a flourishing condition. We

spent the whole morning at his piano playing to each other, and in the afternoon Schadow invited us for a walk.

The general appearance and tone of the company in which we found ourselves made an impression on me that I shall never forget. It was like a prophet with his disciples—Schadow, with his noble head, his dignified easy manner, and his eloquent talk, surrounded by a number of young men, many of them remarkably handsome, and the majority already great artists, listening to him in humble silence, and seeming to think it perfectly natural to be lectured by him. It had become so completely a second nature to Schadow, even outside his studio, to act the teacher, animating and encouraging, or even severely lecturing, that when Felix announced his intention of accompanying us to Cologne on the following day, he asked him in a serious tone what would become of "St. Paul" with all these excursions and distractions. Mendelssohn replied quietly, but firmly, that it would all be ready in good time. The walk ended with coffee and a game at bowls; and Felix, who had been on horseback, lent me his horse to ride home on. Chopin was a stranger to them all, and with his usual extreme reserve had kept close to me during the

walk, watching everything, but making his observations to me alone in the softest of voices. Schadow, always hospitable, asked us to come again in the evening, and we then found some of the most rising young painters there. The conversation soon became very animated, and all would have been right if poor Chopin had not sat so silent and so little noticed. However, Mendelssohn and I knew that he would have his revenge, and were secretly rejoicing at the thought. At last the piano was opened; I began, Mendelssohn followed; then we asked Chopin to play, and rather doubtful looks were cast at him and us. But he had hardly played a few bars, before everybody in the room, especially Schadow, was transfixed; nothing like it had ever been heard. They were all in the greatest delight, and begged for more and more. Count Almaviva had dropped his disguise, and everyone was dumb.

The next day Felix accompanied us on the steamer to Cologne. We arrived late in the afternoon, and he took us to see the Apostles' Church, and to the Bridge, where we parted in rather a comic way. I was looking down into the river, making some extravagant remark or other, when Mendelssohn suddenly calls out: "Hiller getting sentimental; heaven help us! Adieu, farewell"—and was gone.

A year afterwards I received the following letter:—

DÜSSELDORF, *February 26th*, 1835.

DEAR HILLER,—I want to ask you a favour. No doubt you will think it very wrong of me to begin my first letter in this way, and not to have written to you long since of my own accord. I think so too; but when you consider that I am the worst correspondent in the world, and also the most overworked man (Louis Philippe perhaps excepted), you will surely excuse me. So pray listen to the following request, and think of happier times, and then you will fulfil it.

You will remember from last year how the second day at the Musical Festivals is generally arranged. A Symphony, an Overture, and two or three large pieces for chorus and orchestra, something of the style and length of Mozart's "Davidde penitente;" or even shorter and more lively, or with quite secular words, or only one long piece—such as Beethoven's "Meerestille," for instance. I am about to conduct the Cologne Festival this time, and I want to know whether Cherubini has written anything that would do for the second day's performance, and whether, if in manuscript, he would let me have it. You told me that you were on very good terms

with him, and I am sure you can get me the best information on the point. If printed, pray say what you think of it, and give me the full title, that I may send for it. The words may be Latin, Italian, or French, and the contents, as I said before, sacred or otherwise. The chief condition is that it should employ both chorus and orchestra; and if it were a piece of some length, say half-an-hour, I should like it to be in several movements; or, if there is no long piece, I should even like a single short one. It appears that he wrote a number of grand Hymns for the Revolution, which ought to be very fine; might not one of these do? It is impossible to see anything of the kind here, and it would only take you a couple of hours or a walk or two; so I am convinced you can do what I ask, especially as you are intimate with Cherubini, and he will therefore tell you directly what he has written in this line, and where it is to be found.

It would of course be best if we could find something quite unknown to musicians. You may imagine how glad the whole committee, and all the company of Oberbürgermeisters, and the entire town of Cologne, and all the rest, would be to write to Cherubini and make this application. And of course they would also

willingly be charged something for it; but, with his strange ways, they might catch him in an evil hour, and probably he does not care much about it: therefore it is better for you to undertake the matter, and write to me what is to be done next. All that I want is to have nothing but really fine music on the second day, and that is why this request is important to me, and why I count on your fulfilling it.

Then I shall at the same time hear how life goes with you on your railway. Sometimes I hear about it through the *Messager* or the *Constitutionnel*, when you give a Soirée, or play Bach's Sonatas with Baillot; but it is always very short and fragmentary. I want to know if you have any regular and continuous occupation, whether you have been composing much, and what, and if you are coming back to Germany. So you see I am the same as ever.

My Oratorio* will be quite ready in a few weeks, and I hear from Schelble that it is to be performed by the Cæcilia Society in October; I have some new pianoforte things, and shall shortly publish some of them. I always think of you and your warning whenever an old-fashioned passage comes into my head, and

* St. Paul, first performed at Düsseldorf at the Lower Rhine Festival, May 22, 1836.—*Ed.*

hope to get rid of such ideas. You will of course conclude from this that I often think of you, but you might believe that anyhow. My three Overtures are not out yet; Härtel writes to me to-day that they are at the binder's, and will be here in a few days. I shall send you a copy as I promised at the first opportunity, and as soon as my new Symphony comes out, you shall have that too. I will gladly release you from your promise of sending me those plaster caricatures in return, and ask you instead to let me have some copies of new compositions, which I should like a great deal better. Remember me to Chopinetto, and let me know what new things he has been doing; tell him that the military band here serenaded me on my birthday, and that amongst other things they played his B flat Mazurka with trombones and big drum; the passage in G flat with two bass bassoons was enough to kill one with laughing. *A propos,* the other day I saw Berlioz's Symphony, arranged by Liszt, and played it through, and once more could not imagine how you can see anything in it. I cannot conceive anything more insipid, wearisome, and Philistine, for with all his endeavours to go stark mad, he never once succeeds; and as to your Liszt with his two fingers on one key, what does a homely

provincial like me want with him? What is the good of it all? But still it must be nicer in Paris than here, if it were only for Frau von S. (Frau von M.'s sister), who is really too pretty, and is now in Paris (here there's not a soul that's pretty). And then there's plenty of agreeable society (remember me to Cuvillon, Sauzay, and Liszt, also to Baillot a thousand times; but not to Herr —— nor Madame —— nor the child; and tell Chopin to remember me to Eichthal), and it's always so amusing there,—but still I wish you would come to Germany again.

I have gossipped long enough. Mind you answer very soon, as soon as you can tell me what I want to know, and remember me to your mother, and keep well and happy.

Your

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

DÜSSELDORF, *March* 14, 1835.

DEAR HILLER,—Many thanks for your dear kind letter, which gave me very great pleasure. It's not right of you to say that I should be forced on account of the business to write to you again, because I should have done so at any rate; and if you want to try, you had

better answer at once, and then you will see how soon I shall write again. I should so like to know all about your life, and what you do, and be able to picture it to myself thoroughly.

About my own I have not much to say, but there is no thought of my leaving Germany and going to England; who can have told you such a thing? Whether I stay at Düsseldorf longer than I am bound by my contract, which comes to an end next October, is another question; for there is simply nothing to be done here in the way of music, and I long for a better orchestra, and shall probably accept another offer that I have had. I wanted to be quite free for a few years, and go on a sort of art-journey, and snap my fingers at musical directorships and the like; but my father does not wish it, and in this I follow him unconditionally. You know that from the very beginning all I wanted here was a really quiet time for writing some larger works, which will be finished by October; and so I hope to have made use of my stay. Besides it is very pleasant, for the painters are capital fellows, and lead a jolly life; and there is plenty of taste and feeling for music; only the means are so limited that it is unprofitable in the long run, and all one's trouble goes for nothing. I assure you that at the beat, they all

come in separately, not one with any decision, and in the *pianos* the flute is always too high, and not a single Düsseldorfer can play a triplet clearly, but all play a quaver and two semi-quavers instead, and every *Allegro* leaves off twice as fast as it began, and the oboe plays E natural in C minor, and they carry their fiddles under their coats when it rains, and when it is fine they don't cover them at all—and if you once heard me conduct this orchestra, not even four horses could bring you there a second time. And yet there are one or two musicians among them, who would do credit to any orchestra, even to your Conservatoire; but that is just the misery in Germany—the bass trombones and the drum and the double bass excellent, and everything else quite abominable. There is also a choral society of 120 members, which I have to coach once a week, and they sing Handel very well and correctly, and in the winter there are six subscription concerts, and in the summer every month a couple of masses, and all the *dilettanti* fight to the death, and nobody will sing the solos, or rather everybody wants to, and they hate putting themselves forward, though they are always doing it; but you know what music is in a small German town—Heaven help us!

This is certainly rather an odd way of coming back to the question of your returning to Germany. But still the very agreeable and telling way in which you refused my dinner-invitation does not yet repel me. On the contrary, I should like you for once to answer the question seriously: Is there any condition on which you would like to live in Germany? and if so, what? In the theoretical way we talked of it in front of the Post-house at Aix-la-Chapelle, we shall never get far in the matter. But now I should like to know whether, if for instance a place like Hummel's, or like Spohr's at Cassel, or Grund's at Meiningen, in short any Capellmeister's place at one of the small courts were vacant, you would accept such a thing, and make up your mind to leave Paris? Would the pecuniary advantages be of any great importance to you? or are you not thinking of coming back in any case? or are you too much tied by the attractions and excitements of your present life? Pray don't be vexed with me for all these questions, and answer them as fully as you can. It is always possible that some place may turn up in Germany, and you can imagine how I should like to have you nearer, both for my own sake and the sake of good music.

And now to business; and first I must thank you very much for the prompt and satisfactory way in which you have managed the thing for us. I should like best if you would send me the Motet in E flat, "Iste die," with the "Tantum ergo" for five voices, and at the same time *also* the Coronation March from the Mass *du Sacre.* That is what I want.

A Herr Bel from Cologne will call on you, and ask for these things. Please let him have them to send to me, and tell him what you have spent, and he will reimburse you—and again many thanks to you. I have not yet received your studies and songs from Frankfort, but on the other hand the *Rêveries* are lying on my piano, because an acquaintance of mine gets the French paper and always sends it to me whenever there is anything of yours or Chopin's in it. The one in F sharp major is my favourite and pleases me very much, and the A flat one is quaint and charming. But do tell me exactly what you have been doing and are going to do. I see from what you say that you are proposing some great work, but you don't tell me what it is. . . . .

Yours, F. M. B.

P.S. Bendemann, Schirmer, and Hildebrand all

beg to be remembered to you, and hope that you will soon be here again.

At the end of 1847, when I came to Düsseldorf as Director, I found the music there on quite a different footing from that which Mendelssohn had described. The twelve years' energy which Julius Rietz had devoted to it had not been in vain. On my removal to Cologne in 1850, I managed to secure the post for Robert Schumann.

CHAPTER IV.

FRANKFORT AND LEIPSIC—1836 AND 1837.

My dear mother had given up living in Paris, so as to leave me free for a journey to Italy, which I had long wished to undertake. We returned to Frankfort in the spring of 1836, and immediately after our arrival I hurried off to Düsseldorf. The Lower Rhine Musical Festival was to take place there that year under Mendelssohn's direction, and "St. Paul" was to be performed for the first time. The concert was held at the Becker-garden (now the so-called "Rittersaal" belonging to the town music-hall), but the room was too small for the large audience and orchestra, and in the "Sleepers wake" chorus, the blast of the trumpets and trombones from the gallery down into the low hall was quite overpowering. I had arrived too late for rehearsal, and, sitting there all alone, listening to an entirely new work, in a frightfully hot and close room, was naturally not so deeply

impressed as I expected to be. But the audience, who had already heard it three or four times, were delighted; the performers were thoroughly inspired; and on the third day, when, among other things, the chorus "Rise up, arise" was repeated, I listened with very different ears, and was as enthusiastic as anybody. The oratorio afterwards grew on me more and more, especially the first part, which I now consider one of the noblest and finest of Mendelssohn's works.

Mendelssohn was in every way the centre-point of the Festival, not only as composer, director, and pianist, but also as a lively and agreeable host, introducing the visitors to each other, and bringing the right people together, with a kind word for everybody. There I saw Sterndale Bennett for the first time, renewed my boyish friendship with Ferdinand David, and greatly enjoyed meeting the young painters of Schadow's school, many of them already famous. The only musical part of the Festival which I remember, besides "St. Paul," was the marvellously spirited and perfect performance of the Kreutzer Sonata by Mendelssohn and David on the third day.

A few days after my return, Felix followed me to Frankfort. The first thing which he encountered there was a report of the Festival

(the only one he had seen), in which "St. Paul" was spoken of in that lofty, patronizing, damaging tone too often adopted by critics towards artists who stand high above them. It was some time before he could get over the fact that the first criticism of his beloved work should be so offensive—thus the writer had gained his object.

Our excellent friend Schelble had been obliged by illness to retire to his home at Hüfingen near Baden, and during his absence Mendelssohn had promised to undertake the direction of the "Cæcilia" Society for him. He took it only for six weeks, but during that short time his influence was most inspiring. He made them sing Handel and Bach, especially the wonderfully beautiful cantata by the latter, "Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit." He had the art of communicating his own enthusiasm to the chorus, so as completely to electrify them. At the same time he won all hearts by his invariable good-nature and kindness in every act and word.

Mendelssohn was living in a large house belonging to Schelble, which stood at the corner of the "Schöne Aussicht," with a splendid view up and down the river, and was very comfortable there. He enjoyed receiving his friends, and even loved an occasional interruption from

sympathetic visitors in the morning. Our house, at the "Pfarreisen," was not far off, and we saw a great deal of each other. My dear mother, who in spite of her intense love for me could easily be enthusiastic about talents which surpassed my own, was in raptures with Mendelssohn, and ready to do anything for him that lay in her power. She soon discovered his favourite dishes and knew how to indulge him in so many little ways, that he felt quite at home with us. She would often secretly order a carriage for us, so that we might make excursions in the beautiful environs of Frankfort. On one of these expeditions I had the opportunity of seeing my friend in rather a passion. It was near the village of Bergen. The coachman did or said some stupidity or other, upon which Mendelssohn jumped out of the carriage in a towering rage, and after pouring a torrent of abuse upon the man, declared that nothing should make him get in again. The punishment was on our side, and my mother was quite frightened when we arrived late in the evening, hot and exhausted, having had to walk the whole way home. At supper Felix himself could not help laughing, though still stoutly maintaining that he was right.

I remember that one day, after dinner, Men-

delssohn found my Studies lying on the piano, and instantly sat down and played off the whole four-and-twenty one after the other in the most splendid style. My mother was in ecstasy. "He is a wonderful man, that Felix," she said to me, beaming with delight. He, meanwhile, was in the greatest spirits at having given us pleasure, but so hot and excited that he went off at once to my room, to the leathern sofa on which he was so fond of rolling about.

We had many pleasant and interesting visitors at that time, amongst others the famous Swedish song-writer Lindblad, whose northern accent added a peculiar charm to his liveliness and gaiety. His visit was short, but we saw a great deal of him. One morning, after Mendelssohn had played his Overture to Melusine, he said, "That music listens to itself!" Perhaps it does—and it must be delighted with what it hears.

A special interest was given to that spring by Rossini's visit to Frankfort, and his almost daily meetings with Mendelssohn at our house. This most renowned of all Maestros had come to Frankfort with the Baroness James Rothschild, for the wedding of one of the younger members of the family—in the Baroness's mind no doubt to add to the glory of the feast by

his presence. She was a highly cultivated lady, and knew Rossini's best points, having had plenty of opportunity, during their long journey, of observing his deep appreciation of whatever was beautiful, and his delight in art and nature. Since his "William Tell," Rossini had reached the highest pinnacle of his fame, and was now also at the height of his personality, if I may so express myself. He had lost the enormous corpulence of former years: his figure was still full, but not disproportioned, and his splendid countenance, which displayed both the power of the thinker and the wit of the humourist, beamed with health and happiness. He spoke French quite as well as Italian, and with the most melodious voice: his long residence in Paris, and intercourse with the best people there, had transformed him from a haughty young Italian into a man of the world, dignified, graceful, and charming, and enchanting everybody by his irresistible amiability. He had come to see us one morning, to our great delight, and was describing his journey through Belgium, and all that had struck him there, when I heard the bell, and feeling certain that it was Mendelssohn, ran out to open the door of the corridor. It was Felix, and with him Julius Rietz, who had just arrived. I told them that Rossini was there,

and Mendelssohn was delighted; but, in spite of all our persuasions, Rietz would not come in, and turned back. When Felix appeared, Rossini received him with marked respect, and yet in such a friendly manner, that in a few minutes the conversation resumed its flow and became quite animated. He wanted Mendelssohn to play to him, and after a little resistance on Mendelssohn's side, they arranged to meet at our house again next morning. These meetings were often repeated in the course of the next few days, and it was quite charming to see how Felix, though inwardly resisting, was each time afresh obliged to yield to the overwhelming amiability of the Maestro, as he stood at the piano listening with the utmost interest, and expressing his satisfaction more or less openly. I cannot deny the fact—and indeed it was perfectly natural — but Felix, with his juvenile looks, playing his compositions to a composer whose melodies just then ruled the whole world of song, was, in a certain measure, ostensibly acting an inferior part—as must always be the case when one artist introduces himself to another without any corresponding return. Mendelssohn soon began to rebel a little. "If your Rossini," said he to me one morning when we met at our bath in the Main, "goes on mutter-

ing such things as he did yesterday, I won't play him anything more."

"What did he mutter? I did not hear anything."

"But I did: when I was playing my F sharp minor Caprice, he muttered between his teeth, '*Ça sent la sonate de Scarlatti.*'"

"Well, that's nothing so very dreadful."

"Ah—bah!"

However, on the following day he played to him again. I must add that Rossini always looked back to this meeting with Mendelssohn with heartfelt pleasure, and expressed the strongest admiration for his talent.

The impression made by Rossini on the whole colony of Frankfort musicians was really overwhelming. The second day after his arrival I had to drive about with him to all the artists of importance, and with many of them to act the part of interpreter. Some were ready to faint with fear and surprise when he appeared. My mother afterwards invited all these gentlemen, and one or two foreign artists who happened to be staying in Frankfort, to meet him at a *soirée;* and it was almost comic to see how each did his best to shine before the great leader of the light Italian school. Capellmeister Guhr played a sonata of his own, Ferdinand

Ries the Study with which he had first made a sensation in London, Aloys Schmitt a Rondo, and some one else a Notturno. Mendelssohn was intensely amused at the whole thing. Rossini was more pompous that evening than I ever remember to have seen him; very polite, very amiable, and very complimentary—in fact, *too* complimentary. But next day his sly humour came out. A grand dinner had been arranged in his honour at the "Mainlust," and as many celebrities of all kinds as there were room for took part in it, Mendelssohn among the rest. When the dinner was over, the hero of the day began walking up and down the garden and talking in his usual way; meanwhile the place had become crowded with people who wanted to see the great man, and who pushed and squeezed and peered about to get a peep at him, he all the time pretending to ignore them utterly. I have never witnessed such a personal ovation to a composer in the open air—except, perhaps, on his way to the grave!

The year 1836 was one of the most important of Mendelssohn's life, for it was that in which he first met his future wife. Madame Jeanrenaud was the widow of a clergyman of the French Reformed Church in Frankfort. Her

husband had died in the prime of life, and she was living with her children at the house of her parents, the Souchays, people of much distinction in the town. Felix had been introduced to them, and soon felt himself irresistibly attracted by the beauty and grace of the eldest daughter, Cécile. His visits became more and more frequent, but he always behaved with such reserve towards his chosen one, that, as she once laughingly told me in her husband's presence, for several weeks she did not imagine herself to be the cause of Mendelssohn's visits, but thought he came for the sake of her mother, who, indeed, with her youthful vivacity, cleverness, and refinement, chattering away in the purest Frankfort dialect, was extremely attractive. But though during this early time Felix spoke but little to Cécile, when away from her he talked of her all the more. Lying on the sofa in my room after dinner, or taking long walks in the mild summer nights with Dr. S. and myself, he would rave about her charm, her grace, and her beauty. There was nothing overstrained in him, either in his life or in his art: he would pour out his heart about her in the most charmingly frank and artless way, often full of fun and gaiety; then again, with deep feeling, but never with any

exaggerated sentimentality or uncontrolled passion. It was easy to see what a serious thing it was, for one could hardly get him to talk of anything which did not touch in some way upon her. At that time I did not know Cécile, and therefore could only act the sympathetic listener. How thankless the part of confidant is, we learn from French tragedies; and I had not even the satisfaction of being sole confidant, for S. was often present during Felix's outpourings; but on the other hand he and I could talk over all these revelations, and our affection for Mendelssohn made it easy for us to forgive the monotony which must always pervade a lover's confidences. Mendelssohn's courtship was no secret, and was watched with much curiosity and interest by the whole of Frankfort society; and many remarks which I heard showed me that to possess genius, culture, fame, amiability, and fortune, and belong to a family of much consideration as well as celebrity, is in certain circles hardly enough to entitle a man to raise his eyes to a girl of patrician birth. But I do not think that anything of this sort ever came to Mendelssohn's ears.

In the beginning of August he went to the seaside for the benefit of his health, and also, as Devrient tells us on good authority, to test his

love by absence. Soon after he left, I received the following letter from the Hague; and his humorous irritation shows even more plainly than his pathetic complaints, how hard he found it to bear the few weeks' separation.

'S GRAVENHAGE, *7th August*, 1836.

DEAR HILLER,—How I wish I were at the Pfarreisen with you, telling you about Holland, instead of writing to you about it. I think it is impossible in Frankfort to have any idea of how dull it is at the Hague.

If you don't answer this letter directly, and write me at least eight pages about Frankfort and the Fahrthor,* and about yourself and your belongings, and music, and all the living world, I shall probably turn cheesemonger here and never come back again. Not one sensible thought has come into my head since I drove out of the Hôtel de Russie; I am now beginning by degrees to accustom myself to it a little, and have given up hoping for any sensible ideas, and only count the days till I go back, and rejoice that I have already taken my sixth bath to-day, about a quarter of the whole penalty. If you were me, you would already have packed up

* The Jeanrenauds lived close to the "Fahrthor."

ten times, turned your back on the cheese-country, said a few incomprehensible words to your travelling companion, and gone home again; I should be glad enough to do so, but a certain Philistinism that I am known to possess holds me back. I had to stay three days instead of two at Düsseldorf, because it was impossible to get S. away, and I think those few days did a good deal towards making me melancholy. There was such an air of the past about everything, and fatal remembrance—for which you know I care but little—would play its part again. The Festival is said to have been fine, but that did not make the time less tedious. I had to hear no end about Schindler and his writings and refutations, and it was not amusing. I dined at ——, and that also recalled bygone times.

Rietz is for the moment recovered, but looks so dreadfully ill and worried, and is so overworked by the musical set at Düsseldorf, and so ill-treated by others, that it made my heart ache to see him. We had rain on the steamer as far as Rotterdam; Schirmer came on here with us, and then went by steamer to Havre, and after that to Paris—but oh! I wish I were at the Pfarreisen!—for all the real bother began here. S. got cross, and found everything

too dear, and we couldn't get a lodging or a carriage, and the Dutch did not understand German, though S. boldly addressed them all in it; and his boy was naughty, and there was no end of bother. We have got a lodging at the Hague now, and drive out to Scheveningen every morning at eight, and take our bath, and are all in good working order. However, nothing can destroy the effect of the sea out at Scheveningen, and the straight green line is as mysterious and unfathomable as ever, and the fish and shells which the tide washes up on the shore are pretty enough. But still the sea here is as prosaic as it can possibly be anywhere; the sand-hills look dreary and hopeless, and one sees hardly any reflection in the water, because the level of the coast is so low; half the sea is just the colour of the shore, because it is very shallow at first, and only begins to be deep far out. There are no big ships, only middling-sized fishing-boats; so I don't feel cheerful, though a Dutchman caught hold of me to-day as I was running along the shore and said, "Hier solle se nu majestuosische Idee sammele." I thought to myself, "It's a pity you are not in the land where the pepper grows and I in the wine-country." One can't even be really alone, for here too there are musical people, and they take

offence if you snub them. There are actually some Leipsic ladies, who bathe at Scheveningen and go about afterwards with their hair all down their backs, which looks disgusting, and yet you're expected to pay them attention. My only consolation is Herr von ——, which shows how far gone I am; but he also is bored to death, and that is why we harmonize. He keeps looking at the sea as if he could have it tapped to-morrow if he chose; but that does not matter, and I like walking with him better than with the Leipsic ladies and their long hair. Lastly, I have to teach S.'s boy, help him with his Latin construing from Cornelius Nepos, mend his pens, cut his bread and butter, and make tea for him every morning and evening, and to-day I had to coax him into the water, because he always screamed so with his father and was so frightened—and this is how I live at the Hague, and I wish I were at the Pfarreisen.

But do write soon and tell me all about it, and comfort me a little. . . . That was a good time we had in Frankfort, and as I seldom talk about such things, I must tell you now how heartily thankful I am to you for it. Those walks at night by the Main, and many an hour at your house, and the afternoons when I lay on your sofa, and you were so frightfully bored and I

not at all—I shall never forget them. It really is a great pity that we meet so seldom and for such short times; it would be such a pleasure to us both if it could be otherwise. Or perhaps you think we should quarrel at last? I don't believe it.*

Have you ever, since I went away, thought of our Leipsic overture which I am so fond of? Do let me find it finished when I come back; it will only take you a couple of afternoons now, and hardly anything but copying. And my pianoforte piece, how about that? I have not thought of music here yet, but I have been drawing and painting a good deal, and I may also perhaps bring back some music. What is the Cæcilia Society doing? Is it alive still, or sleeping and snoring? Many things belonging to our Frankfort time are over . . . X. told me to-day that H. is engaged to be married: is it true? Then you also must marry soon. I propose Madame M. Have you seen her again, and the Darmstadt lady? Write to me about all Frankfort. Tell Mdlle. J. that there is only one engraving hanging in my room here, but it represents *la ville de Toulon*, and so I always have to think of her as a

* See page 216.—*Ed.*

Toulonese. And mind you remember me to your mother most particularly, and write to me very very soon. If my patience is not exhausted, I shall stay here till the 24th or 26th of August, and then travel by land or water back to the Free-town of Frankfort. Oh that I were there now! If you show this letter to anybody I wish you may be roasted, and anyhow I should be hanged; so lock it up or burn it, but write to me at once, *poste restante, à la Haye.* Farewell, and think nicely of me and write soon.

Your F. M. B.

It will easily be conceived that I did not burn this letter, and I shall hardly be blamed for not keeping it locked up any longer. A few days after I received it I met with a little accident. Jumping into the swimming-bath in a shallow part of the river, I trod on a sharp piece of glass, and must have cut a small vein, for when, with a good deal of pain, I got to land, a little fountain of blood sprang from the wound. I was more amused than frightened at the sight, but towards evening a kind of nervous attack came on, which made me feel very weak and ill. A few days later the doctor recommended change of air, and sent me to

Homburg, at that time a most retired and idyllic little spot. There was one small house near the mineral spring, in which my mother and I established ourselves: the whole bathing-population consisted only of some two dozen Frankforters. From Homburg I sent Mendelssohn a report of myself, and received the following answer:—

THE HAGUE, 18*th August*, 1836.

DEAR FERDINAND,—This is very bad news which your letter gives me, and the whole tone of it is so low-spirited that it shows what a tiresome and serious illness you have gone through. I hope you are getting on better, and that these lines will find you in quite a different frame of mind from the one you wrote in; but as you had to be sent to the country, the thing must have been rather obstinate, and if with your strong constitution you had nervous attacks, and suffered from exhaustion, it must really have been serious, and you must have needed much patience, poor fellow! I only hope that it is all over now, and that I shall find you in Frankfort again quite strong and well. It is curious that I also should have hurt my foot bathing, about a week or ten days ago

(much less seriously than you, of course, only sprained), and since that time I limp about laboriously, which certainly creates a sort of sympathy between us, though it only makes the stay here more tiresome; for if one can't give full play to one's body (in a twofold sense) in a bathing-place like this, one really has nothing else to do. In fact, if you expect this to be a cheerful letter I am afraid you must take the will for the deed, for I am much too full of whims now that I have to limp about, and am no good as a comforter. Besides this, S. took himself off a few days ago, and has left me here alone amongst the people "who speak a strange tongue." So now I have to swallow all the *ennui* by myself—we used at least to be able to swear in company. The bathing seemed to exhaust him too much, and he was afraid of getting seriously ill, so I could hardly press him to stay, and he is probably already sitting comfortably and quietly at Düsseldorf, whilst I have our whole apartment to myself, and can sleep in three beds if I like. Twenty-one baths make up what they call the small cure, the minimum that can do one any good, and when these are finished I shall be off in a couple of hours, and I look forward to Emmerich and the Prussian frontier as if it

were Naples or something equally beautiful. Next Monday I shall take this long-expected twenty-first bath, and my plan is to go up the Rhine by steamer, as unfortunately there is no quicker way. I must stop a day at Horchheim, at my uncle's, for on the way here I hardly stopped at all; and I hope to goodness on Sunday evening, the 28th August, I may celebrate Goethe's birthday at Frankfort in Rhine wine; and as I write this you can't imagine how I long for the time. Shall we be able to spend the evening together directly? I am always afraid you will stay too long at your Homburg, and who knows whether I should be able to go and see you there? Whereabouts is this Homburg? Is it Homburg vor der Höhe, or Hessen-Homburg where the Prince comes from, or which? Just now it seems to me as if I had also heard of one in the Taunus; if so, and that be yours, could not we meet somewhere between Frankfort and Mainz on the 28th? That would be splendid, and we would come along together past the watch-tower into Frankfort, and have such a fine talk all the evening. Please write me a few lines about it, and about how you are—you would be doing me a great kindness; only say how and when I am to meet you, and give me good

news of yourself and your belongings. I can plainly see from your letter that it was an effort to you, and I thank you all the more for having written it, but you must please make another good effort, even if it is only a few lines, and address it to Herrn Mendelssohn, Coblenz, and then I shall get it quick and sure. I am drawing a great deal, but composing little; but I wish I were at the Pfarreisen. Forgive this stupid letter; farewell, and may we have a happy meeting on the Main, in good health.

Always your F. M. B.

In consequence of this letter I must have offered to meet Mendelssohn at Höchst, which I could easily reach from Homburg. Nothing came of it, however, as may be seen from the following note:—

COBLENZ, 27*th August*, 1836.

DEAR OLD DRAMA,*—I got your letter yesterday at Cologne, and can only answer it

* I had given my first Concert Overture in D minor, which I have mentioned once or twice, the title of "Overture to the Old Drama of Fernando;" this brought about the expressions "Old Drama," and the like, which we shall find often repeated. When it was published I omitted the title, as it referred to a drama which is only now by degrees becoming an old one.

to-day from here in great haste, for it is better to talk than write. I shall not be able to say exactly when I go from Mainz to Frankfort, and come to Höchst. I have to have leeches on my stupid foot to-day, *par ordre de moufti (chirurgien)*, and so must stay here to-morrow, and keep quiet; it would be too horrible to come to Frankfort and have to stay in. I hope to be able to come on Monday evening, but I may still perhaps start to-morrow morning, and in any case I am too uncertain to be able to give you a *rendezvous*. I must obey the leeches; but anyhow I could not have gone to Homburg with you; I feel myself far too much drawn to the old Free-town, and you know how I long to be there. Do come back there soon, and let me find a line from you, *poste restante*, Frankfort, to say how and when you will come, so that I may meet you. Remember me to your people, and keep well and happy, in major, and 6-4 chords of all sorts.

Your F. M. B.

Mendelssohn's engagement took place during my stay at Homburg—a great event, and much spoken of. He called on us one afternoon with his *fiancée* and her sister, but as he had only

a very short time to be with her, one could not make any demands on so happy a lover. Towards the end of September, if not sooner, he was obliged to return to his Leipsic duties, and could not even remain for a great rural festivity* given at the "Sandhof" by the grandparents of Cécile, to celebrate the engagement. He went off, with post-horses, in an old carriage which my mother lent him. I had put off my journey to Italy, so as to undertake the direction of the Cæcilia Society, and shortly afterwards received the following letter:—

LEIPSIC, 29*th October*, 1836.

MY DEAR FERDINAND,—Cécile says you are angry with me, but I say, don't be so, at least, not very, for my long silence really may be forgiven. You cannot have any idea of the heap of work that is put upon me; they really push it too far with music here, and the people never can get enough. I have rehearsals almost every day, sometimes two, or rehearsal and concert the same day, and when I am tired and done up with talking and beating time, I don't like then to sit down and write to you. If you

* See published letter, July 3, 1839; and also page 187.—*Ed.*

had been a really nice fellow you would long ago have sent me a few lines, and have thought, "As he does not write first, he probably can't, so I will," and certainly you are not as driven and worried as I am. And then you often see Cécile, and you might have written to me about her, and you don't do it a bit, and yet you expect to be called generous! But I won't complain if you will make up for it directly, and write and describe everything that has happened to you since the 19th of September at midnight.

About myself there is really nothing to say. I conduct the Subscription Concerts and divers others, and I wish with all my heart I were at the Fahrthor. You have plenty to write about — how you are living, how your people are, whether you have time and inclination for composing, how my pianoforte piece is getting on, and the Cæcilia Society; how my bride is looking, how you get on in their house; about Schelble, about the fat P., about all Frankfort (where I would so gladly be, and you perhaps in Leipsic), all this you must write about, and do it very soon, dear Ferdinand.

After all I have something to tell you about, and that is our second Subscription Concert and your Overture in E, with which you gave me

and all of us such real and heartfelt pleasure. It sounded extremely fresh and beautiful with the orchestra, and was played with real liking; some parts, from which on the piano I had not expected so much, came out admirably in the orchestra, especially one where it goes down *fortissimo* in semibreves (your favourite passage, very broad and strong) and sounds splendid, and my wind instruments went at it so heartily that it was quite a treat. David made the strings do it all with the down bow—you should have heard it; and then the softness of the wind instruments, and the return to E major *pianissimo!* The whole composition gave me more pleasure than ever, and I liked it better than any of the new things that I know. The so-called public were less delighted than I had expected and wished, because it is just the kind of thing that they can and ought to understand; but I think it comes from their not yet having seen your name to any orchestral composition, which always makes them chary of their enthusiasm in Germany. So it's lucky that the Director of the theatre sent the very next day to ask for the Overture for a concert which is to be given in the theatre in a week or two, and I promised it him. (I hope you don't mind.) On the 8th of January we do the one in D minor,

and towards the end of the winter I shall probably repeat both. I don't know what the reviews have said about it, for I did not read them; Fink said to me that it was "beautiful writing," and Sch . . was going to write at length about it—God grant it may be something good.* But what does it matter? The generality of musicians here were very much pleased with it, and that is the chief thing. But when is my pianoforte piece coming?

You had better not boast so much about your Cæcilia Society; we Leipzigers are getting up a performance of "Israel in Egypt," which will be something quite perfect; more than 200 singers, with orchestra and organ, in the church; I look forward to it immensely; we shall come out with it in about a week, and that is also one of the things which makes my head in a whirl just now, for these rehearsals, with all the amateurs, ladies and gentlemen, singing and screaming away all at once, and never keeping quiet, are no easy matter. You are better off at the Cæcilia Society, where they have been well drilled into obedience,—but then they criticise among themselves, and that isn't nice

* Fink was the Editor of the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, the principal musical paper of the day. Schumann's was the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*.—*Ed.*

either. In fact—and so on! I wish I were at the Fahrthor — and also at the Pfarreisen, you may believe me or not. Stamaty is staying here, and I have got to teach him counterpoint—I declare I really don't know much about it myself. He says, however, that that is only my modesty. And the carriage! How am I ever to thank you enough for it? . .

Are you a Freemason? People declare that there are some four-part songs for men's voices in the lodge here, which no one but a Freemason could have composed. Do you still mean to keep to your Italian journey in the spring? Pray, dear Ferdinand, write soon and long, and forgive my silence, and don't punish me for my small paper with a small sheet of your own.

My best remembrances to your mother, and write soon and keep well and happy.

Your FELIX M. B.

A few weeks later I had this one :—

LEIPSIC, 26*th November*, 1836.

DEAR FERDINAND,—Here is your Overture (if you object to my having kept the autograph I will bring it you at Christmas and exchange)

and the copies of your songs which you wanted, and which I went and got from Hofmeister. Many thanks for your delightful long letter, but now that I hope, please God, to be in Frankfort this day three weeks, I hardly feel in the mood to answer it properly. It is so much nicer and pleasanter to do it oneself in person. I should have sent you the Overture long ago, if the copyist had not kept me waiting such a shameful time; the one in E will have to be repeated at one of the next concerts, and now I am curious to see what they will say to the D minor. As to the carriage, I may perhaps bring it back myself at Christmas. I am having it repaired a little, and the smith declares it will then be perfect. Many thanks to your mother for having lent it me. Stamaty will be at Frankfort in a few days, on his way back to Paris—I maintain that he has got *de l'Allemagne* and *du contrepoint double par dessus les oreilles* —and in three weeks, please God, I myself come to Frankfort. O that I were at the Pfarreisen! I should first come and say good evening to you, and then turn to the right. To-day I can only say, *auf Wiedersehen!* Remember me to your mother.

Your FELIX M. B.

I have very little to tell about the short visit which he paid his *fiancée* at Christmas, excepting that I saw him oftener than might have been expected under the circumstances. He interested himself much in our work at the Cæcilia Society, where they had begun studying "St. Paul" under my direction. Our performance of it was the first after that at Leipsic, which Mendelssohn himself had conducted, though in reality the third, counting that at the Düsseldorf Festival, while the work was still in manuscript.

Shortly after his return to Leipsic I received the following letters :—

LEIPSIC, 10*th January*, 1837.

DEAR FERDINAND (OLD DRAMA),—First let me thank you for the *nervos rerum* which you lent me, and which I now return; they were of the greatest service, for I had very little left when I got here. Still I don't think that that was the chief reason why I felt so dreadfully low when I came into my room again on the evening of my return—so low, that even you with your flinty heart would have pitied me; I sat quite quiet for full two hours, doing nothing but curse the Subscription Concerts to myself. And with this

old strain I come back to Hafiz, and wish I were at the Pfarreisen. I am always happy there. Tell me yourself, what pleasure *can* I take in the remaining nine concerts, in the Symphony by H. and the Symphony by S.? The day after to-morrow we have Molique's Symphony, and that is why I am writing to you, because we had to put off your Overture till the next concert, when we shall also have [Sterndale] Bennett's pianoforte * concerto, the sacrifice scene from "Idomeneo," and Beethoven's B flat symphony. I meant not to write before next Friday, but as that would put it off for a week, and I want to save my reputation as a man of business, I will write again then. So you had better look out and answer me before that, or I shall abuse your Overture, or rather, make it go badly, and intrigue against it, *secundum ordinem Melchisedek,* etc. . . . You once praised me for making friends of all the German composers, but this winter it's the very reverse—I shall be in hot water with them all. I have got six new symphonies lying here; what they are like God only knows, I would rather not; not one of them will please, and nobody has to bear the blame but me, because I never let any com-

* Concerto No. 3, in C minor, played by the composer himself.—*Ed.*

posers but myself have a chance, especially in symphonies. Good heavens! Ought not the Capellmeisters to be ashamed of themselves, and smite their breasts? But they spoil everything with their cursed artistic consciousness and the wretched "divine spark" which they are always reading about.

When am I to have my pianoforte piece, "Drama"?

I have sent my six Preludes and * Fugues to the printer to-day; they will not be much played, I fear; still I should very much like you to look them through some time, and tell me if anything pleased you in them, and also anything to the contrary. The Organ † Fugues are to be printed next month; *me voilà perruque!* I wish to goodness that some rattling good pianoforte passage would come into my head, to do away with the bad impression. Oh dear! I only really care about one thing, and that is the calendar. Easter falls early—I wish it would fall at once. However, I have informed my Directors that I must leave directly after the last concert (17th of March), and cannot conduct any oratorio, either my own or the Angel Gabriel's, because of family affairs. They

* For Piano. Op. 35.

† Three Preludes and Fugues for the Organ. Op. 37.—*Ed.*

understand this, and think it quite fair. If only I had not to wait so long. How many times must it thaw, and freeze, and rain, and must I be shaved, and drink my coffee in the morning, and conduct symphonies, and take walks, before March comes. Schumann, David, and Schleinitz (though he does not know you) wish to be remembered to you. I must leave off and go to dinner; in the afternoon we rehearse Molique, in the evening there is a fête for the newly-married couple (the Davids); his wife is really here, and is a Russian, and he is married to her, and is a brother-in-law of Prince Lieven, and our "Concertmeister." It is needless to say more. Many remembrances and good wishes to your dear mother, and many compliments de Mdlle. J. And so farewell, and do not forget your

FELIX M. B.

LEIPSIC, *24th January*, 1837.

MY DEAR FERDINAND,—I have to give you my report of the performance of your D minor Overture,* which took place last Thursday evening. It went very well; we had rehearsed it

* Afterwards published by Breitkopf and Härtel, with many alterations, under the title of "First Concert Overture in D minor, Op. 32."

very carefully several times, and many parts of it greatly surpassed my expectations; the most beautiful of all is the A minor *piano* passage in the wind, and the melody that follows it—it sounds capital; then also, at the beginning of the so-called working-out, the *forte* in G minor, with the *piano* after it (your own favourite passage), and then the drums and wind instruments *piano* in D major right at the end. The winding-up sounds far better in the orchestra than I had expected. But I must tell you that after the first rehearsal, relying on the good understanding between us, I could not resist changing the basses to the melody in A—and also where it comes back in F and in D—from *staccato* to sustained notes; you can't think what a restless effect it had before, so I hope you won't be annoyed at my taking such a liberty; I am convinced you would have done the same, for it did not sound at all as you wanted it to.

But now, there is still something on my mind which I want to say. The Overture, even at the performance, did not take hold of the musicians as I had wished, but left us all a little cold. This would not have mattered, but it was remarkable that all the musicians whom I spoke to, said the same—they had all been extremely

pleased with the first subject and the whole of the opening, and the melodies in A minor and major, and so far had felt quite worked up by it, but from that point their liking began to decrease, till by the end, the good and striking impression of the subject was forgotten, and they felt no more interest in the music. This seems to me important, for it touches again upon a matter about which we have had such endless discussions, and the want of interest with which it is possible for you at any time to regard your art, must at last be felt by others also. I would not like to say this to you if I were not so perfectly convinced that the point is just one at which every man is left to *himself*, and where neither nature, nor talent, not even the very greatest, can help him, but only his own will. I dislike nothing more than finding fault with a man's nature or talent; it only depresses and worries and does no good; one cannot add a cubit to one's stature, all striving and struggling are useless there, so one has to be silent about it, and let the responsibility rest with God. But in a case like the present with your work, where all the themes, everything which is talent or inspiration (call it what you will) is good and beautiful and impressive, and the development alone not good, then I think

it may not be passed over; there, I think that blame can never be misplaced,—that is the point where one can improve oneself and one's work; and as I believe that a man with splendid capacities is under an obligation to become something great, and that it may justly be called his own fault if he does not develop himself exactly in proportion to the means given him, I also believe it ought to be the same with a piece of music. Don't tell me, it is so, and therefore it must be so; I know perfectly well that no musician can make his thoughts or his talents different to what Heaven has made them; but I also know that if Heaven has given him good ones, he must also be able to develop them properly. And don't go and tell me that we are all mistaken, and that your treatment is always as good as your invention; I don't think it is. I do think that as far as talent goes you are equal to *any* musician of the day, but I know hardly any piece of yours which is satisfactorily worked out. The two Overtures are certainly your best things, but the more clearly you express yourself, the more one feels what is wanting, and what in my opinion you ought to remedy.

Don't ask me, how; for you know that best yourself; after all it is only the affair of a

walk, or a moment—in short, of a thought. If you laugh at me for all this long story, you will perhaps be doing very right; but certainly not, if you are angry, or bear me a grudge for it,—it is foolish of me even to think of such a thing; but how many musicians are there who would put up with it from another? And as you must see from every word how I love and admire your talent, I may also say that you are not perfect—and that again would offend most musicians. But not you, for you know I take the matter to heart.

As for that passage in Bach, I don't happen to have the score, and I should not be able to find it here at once, but I never considered it a misprint, though the edition generally swarms with them. Your version seems to me therefore incorrect. I should have thought the A flat quite necessary at "Thou smotest them"—and peculiarly Bach-ish.

Kindest regards. Your F. M.

This letter, in which Mendelssohn lectures me so affectionately, appears in the second volume of his published letters, but I felt that I could not omit it here; and I must add a few words, with regard to the matter about which

we had had "such endless discussions," as Felix says,—a matter in which to this day I believe myself to be right, though I do not therefore by any means wish to set myself up against his criticism on that occasion.

That a composer must be *born*—that unless there is a natural power working in him with all the force of instinct, he will produce nothing of paramount greatness—there can be as little doubt as that he must learn and study all that is to be learned, quite as much and more than he would do for mere technical purposes. But the question now arises, where does the inborn power end, and the power of workmanship begin? According to Mendelssohn's opinion, as expressed above, all that comes within the range of invention of melody belongs to the first power, and the development to the second, in which the strong will, coupled with the presupposed amount of ability and dexterity, deals like a master with the material in hand. This view of his, no doubt shared by many, had a twofold source, in his harmonious nature and his perfectly matured artistic education. The greater spontaneity of melodious thought cannot be denied; and though with the acceptance or rejection of the *first inspiration* criticism already comes into play, the choice in that case is not so *indefinite* as it

becomes in the *working out* of the leading ideas—and choice is always distracting. But in spite of this, it seems to me a mistake to consider the after development as less dependent on original genius than the first discovery; for if this development rests only on what has been learned and studied, if the qualities of poetical creation do not come into play in the same degree in both cases, if it is not fresh, living, and original, it cannot make any impression; the cleverness and learning of the musician will always meet with due recognition, but can never make him pass for an inspired composer. One might even assert, that in the union of musical thought and speculation with the vivid power of the imagination, a still higher degree of productive genius is called out than in the formation of the simple melodious idea; if indeed this latter, as soon as it passes beyond the most elementary forms, does not at once need the strongest chisel and the finest file. I find the proofs of this opinion in the masterpieces which adorn our art. In the best works of the five great masters, Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, it is impossible to point out any separation between invention and treatment; as soon as such a separation is discernible, the music is no longer so great. In fact, there are not a few cases where just the

whole force of genius shows itself in works which have developed from comparatively unimportant germs; as, on the other hand, with inferior composers, the working out and the invention are much on the same level of poverty and weakness. If there are some ingenious composers, in whose works the "form" (a word often used and generally mis-used) is not on the same level as the subject-matter with which they have been inspired, this is a want which certainly lies more in their natural gifts than in their education. For assuredly we are attributing far too much to artistic education and development if we can see nothing in natural gifts, when they are in any way remarkable, beyond the mere power of inventing melodies. Amongst the countless gifts with which Nature must endow the man whom she designs for a great composer, one of the most essential is a firm will to develop and deepen his own ideas. It may sound hopeless to say that in art this also is inborn; it is still more hopeless to see many possessing it without the material on which they might worthily employ it.

Mendelssohn, who was endowed with *all* these gifts, only in less measure than the *very* greatest of his predecessors, possessed also in a preeminent degree that indefatigableness which

made him devote the minutest care, as well as the greatest energy, to attaining his ideal. He could not conceive that anything else was possible. And yet after all, towards the close of the letter just quoted, he himself admits, that the best must always be the half-unconscious; for what else—to use his own words—can be said to be "the matter of a walk, or a moment —in short, of a thought"?

I need hardly add, that I have no wish to deny the necessity of the most uninterrupted, strenuous, and painstaking labour.

CHAPTER V.

FRANKFORT, LONDON, LEIPSIC, BERLIN—1837—39.

MENDELSSOHN was married on the 28th of March, the ceremony taking place in the French Reformed Church, to which his bride belonged. It seemed strange to hear anyone so thoroughly German harangued in French on this solemn occasion; but the simplicity of the service, and the extraordinary fascination of the young couple, touched and impressed everyone. I had composed a marriage song for the reception of the newly-married pair at the grandparents' house, and for its performance had engaged the services of the ladies belonging to a small choral society which I had conducted every week during the winter at the E.'s house. In spite of all the admiration and idolatry of these young ladies for Mendelssohn, and though they knew we had leave, and that it was very pretty and laudable to show such an attention to so great an artist, it was not without some embarrassment that the graceful

band entered the strange house under my direction, and took up their position in battle array before the eyes of the astonished servants, to await the expected arrival. But Mendelssohn and his charming bride were so touched and pleased, and the numerous members of the family, as might have been expected, so extremely amiable, that the fair singers soon completely forgot their doubtful situation, and thoroughly enjoyed being in the thick of the merry throng.

The young couple went first to spend some time at the charming town of Freiburg-im-Breisgau. A place more congenial to their poetic and artistic tastes could hardly have been found. It is a smiling little city, with clear streams running through the streets, glorious hills looking down on it all around, lovely environs with views over mountain and valley, river and plain; and besides all this, the homely, simple, South-German dialect and manners—in short a perfect place for a honeymoon. It will be remembered that Cécile had great skill in painting. She and Felix kept a journal,* unique of its kind, which I was allowed to see on their return, and which contains written matter and drawings by each in turn, landscapes, houses, little scenes in

* Now in the possession of Mendelssohn's youngest daughter, Madame Wach, at Bonn.

which they took part—in fact, hundreds of things done on the spur of the moment. During their absence I constantly heard news of their doings from the lively and communicative Madame Jeanrenaud. In the middle of May the happy pair returned to Frankfort. Felix writes in a letter to Devrient:—"I can only tell you that I am perfectly happy and in good spirits, and though I never should have thought it, not the least over-excited, but just as calm and settled as if it were all quite natural." In this tranquil happy state I found him on his return. But when he showed me the 42nd Psalm,* the musical result of his wedding tour, I was astonished—though only so long as I had seen nothing but the title. For the tender and longing pathos which pervades some parts of it is based on a foundation of perfect trust in God, and the subdued sentiment which for the most part characterizes the work, may well harmonize with the blissful feelings of deep happiness which penetrated him at the time. The final chorus, the words of which do not belong to the Psalm, and which he composed afterwards at Leipsic, seems to me not entirely in keeping with the other movements.

* (Op. 42.) "As the hart pants."

However, I must at once protest against the possible misunderstanding of my being supposed to hold artistic creation in general to be the produce of the state of mind at the moment. Even in the most ordinary life the mood of the mind changes so continually, that if one were to follow it, no artistic work of any unity would ever come into being; these matters are ruled by other and higher laws. But anything which was the result of such a wedding tour naturally leads one to make observations and draw comparisons, though I should hardly have expressed them if they had not forced themselves upon me at the time.

In the midst of the engagements and excitements which now engrossed the young pair, Felix composed his beautiful E minor quartet,* .the progress of which I watched with the keenest interest. I must not forget one of the last occasions on which I conducted the Cæcilia Society. The performance was in honour of the young couple, and consisted chiefly of selections from "St. Paul," with pianoforte accompaniment only; and I remember how delighted Mendelssohn was with the fine rendering of some of the

* Op. 44, No. 2. The Autograph is dated "18th June, 1837, Frankfurt."—*Ed.*

chorales, which I had made the chorus sing *a capella*.

It was now almost time for me to set out on my Italian journey. Mendelssohn, meanwhile, travelled on down the Rhine, and we hoped to see him again in a few days. Our hopes were, however, disappointed, and my next letter from him was dated from Bingen :—

BINGEN, 13*th July*, 1837.

DEAR FERDINAND,—When you got into the carriage the other day at Homburg, and drove off with your ladies, I must have had a presentiment that we should not meet again for some time ; I felt almost sure we should not. It is strange enough that it has really turned out so ; I shall not return to Frankfort before my English journey, but in a week or ten days I go from here to Coblenz, and so on, slowly down the Rhine ; and in September, when I get to Frankfort for half a day, you will already be far away in the mountains, perhaps across the Alps. Who knows where and when we may meet again ? In any case, I hope, unchanged ; how much we should have had to talk about before the long separation : but the chief thing is that we must have a happy meeting some time or other.

I could not manage it differently, the journey here was rather a sudden affair, and I was quite prepared to find the inn as uncomfortable as the one in Homburg, and no lodgings to be had; in that case we should very soon have come back to Frankfort, and I should have betaken myself to the Hôtel de Russie. Contrary to our expectation we found the inn quite bearable, the view beautiful, and the neighbourhood and environs so splendid and varied, that after a few days I put off thinking about returning to Frankfort, and have now quite given it up, for I hope that my people will go on a little further with me. You really cannot think how this beautiful spot on the Rhine grows upon me every day, and how I love it; I have often seen it before, but only in a superficial way. In five minutes, with a boat, I am at the "Mäusethurm," my favourite point, and then over at Rüdesheim; and the Rhine is so beautiful in the changeable weather, and even after the late storms.

Thank God, my dear Cécile is well and cheerful; if I tell you that I love her more every day, you won't believe me, but it's literally true. I have not worked much here, I mean not written much, but I have a new violin quartet, all but finished, in my head, and I think I shall finish my pianoforte Concerto next week. I have

mostly followed your advice in the alterations in the E minor violin quartet, and they improve it very much; I played it over to myself the other day, on an abominable piano, and quite enjoyed it, much more than I should have imagined. And so one day passes like another, but all are happy.

This letter is to remind you of our agreement that you should always write on the 15th of the month and I on the 1st. Do let us keep to this, dear Ferdinand, even if the letters contain only a few lines or words, the regular correspondence is so precious. Please, leave your E minor Symphony at the Souchays' for me when it comes from Paris, so that I may take it to Leipsic in September, I shall immensely enjoy having a good look at it and hearing it again properly. The Cæcilia Society wanted to have another musical evening in your especial honour, and I had promised to conduct; but I had to give that up too. Did anything come of it after all? And do all the musical heads in Frankfort still show their teeth at one another? And does —— show you his stumps? This stupid behaviour of the German musicians annoyed me more even than I said at the time. But it is God's will, so let the devil take them. Even their daily life is a mere hell upon earth. And

so farewell; I have got back into the angry style again after all.

My address till the 1st of August is here, *poste restante;* from then till the 10th, Coblenz, *poste restante;* from then till the 20th, Düsseldorf, ditto; from then till the 20th of September, London, care of C. Klingemann, Hobart Place, Eaton Square, Pimlico; and from the end of September again in Leipsic. Is not that very precise? And my pianoforte piece? Am I ever to get it? Do tell me, for I should so like something new and good to play, and can hardly count on my concerto for that.

And now farewell, dear friend. Write to me soon. Many many remembrances to your mother, and thank her for the love and kindness which she has so often shown me; think of me sometimes, and let us look forward to a happy meeting soon.

Your FELIX M. B.

I too at last set out on my journey, beginning by wandering through the Black Forest on foot, and spending some delightful days in Baden with my friend Ferdinand David, also just married, and his lively, refined, and interesting wife. Thence I went to the Tyrol, and late in the autumn to Italy, where I spent the winter,

and where my mother, who could not bear to be separated from me, joined me as soon as the weather began to get pleasant. Mendelssohn's letters to me during that time, some of which follow here, give a far better picture of the highly gifted man and true friend, than my pen can possibly do.

LONDON, 1*st September*, 1837.

DEAR FERDINAND,—Here I sit—in the fog—very cross—without my wife—writing to you, because your letter of the day before yesterday requires it; otherwise I should hardly do so, for I am much too cross and melancholy to-day. It's nine days since I parted from Cécile at Düsseldorf; the few first were quite bearable, though very wearisome; but now I have got into the whirl of London—great distances—too many people—my head crammed with business and accounts and money matters and arrangements—and it is becoming unbearable, and I wish I were sitting with Cécile, and had let Birmingham be Birmingham, and could enjoy my life more than I do to-day. D—n it! you know what that means, don't you? and I have three more weeks of it before me, and have got to play the organ at B. on the 22nd and be in Leipsic again on the 30th

—in a word, I wish I were rid of the whole business. I must be a little fond of my wife, because I find that England and the fog and beef and porter have such a horribly bitter taste this time—and I used to like them so much. You seem to be having a splendid journey, and this letter will see finer country than I do, as it has to go to Innspruck. Do inquire at Innspruck if anybody knows anything about a Herr Christanell of Schwatz, who has written to me twice, and calls himself a great amateur of music, and about whom I should like to know more. And so you are seriously thinking about your Jeremiah, and all the while striding off to Italy to compose operas there for the season? You really are a mad "old Drama."

It is pretty quiet here. Most people are away in the country or elsewhere. The Moscheles' have been at Hamburg for some weeks, and I shall not see them; Thalberg is giving concerts at Manchester and other places; he has made an extraordinary sensation and is very much liked everywhere, and I hope still to meet him; Rosenhain is at Boulogne, and coming back soon; Benedict at Putney, *à la campagne;* Miss Clara Novello travelling from one Festival to another, and will probably not be in Italy until next spring; till then she comes to Leipsic

for our concerts (pray forgive me, I would willingly give her up to you, but—duty). I met Neukomm on the Rhine steamer, as polite and unapproachable as ever, and yet showing a friendly interest in me; he asked a great deal after you, &c., &c. Simrock promised to write directly, and put himself into communication with you about the manuscripts; I told him I did not know whether you had anything for him just at present, that it was more for the future. Has he written?

I have heard nothing from my people in Berlin for so long (more than five weeks) that I am beginning to be anxious—and that adds greatly to my unhappiness. I composed a great deal whilst we were on the Rhine, but I don't mean to do anything here but swear, and long for my Cécile. What's the good of all the double counterpoint in the world when she is not with me? I must leave off my complaints and my letter, or you will be laughing at me at Innspruck in the sunshine. Address to Leipsic again,—I wish I were there. It seems that Chopin came over here quite suddenly a fortnight ago, paid no visits and saw nobody, played very beautifully at Broadwood's one evening, and then took himself off again. They say he is still very ill and miserable. Cécile will

have given my remembrances to your people herself. So farewell, dear "Drama," and forgive this horridly stupid letter, it is exactly what I am myself.

Your FELIX M. B.

The chief thing I leave for the P.S., just as all girls do. Am I ever to get your E minor Symphony? Do send it to me! You have cheated me out of my concert piece. Get me the E minor Symphony, the Leipzigers must hear it—and like it.

LEIPSIC, 10*th December*, 1837.

MY DEAR FERDINAND,—I thank you with all my heart for having written in November, in spite of my last month's irregularity; I really could hardly have believed it. The arranging of my new house, moving into it, with many concerts and a deal of business—in short, all the impediments, whatever they may be, which a regular Philistine, like I, can only enumerate to a smart and lively Italian like you—my installation as master of the house, tenant, musical director of the Subscription concerts—all this prevented me from doing my regular correspondence last month. But just because of that

I wanted to beg you, and I do beg you to-day, most earnestly, that in spite of all the inconceivable difference of our positions and surroundings, we should stick fast to our promise of monthly letters; I feel that it might be doubly interesting and good for us both to hear about each other, now that we must seem so dreadfully strange to one another, and yet just for that reason all the closer friends. At least I find that whenever I think of Milan and Liszt and Rossini, it gives me a curious feeling to remember that you are in the midst of it all; and with you in the plains of Lombardy it is perhaps the same when you think of me and Leipsic. But next time you must write me a long detailed letter, full of particulars, you can't imagine how they interest me; you must tell me where you live, what you are writing, and everything that you can about Liszt and Pixis and Rossini, about the white cathedral, and the Corso—I do so love that enchanting country, and it's a double pleasure to hear from you from there, so you really mustn't use half-sheets. Above all, tell me if you enjoy it and revel in it as thoroughly as I did? Mind you do, and mind you drink in the air with as much ecstasy, and idle away the days as systematically as I did—but why

should I say all this, you will do it anyhow? Only please write me a great deal about it.

You want to know whether I am satisfied here? Just tell me yourself if I oughtn't to be satisfied, living with Cécile in a nice, new, comfortable house, with an open view over the gardens and the fields and the city towers, feeling so serenely happy, so calmly joyful as I have never felt since I left my parents' house, and able to command good things and goodwill on all sides! I am decidedly of opinion, either this place or none at all. I felt this very strongly after the reports about ——'s place at ——; no ten horses and no ten thousand thalers could take me there, to a little court, which from its very smallness is more pretentious than the great ones, with the utter isolation of its petty musical doings, and the obligation to be there the whole year managing the theatre and the opera, instead of having my six months free. However there are also many days when I think *no* post would be the best of all. Two months of such constant conducting takes more out of me than two years of composing all day long; in the winter I hardly get to it at all. At the end of the greatest turmoil if I ask myself what I have actually been doing, after all it is hardly worth speaking of, at least it does not interest me

particularly whether or not all the recognized good things are given one time more or better. I only feel interested in the new things, and of these there are few enough. I often think I should like to retire completely, never conduct any more, and only write; but then again there is a certain charm in an organized musical system, and in having the direction of it. But what will you care about this in Milan? Still I must tell you, if you ask me how I like being here. I felt the same thing at Birmingham; I have never before made such a decided *effect* with my music as there, and have never seen the public so entirely taken up with me alone, and yet there was something about it, what shall I call it? something flighty and evanescent, which rather saddens and depresses than encourages me. It so happened that there was an antidote to all these eulogies, on the spot, in the shape of Neukomm; this time they ran him down wholesale, received him in the coldest way, and completely set him aside in all the arrangements, whereas three years ago they exalted him to the skies, put him above all other composers, and applauded him at every step. You will say that his music is not worth anything, and in that no doubt we agree; but still, those who were enrap-

tured then, and now affect such superiority, do not know that. I am indignant about the whole affair, and Neukomm's quiet, equable behaviour appeared to me doubly praiseworthy and dignified when compared to theirs. This resolute demeanour of his has made me like him much better. Just fancy also that I had to go straight from the organ loft into the mail coach, and drive for six days and five nights on end till I got to Frankfort, then on again from there the next day, arriving here only four hours before the beginning of the first concert. Well then, since that we have given eight concerts, such as you know, and the "Messiah" in the church. Our star this winter is Clara Novello, who has come over for six concerts, and has really delighted the whole public. When I listen to that healthy little person, with her pure clear voice, and her animated singing, I often think of how I have actually stolen her away from you in Italy, for she was going straight there, whereas now she will not go till the spring. But by persuading her to come here I was able to do our cause the greatest service, for this time it is she alone who puts life and spirit into it, and as I said before, the public are wild about her. The air from "Titus" with *corno di bassetto*, the Polacca from Bellini's "Puritani," and an English

Air * of Handel's, have driven the public quite frantic, and they swear that without Clara Novello there is no salvation. She has her whole family with her, and very pleasant people they are. You are often and much thought of.

The finest of the new things was Beethoven's "Glorreicher Augenblick," a long Cantata (three-quarters of an hour, with choruses, solos, etc.) in honour of the three monarchs who met at the Vienna Congress; there are splendid things in it, amongst others a Cavatina,—a prayer, quite in Beethoven's grand style, but with wretchedly stupid words, where "heller Glanz" is made to rhyme with "Kaiser Franz," followed by a great flourish of trumpets; and now Haslinger has actually put other words to it, and calls it "The Praise of Music," and these are even more wretched, for "poesy" is made to rhyme with "noble harmony," and the flourish of trumpets comes in still more stupidly. And so we spend our days in Germany.

David played my E minor quartet in public the other day, and is to repeat it to-day "by special desire;" I am curious to know how I shall like it; I thought it much prettier last time than I did at first, but still I do not care much about it. I have begun a new one which

* "From mighty kings."—Judas Maccabæus.—*Ed.*

is almost finished, and which is better. I have also done a few new songs, some of which would probably please you, but my pianoforte Concerto I think you would challenge. It's your own fault, why haven't you sent me your promised piece? You perhaps don't know that Ricordi, the music-seller, often sends parcels here to Wilhelm Härtel. So you might put it in some day. There's a delicate reminder! I have had to get the score of your E minor * Symphony written out from the parts; the score that came with it (in your own hand) had an almost totally different first movement, the *Andante Allegretto* was in B flat instead of C, and the two last movements quite different,—in short I did not know what to do, and only yesterday had the pleasure of receiving the old well-known score from the copyist and playing it through at once. I have put it down for one of the January concerts, and it will form the second part by itself. The two middle movements are quite superb. Now I must stop. Give Liszt many remembrances from me, and tell him how often and with what pleasure I think of him. Remember me to Rossini, if he likes being remembered by me. And above all, keep fond of me yourself.

Your FELIX.

* This Symphony has not been printed.

LEIPSIC, 20*th January*, 1838.

You Milanese "Drama," you begin your letter so contemptuously, and look down so upon my reminder about punctuality, that I had almost resolved, first to be very punctual myself, and secondly not to remind you any more. But as you may see from the date that I have not kept the first resolution, I also cannot answer for keeping the second or slipping a reminder into this letter now and then—you may attend to them or despise them, as you like; I am past improvement you see (I mean, "incorrigible"). But joking apart, I should have written to you at the New Year, and thanked you for your dear good wishes, and given you mine, but I was prevented in the most tiresome way by an indisposition or illness, which attacked me in the last week of the year and I am sorry to say has not yet subsided. This has put me into bad spirits, and at times made me so desperate, that even to-day I only write because I see that it is no use waiting till I am better. I am suffering, as I did four years ago, from complete deafness of one ear, with occasional pains in the head and neck, &c.; the weakness in the ear keeps on without any interruption, and as I had to conduct and play in spite of it (I have been keeping

my room for a fortnight) you may imagine my agony, not being able properly to hear either the orchestra, or my own playing on the piano! Last time it went off after six weeks, and God grant that it may do the same this time; but though I summon up all my courage, I cannot quite help being anxious, as, till now, in spite of all remedies, there is no change, and often I do not even hear people speaking in the room.

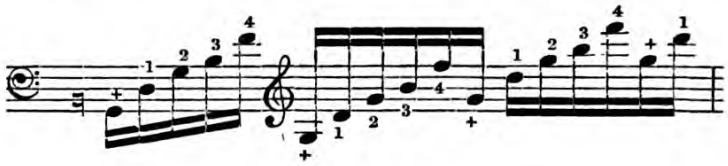
Besides this there is another still greater anxiety, from which I hope every day to be released, and which does not leave me for a moment. My mother-in-law has been here for a fortnight, you know for what reason. When you see your whole happiness, your whole existence, depending upon one inevitable moment, it gives you quite a peculiar sensation. Perhaps I shall be better when the weather improves; I hardly remember such a winter; for a whole fortnight we have had from 14 to 22 degrees of cold, yesterday at last it was milder, but we had a snowstorm, which is still going on and has almost blocked up the streets. How is it with you in Milan?

A thousand thanks for the details in your last letter, they interest me more than you can imagine, living as you do in the very midst of so much that sounds quite fabulous here. You must tell me a great deal about it all whenever

you write; tell me about your Psalm, and how they sang it, and whether you have already begun the opera, and what *genre* you have chosen, and about Pixis' *début*—in short, all about what you are doing and what you like. Here everything goes on in the usual quiet musical way. We have one subscription concert every week; and you pretty well know what we do there. For the New Year, when the concert always opens with sacred music, we performed my Psalm "As pants the hart." I have written a new and very elaborate chorus as a *finale* to it, and the whole Psalm pleased me a good deal, because it is one of the few things of my own which I am as fond of now as when I was writing it. A symphony by Täglichsbeck, which was very much praised in Paris, and played at the Conservatoire, made but little impression, and seemed to me nothing particular.

Henselt the pianist was here shortly before the New Year, and certainly plays exquisitely; there is no question about his belonging to the first rank, but it remains to be seen whether he will be able sufficiently to master his German anxiety and conscientiousness, that is to say, his nervousness, so as to make himself generally known, and play in London or Paris. He practises the whole day till he and his fingers

are so done up that in the evening when he has to give a concert he is quite tired and exhausted, and then, compared to other times, plays mechanically and imperfectly. His great specialty is playing wide-spread chords. He goes on all day stretching his fingers, and amongst other things does the following, *prestissimo* :—



His Studies are charming, and form a great feature at his concerts. He is now off to Russia.

We played your Overture in E at his concert; it went well, and was greatly enjoyed. The Fernando Overture will come next; but your mother did not send me the corrected score, only the parts, which I did not want, because we have them here. I got nothing but the score of the E minor Symphony, which you said was to be burned, but with your leave or without it I shall do nothing of the sort. It is strange that again I do not take to the last movement, whilst the second and third please me even more than before. It is fixed for one of the February concerts. A symphony by Burgmüller of Düsseldorf was very much liked the other

day. Yesterday Schleinitz brought me your G minor song (in the "Europa"), sang it to me, and made me guess whose it was; to my great annoyance I couldn't, and was vexed with myself afterwards, for I ought to have known it by the beginning, and by the close in G minor in the middle. In the way of new things I have almost finished the violin Quartet,* and also a Sonata for piano and cello,† and the day before yesterday sent Breitkopf and Härtel six four-part songs for mixed voices, small things for singing in the open-air, or at parties.

The Novello, who has made *la pluie* and *le beau temps* here, and at her farewell concert was smothered with poems and flowers, and endlessly applauded and shouted at, is gone to Berlin to sing there; she passes through here again, and will perhaps give us two more Arias, which Leipsic has begged for on its knees—and is to be in Italy by the spring, but in what part, I fancy she knows at present as little as I do. She has given the concerts a splendid impetus this winter, and even if it is difficult to replace her, the good effect will last for a time.

But what do you say to Ries's sudden‡ death?

* Quartet in E flat. Op. 44, No. 3.

† Sonata for piano and cello in B flat. Op. 45.

‡ Ferdinand Ries, Beethoven's pupil, died 13th January, 1838.—*Ed.*

It was a great blow to me, and gave me a strange feeling, just because his manner and way of going on had displeased me; but this news is such a contrast with all that, as to make one completely forget everything else for the moment. The Cæcilia Society certainly seems strangely fated. I have no idea who could or would undertake it now. Only a week ago Ries was slightly ill with gout and jaundice;—and in two days he is suddenly dead!

If you were in Germany now I should say you ought to go to Weimar in Hummel's* place; there must be much that is nice about it; perhaps it will remain vacant till you come back some day. You always liked Weimar very much. Above all, if you would only come back, there is no want of places, I see that plainly now, it is only the men that are wanting—my old story over again. And you say that *you* are long past all that now. And I hope that *I* have not yet come to it.

LEIPSIC, 14*th April*, 1838.

DEAR FERDINAND,—You will be angry with me for my long silence; again I can do nothing but beg pardon, and hope that your wrath will

* Hummel died 17th October, 1837.—*Ed.*

be changed into good-will when you see my well-known fist. A great deal has happened between this and the last letter, and much which prevented me from writing. No doubt you have heard through your mother that Cécile presented me with a son on the 7th of February; but perhaps you don't yet know that towards the end of the month she suddenly became dreadfully ill, and for four days and four nights had to struggle with a terrible fever and all kinds of other evils. Then she recovered, thank God, quicker than could have been expected, though still slowly enough, and it is only quite lately that all traces of illness have disappeared, and that she is again as cheerful and looks as well and fresh as you recollect her. What I went through at that time, I could not tell you in any letter, nor indeed in words; but you will be able to imagine it for yourself, dear Ferdinand. And now that all the anxiety is over, and my wife and child are well, I feel so happy, and yet not a bit *philisterhaft*; you may laugh as much as you like, I don't care, it is too lovely and delightful to see a wee little fellow like that, who has brought his mother's blue eyes and snub nose into the world with him, and knows her so well that he laughs to her whenever she comes into the room; when he is lying at her

breast tugging away, and they both look so happy—I don't know what to do with myself for joy. After that I could decline *mensa,* or do finger exercises with anybody for as long as ever they liked, and allow you to laugh at me and welcome. In a few days we go to Berlin, so that Cécile may get to know my youngest sister and the whole family; Paul and his wife were here last month, and stood godfather and godmother to the little one at his christening. The little man is called Carl Wolfgang Paul. In Berlin I shall see how my wife gets on at our house; if it's all right I shall go by myself to the Cologne Festival in four weeks, and come back directly afterwards to Berlin, so as to spend the summer quietly there or here and work. If not, Cécile will go with me to Cologne; but my mother and sisters would not at all like that, so I think she will probably stay with them, and perhaps go to the Rhine with me next year.

These are my plans for the present. And you? If I were you I should certainly have trudged off to Rome yesterday for Good Friday and Palm Sunday, and I keep thinking that it is still possible you may have done so. On Palm Sunday I always think of the Pope's chapel and the golden palm branches; in the way of ceremony and grandeur it is the most

solemn and splendid thing that I ever saw, and I should like you to see it and think so too. You do tell me capital things about Milan and your life there; how funny that you should find your Paris circle there again — Liszt, Nourrit, Pixis, &c. But it must all be intensely interesting, and I already look forward to the account you are to give me at Leipsic some day of all the "circumstances." You will have enough to tell. And indeed you have hit off a horribly truthful picture of the blissful happiness of a Hofcapellmeister at ——, and the blissful patience of the German public. I have had some strange glimpses into that during the course of this winter. For instance, in the case of the post at ——, for which they wanted to get me (probably because a couple of newspaper correspondents had said so), and where they have again been using the most beautiful artifices to make me *apply* for it, because they did not like to speak straightforwardly and properly to a musician; however they were obliged to at last, and in return I had the pleasure of most politely refusing it, and so I see once more how right you were with your dismal description. And yet there is a certain something in this Germany of ours—I hardly know what, but it has great attractions for me, and I should like to con-

vince you. It is my old story over again, which you have already heard two hundred times, and have disputed four hundred times. Certainly the theatre, as you describe it in Italy, is better and has more life in it than ours, but you should help us to bring about an improvement. A. and his followers will never do it, they only drive the cart deeper into the mire, and will disappear without leaving a trace.

But to turn to something better. Could you and would you send me a copy of your Psalm? and also any other new thing that you may have, and give the whole parcel to Ricordi who often sends things here to W. Härtel? That would be splendid of you, and I beg you many many times to do it. I too have been rather busy this winter. David played a new violin Quartet of mine, in E flat, in public the other day at the last of his Soirées, and I think you would find real progress in it; I have begun a third; I have also finished a concert piece for piano and orchestra (a sort of Serenade and Rondo,* for of course I shall never get yours), a new Psalm (the 95th),—I suppose I have already written to you about my having added

* Serenade and Allegro giojoso for piano and orchestra (Op. 43).—*Ed.*

four numbers to the 42nd—and then there's a set of four-part songs for open-air singing, and various other little creatures that would so much like you to clip and brush them a little if you were here. *Apropos*, isn't this rich? They have been giving a first performance of my St. Paul at Dresden, with all sorts of wonderful preparations, and ten days before, R. writes me a formal letter, saying that they wished to shorten the first part a little, and he should therefore cut out the chorus "Rise up, arise," with the chorale "Sleepers wake," as those numbers did not appear to him to be necessary for the action. I was stupid enough to be frightfully put out for a whole day at this piece of presumption, but you too will think it rich.

Clara Novello will really soon be in Italy now. I hear that she is at Munich, and will go on from there direct. She went from us to Berlin, where she had such incredible success, that I am afraid it made her a little over-confident, for at Dresden and Vienna, where she went directly afterwards, she is said to have made very little sensation. In Berlin, on the other hand, she gave two concerts, sang twice for the poor, four times at the theatre, twice at court, and how can I tell where besides? Mind you

pay her every possible attention, if she flutters into your arms.

And now I must close, though I still have quantities of things to say. More next time. My wife sends you many best remembrances. She is busy about the journey. Please write to me to Berlin (Leipziger Strasse No. 3), then you shall have Berlin news in exchange for Milan news (by which I should lose a good many yards). But good-bye, dear Ferdinand, be happy, and always fond of your F. M.

BERLIN, 15*th July*, 1838.

DEAR FERDINAND,—As all manner of creatures were created by God, to wander about the earth, bad correspondents among the number, don't be too angry with me for having got this nature. There are times when I cannot make the ink flow, and if I could get answers (for instance from you) without first writing myself, I really should quite forget how to write. You may perceive, first from my long silence and from my present stiff writing, that this is one of those times. But as I said before, it is for the sake of the answer. I hope you will discover some quite new way of abusing me for the beginning of your letter, because then I am sure to get it soon. And besides, you will have to answer as a man

of business, for I am writing on business, to ask about the Overture which you promised us for the concerts. What has become of it? I hope we shall get it, and then we can at once put it down for the beginning of the concerts (end of September). Don't retort that I have not sent you my things by Härtel's, as you wished; you know that since then, I came here, and have been leading rather a disturbed life, and besides, what can you want with them now? I would rather play them all to you *en gros* when you at last come back to the Vaterland. But with you it is different; because yours would be a help to me in my performances, and would give us pleasure, and you have promised it me, and I shall keep you to your word. It is to be hoped the Overture is finished, and it is also to be hoped that you will send it. I feel more eager about it than I have about any piece of music for a long time, just as I do about your Italian life and doings altogether. I fancy you now sitting by the lake of Como with your mother; it must be a delicious kind of life. And I suppose you also go lounging about with Liszt, and paying court to the Novello, who, I hear, is in Milan, taking lessons; is she still your particular favourite? What do you say to her singing, and to her looks?

I have now been here in my old home since May. It gives me a peculiar sensation, so much in it is changed, so much in my own self is changed, and yet there is a sort of comfortable homelike feeling in it as if I had never left it. Then my family is so secluded and isolated here that one really knows very little of Berlin, and hardly comes into contact with anybody but the people in the house, which has its good side, as well as its disadvantages. Looking around me now as a stranger and free from prejudices, I certainly feel glad that I did not stay, however much I may regret it on account of my family; but the climate and the air here are unprofitable and good for nothing. For study and work and isolation Berlin is just the place, but hardly at all for enjoyment. Everything in my former life has now for the first time become quite clear to me, and I see plainly how all my old hostilities with the people and my bad position were brought about of necessity: and this has made these months especially interesting to me. We are quite pleased with each other now, and on the whole I like Berlin very much, because, having got rid of the wretched business altogether, I can enjoy what is good in the place without any bitter feelings.

The first evening after my arrival we went to

the theatre to hear Gluck's "Armida;" I have hardly ever, if ever, enjoyed anything so much at the opera. That great mass of thoroughly-trained musicians and singers, ably conducted by Spontini, the splendid house, full to suffocation, the good *mise-en-scène,* and above all the wonderful music, made such an impression on me that I was obliged to say to myself that there was nothing to be done with small towns and small means and small circles, and that it was quite another thing here. But how often since have I had to retract that. The very day after, they gave a so-called Beethoven Memorial Festival, and played his A major Symphony so atrociously, that I soon had to beg many pardons of my small town and my small means; the coarseness and recklessness of the playing were such as I never heard anywhere, and can only explain to myself by the whole nature of the Prussian official, which is about as well suited for music as a strait-waistcoat is for a man. And even then it is an unconscious strait-waistcoat. Well, since then I have heard a good deal in the way of quartets and symphonies, and playing and singing in private circles, and have altogether begged pardon of my little town. At most places here music is carried on with the same mediocrity and carelessness and assumption as ever, which quite sufficiently explains my old

wrath, and the very imperfect methods I adopted to cure it. It all hangs together with the sand, the situation, and the official life, so that though one may enjoy a good thing here and there well enough, one cannot become really acquainted with anything. The Gluck operas may be reckoned amongst such good things. Is it not strange that they always draw a full house, and that the public applauds and is enchanted and calls the singers back? And that it is about the only place in the world where such a thing is possible? And that the next evening the "Postillon" draws just as full a house? And that in Bavaria it is forbidden to have any music in any church, either Catholic or Protestant, because it desecrates the church? And that *chorales* are becoming *obbligato* at the theatres? Confound it all.—— However the chief thing is to get as much novelty as possible, and that there should be plenty of good and beautiful things in the world; that is why I am so eager about your Overture and your Opera.

You will have heard that I was at Cologne for the festival. It all went well; the organ was splendidly effective in Handel and still more so in Bach—it was some newly-discovered music of his, which you don't yet know, with a grand double chorus. But even that, to my feeling

at least, was wanting in the interest that one feels for something new and untried; I like so much when there is that kind of uncertainty which leaves room for me and the public to have an opinion; in Beethoven and Handel and Bach one knows beforehand what it will be, and must always be, and a great deal more besides. You are quite right in saying that it is better in Italy, where people have new music every year, and must also have a new opinion every year,—if only the music and the opinions were a little bit better. At this you snort and say: What *is* "better"? Well, if you want to know, something more to my taste. But really Germany seems to be possessed with the devil; Guhr has just been giving two tremendously brilliant performances of the "Creation"; all the newspapers are talking about the passage "Let there be light," where the bands of some Austrian and Prussian Regiments which Guhr had placed in the church, were made to blow their hardest. And the Cæcilia Society is conducted by V., who as far as I know is the best that they can get; and S. is making speeches in Mozart's honour, and all that is not to my taste. Perhaps after all my taste is perverted—the possibility of it occasionally dawns upon me—but I must make the best of it,

though I certainly have about as much difficulty in swallowing most of these things, as the stork had with the porridge in the shallow dish. The stork reminds me of my boy, who is stout and fat and merry, and takes after his mother both in looks and disposition, which is an inexpressible delight to me, because it is the best thing he can do. Cécile is well and blooming and sends you many greetings.

But I have not told you anything about what I have been writing, I mean what music: two Rondos for Piano, one with and one without orchestra, two Sonatas, one with violin, the other with Cello, one Psalm, and just now I am at a third violin Quartet, and have a Symphony in my head, which will soon be launched. In B flat. And you? Do you mean to send the Overture? A thousand affectionate greetings to your mother. Enjoy your life in that heavenly country and think nicely of me.

Your F. M. B.

BERLIN, 17*th August*, 1838.

DEAR FERDINAND, — Your yesterday's letter delighted me so much, that I do not like to lose any time in telling you so. It is the nicest of all that I have ever had from you, and I

read it again and again, always with new delight at the happy and tranquil mood which it reflects, at each separate good and loving thing in it, at the beginning and the middle and the end. I am so glad that such happiness should fall to your share, and I wish you joy of it with all my heart, or rather I enjoy it with you, for I see from your letter how well you know how to enjoy it yourself. It must indeed be delightful there at Bellagio with your mother; and it is because you seem so penetrated by this happy feeling, that your letter gave me such pleasure, for I confess I had hardly expected it. What you tell me about the new Oratorio is also not so bad, and I can see from all this that you are just now living exactly the sort of life that I always wished you to live, and about which I was always holding forth to you—it's all the same *where*—may Heaven keep it so for you always, and may you always think of me affectionately as you do in this letter.

The Babylonians certainly had valve trumpets (in fact all Babylon was a kind of valve trumpet), such luxurious, arrogant Orientals would hardly be satisfied with mere trumpets in C. But please don't call them *trompettes à piston* in your score, I have such a hatred for the word *piston*—you see I am a regular doctor of phi-

losophy. Well, and when the Oratorio is finished, are we to hear it in Germany? Now, that will really be a word in season. Only mind you do it somewhere within my reach, so that I may have some share in it, I mean in the first performance; you should do it in Leipsic, that would be splendid, and all the singing and playing faculties of the place should be at your command and on their mettle for you. Do get it done soon, and tell me a great deal about it, so that I may at least have a foretaste of it in the meanwhile.

I agree with every word you say about the Novello, and also about Liszt. I am very sorry that we are not to have the Overture, but of course I can understand that you don't want any of it to be played before the first performance. And will that be next winter? And is the whole Oratorio actually sketched out in four parts? That's really industrious, and by this you at once set me an example, for the ten operas and ten oratorios which you say I am to write in the next twenty years. I assure you, it gives me the greatest desire and stimulus to follow your advice and example, if only there were one true poet to be found in the world, and he were my friend. It is too difficult to find so much all at once. One would have to be driven

to it. Germany is wanting in such people, and that is a great misfortune. Meantime as long as I don't find any, I shift for myself, and I suppose one will turn up at last.

Your psalm with instrumental accompaniment and your wedding-chorus I received here, haven't I thanked you for them yet? It seems to me as if I had, and if I am mistaken I must tell you again how much pleasure you gave me with the latter, and what happy days are recalled by every note of the former. Your abridged Fernando Overture I received at Leipsic, and I think of giving it at the beginning of the Subscription Concerts; I shall write you all about it, and send it to you directly afterwards (at the beginning of November perhaps, if that is soon enough?) through Härtel and Ricordi. I shall add a couple of new things of my own; I wonder what sort of impression they will make upon you in Italy!

My time at Berlin is almost over now, and I think of going back to Leipsic in four days; they are going to do my St. Paul there in the church, and the rehearsals begin next week. Our family life here has been most pleasant; yesterday evening, when I went over to tea and found them all assembled, I read them a good deal out of your letter, which gave them

great pleasure, and they told me to give you many kind remembrances. We were together in that way every evening, talking politics, arguing, and making music, and it was so nice and pleasant. We only had three invitations the whole time, and of music in public I heard little more than I was obliged to; it is too bad, in spite of the best resources; I saw a performance of "Oberon" last week which was beyond all conception, I believe the thing never once went together all through; at the Sing-Akademie they sang me a piece of my own, in such a way that I should have got seriously angry, if Cécile had not sat by me and kept on saying: "Dear husband, do be calm." They also played me some quartets, and always bungled the very same passages that they had bungled ten years ago, and which had made me furious ten years ago—another proof of the immortality of the soul.

My third violin quartet, in D,* is finished; the first movement pleases me beyond measure, and I wish I could play it to you,—especially a *forte* passage at the end which you would be sure to like. I am also thinking of com-

* Op. 44, No. 1. The autograph, in possession of Sir W. Sterndale Bennett, is dated "Berlin, 24 July, 1838."—*Ed.*

posing an opera of Planché's next year; I have already got two acts of the libretto, and like them well enough to begin to set to work. The subject is taken from English history in the Middle Ages, rather serious, with a siege and a famine; I am eager the see the end of the libretto, which I expect next week. I also still hope to get words for an oratorio this year. You see, that I was already going to follow your advice of my own accord, but, as I said before, the aid and invention of the poet is wanting, and that is the chief thing. Pianoforte pieces are not exactly the things which I write with the greatest pleasure, or even with real success; but I sometimes want a new thing to play, and then if something exactly suitable for the piano happens to come into my head, even if there are no regular passages in it, why should I be afraid of writing it down? Then, a very important branch of pianoforte music which I am particularly fond of—trios, quartets and other things with accompaniment—is quite forgotten now, and I greatly feel the want of something new in that line. I should like to do a little towards this. It was with this idea that I lately wrote the Sonata*

* Sonata for piano and violin, in F—still in MS.

for violin, and the one for cello, and I am thinking next of writing a couple of trios. I have got a Symphony * in B flat in hand now, and mean to get it finished soon. I only hope that we shall not have too many foreign *virtuosi* at Leipsic this winter, and that I shall not have too many honours to enjoy—which means, concerts to conduct. So Herr F. has gone all the way to Milan. Brr, he is enough to spoil the warm climate. Yes, you see, I have to digest such creatures, and am in Leipsic, instead of at Cadenabbia, where I once was, opposite your present lodging. When I am writing to you at the lake of Como, I feel the greatest longing to see that paradise again, and who knows what I may do in the next year or two? But you will first have to have been here with your oratorio, which is best of all. Do you know that my sister Fanny will perhaps see you soon? She intends going to Italy with her husband and child and only returning next year.† When I know more definitely about her journey I will tell you, so that she may not miss you, as Franck did. Now good-bye, write to me soon

* Alas! this has never been published, nor is any MS. score, or any trace of it, beyond a few notes in memorandum books, known to exist.—*Ed.*

† See published letter to Fanny Hensel, of Sept. 14, 1839.

to Leipsic, just such another splendid letter. Once more, thanks. Remember me to your mother. Farewell, farewell.

Your FELIX.

LEIPSIC, 15*th April*, 1839.

MY DEAR GOOD FRIEND,—I feel particularly inclined to write to you to-day, and have a chat with you; I was just thinking of how I used to lie on your sofa and grumble and make you play to me, because I was so much in love; and then I thought, how nice it would be if we could see one another again soon and really live together, and then I thought what a long while off that must be. But I have a lot of business matters to write to you about to-day, and will begin with them at once. First of all the oratorio. What do you mean by talking about my "taking responsibility upon myself" and the "risk of looking through the score beforehand," &c.? You insane fellow, as if I did not know all that long before, and also how a work of yours which you yourself take pleasure in and write with real liking will turn out; and you know too how I look forward to such a work, and that I shall devote all the loving care that I can to the performance of it, if you will entrust it to

me. Is it really necessary for me to tell you that first? However, that I might not follow my own opinion solely, or be alone in addressing you, I told the concert directors about the part of your letter referring to the oratorio (*cum grano salis*—that is to say, omitting your over-great modesty) and received the following answer from Stadtrath Porsche, the secretary to the concerts—at first I meant to send you the original letter, but I shall copy it instead, because the paper is so thick that the postage would be thick too:—

"Honoured Sir (notice the official style)—according to your obliging information that Herr Ferdinand Hiller is occupied at Milan in the composition of an oratorio, 'The Prophet Jeremiah,' from which great things may be expected as to merit and importance; the concert directors have commissioned me to assure you that it would afford them much pleasure to see the work and hear it performed at one of the concerts during the coming winter of 1839-40, if Herr Hiller will have the kindness to forward the score to us. With the greatest esteem, etc., etc.,

"*Leipsic, March* 1839. PORSCHE."

It is to be hoped that you'll never think again about my having too much "responsibility."

And I hope that this insignificant opportunity may give you zest and inclination for beginning a new work. In your next letter (addressed to Düsseldorf till the middle of May, to Frankfort till the end of June) you must give me a few words, in reply to this, which I may communicate to the Directors; it pleases them immensely when an artist like yourself takes notice of them as the Committee of the Concerts, and they were all much flattered by your request. We could not well do it in the church, because we shall have to let our church-concerts rest for a year or two, before we can put them on a proper footing again (it would take too long to explain all the reasons), so it would be in the concert-room, with a large chorus of amateurs; therefore mind you give the chorus plenty to do, and as I said before, answer as soon as you can. There's a parcel going off to you in a few days by Kistner; it has been in his hands all ready packed for the last four weeks, and at last he promises really to send it off; it contains the score of my 42nd psalm, "St. Paul," and a Cello sonata of mine lately published (which I only send because of the lovely cover, and by way of a novelty—otherwise there is not much in it). But if you are not pleased with the psalm in its new dress with

the old lining, I shall shoot myself. The parcel will be six weeks on the road, I hear, and will be addressed to Giovanni Ricordi at Milan; so you must inquire there when you have an opportunity. Of course you understand that I mean you to keep all the contents of the parcel. I sent off your two overtures, with the metronome marks, to the Philharmonic a fortnight ago, after we had first given a good performance of the one in D minor at the charity concert here, and found your alterations very advantageous. It gains very materially by them, and the flow of it is not at all interrupted. And now, though I am really ashamed to, I must tell you of an article which I read about you in the newspaper the other day, and which gave me a deal of pleasure. One morning at rehearsal somebody showed me a number of the new musical paper (Schumann, the editor of it, was in Vienna all the winter) in which there was something which concerned me, and looking through the rest of the paper, I found a leading article, continued through two numbers, headed by your name. I took it away with me to read, and a great deal of it really gave me extraordinary pleasure; it is evidently written by some one who is not personally acquainted with you in the very least degree, but on the other hand knows every one

of your works most intimately, some one who was not even aware that you were no longer in Frankfort, and yet could picture you to himself quite well and distinctly from your compositions, and is evidently very favourably disposed towards you. I hear that it is said to have been written by a German in Warsaw. The real point of the thing is that he thinks that somehow or other you are out of humour, and have resolved not to publish or even compose anything more, and he implores you for Heaven's sake not to carry out this resolution, and not to believe that people do not watch you with sympathy and pleasure, as he does himself for example; and the paper is headed with the motto: "How great the loss, when such heads make holiday." You see the writer knows nothing of you personally, but that was just why I enjoyed it, and I should have sent it to you if I had not almost sworn never to put newspaper extracts into my letters.

But this and a joke on the last page remind me of the too terrible and awful news of Nourrit's death. It is a long, long time since anything has grieved me so deeply and taken such strong hold of me as this. It made me think of the bright, happy time when I met him, of the genuine, free, artist-nature which he

seemed then to have, of the honour and glory which he gained everywhere, of his wife and children, and of the infinitely sad state of a mind which knew no other remedy but one, which wipes out the whole previous existence with all its happiness as if it had never been. How the news must have shocked you! It was only in your last letter that you were speaking of him; you had seen him so lately, and were so fond of him—it is really dreadful. And who can think of fame and celebrity and happiness, or wish for them, when a man outwardly so happy and inwardly so gifted, could at the same time be so boundlessly unhappy. To me, there is more in it than in the profoundest sermon I ever heard, and once I begin to think of it I cannot get over it at all. Do tell me all you can about it; all that you know of further particulars and details. I have heard nothing but the details of the evening before, and of his last moments. Tell me, if you know anything about it, what could have brought him to such terrible misery and to such a resolve. If it were nothing more than those few hissings and whistlings at the theatre, as they say in the papers, nobody ought ever to appear in public again after they have once earned bread enough to keep them from starving, or ought ever to choose a pro-

fession which would make them dependent on the public.

Now I must answer some of the questions in your letter. A number of different people conduct at the Philharmonic, Sir G. Smart, Moscheles, Potter, etc., so it is impossible to foretell into what sort of hands you might fall, clean or unclean. I am quite at sea again about my English opera; the poet won't alter it, and I won't compose unless he does—it's the old, old song of the drunken "Bohnenschmied." And I always have to begin it over again, because I know I am right. But woe betide you if you praise Mercadante's "Giuramento," for I have had the pianoforte arrangement in my room for ever so long, and have certainly given myself trouble enough with it, and yet I find it quite insufferable and vulgar, without a note in it which I care the least bit about. Don't be angry with me, I can't help it; it's curious that the surroundings and the air and the way it's done really do make an impression on everybody—but here in Leipsic the "Giuramento" cuts an awful figure—in my own house that is to say. You will never in all your life make music like that, it can't be; that is why I rejoice doubly for the numbers of your opera which you promise me and for which I am most eager.

In a week I go to the Festival at Düsseldorf, where the "Messiah" is to be given on the first day; on the second the "Eroica," the Beethoven C major Mass, an overture and my 42nd psalm; and on the third Gluck's "Alceste" in the theatre with costumes and all. There are to be singers from Berlin, and they will make the last (evidently the best) practicable. The festival is at Whitsuntide again. Afterwards we are to be at the wedding of my sister-in-law, Julie Jeanrenaud, who is going to marry a young Schunk from here; after that we stay on in Frankfort for a time, then spend a fortnight with my uncle on the Rhine—and my castles in the air go no further. Now this letter is really done; it's quite absurdly long; many many remembrances to your mother, and also to Mdlle. J., and write to me very soon, dear Ferdinand; your letters are such a pleasure to me.

Always your FELIX.

My wife and child are well and beg to be remembered to you.

FRANKFORT, 27*th June*, 1839.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your brother says I am to put in a word for you into his letter. Every-

thing here, every day, every walk through the town and in the woods recalls you to me so strongly, that I ought long ago to have written you a proper letter of my own, and I mean to very shortly. I should like to write to you about all Frankfort, but that is just what keeps me from writing. So to-day I only send you and your dear mother my remembrances and best wishes. We are all well, and so is your brother and also your sister-in-law on the sofa in the next room. Your portrait over the sofa is like, after all, rather atrociously painted, but well conceived. Yes, if only you were here yourself. All your friends remember you most affectionately I can tell you, and all wish for you back again. It's to be hoped the oratorio will soon come now, and you with it, which will be far nicer than this letter paper and the 100 miles of separation.

Farewell for to-day, dear friend and musician; next time I shall write to you properly: forgive my haste and be a little fond of your FELIX.

FRANKFORT, 16*th August*, 1839.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—On returning here from Horchheim I find your letter from Basle, with the second part of the oratorio, and glancing

quickly over it in the bustle of travelling preparations, I am struck by so many and such great beauties in it, that I can't help telling you so to-day, though in few words, and thanking you for the great pleasure and enjoyment you have given me with it. This second part seems to me far superior to the first in every respect, and wherever I look I find splendid touches, quite peculiar to you. What I like best of all is the A major chorus with the solo and the repeat—the *tempo*, and the vigorous opening are new and capital; one expects something quite different, and not nearly so fine. And then the first chorus, and the war march in C major, and the entrance of the chorus in the recitative, and the one in F minor, and in fact the whole thing. It seems to me that the poet has again now and then missed a point; but why should I begin criticising, when there is so much to surprise and delight me beyond my expectation? I promise you not to open my mouth again, at least not till I get your answer, which will be very soon I hope, and till I know that you are not angry with me for opening it so enormously wide already. Write soon, dear Ferdinand, and thanks, thanks, thanks for all this good and beautiful music.

Some letter of yours must have been lost. You

write that you may perhaps hear from me at Bern, and I had no idea of your Swiss journey, and was quite perplexed by your dating from Basle. How shameful it is that we were so near together, both on the Rhine, and now again so far from one another! And yet it is quite right that you should be in Italy again, and that you should not let yourself be disturbed in your wishes and doings. To-morrow I go back to Leipsic, where I hope to hear from you soon. My wife and child are well, and send messages to you and your mother, and I do the same with all my heart. Now I must be off.

I like your having put "Rigikulm, Midnight," at the end of the Oratorio; but the C major is still better, and the A major opening is the most beautiful of all, and so Ferdinand, best thanks to you my dear friend.

Always your FELIX.

I had taken my dear mother and her companion to Basle, because the state of her health made it necessary for her to take the baths at Wiesbaden. Nevertheless, after a few weeks she became so ill that I hastened home. I received the following after I had written to Mendelssohn from Frankfort about the anxieties which were troubling me:

LEIPSIC, 19*th September*, 1839.

DEAR FERDINAND,—I need hardly tell you how your yesterday's letter saddened me; you know what heartfelt sympathy I feel in you and your welfare. May God restore your dear mother to complete health, and give comfort and happiness to you all; I can well imagine your anxiety and sadness at present; dear Ferdinand if only I were with you! Even though I might not be able to help, I could perhaps divert your thoughts a little; have I also not felt from the bottom of my heart, how at such moments all art and poetry and everything else that is dear and precious to us, seem so empty and comfortless, so hateful and paltry, and the only thought that does one any good is: "Oh that God would help." When you have a spare moment, do write me a line to say how she is; we should so much like to hear from you as often as possible; write me a line at least every week, I shall be so impatient for it.

I send off the first part of the oratorio by to-day's post. I have not quite done with the second, so I did not write to you in Italy about it; I shall send it to-morrow or the day after, and then write you properly and fully. Let us

hear from you again directly. My wife sends best remembrances.

Your FELIX M. B.

My dear mother was not able to resist the illness which had attacked her, and died on the 22nd of September.

NOTE.

The subject of the Opera mentioned on page 131 was the Siege of Calais. For the correspondence between Mendelssohn and Mr. Planché, and the circumstances under which Mendelssohn at length decided to abandon it, see Mr. Planché's "Recollections and Reflections," Chap. XXI.

CHAPTER VI.

LEIPSIC—WINTER OF 1839-40.

LEIPSIC, 29*th September*, 1839.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—No words are needed to tell you how deeply I grieve for you in this great sorrow; you know how I sympathize with you in everything that concerns you, whether it be good or bad, even in the merest trifles; how much more so then in the greatest loss which could befall you! Anyone who knew your dear mother in the very least, or had ever seen you together, must know what an irreparable blank is made in your life and heart by her death. But why say all this to you? I would so much rather be with you, so that we might have a quiet time together, and I might try and if possible help you to bear this bitter trial. Even that I cannot do; and besides, just at first, neither sympathy, nor words of comfort, nor even friends, can do one any good;

when they try their very best, they may only do harm, and certainly cannot help or be of any use; only God and one's sense of duty can do that. But what I wanted to write to you about was suggested to me by the last words in your letter, where you say that you must stay in Frankfort for the present on account of business matters. When these are over, couldn't you come to us for a little? Would not the change of surroundings, the affectionate and hearty welcome which you are sure of from all the musicians here, the separation from a place which though now doubly dear must also be doubly sad, do you good, and if not cheer you, at least distract your thoughts now and then? I do not mean now directly, but I was thinking of the end of next month, and November; my Vienna journey is as good as given up, so I can offer you a nice, warm, pretty room, which we would make as comfortable as possible for you. Cécile joins with me in my request, and we hope you will do what we ask.

I don't speak of how well we could talk over the oratorio together, and all that we might do towards arranging for the performance, or of all the music that I should hope to make you enjoy. To-day I only wish to impress upon you how much I want you to spend the next

month in different surroundings, and with friends who are as fond of you as we are.

How entirely our whole future rests always, and every day, in God's hands! My Cécile is expecting her confinement in the next few weeks, and if one is to speak of the cares of married life, I as yet only know those which at such a time engross me every hour and minute, and leave me no peace for any other thought. Thank Heaven, she is so well and strong, that I hope God will continue to grant her health and happiness—and so with a sanguine heart I repeat my request and our invitation to you. Farewell for to-day, my dear, dear friend; try to keep up, and may Heaven give you courage and strength!

Always your F. M.

In the course of a few weeks this affectionate letter was followed by another similar to it, with these words: "Your room is ready for you, with a piano in it, and you shall be as undisturbed as you like; and a good deal disturbed too. My Cécile sends you her remembrances, and joins most heartily in my request; so do come and try perfect rest and our quiet homely life for a time, and let me hope to see you very soon." It was impossible to resist such an invita-

tion, so I set off as soon as I could manage it. I stopped at Weimar to pay a visit to the widow of my revered master, Hummel, for she had always been like a mother to me. There I found the following lines from my thoughtful friend :—

LEIPSIC, *3rd December*, 1839.

DEAR FERDINAND,—As there was no time after receiving your dear and welcome lines to write to you at Frankfort, I send this to Weimar, in the hope that you may get it immediately on arriving. I live in Lurgenstein's garden, the first house on the left, on the second floor. Let me know whether you travel in your own carriage, or by post, so that, in the first case, I may secure a place for your carriage. Write me two lines from Weimar to say when you are coming, and if possible tell me the exact time of your arrival here, or departure from there, then I can go and meet you on the road. I need not tell you how much my wife and I look forward to seeing you, you dear friend. For the last three weeks all our friends, and all the friends of music, have kept on asking me, "When is Hiller coming?" and I have often had to tell them of your reso-

lution to keep quiet, so that they might not be too eager in their demands. Now good-bye till we meet!

Your FELIX.

Mendelssohn and David met me at the place where the coach stopt and gave me the warmest of welcomes. In the course of the first few days I was introduced to Mendelssohn's relations and friends, and soon felt as if I had belonged to that delightful circle for years. Mendelssohn's house was pleasantly situated, with a nice open look-out from the front upon the Leipsic boulevard, and the St. Thomas's school and church, once the sphere of the great Bach's labours. The arrangement of the rooms was as follows:—first, a sort of hall, with the dining-table and a few chairs: to the right of this a large sitting-room and some bed-rooms; to the left my friend's study with his piano. Opening out of this was a fine large drawing-room, which however was robbed of some of its natural elegance by the bed which had been put there for me, though this was counteracted by a piano also put there for my use.

Our way of life was regular and simple. At about eight we breakfasted on coffee and bread and butter. Butter Felix never eat, but broke

his bread into his coffee like any schoolboy, "as he had been accustomed to do." We dined at one, and though he despised butter he always liked a glass of good wine, and we often had to try some special sort, which he would produce with great delight, and swallow with immense satisfaction. We generally made quick work with our dinner, but in the evenings after supper we used often to sit round the table for hours chatting (not smoking), unless we moved to the pianino which had been presented to Madame Mendelssohn by the directors of the Gewandhaus.

The first few days were taken up with paying and receiving visits, and passed quickly enough. My next thought was to resume my work. I had a performance of my oratorio in prospect, and there was still a great deal to be done towards it. "We must sit and compose at the same table together," said Mendelssohn, one morning; "and let's begin at once to-day."

The following day was the Liedertafel, by which I must not be supposed to mean one of those huge societies formed in the last forty years to assist the love of the Vaterland and of "wine and woman." This one consisted of a dozen thorough musicians, some of them still representing the most zealous supporters of music in Leipsic, who used to meet from time to time, and did all

honour to their title, for their *table* was no less excellent than their songs.* Mendelssohn thought it would be great fun if we set the same words to music, and let the singers guess which was which. No sooner said than done. We looked through several volumes of poetry, and soon agreed in the choice of a song of Eichendorf's. I can still see the two sitting opposite each other, dipping our pens into the same inkstand, the silence only broken at rare intervals by some joke or other, and the piano not once touched. In writing out the parts, each copied half of his own composition and half of the other's. The scores were not to appear, and above all the secret was on no account to be betrayed to the members of the Liedertafel.

The evening arrived, and the thing was a complete success. The songs were sung at sight in capital style, and only one of the singers, Dr. Schleinitz, one of the most accomplished of living amateurs, gave his opinion, with thorough conviction—and was right. None of the others could make up their minds. We laughed and—held our tongues.

Mendelssohn afterwards apologised to me—

* One of them, Dr. Petschke, has published some very pretty quartets for men's voices.

quite unnecessarily—for having let out the secret by publishing his song.* I then published mine in a Swiss collection, to which I had been asked to contribute; I forget the title of it, and where it appeared, but the origin of this little piece was always a charming recollection to me.

Though I had felt no difficulty in throwing off a simple song in my friend's presence, it was quite different with more serious work. It was impossible to feel at ease at the piano, with the consciousness that every idea had a listener, and such a one! Besides, I afterwards discovered, by chance, that Mendelssohn equally disliked his communings with his genius to be overheard. How could it have been otherwise? Still, I found it extremely difficult, in the midst of much kindness and affection to come forward with the announcement, that, delightful as was our way of life, it must come to a stop. After many discussions, I at last got permission to look out for a lodging close by, on the condition that I should only work and sleep there; and to our general satisfaction we found one within a few steps. They were the same rooms in Reichel's garden which Mendels-

* "Love and Wine," Op. 50, No. 5.

sohn had inhabited in his bachelor days. So, after about a fortnight at my friend's house, I moved into my new quarters.

We had had a tolerable quantity of music, however, during this time. Mendelssohn had just finished his great D minor trio, and played it to me. I was tremendously impressed by the fire and spirit, the flow, and, in short, the masterly character of the whole thing. But I had one small misgiving. Certain pianoforte passages in it, constructed on broken chords, seemed to me—to speak candidly—somewhat old-fashioned. I had lived many years in Paris, seeing Liszt frequently, and Chopin every day, so that I was thoroughly accustomed to the richness of passages which marked the new pianoforte school. I made some observations to Mendelssohn on this point, suggesting certain alterations, but at first he would not listen to me. "Do you think that that would make the thing any better?" he said. "The piece would be the same, and so it may remain as it is." "But," I answered, "you have often told me, and proved to me by your actions, that the smallest touch of the brush, which might conduce to the perfection of the whole, must not be despised. An unusual form of arpeggio may not improve the harmony, but neither does it spoil it—and it becomes more interesting to

the player." We discussed it and tried it on the piano over and over again, and I enjoyed the small triumph of at last getting Mendelssohn over to my view. With his usual conscientious earnestness when once he had made up his mind about a thing, he now undertook the lengthy, not to say wearisome, task of rewriting the whole pianoforte part. One day, when I found him working at it, he played me a bit which he had worked out *exactly* as I had suggested to him on the piano, and called out to me, "That is to remain as a remembrance of you." Afterwards, when he had been playing it at a chamber concert with all his wonderful fire, and had carried away the whole audience, he said, "I really enjoy that piece ; it is honest music after all, and the players will like it, because they can show off with it." And so it proved.

In the course of that winter I witnessed a curious example of Mendelssohn's almost morbid conscientiousness with regard to the possible perfection of his compositions. One evening I came into his room, and found him looking so heated, and in such a feverish state of excitement, that I was frightened. "What's the matter with you?" I called out. "There I have been sitting for the last four hours," he said, "trying to alter a

few bars in a song (it was a quartet for men's voices) and can't do it."

He had made twenty different versions, the greater number of which would have satisfied most people. "What you could not do to-day in four hours," said I, "you will be able to do to-morrow in as many minutes. He calmed down by degrees, and we fell into such earnest conversation that I stayed with him till very late. Next day I found him in unusually good spirits, and he said to me, "Yesterday evening when you were gone I was so excited that it was no use thinking of sleep, so at last I composed a little hunting-song, which I must play you at once." He sat down to the piano, and I heard the song, which has since delighted hundreds and thousands of people, namely Eichendorf's, "Sei gegrüsst du schöner Wald!" I hailed it with joyful surprise.

Musical life in Leipsic, which has always been extremely active, had certainly acquired an extraordinary impetus through Mendelssohn's personal influence and energy. His eminent talent as a conductor was especially favourable to the performance of orchestral works. Vigorous leaders had managed, before his time, by the help of their fiddling, to put plenty of spirit and precision into them, but no one had ever imagined so

deep a conception, or such artistic finish in the performances of the great symphonies. It was altogether a capital orchestra, though the only example of extraordinary talent in it was Ferdinand David, who followed the conductor with his whole soul, and carried the whole of the strings along with him. Having for many years attended the (wrongly so-called*) Conservatoire Concerts in Paris, I was naturally at first much struck by the contrast, especially in the wind, and the general tone and effect. At that time the Leipsic Conservatorium was not yet founded, and it was only afterwards that the Gewendhaus Orchestra gained such material and brilliant reinforcements from David's pupils. But all the little imperfections in individual execution were thrown into the background by the spirit and life which Mendelssohn instilled into the orchestra, his complete devotion to the cause, and the delight which lit up his expressive features at every successful achievement, and acted like electricity upon the public. When I speak of his conducting thus influencing the audience, it must not be supposed that he in any way courted notice by his behaviour at the desk. His

* The name of the Institution is "Société des Concerts," and it consists of the best musicians in Paris. The Conservatoire, as such, only supplies the concert room, and the Sopranos and Altos for the chorus.

movements were short and decided, and generally hardly visible, for he turned his right side to the orchestra. A mere glance at the first fiddle, a slight look one way or the other, was sufficient. It was the sympathy in the cause, which gathered strength from the sympathy brought to bear on it by so wonderful a man.

Symphonies and overtures were then, as now, the prominent features in the Leipsic programmes. It is well known what a ready welcome Mendelssohn had for any composers whose works in any way deserved it. Thus, in that winter, or rather in the second half of it, many novelties were produced. Kalliwoda conducted one of his symphonies (in B minor) which met with a very favourable reception. Kittl's "Jagd-Symphonie," which had been given in Paris with some success, was performed in the presence of the composer, who introduced himself as a humble amateur. We also had one by the composer of the "Last Judgment," the old Dessauer, as Friedrich Schneider was often called. Schubert's great C major symphony* made such a powerful impression that it was put down in the programme a second time. However, it had hardly begun when the public took fright at a false alarm of fire, and

* Brought from Vienna by R. Schumann, and first performed, in MS., on 22nd March, 1839.—*Ed.*

fled. Afterwards it was played at the end of the last concert, with much fire, and no alarm. I also heard there, for the first and last time in my life, a symphony by Vogler. Amongst the overtures, Rietz's in A major especially deserves mention, having become one of the best known works of that composer. I happened to be with Mendelssohn at the moment when he got the score. He had known this excellent composition at Düsseldorf, and was greatly delighted with the successful alterations which had been made in it, probably by his own advice. He soon found a publisher for it, and was immensely excited at being able to send the news to Rietz in his musical solitude at Düsseldorf. At one of the first concerts which I went to, a half improvised performance of the four Leonora-Fidelio Overtures took place.* The first and second were in the programme — the latter, then unpublished, being given for the first time; it was received with great enthusiasm, and encored, upon which Mendelssohn gave the third, the greatest and best known; and later in the concert, some instrumental solo having been omitted, he also gave the fourth, the overture to "Fidelio," in E. This wonderfully interesting conjunction of these

* It is well to preserve the date of this memorable musical event—11th January, 1840.—*Ed.*

four masterpieces was all the more charming for its not having been pre-arranged.

Amongst his choral works I must specially mention the splendid Psalm, "When Israel out of Egypt came," the first performance of which took place on New Year's Day, 1840. The first movements of it are certainly among the noblest of Mendelssohn's compositions, and will always hold their own against the most important things which our art has produced. Neither the novelty of the work nor the presence of the composer could add to its merit, but they certainly heightened the impression, and it need not be said that its reception was enthusiastic. I also have a very vivid remembrance of the performance of a capital Finale from Cherubini's "Abencerrages," which Mendelssohn had taken great pains to get from the directors of the Berlin Opera.

The solo vocal music at a great number of the concerts was sustained by a charming young Belgian lady, Mlle. Elise Meerti, and afterwards by the well-known Sophie Schloss. All manner of Cavatinas out of unknown Italian Operas (which the public of course enjoyed extremely) had to be scored for the programmes, and to our great delight these were so well done by a very clever copyist as only to require slight revision from Mendelssohn before perform-

ance. We often secretly chuckled over some of the bold orchestral effects which our poor copyist had successfully ventured upon at sixpence a sheet.

The instrumental solos were endless, and many of them capital. Mendelssohn played his D minor Concerto for the first time; David and Ernst, Eckert (now Capellmeister at Berlin), Kalliwoda, and many others, contributed violin solos. One of the pianoforte performances I must mention, because of, or rather in spite of, my having a share in it. Felix and I were to play Mozart's E flat Concerto for two pianos, and had prepared the Cadenza for the first movement in the following manner. I was to begin extemporizing and make a pause on some chord of the seventh, Mendelssohn was then to continue and pause on another chord which we had fixed upon, and for the finish he had written a few pages for both instruments, now separately, now together, till the return of the Tutti. The thing succeeded perfectly, and the audience, few of whom could make out how we had managed it, applauded enthusiastically.

Besides these there were performances on the cello, the clarinet, the horn, the bassoon, the trombone, and even the musical glasses. The public were much more tolerant about such

things at that time than now, when the pianoforte, violin, and cello have almost exclusive command of the concert-room. No doubt this is of advantage to the programmes, but it is by no means so to the orchestras, as it entirely deprives the wind-instrument players of the opportunity of gaining a little extra honour and extra pay. Thus it has come about that our much-vaunted improvement in executive music can only be called real with respect to the string instruments. And the preference given to the brass in modern music is likely to make the performance of works by the old masters more and more difficult. But I am digressing, and must return to Leipsic.

The interest of the Quartet-Evenings, which Ferdinand David had carried on for some years past, was greatly heightened this winter by Mendelssohn's co-operation. He often played at them, and his renderings of Mozart and Beethoven were incomparably beautiful. He and I also occasionally played duets for four hands, and made a great sensation with Mozart's Variations in G. But what I remember most distinctly was his performance of Bach's Chromatic Fantasia; it was quite overwhelming, and the applause was so great he was obliged to go back to the piano. He then improvised, combining in the cleverest

way a theme of Bach's with his own well-known Song without Words in E (No. 1, Book 1)—thus uniting past and present into something new and difficult to describe. David was no less many-sided in *his* way; in addition to the three great quartet writers he favoured us with Spohr, Onslow, and Mendelssohn, and also Schubert, then little known as a quartet composer. I must not forget to mention the fact that this winter he brought before the public the Chaconne of Bach, since so much played. Mendelssohn accompanied* *ad libitum* on the piano, and it was a great success. The public were also much delighted one evening to see Mendelssohn and Kalliwoda playing the violas in Spohr's double quartet and Mendelssohn's octet. Mendelssohn never touched a stringed instrument the whole year round, but if wanted he could do it—as he could most other things.

Nor must I forget, for the sake of that clever artist's friends, that during this season young Verhulst, who was in some measure a pupil of Mendelssohn's, earned his first spurs as conductor of the "Euterpe" concerts. At these he gave some very promising large choral works of his own composition.

* Mendelssohn afterwards published his accompaniment, and Schumann another, to this and other solos of Bach.—*Ed.*

This winter was remarkable for the appearances of some of the most brilliant players. First of all Ernst, then at the summit of his talent, and enchanting the whole world. Mendelssohn was very fond of him. Ernst told me one day, almost with emotion, how at the time of his concerts in the Königstädter Theatre at Berlin, he was very much pressed one morning in Mendelssohn's presence to put down his "Elégie" in the programme again, though he had already played it I don't know how many times. When Mendelssohn also began urging him to do it, Ernst answered, in fun: "If you will accompany me I will;" and Mendelssohn in fact made his appearance on the Königstädter stage, accompanied the "Elégie," and vanished. It was not only their beloved violins which united David and Ernst, but also the beloved game of whist. I certainly believe that neither of them ever played the violin so late into the night as they did whist. It was harmless enough, and good and bad jokes played just as great a part in it as the cards.

Towards the spring Liszt arrived in Leipsic fresh from his triumphs at Vienna and Prague, and revolutionized our quiet town. It will be remembered that in Paris he had excited Mendelssohn's highest admiration. At his first con-

cert, as he glided along the platform of the orchestra to the piano, dressed in the most elegant style, and as lithe and slender as a tiger-cat, Mendelssohn said to me: "There's a novel apparition, the virtuoso of the 19th century." I need hardly describe the impression made by his playing. When he played Schubert's "Erlkönig" half the people stood on their chairs. The Lucia fantasia turned everybody's head. With some other pieces, however, he was less successful—for instance, with Mendelssohn's D minor concerto, which had just appeared, and which he could neither read at sight nor find time to study with any care, so that people thought that the composer played it better himself. His performance of a part of the Pastoral Symphony, in the same room where it had so often been heard with all its orchestral effects, also did not meet with general approval. In the preface to his arrangement of the Beethoven Symphonies Liszt boldly declares that every effect can be reproduced on the modern piano. When Mendelssohn read this, he said: "Well, if I could only hear the first eight bars of Mozart's G minor Symphony, with that delicate figure in the tenors, rendered on the piano as it sounds in the orchestra,—I would believe it."

It may easily be imagined that Liszt was

fêted to the very utmost. Mendelssohn arranged a grand soirée at the Gewandhaus to which upwards of two hundred people were invited. It was a half conversazione, half concert. I had the honour of taking part in a performance of Bach's concerto for three pianos. I myself entertained Liszt at a rather solemn dinner on the first floor of a fashionable hotel, and invited all the heads of the musical societies in the place to meet him. Some time afterwards, when we were talking over these heroic social deeds of ours, Mendelssohn was infinitely amused at hearing that my mere private fête, which had included such a small number of people, cost me much more than his grand demonstration. He had such a childishly naïve and good-natured way of laughing at anything of that sort, and really was never so pleasant as when he could be making fun of something or other.

At the last of the Gewandhaus Concerts* I conducted my oratorio, the "Destruction of Jerusalem." I had sent Mendelssohn a finished sketch of it in the foregoing summer, and he at once took the warmest interest in it; it was certainly owing to his influence that, though the score was not yet even written, the oratorio

* 2nd April, 1840.

should have been accepted for performance by the directors of the concerts. In the putting together of the words there was a great deal with which we were neither of us satisfied. One day he took the *libretto* home with him, and surprised me in the kindest way on Christmas Eve with a fresh and complete copy of it. I need not explain how useful his severe critical remarks were to my composition. One day when I thanked him he said: "I only show you what you would have found out for yourself in a few months." The oratorio had a very warm reception; but what pleased me most was Mendelssohn's entire satisfaction. He sat amongst the audience with Cécile, and told me what pleasure he had felt not only in my music but also in the correct judgment of his wife, who had always picked out the best things. He also admitted that the work had a very peculiar colouring, and I only refer to this now because it has sometimes been spoken of as an imitation of the "Elijah," which was not completed till six years later.

In the course of that winter Mendelssohn published a number of works, and amongst others his D minor trio.* He went on correcting

* Op. 49.

and altering it up to the last minute, and many of the plates had to be engraved over again. He also composed a good many new things. But what occupied him most of all was the "Hymn of Praise" (Lobgesang) which he had undertaken to compose for the commemoration of the discovery of printing, in June 1840. How he managed to work in the midst of so many distractions it would be difficult to imagine but for his wonderful mental equanimity. In general he was completely master of his powers, though I do not mean to say that he could or would have composed at any moment—but he certainly often did so when one would least have expected it. "When I go into a painter's studio," he once said to me, "I am often envious. It must be too nice to live all day entirely for one's work, as they do. But our independent way of spending our time has a great charm about it too." Of this independence he made the greatest use, and probably never spent his time alike two days running. One afternoon I found him particularly cheerful, and he said to me: "I have had such a satisfactory morning: I have been playing a great deal, all sorts of people's music, and yours too, and also composing and writing. I mean to do this every day now!" And yet he hardly

managed it a second time. His correspondence really took up most of his time, and the number of letters he must have written is incredible. But it was a pleasure to him to be in such general requisition, and he never complained of it. Everything he did he strove to do in the most perfect manner possible, down to the smallest details, and it was the same with his correspondence. It was delightful to see the care and evident satisfaction with which he would fold and seal his letters. Anyhow, he could always feel sure of their giving pleasure. Whatever hard work he had before him it never prevented him from occupying himself with something else up to the last minute. How often, when I called for him to go to a concert where he had to play and conduct, I would find him in full dress, sitting quietly at the writing-table! It was just because he felt so secure in all that he did.

"How would you translate this?" he asked me one evening, and then read me a line out of one of Dante's Sonnets. His uncle Joseph (the eldest son of Moses Mendelssohn, who dedicated his "Morgenstunden" to him), a very highly-gifted man, and devoted to his latest years to study and self-culture, had sent him several of Dante's Sonnets from the "Vita Nuova," begging him to translate them for him in the form of the original.

The nephew set to work with feverish eagerness; and, as far as I could judge, succeeded admirably. But after all he got more vexation than pleasure from it, for the old gentleman, with an uncle's want of consideration, had meanwhile made use of some other version, and Felix did not even get a word of thanks, whereat he greatly complained. I take this opportunity of saying that I feel sure that Felix must have written a considerable number of lyrical poems, though I do not know if he told his friends of it. If I am right, we may surely hope that some future time may bring them to light. They would certainly not be without merit.

Another partly literary work which occupied my friend for some time was an address to the King of Saxony. A sum of 20,000 thalers had been bequeathed to the king by a Leipsic gentleman, with the request that it should be devoted to some artistic purpose. In conjunction with Von Falkenstein, then "Kreis-director," and now Minister, Mendelssohn drew up the plan for the organisation of a Conservatorium, to which he added an entreaty that the king would devote the money in question to the foundation of the institution. It is well known that the Leipsic Conservatorium was opened in the year 1843, that Mendelssohn laboured enthusiastically for it,

and that this school contributed greatly to the progress of musical life in Leipsic. It was equally Mendelssohn's doing that Hauptmann and Moscheles were appointed to posts there.

One evening I found Felix deep in the Bible. "Listen," he said; and then he read to me, in a gentle and agitated voice, the passage from the First Book of Kings, beginning with the words, "And behold, the Lord passed by." "Would not that be splendid for an oratorio?" he exclaimed—and it did become part of the "Elijah."

In the midst of the manifold occupations and social meetings in which he gladly took part, and which he graced by his talent and brilliant conversation, there would come days of exhaustion, even of depression. At such times, visits from his friends, foremost among whom were David and Dr. Schleinitz, would always do him good. Sometimes he would amuse himself with doing little water-colour sketches—or he would read some poem of Goethe's, such as "Hermann and Dorothea" or "Iphigenie." The first of these he was especially fond of, and he would go into raptures over the deep feeling which penetrates the most insignificant things in that wonderful work. He said one day that the line,

Und es lobte darauf der Apotheker den Knaster,

was enough to bring tears into one's eyes. He would also get out Jean Paul sometimes, and revel in his humour; one evening he read aloud to me out of Siebenkäs for at least an hour. But sleep was always his best resource. Several times I found him lying on the sofa before dinner, ready dressed, having been asleep for hours, after which he would awake with a capital appetite. A quarter of an hour after he would say with the air of a spoiled child, "I am still quite tired;" would lie down again, saying how delicious it was, stretch himself out, and in a few minutes be fast asleep again. "He can go on in that way for two days," Cécile said to me, "and then he is fresher than ever." Nature supplied him with the best cure—but unhappily it could not remain so always.

For his birthday we arranged a joke with which he was immensely delighted. The first idea of it arose from the fact that his wife and her sister and myself were of the same nation, the free town of Frankfort being our common native place. I wrote a little piece, or rather a couple of scenes, in Frankfort dialect, giving myself the part of the now typical "Hampelmann."* Ma-

* "Hampelmann" is the name of the typical Frankfort burgher, a favourite character in farces.—*Ed.*

dame Mendelssohn was to represent my wife, and her sister my daughter. The story was somewhat slight, and ran as follows :—Fräulein Hampelmann is a very passionate lover of music, and in the first scene expresses a great wish to have pianoforte lessons from the celebrated Mendelssohn at Leipsic. After much discussion the papa is gained over, and the family prepare for the journey. The second scene opened in Mendelssohn's study, where he was represented by David with inimitable drollery. The costume was true to life, being the very coat which Mendelssohn wore at home, and David managed in all sorts of delightful ways to caricature our friend's movements and manner of speaking. The Hampelmann family are introduced to him, and very politely received. After some conversation Fräulein Hampelmann is made to play, and then Mendelssohn is at last induced to improvise, and this David did in the funniest way, imitating Mendelssohn in his movements more than in his thoughts. Finally this good-natured, but not very artistic family, is sent home again in the most civil manner possible. I had made the Hampelmann ladies, in their excessively limited knowledge of musical matters, say all manner of malicious things, which were taken as pleasantly as they were harmlessly meant.

When our life had become a little quieter so that we often spent the evenings at home, Mendelssohn proposed that we should improvise on given poems. We read and played in turns, each declaiming for the other, and found it a most amusing and exciting pastime. Heaven only knows how many poems of Schiller, Goethe, and Uhland had to serve us for musical illustrations. After one of my improvisations Mendelssohn said to me, "I can't imagine how you can ever for a moment feel any doubt about your musical gifts;" and these words often afterwards in sad moments rang with consolation in my ears. During my subsequent stay in Dresden I had the opportunity of continuing these improvisations with my friend Edward Devrient, who perhaps declaimed better than anyone else, certainly more musically. In this way we were able to give great pleasure, and as an amusing social diversion, I have often, even up to the present time, carried on this game with some friend or other, and it always recalls the happy times in which we first began it.

We had many serious conversations together that winter, and I very much regret that I did not note down some of my friend's sayings. But when one is living in affluence one does not readily think of putting by. A few things which

I happen to remember may find room here. After the performance of a most prosaic symphony, which met with a very cold reception, he said to me, "We have successfully conquered the Philistines now, but it remains to be seen whether our Art will not be still more threatened from the opposite side." Once when I was speaking of the happiness that lay in the conviction of so many people whom one highly esteemed being kindly disposed towards one, he grew very excited upon the subject, and said, "It is certainly the best thing that one has. When I am thoroughly dissatisfied with myself, I think of such and such a person who has shown himself a friend to me, and say to myself, 'You can't be in such a bad way, after all, if such men are fond of you.'" One day, speaking of his adherents and his opponents, he said that he could perfectly understand that certain musicians who took up the very strict line considered him half a deserter, because many of those of his compositions which met with most favour must appear to them frivolous compared to former ones, and therefore they might say he had forsaken his better style.

With his earnest character, it was especially disagreeable to him when people treated serious things with exaggeration. "I had a visit from

a Belgian author this morning," he told me, a few hours later; "the man really has an astounding flow of talk, and said several good things. But when he was gone, and I began to think it over, I found that it might have been expressed much better in the very simplest way: therefore why use such big words? why want to appear so deep?" It is this simplicity, always exemplified in his works, which makes them appear shallow to those people who take bombastic nonsense for depth. There is no shallowness to be found in Mendelssohn's works, but rather in those which are too shallow to contain the beauty of simplicity.

Once at dinner, when we were talking about Beaumarchais' comedies, which he greatly admired, he said, "One really ought to have Beaumarchais;" so I got it for him and wrote inside it, "One really ought to have Beaumarchais (Mendelssohn's table talk)."

One peculiarity of his, which I have already alluded to, was his way of suddenly jumping to something very comic or very serious in the midst of a quiet conversation. One afternoon when we were lounging about in the promenades, he turned upon me all at once with the question: "Do you believe in the progress of humanity?" "How, in what way do you

mean?" I said, with some surprise. "Well," he answered, "I don't speak of machines, and railways, and all those things, but I ask if you think that mankind becomes better and more remarkable as time goes on?" I do not now remember what conclusion we came to.

It was always from the way in which he had been taught that he drew his reasons for everything which he did, or did not do. Thus in the scores of his choruses he always used the C clef, and kept the alto part also in the soprano clef. This rather puzzled me, and I once reproached him for the inconsistency of such a proceeding, upon which he answered, "You are perfectly right, but it is not my fault. It was Zelter's way, and I accustomed myself to it from the very first." His lovely musical handwriting he said he owed to his friend Edward Rietz the violin-player, who died young, and was the elder brother of Julius Rietz, the Capellmeister.

He sometimes talked to me about his studies with Zelter, and of the peripatetic way in which they were usually carried on in the garden behind his father's house. What he told me of them confirmed me in the opinion which Marx expressed when he said that "when Zelter became Mendelssohn's master, he merely put the fish

into the water, and let it swim away as it liked." With all his love for his old teacher, the remembrance of the following fact always made him angry. Some years before Felix's birth, his father, who was a friend of Zelter's, gave the latter a great quantity of Bach's Cantatas in the original manuscripts; and when Felix became his pupil, Zelter used sometimes to take him to the closet where these treasures were stored up, and show them to him, saying, "There they are; just think of all that is hidden there!" But poor Felix, though he thirsted for these costly treasures, was never once allowed to look inside them, and taste them. They would certainly have been better cared for in Mendelssohn's hands than in Zelter's.

Mendelssohn was very fond of repeating a funny expression or word over and over again till it became a joke. As in former years he had amused himself with calling me "Old Drama," so now during this winter, for a long time he always addressed me with the words, "Hail, Zedekiah!" out of one of my choruses in the "Destruction of Jerusalem." Or else it would be a passage out of some pianoforte piece which he liked, and which he would always be bringing up again, and playing to me when it was furthest from my thoughts.

I also have pleasant recollections of the walks which we often took with David, on clear, cold days, far out into the Rosenthal. We used to stop at one of the cafés there, and Mendelssohn would indulge in his latest, but as I believe, very passing, passion for billiards. Whether he was as clever at that as at everything else I could not judge, for though I lived many years in the land of billiards, I knew nothing of the game.

It may seem strange that I should not have mentioned Schumann, especially as Mendelssohn thought so highly of him, but at that time he lived in greater retirement than usual, and hardly ever left his room. His newspaper, his songs, but above all his approaching marriage with Clara Wieck, completely occupied him; his bride, already celebrated, did not often come to Leipsic that winter, but a few years afterwards at Dresden I enjoyed a great deal of pleasant and intimate intercourse with the famous pair.

Everyone knows how happy Mendelssohn was at home. His beautiful, gentle, sensible wife spread a charm over the whole household, and reminded one of a Rafael Madonna. Little Carl, the eldest child, amused us intensely with his first attempts at speaking. Cécile's family, charming people, were in and out all day, and the whole

atmosphere was a sort of rivalry of amiability and affection,—it was a period of happiness which falls to the share of but few mortals. We laughed much when Cécile told us how, as she came out of a concert at the Gewandhaus, she had heard two women talking about her and pitying her because "her husband was so cruel, inhuman, and barbarous to her!"

All this time, though I was very much occupied with my work, and looking forward with anxiety to the first performance of the oratorio, I could feel and enjoy to the utmost the happiness which Mendelssohn's affection and esteem imparted to me. And at last, when my labours were crowned by an entirely unbiassed success, the concluding days of my stay in Leipsic became some of the happiest in my life. On the 2nd of April, 1840, the "Destruction of Jerusalem" was performed for the first time at a concert given at the Gewandhaus for the benefit of the poor. The chorus and orchestra were capital; Frau Livia Frege, whose lovely and expressive singing can never be forgotten by any who had the good fortune to hear her, Fräulein Sophie Schloss, with her fine sympathetic voice, the clever tenor, Schmidt, and a very cultivated amateur baritone, undertook the solos. The audience was enthusiastic, and next morning my excellent publisher,

Kistner, secured the work as his property—what more could I desire? I returned full of gratitude to my native town, which I had left with such a sad heart, and from thence went on to Italy, where my bride awaited me.

CHAPTER VII.

FRANKFORT, BERLIN, LEIPSIC—WINTER OF 1842.

My chief authority for this period is my journal, which, though short enough, I kept very regularly. Having spent the first winter after my marriage in Rome, I returned to Frankfort with my young wife in the summer of 1842, and was most kindly welcomed by my numerous friends, amongst whom I may reckon those connected with Mendelssohn by his wife. Felix came to Frankfort with his family in September, and stayed a fortnight. My wife had cultivated her beautiful soprano voice with great care in Italy, and for some months was very successful on the stage. Mendelssohn took the greatest interest in her musical gifts, and his short visit that autumn was like a musical spring to us. He generally spent half the day at our house, and we used to meet him and his wife at parties nearly every evening. I had filled a thick blue music-book with music of all sorts, German and

Italian psalms, airs and romances, which I had composed for my wife, and all of these Mendelssohn insisted on hearing; in fact, he never came to see us without asking for the blue book. Carl Müller, a clever painter, whose acquaintance we had made in Rome, happening to be in Frankfort just at this time, promised to do us a pencil sketch of Mendelssohn if we could only get him to sit. At my wife's request he consented to put himself into the painter's hands, on condition that she would sing to him during the time. Sixteen songs of various lengths completed the sitting, and this sketch, with his autograph and the date of the 15th September, 1842, is one of our greatest treasures.*

A few days before his departure he wrote in my wife's album a setting of the Volkslied,

"Es weiss und räth es doch Keiner,
Wie mir so wohl ist, so wohl"—

and painted underneath it a miniature map of Germany, to impress her new country on her mind. Next to the map he drew a pair of yellow kid gloves, as a sign of his endeavour to attain the height of elegance. After his return to Leipsic he continued his gallant behaviour by

* See the Frontispiece of this Volume.

writing her an Italian letter, which I shall give in its proper place.

At that time he chiefly played to me the choruses from his "Antigone." He delighted to recall the energetic way in which he had pushed forward and fixed the performance, in opposition to Tieck's hesitation and doubt; and as usual in such cases gave me amusing and graphic accounts of his little devices for getting round the famous old poet; he seemed to enjoy all this almost more than the beautiful work itself, which had taken him only just over a fortnight to compose. He had completed his great A minor symphony* in the course of the summer, and was at work on a four-hand arrangement of it for the pianoforte, which he made haste to finish on my account. During his stay we had invited our Frankfort acquaintances for the first time to a musical Matinée; Felix completed the arrangement the evening before, and we began our music with this glorious work.

As usual Mendelssohn's time was always entirely taken up in some way or other with music. Charles Halle, who has since gained such a high artistic position in England, came to

* The "Scotch Symphony." The Autograph score is dated "20th January, 1842."—*Ed.*

Frankfort with his charming wife during that fortnight. Being totally unknown there, the prospects of a concert which he intended giving were perhaps not so brilliant as his great talent deserved. So I persuaded Mendelssohn to help us, and we played Bach's Triple Concerto; in consequence the room was crowded, everyone wanted to see Mendelssohn at the piano, and Halle's success was complete.

Another day he played on the organ at St. Catherine's church, and this, as may be imagined, attracted a great number of musical people. But I confess that even Mendelssohn's famous talent, like that of many other eminent organists, left me quite cold, though I am far from attributing this to any want in their playing. I find it immensely interesting to stand by an organist and watch the motions of his hands and feet whilst I follow on the music. But the excessive resonance in churches makes it more pain than pleasure to me to listen from below to any of those wonderful creations, with their manifold intricacies and brilliant passages. When I saw near me so many cultivated musical people in the greatest delight, I was obliged to admit that the fault must lie in my imperfect musical organisation. Or did they only show their delight because it was the correct thing to do? That

also is possible. As an accompaniment to congregational singing, or for strengthening the harmony in oratorio choruses, the organ is indispensable, sublime, unique. But as a solo instrument I can only enjoy it when the greatest care is taken both in the choice and performance of such pieces as lie completely within its province. To make use of the organ for secular music is to misuse it; but many even of the great works written expressly for it, though suitable in feeling, are not effective in a church. The organ is a queen who should only show herself when surrounded by her choicest state.

Mendelssohn was immensely excited whenever he played the organ, and indeed, even for musical organisations less highly developed than his, it must be most intoxicating to revel in that ocean of sound. Still, there is a gulf between making music and listening to it.

He also accompanied us to the opera a few times, and I may here recall a gay remark of his as we were listening to a performance of the "Favorita" for the first time. In the opening scene, if I am not mistaken, there is a chorus of monks, which begins with an ascending scale, accompanied by the orchestra in rather an old-fashioned style. "Now they will sing the descending scale," said Felix; and he was right.

The young singers of Frankfort were determined again to do honour to the famous composer, and a great *fête* was given at the "Sandhof," with part songs, tableaux vivants, toasts, speeches, and the like. It was very pretty, though it had none of the poetry of the one which Mendelssohn so charmingly describes in a letter to his mother, 3rd July, 1839.* I was in Italy at that time, and was only represented by some of my songs which were sung. But I cannot resist going back a few years, and quoting a letter from one of the ladies who helped to arrange the *fête*, because it gives such a vivid picture of the chief figure :—

"Everything went off beautifully, and it was just as if God had given His blessing to the whole affair. Mendelssohn seems not to have been able to wait till the time fixed, for he and his lovely young wife arrived much too early. But he adapted himself to the situation with the greatest good humour, and watched the preparations for his reception with infinite delight. I have never seen such a perfectly happy being as he was when he heard his quartets sung for the first time in the wood. His whole face beamed, his eyes literally sparkled with pleasure,

See also *ante*, page 73.

and he was so excited that he actually danced about on one leg, calling out after each song, 'Again, again, please, once more!' We had to do the 'Lark's Song' three times running with all the repeats."

It was in consequence of this *fête* that he dedicated the first book of his "Part-songs for the Open Air" to Dr. Spiess and Herr Martin, two very musical gentlemen who had greatly helped in the preparation of the party.

But to return to 1842. On the 25th Mendelssohn went to Leipsic, and then to Berlin. It was only twenty years afterwards that I learned from the published collection of some of his letters in 1863 what a truly friendly action he had done for me during that very time. Amongst these letters I discovered one to Simrock, the publisher in Bonn, in favour of someone whom the editors of the letters discreetly designate as "X." There was no doubt about my being this unknown quantity; and having revealed the secret, I cannot resist reprinting the letter again, for it displays such a wonderful amount of tender consideration and loving sympathy. It is dated Frankfort, the 21st September:—

DEAR MR. SIMROCK,—I write to you to-day about a matter in which I must count on your

entire discretion and profound secresy; your kindness towards me I know too well from experience to doubt the fulfilment of my wish, and I put the matter before you fully relying on your silence. I heard quite by chance, during my stay here, that my friend and fellow-artist, Mr. F. Hiller, had written to you about the publication of some new works, but as yet had received no answer. I wish very much, in the interest of art as well as in that of my friend, that your answer may be favourable; and as I fancy that my opinion may have some weight with you, it occurred to me to write to you about it, and beg you, if you possibly could, to make the German public acquainted with some of my friend's works. My reason for begging you to keep the matter secret from *everybody* and under *all circumstances*, is that I am certain that Mr. Hiller would be frantic if he had the remotest idea of my having taken such a step. I know that nothing would be more unbearable to him than not to stand altogether on his own feet, and therefore he must *never* know anything about this letter. But, on the other hand, it is a duty and obligation which one artist owes to another to help him as much as possible over difficulties and disagreeables, and to give him every assistance towards the attainment of the

efforts, provided they are noble and the cause a good one. And certainly this is true in the very highest degree, both of his efforts and his cause. That is why I wanted to beg you to publish some of his compositions, and above all, if possible, to enter into some sort of agreement with him. I know perfectly well that the German publishers have not done any very brilliant business (as it is called) with most of his works as yet, and I cannot ensure its being different now; but that this *deserves* to be otherwise I feel no doubt whatever, and this is my reason, and my only reason, for making you this request. Were it not so, however great a friend he might be of mine, I would not ask it.

But just because the only consideration which ought reasonably to be entertained is that of intrinsic worth, and because it is the only one which *ought* to insure success if everything were carried on fairly in this world, and because it is too annoying to hear the old story repeated for ever of the deserving and clever artists who at first have the greatest difficulty in getting their music brought out and made known, and afterwards are made a fuss about by everybody when one of their works happens to make a hit and gains the ear of the public—though, after all, neither the pleasure nor the fuss can make up

for their former troubles—just because of all this I want you to act differently, and to believe more in real work than in chance success. It must be put a stop to some day, and the only question in such cases is how soon, and after how many disagreeables; and that is just the point where a publisher may be of so much value and importance to an artist. Universal applause brings them all to the front, of course; but I feel that you would be just the man to reform this state of things, and bring about one which should be at once ideal, practical, and just. Pray forgive my boldness, and if possible fulfil my request. As far as I understand, a large remuneration is of no consequence; but it is of the greatest importance that you should write in a friendly and artistic tone, that the works should be published and well diffused, and finally, if you are willing and able to carry out the matter, that my share in it, my name, and my request, be kept *completely secret.* How happy it would make me if I were shortly to hear from him that you had written, and made him a kind offer to publish some of his new songs and pianoforte pieces! After all, perhaps you will only say "What does this idle composer and still more idle correspondent mean?" But I certainly have improved in my correspondence, as

you may see from this, and in the other matter I mean to improve very shortly, and shall assail you with music-paper (as soon as it is well filled), and beg you, in my own name, what I have begged so earnestly and fervently for my friend.

Always yours faithfully,

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

The following extract from a subsequent letter of his from Berlin to Simrock also deserves a place here:—

If ever I was agreeably surprised by a letter, I was so by yours which I received here yesterday. The kind and quick fulfilment of my wish, and the large sum which you sent me for my "Songs without Words"—I really do not know how to thank you enough, or express the great pleasure you have given me; I must confess I had hardly expected so hearty and complete a response as your immediate reply to my letter, and am now doubly glad that I took a step from which, even as I wrote, I was very nearly withheld by false shame, and by that fatal worldly-wise maxim about not meddling with other people's affairs. I feel that your conduct, as exemplified in your yesterday's letter, only confirms me afresh in

what I believe to be good and right, so I shall hang up the much-vaunted worldly wisdom on a nail,* and go straight ahead, following my own first impulses and feelings. Even if I fail a hundred times, one *such* success is ample amends.

We composers, though possibly more inclined than other artists to devour each other (which lies in the nature of things), are still not so bad but what we often do one another such services as Mendelssohn did me by means of this letter. But this was done without any encouragement, quite secretly, without the possibility of receiving any thanks, much less a future return, even without the satisfaction of having patronised me. Perhaps it is just the secrecy of the service rendered which makes it a thing so rarely heard of. But nobody who has not made the experience can imagine the overpowering, elevating feeling it gives one to hear of such a deed long after the death of a friend.

The following letters I received soon afterwards from Berlin and Leipsic:—

BERLIN, 8*th October*, 1842.

DEAR FERDINAND, — We arrived here quite safe and well, but still it seems to me as if it

* An expression of his father's. See the published Letter Jan. 30, 1836.—*Ed.*

were already centuries since I left the "Fahrthor," and as if Berlin were a thousand miles from Frankfort. There's nothing worse than travelling north in the autumn; for the yellow leaves, and the bare trees, and cold blasts, and hot stoves, seem to come upon one quicker and quicker till one is right in the midst of them, and then one sees the court carriages all out, and eats sour grapes and bad nuts, and wastes a deal of breath in grumbling over them, and at the same time bores oneself and everybody else but—— Oh dear, I am already falling back into the old Berlin strain! But why *is* everything better in the south? The people, the fruit, the weather, the country, and everything? Your wife won't hear of its being so—but that doesn't alter it. At Leipsic I was told that there had been a musical morning-soiree at Ferdinand Hiller's last Sunday, with Herwegh and other notabilities. And then, as I said before, it did seem to me no end of a time since I left the "Roth-männche,"* though it was only three hours before the said morning-soiree; but I was already at Langensebold whilst the "Rothmännche" was resounding with good fine music.

This is really a business letter, though you

* The name of the house we then lived in at Frankfort.

may not think so. I was at S.'s yesterday about your message. He says he will have your songs engraved, and then, when he gets your answer he will be able to publish them in six weeks, with a German translation, which we both thought desirable; if you are satisfied with the whole arrangement, he begs that you will fix the day of publication for him and for Ricordi. He made difficulties about engraving the Cello Sonata, because he has just now got to engrave the whole of Halevy's "Queen of Cyprus," besides all sorts of arrangements and potpourris of it, and could not publish any large work at the same time; however, if you like, he will write to Ricordi, and order a hundred copies from him, and get him to put the name of his (S.'s) firm on the title-page, and then he will see that it gets known in Germany. I could not exactly make out what particular advantage this would be to you, but as he insisted, I was at last obliged to promise that I would write to you, and so I do it. If I have done wrong, send me your "Hattischerif," but without the bow-string. S. is the only publisher here (Z. is the essence of Berlin Philistinism bottled, and sprinkled over a music-shop), so he does what he likes, and you have to cringe if you want to get anything published in Berlin. The day before

yesterday they gave Rossini's "William Tell" *as a new opera*, for the first time, to celebrate the grand wedding, &c. (what should I know about it?) They cut it down to three acts, and announced it "as arranged by the composer for the stage in Paris." Since then it has been the talk all over Berlin every day, whether or not it is Rossini's true vocation to be a composer—that is to say, whether he has been able to rise to the level of dramatic music, and possesses the inspiration for it—whether, in fact, it was justifiable to choose such a subject, Schiller's tragedy being certainly a far more perfect work of art than this opera—whether meanwhile, &c., &c. (Oh dear! how good the dinners at the "Mainlust" are!) Certainly the Philistinism of all the rest of Germany put together is nothing compared to this spiritual "Michel," this immortal Nicolai,* who blooms and blossoms in all discussions on art, and peeps out of every Berlin form of speech. But now I am tired of this dry tone, and must talk to your wife in Italian.

ILLUSTRISSIMA SIGNORA!—S'io avessi voluto aspettare la esecuzione della sua promessa, voglio

* "Michel" is the German "John Bull." Nicolai was rendered "immortal" by a work on Italy, solely remarkable for the wholesale way in which he abuses that country.—*Ed.*

dire il ricevimento d'une lettera Italiana scritta da lei, io avessi potuto aspettare lungo tempo. Per questa raggione debbo fra il commincia-mento e domandarla come sta la vostra salute? Spero che il rhumo del quale Lei soffriva allora è partito lungo tempo fà, e che la sua voce è da capo chiara e bella come sopra. Il paese quì non mi piace a fatto; vado frà dubbio e sospiri, navigando in un mar di pene, senza ramie e senza vele. Vorrei aver il coraggio di dir *al* fine: così sì fà; ma la mia indecisione è sempre pìu forte di me. Qualche volta vorrei sentirla cantare soltanto un quarto d'ora; darei in cambio tutte le opere del Teatro Reale, dove si ascolta un canto pessimo. Adesso voglio finire. La mia moglie gli fà cento complimenti e pregandola di scusare gli sbagli che forse si troveranno nel mio stilo italiano, sono sempre con molta consideraziione il suo umilissimo,

FELICE MENDELSSONIO BARTHOLDI.

The fact is that I. am a little ashamed of these last lines, on reading them over this evening; but as I had to write to you directly, and in the hurry of my arrival have no time for another letter, you must excuse the bad old jokes, and remain my true old friends. Good-bye for to-day.

Always your FELIX M.

LEIPSIC, 19*th January*, 1843.

MY DEAR GOOD FERDINAND. — When your letter of the 16th of November arrived (it was the best and nicest that I have ever had from you, and not one has ever given me so much pleasure, or touched me much more), I determined at once to write to you the next day, and at the same time to thank your wife for her affectionate lines. I put it off a few days— and now what a terrible gulf there is between that time and this !* I have to thank you for a second letter since then, another proof of your true friendship and kindness to me. Till now I could not think of letter-writing, or I should have thanked you at once, and have already done so many times in my heart. But at first I could do nothing, at most read a few pages or so, and it was only some weeks afterwards, when I could occupy myself with any routine musical work, or with writing music, that I began to feel a little better —but letters were not to be thought of, and the least conversation with my most intimate friends would bring back the dull, confused feeling in my head, a sort of stunned sensation, together with the sorrow. I have had to conquer it these

* He had lost his mother on the 12th of December.

last three days, the mass of business letters had accumulated to such an enormous degree; and having once begun writing I felt that I must at least send you a few words of greeting and thanks; it won't be much more to-day. You know my feelings towards you and yours and the deep interest I take in your welfare; let me hear of it soon and often, for it always cheers me and gives me pleasure. Thank God, my wife and children are well, and I really ought never to do anything but thank Heaven on my knees for such happiness. When I am alone with them drawing windmills for the children, putting the oboes and violas into the score, or correcting tiresome proof-sheets, I sometimes feel quite cheerful and happy again; but when I begin to think of other things, or have to see people, and look after the rehearsals or concerts which I have to go on conducting directly afterwards, it is as bad as ever. So I am not at home for anybody all day, except between three and four, and sit in my little study, which I have now arranged, and where I am most comfortable; it is the old nursery, which you will remember, just opposite the front door, with a beautiful view over meadows and fields towards the sunset. Schumann and David we see sometimes, A. hardly ever, for he really only lives and breathes for the

Subscription Concerts, and I am very little good there just now—and so the days slip on. May yours be all the brighter and happier! I hear of your giving great Charity Concerts, and also that your new work is soon to be performed. I hope you will tell me about it, and confirm the good news.

You ask for details of my present position. The King of Prussia has allowed me to return here, and stay till he wants me in Berlin; in that case I have promised to go back. I have since written to him, that until I am personally established in Berlin I wish to give up half my salary, and meantime will carry out all his instructions here. Thereupon he wrote to me here that he was satisfied with this; he has also given me a new title, but otherwise there has been no change of any importance. In a word I am only awaiting here what I was at first to have awaited in Berlin, namely, that I should be indispensably needed there. I still doubt whether that will ever be the case, and hope (more than ever now, as you may imagine) that the King of Prussia will allow the present state of things to continue. What made me specially cling to Berlin, what in fact produced that consultation, or rather combination, no longer exists now.

The interest of that bequest, which I peti-

tioned for more than three years ago for a school of music, has at last been granted, and now the official announcements will appear in the newspapers. I shall have to go to the Gewandhaus three or four times a week and talk about 6-4 chords in the small hall there. I am quite willing to do this for love of the cause, because I believe it to be a good cause.

How thankful I am to you for counting me amongst those with whom you like to be, and how heartily I respond to all you say about it. Indeed, it could not be so with one, unless the other felt exactly the same. We think we shall not travel this year, but probably spend the summer here or at Dresden. Is there any hope of our seeing you here? You once spoke of it. Best and kindest remembrances to your wife from me and mine; thank her for her sympathy, and beg her to keep us a place in her heart, and think of us sometimes, as we do daily with fond affection of you both, in good and evil times.

Your FELIX M. B.

LEIPSIC, *March 3rd*, 1843.

DEAR FERDINAND,—Best thanks for your dear, good, kind, long letter, which gave me great pleasure; I was especially glad of what you say

about your Opera, and your own satisfaction with it, and its conclusion; *you* feel this now that your work is done, whilst others would only feel it on the day of performance, after receiving laurel wreaths and poems, and such like; but really the satisfaction can only be true and genuine when one's work is finished. I am quite delighted with all that you say about it, and I have no doubt whatever that a work written in such a spirit, and from the depths of your soul, cannot fail to make an impression on your countrymen.

But it will not only meet with success, it will deserve it—which in these days is saying ten thousand times more. How I look forward to it! Pray don't dream of letting the first performance be anywhere but in Frankfort; it would be the greatest mistake. You know how much importance I attach to one's native country; in your present circumstances I attach it also to your native town; they are fond of you there, they know all about you, and have to make amends for former slights in their behaviour towards you; and little as I should like to enforce this for the sake of making a bad thing pass for good, so much the more would I do it to ensure success for a good thing. Besides, *all* the theatres in Germany are at present in a bad state, so do not let yourself be deterred by any defect in

your Frankfort theatre; rather try and improve it, and all the others as well by degrees.

How can you wonder at N.'s success? They put all that into the newspapers themselves; and you who read them don't know what to think of it all, whilst I, meantime, am much better off, for I have become such a *Septembriseur* against all newspapers that I believe nothing, absolutely nothing, except what I see with my eyes on the music-paper, or hear with my ears. Unfortunately it is somewhat the same thing with Wagner; I am afraid that a great deal becomes exaggerated in that quarter; and just those musicians whom I know to be conscientious people, increase my fear not a little. Still I have not yet heard any connected things out of his operas, and I always think that they must be better than people say. Talent he has most certainly, and I was delighted that he got that place, though even that made him enemies enough in the course of those few weeks, as I will tell you when we meet and go for a walk together at sunset.

Your question about your oratorio at Berlin you must explain to me more clearly; what do you mean by "being able to give a performance?" Do you want to give a concert on purpose, or do you merely want to give it a

hearing at the Sing-Akademie or elsewhere? The subscription concerts here begin on the 1st of October; there is no regular musical season in Berlin before the middle of September; so that if you come, as you say, towards the end of August and spend a few quiet weeks with us, here or in Dresden, it would then be the regular concert season. Now do carry this out, and fulfil these fine plans and promises as soon as the summer comes on.

You remind me to take a good singing-master for our Music School. Please tell me if there is one to be found in all Germany. Meantime I have had hard work to stop them from altogether doing away with the teaching of singing, which is almost more necessary than anything else. Thirty-four pupils have sent in their names, and the school is to be opened in the middle of April. Schumann will teach the piano, and so shall I.

Next Thursday, as I hear, is the hundredth anniversary of the foundation of the Leipsic Subscription Concerts, and the orchestra is to have a supper. My symphony is out, and to be had since yesterday; Guhr did not say anything definite about it, or I should have sent it to him sooner. I hunted out that Scena for Mdlle. Schloss, for her Benefit Concert, wrote a new

Allegro to it, and so helped to make a full room. Otherwise it has little merit. I have written the Walpurgis Night all over again from A to Z; in fact, it is altogether a different thing now, and a hundred times better. But I am still in doubt about having it engraved. Many remembrances to your wife from me and mine. Don't forget your FELIX.

LEIPSIC, *March 25th*, 1843.

MY DEAR FERDINAND,—If it be one of the evils of separation that good moods pass away before any answer can be made to them, it is one of its good points that bad moods also pass away before they can be answered. I hope this is so with your letter of to-day, and shall therefore not inquire much into your depression, but firmly believe that it has already gone by, and that you are as contented with yourself, with your work, and consequently with everything else, as I always wish you to be, and as you were in your first letter. Besides, if that state of cheerful contentment with himself and his works becomes habitual to a man, I look upon him as a regular Philistine, and believe that he will never do anything decent all his life long, so I don't complain of your desponding remarks.

And when you declare that you have a real liking for any musical sphere of action, you meet with a hearty response from me and from all your friends and all musicians; and your insane misgivings about the "doubtfulness of your compositions" I shall again put down to the account of ungovernable fury, and not complain of that either, as it leads your thoughts to so desirable a result. And yet, to be candid, I do complain of it after all; and only hope that when you get these lines everything will look brighter and more rose-coloured.

I can write but little about myself, or anything else, just now. If the dear God will only grant me and all of us a happy Spring—then everything will go well again, even letter-writing. There's little I can say or do now, but always keep on thinking. If only the dear God would grant us a happy Spring. And because I don't want to go on repeating this in a letter, I will to-day only make haste and answer your questions. Do you mean that for a joke, what you say about the Director-general of the sacred music? or does it only sound so, without your intending it? You must know that I don't get the least thing for it but the title on paper, and nobody knows whether I shall ever get anything more. I neither have the right nor the wish

to interfere in anything that goes on, or does not go on, in the way of music in Berlin. This much only do I know from all my experiences, that you would find it very difficult to give the oratorio in a concert of your own—it is difficult to make the civilities requisite for inducing the chorus to sing, the money for getting the orchestra to play, and the unheard-of perfection which is necessary to make the public really interested; therefore it's better that the Sing-Akademie should give it at their concerts, and you should conduct. Anyhow, you ought soon to communicate with Rungenhagen about it; I would gladly save you the trouble and bother of a correspondence with that Society, if, on the one hand, I were not already utterly weary of them, and on the other did not know that my recommendation would more likely produce the opposite effect, if any at all; because everything there is done in a sort of haphazard way, and according to that strange Berlin *je ne sais quoi*, by which nobody knows, nobody cares, but everybody rules, from the King down to the meanest porter and the pensioned drummer. As far as one can reasonably foresee, a letter from you to Rungenhagen would be the best thing at present; especially if you can therein refer to your

conversation with Rellstab, and say something about his having advised you, and so on.

But, as I have already said, business being chiefly carried on in an unreasonable way there, a different plan may perhaps be just as good—for instance, if you happened to know one of the managers, and could entrust the matter to him. If all this doesn't suit you, and you want me to write to him, then I shall have to do that too, and everything else that I can, to please you; but, as I said before, I think I could then answer for a failure, and their unbusiness-like and unartist-like style of procedure is almost more than I can stand. Forgive this philippic. I suppose I shall be in the right, whatever the newspapers say, good or bad. I am working at the music for the "Midsummer Night's Dream," with chorus, entr'actes, &c., and when I have done that I shall also finish the choruses for "Œdipus," which I have begun. I know next to nothing about the "Tempest," so only a third of those reports, if even that, has any foundation.

You want me to write about Berlioz? A subject like that is far too vast and full of detail? besides even as to his success or non-success, his giving pleasure or not, there are so many different opinions. In the autumn, when you come here, I will tell you about it; now if you

would only be very curious, and come a week sooner! Best remembrances to your wife from us both. Farewell, and may we have a happy meeting!

Your FELIX.

CHAPTER VIII.

LEIPSIC AND BERLIN—AUTUMN OF 1843.

SINCE the accession of King Frederic William IV., who wanted to transplant Mendelssohn to his capital, the latter had often wavered between living at Berlin or at Leipsic. He was drawn to Berlin by his promise, and to Leipsic by his inclinations. However, at the end of 1843 it was decided that the whole family should move to Berlin; and under these circumstances I received at Frankfort the flattering proposal that I should undertake the direction of the Gewandhaus Concerts during Mendelssohn's absence. Though seeing very clearly that a temporary situation of that sort would have its difficulties, and how hazardous it would be to follow immediately after, or rather act as substitute for, a conductor who was worshipped to the degree that Mendelssohn was, I still thought I could not refuse; for since my marriage, I had been longing for some regular, artistic occupation, such as my friend

had long wished me to have, and a more interesting one than that now offered me at Leipsic could hardly be imagined.

So I crossed the Rubicon and the Fulda with a light heart, and on the 23rd, arrived in Leipsic, where a few hours afterwards, whilst my wife was resting from the fatigues of the journey, I was present with Mendelssohn and other friends at a performance of "Samson," in St. Thomas's Church, under the direction of Hauptmann. The peculiar situation in which Felix and I stood towards each other caused a slight *gêne* that evening, but next day it entirely disappeared. He and David came to see me early in the morning; in the evening he accompanied us to a performance at the theatre, supped with us afterwards in the hotel, and was in such exuberant spirits, so gay and genial and communicative, that I felt how anxious he was to put everything on a smooth footing.

He confessed to Cécile and David that at the first meeting he had felt rather a pang at seeing the person who was to fill the place he so loved and gave up so unwillingly. But how little this disturbed his confidence in me he proved, by repeatedly telling me that it would not be impossible under certain conditions to fulfil the promises he had made to the King, and still

retain his accustomed sphere of work at Leipsic. He even initiated me so far into the secret as to tell me the particulars of the conditions, and to beg for my candid opinion on the subject. I could only advise him to agree to them.

He also gladly volunteered to play in the first concert which I conducted, and which took place on the 1st of October. He played his G minor Concerto, which David allowed me to conduct, although it was his duty to conduct all solos with orchestral accompaniment. It was the first time I heard the Concerto with orchestra, though I had known it in Paris. It made a most favourable impression on the public that he should thus initiate my first appearance at the conductor's desk by taking a part in the concert, and it was thought to do honour to both of us.

A few days afterwards he went off to Berlin, without his family, to conduct the first performance of the "Midsummer Night's Dream." I followed on the 11th with David and the clever good-natured Niels Gade, who had just come to Leipsic for the first time. The young prodigy Joachim also could not resist the temptation of going to hear this latest work of Mendelssohn's. On the 14th it was given for the first time in the "New Palace." Mendelssohn joined us at dinner at the "Einsiedler" in

Potsdam, after the rehearsal; he seemed very well satisfied, and we had a most lively and pleasant meeting.

The performance of the "Midsummer Night's Dream" enchanted me. The actors managed their parts capitally, though the lovely and popular Charlotte von Hagen would have been more in her sphere in a drawing-room or ballet than in the part of the elfin Ariel. The comic scenes were irresistibly amusing, and the *mise en scène,* especially the children's ballet, was quite poetic. But above all this, even above the great Shakespeare's verses, did I enjoy the wonderfully lovely music; that alone would be enough to stamp Mendelssohn for ever as one of the cleverest of Tone-masters and Tone-poets. The band played to perfection; Felix had had eleven rehearsals, and the result showed what was possible with means like these under the direction of such a conductor.

It is characteristic of Mendelssohn's views of things that he should have been very much excited after the performance, and this from a twofold cause. It had been arranged, according to his wish, that the whole thing, with the entr'actes, should be played without any pause whatsoever, as in his opinion this was indispensable for the proper effect. Nevertheless, not only was a long

pause introduced, but it was made use of to offer all kinds of refreshments to the people in the front rows belonging to the Court, so that a full half-hour was taken up with loud talking and moving about, whilst the rest of the audience, who were quite as much invited, though perhaps only tolerated, were sitting in discomfort, and had to beguile the time as best they could. This disregard of artistic considerations, as well as common civility, so enraged Mendelssohn that he hardly took any notice of all the fine things that we had to say to him.

A few days after I had returned to Leipsic, Felix also came back there. Musical life was in full flow: Gade gave us a new symphony, Schumann brought out his "Paradise and the Peri" for the first time, Mendelssohn played at a chamber concert, and we performed Bach's Triple Concerto once more, Clara Schumann taking the first part in it. Mendelssohn's relations with that great artist had always been based on the most chivalrous affection, and I well remember a charming little incident illustrative of this, which occurred at a *matinée* at the house of our dear friend Bendemann the painter.

A large number of friends had been invited to hear Mendelssohn, Clara Schumann amongst them. He played Beethoven's great F minor Sonata

("Appassionata"); at the end of the Andante he let the final chord of the diminished seventh ring on for a long time, as if he wanted to impress it very forcibly on all present; then he quietly got up, and turning to Madame Schumann, said "You must play the Finale." She strongly protested. Meanwhile all were awaiting the issue with the utmost tension, the chord of the diminished seventh hovering over our heads all the time like the sword of Damocles. I think it was chiefly the nervous, uncomfortable feeling of this unresolved discord which at last moved Madame Schumann to yield to Mendelssohn's entreaties and give us the Finale. The end was worthy of the beginning, and if the order had been reversed it would no doubt have been just as fine.

The King of Saxony was present at one of the first of the Gewandhaus Concerts which I conducted. Mendelssohn arranged a great soirée in the Gewandhaus Concert-room in honour of the Grand Duchess Hélène, and also played to her on the organ. He was busy just then with a four-hand arrangement of the "Midsummer Night's Dream" music, and I used to try it over with him as he finished each part. He put off his departure for Berlin as long as possible, evidently finding it very hard to separate himself from a circle which had become so dear to him.

In one of his very affectionate letters to me he once* suddenly asked: "Do you really think we could ever quarrel? I think not." As far as I was concerned it seemed to me impossible. But, with a sorrowful heart, I must here mention the fact, that it did come to a *brouille* between us, arising from social, and not from personal, susceptibilities. I think we were both in the wrong, but no angry words passed between us, and certainly the matter would soon have been smoothed over if he had not gone to Berlin in the beginning of December. However, it put an end to our correspondence, even though Mendelssohn's feelings towards me remained unchanged; I heard this often enough, sooner or later, from mutual friends, as well as from his wife. In fact, I have just now, quite by chance, come across a letter which he wrote to his old friend Professor Hildebrandt at Düsseldorf, on the 1st of October, 1847, five weeks before his death, and which I cannot quote, because my doing so would be mistaken for the strongest self-praise. But I look upon the cessation of my intercourse with that wonderful man during his last years, even though it was only an external separation, as one of the greatest losses which I have sustained in my agitated life.

* See *ante*, page 66.—*Ed.*

On my way to Düsseldorf, where I had accepted the post of musical director, I came to Leipsic on the 11th of November, 1847, a week after Mendelssohn's death. Cécile received me with tearful eyes, wonderfully calm, and her lovely features transfigured with grief. She told me that even during his last illness Felix had often spoken of me and of my appointment to Düsseldorf with the greatest sympathy. In the evening there was a concert at the Gewandhaus to his memory. "The saddest thing," says George Sand somewhere, "after the death of a beloved being, is the empty place at table." I had exactly the same feeling during the concert. There were the orchestra, the chorus, the audience, which for so many years had been inspired by Mendelssohn; they made their music and played and sang—and only a few days before they had followed his corpse to the church. I could hardly listen to the music—his last song, most touchingly sung by Madame Frege, is all that I remember of it. Indeed it seemed to me impossible that there should so soon again be music in that Gewandhaus Concert-room; but life must go on as usual, and the bereaved must again assemble for the accustomed musical feast!

A few years later, during a short stay in Berlin, I was one day dining with Mendelssohn's

widow, surrounded by her charming children, and could not help feeling deeply affected; the ingenuous bantering prattle of the children, the graceful, gentle way in which Cécile tried to check their high spirits, nearly overcame me. How much happiness was lost to him who had been taken from us—how much happiness those who were left behind had been robbed of!

Again after some years I returned for a few days to my native town. I had heard very sad accounts of the state of health of Mendelssohn's widow, who was then staying in Frankfort, and I feared the worst. It was on the 25th of September, 1853, I went to the house of Cécile's family and rung the well-known bell, which had so often answered to my touch when I went prepared for happy times. In a few minutes Mendelssohn's mother-in-law, Madame Jeanrenaud, burst out of her room and opened the door for me. She was expecting Cécile's brother-in-law. "Oh, it is *you*, dear Mr. Hiller," she said in a gasping voice, with that frightful calm which often comes from despair—"I have just lost my daughter!"

CONCLUSION.

THE mass of the public are in general not ill-pleased when either great poets, or great composers, fare somewhat badly. People pity their fate, but the misery which they have endured invests them with a certain interest. The outward radiance which shone around Goethe certainly procured him numerous opponents, and the advantageous circumstances which surrounded Mendelssohn from his birth are by many still looked on as blemishes.

"Le génie c'est la faim," said a Russian diplomatist to me one day. This absurd witticism meant nothing more than that a small amount of starvation is very wholesome diet for genius. But even that is false. Talent may be spurred on by it to the energy which is necessary for its development; but genius works by the force of nature, and the material difficulties with which it has to struggle are like

rocks in the bed of a mighty stream; it dashes over them, making lovely waterfalls as it goes.

The struggle for the bare necessaries of life may be hard enough, but in itself it has no special merit. It is only the instinct of self-preservation which compels the mere labourer to work, and though the struggle may be more painful when the head is called into action instead of the hands, it is certainly not more meritorious. A second kind of struggle is that against prejudice, against want of understanding, against jealousy, or whatever all such fine things may be called; but what champion of light can be spared this? More or less, everybody has to fight these battles, some sooner, some later, and in the midst of this second struggle it is far harder to preserve the desire for creating, and the power of willing, than it is to resist the first one. It is certainly very unfortunate, when, as often happens, both struggles are combined. Whether the increased admiration which is paid to anyone who has made his way in the face of want, is perfectly justified, remains to be seen. Anyhow, it certainly depends very much on the manner in which he fights.

Perhaps a stronger, because a more independent, force of will is needed to produce great things out of wealth than out of poverty. Who

has not known men of remarkable gifts, varied knowledge, overflowing eloquence, who—I will not say by the force of genius, but by superior gifts of mind—would have been able to produce great things for the public benefit, if the world had not gone "too well" with them? When people bring riches and position into the world with them, all that remains to be acquired of this world's goods is fame, and it is not every-one who is born to that. Contact with the public, to say the least of it, is unpleasant—it is like the wind which fans the large flame, but extinguishes the small one—and the thankless work which even genius has to do, the self-sacrifice which she requires on so many sides, frightens many away, whilst the feeling of duty which demands that something should be done for the benefit of society, if one has the stuff for it, is much less often found than could be wished for the honour of mankind. Therefore, when an artist like Mendelssohn devotes his whole strength to giving even his smallest songs that perfection which always hovered before him as his ideal, when he strains his full power and knowledge to advance all that is best in his art on every side, he deserves no less acknowledg-ment because he happens to be in a position free from all material cares, than if he were

compelled to wait for the reward of his work in order to pay his debts. Or is that preference for misery the unexpressed feeling, which in fact ought never to be expressed, that it is too much of a good thing when outward prosperity is united to the happiness of possessing the poetic creative faculty? Such a preference must surely arise from error. The satisfaction of a man who forcibly conquers mean cares must surely be much greater than that of one who never felt them.

Be this as it may, the spectacle of those spiritual warriors, who, like the heroes in Kaulbach's "Battle of the Huns," are lifted above the earth, and strive for victory in the clouds, is at any rate more gratifying than that of those who fight on the earth and raise clouds of dust. They themselves are works of art; their bright forms are beautiful, apart from the palm-branches which wave before them; and one ought to feel the proudest pleasure that fate succeeds, though but seldom, in bringing forward a thoroughly free man.

Felix Mendelssohn was a bright being of this nature. Gifts of genius were in him united to the most careful culture, tenderness of heart to sharpness of understanding, playful facility in everything that he attempted, to powerful energy

for the highest tasks. A noble feeling of gratitude penetrated his pure heart at every good thing which fell to his lot. This pious disposition, pious in the best sense of the word, was the secret of his constant readiness to give pleasure and to show active sympathy.

Were it conceivable that all his works should perish, the remembrance of his poetic nature would alone suffice to afford the German public the great satisfaction of thinking that such a being was born in their midst, and bloomed and ripened there.

How gloriously the Greeks would have honoured and praised him as a chosen favourite of Apollo and the Muses! For "all the highest things are free gifts from the gods."

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