

CHAP. XV.

HAYDN AND MOZART.

HAYDN.

Had the world never produced a Purcell, a Handel, or an Arne, we might pronounce Francis Joseph Haydn the greatest genius that ever devoted itself to the cultivation of the harmonic art. Of the present highly improved state of instrumental composition, he may indeed, justly be denominated the father; since to the brilliancy of his creative imagination, and the fund, and felicitous employment, of his science, we are indebted for effects, the novelty and the force of which are equally surprising and delightful.

This admirable musician (a native of Rohrau, a small town fifteen leagues from Vienna) was born in 1732. His father, in as humble a station as that of a cart-wright, uniting with his trade the office of a parish sexton, had a good tenor voice, and was sufficiently master of the harp to accompany the voice of his wife. His son, at the early age of six, discovered his musical propensity, by the precision with which he beat time to their performance. A relation of the name of Frank, well acquainted with music, and struck with the child's premature susceptibility of *measure*, prevailed on his parents to trust little Joseph to his care and instruction. With this friend and tutor he had not long been before the melody he

contrived to produce from a tambourine, and the manner in which he exercised a delicate and sonorous voice, began to spread his reputation through the canton. *Reuter, Maitre de Chapelle* of St. Stephens, the cathedral church of Vienna, and who was seeking children for his choir, called upon Frank, in consequence of his little cousin's fame, heard the boy sing, and was too much pleased with his voice, and the style in which he executed a canon, *at sight*, not to covet so valuable a recruit; and at eight years of age, Joseph passed from the abode of his fostering relation to the school of St. Stephen's choir. Here his industry kept pace with his love of the profession to which he was destined; and though only two hours of application each day were exacted, he generally practised fifteen or sixteen. The genius and enthusiasm that induced, perpetuated this habit, and his progress was inevitable and rapid. Nevertheless, *Tantæ molis erat Romanam condere gentem*, so arduous a task he found the accomplishment of his science, that after five years of close and incessant study, he produced a mass which only excited his tutor's ridicule.* Sensible of his theoretical deficiency, he determined to apply himself more immediately to the rules of harmonical combination and evolution; and meeting with the treatise by Fux, soon made himself master of many material secrets that had escaped him and sensible of his own daily improvement, notwithstanding the want of money, of a fire, and almost of an instrument (for the harpsichord in his naked and freezing garret scarcely deserved that name), he pursued his studies with felicity, and astonishing success.

* Since, however, Reuter did not think proper to descend to the trouble of teaching his juvenile pupils counterpoint, he was but ill-entitled to derive entertainment from their harmonical ignorance.

It happening about this time, that the Venetian ambassador, *Corner*, then resident at Vienna, had a mistress whose passion for music, induced her to retain the composer *Porpora*, then advanced in years. Haydn, aware of the advantage he might derive from such an association, contrived to get introduced into the family as a lover and practitioner of music. He pleased his Excellency, who took the young musician with him to the baths of Manensdorff; but *Porpora*, who, as the retainer of the Venetian's fair *Wilhelmina*, was of the party, formed the great object with Haydn. He listened with profit to his accompaniment of the lady's voice; acquired the best Italian style of singing; and at his return to Vienna, took, at day-break, a first violin at the church of the Fathers of the Order of Mercy; afterwards performed the organ at the chapel of Count Haugwitz; at noon, sung the tenor part at St. Stephens; and devoted the rest of the day, and great part of the night, to private study and practice.*

The allowance of six sequins (or three pounds) per month from the Venetian ambassador, and a seat at the table of his secretaries, had supplied a kind of independence which now he began to derive from the liberality of a peruke-maker. *Keller*, who at the cathedral had so often, and so rapturously listened to the fine tones of his voice and his tasteful style of performance, was happy in persuading him to share his humble fare and dwelling, and let his friendship empower

* Haydn's musical education was irregular and almost casual; and it is perhaps, to his having no fixed master, his collecting his intelligence from various sources as they occurred, and making his own unbiassed observations on the compositions of others, that we should in a considerable degree attribute the independence and originality of his style.

him to pursue his studies. The proffered kindness was accepted; the peruke-maker had two daughters; and Haydn's marriage with the eldest, proved no source of future felicity. Persisting in his application, he produced piano-forte sonatas for his pupils, and minutes, allemands, and waltzes, for the *Ridotto*. Performing one evening in company with two professional friends, a serenata under the window of Bernadone Curtz, director of the theatre of Carinthia, the manager, struck with the originality of the music, came down stairs, and learning that it was Haydn's composition, instantly engaged him to set an opera entitled *The Devil on Two Sticks*: the piece was favorably received; and the composer's reward as twenty-four sequins.

Vocal music, however, was neither the natural forte nor the natural bent of Haydn; and the next year (his twentieth) he fell into, and fixed upon, his proper tract. A set of six trios proclaimed the peculiar happiness and novelty of his ideas, and begot that complaint against "dangerous innovations," which generally evinces the worth as well as the necessity of the dreaded reform.* The charm of genius soon allayed the rising tempest of fanaticism. or envy, and his first quartetto in B flat, established his *new church*. The young musician now quitted the abode of his father-in-law, for the residence of M. Martinez, where lodged Metastasio; and now the same roof covered the first living poet, and the most eminent symphonist of his time.+ From the house of Martinez,

* The Emperor Charles the Sixth, not contented with being the patron of rigid fugists (how seldom monarchs *are* satisfied with being that which they ought to be!) was a fugist himself, and scorned nothing so much as a freedom of fancy, and warmth of expression.

+ Dining every day with Metastasio, he collected from the intelligent and communicative poet some of those general rules on which rest the perfection of the fine arts, and which, together with the

and after six years of penury, Haydn was invited into the family of Count Mortzin. Hearing in the concert-room of this nobleman, a symphony of Haydn, Prince Anthony Esterhazy, an ardent amateur, was so delighted with the composition, that he expressed his wish to have the composer for the second leader of his own orchestra. With this desire the Count's courtesy complied; and some time afterwards, the young German was received into the Prince's service; and at the death of his patron, a year afterwards, into that of his successor Nicholas.

The establishment of this Prince, and at the head of a grand orchestra, Haydn possessed the means of more fully developing his powers. The regular studies of the morning; attendance at the Prince's opera, or concert, in the evening; and the hours which he spent with his friends and Mademoiselle Boselli, a charming singer attached to the Prince's band, formed the occupation of his time for more than thirty years, and diminishes our wonder at the multiplicity of his compositions. With the beauty and accomplishments of this young lady Haydn was powerfully affected; but from the honourable sentiments that prevailed, generally, in the character of the musician, it does not appear probable that he would have entertained, or indulged, the passion by which his conduct was afterwards so powerfully and lastingly swayed, had not the perverse piety, and fanatic predilection of Madame Haydn for the company of priests, too often the disturbers and pests of those families into which they are imprudently admitted, driven her husband from home,

instructions he at the same time received in the rudiments of the Italian language, both polished and expanded his mind.

and compelled him to seek consolation in the society of Mademoiselle Boselli.*

Great as was Haydn's native wealth, far from always depending on his own stock, he frequently fed, or manured his imagination, with the floating riches of other times and other countries. Some years after his establishment with Prince Nicholas, and when his style was too settled and confirmed to be disturbed and enfeebled, he consulted the national melodies of the Ukraine, Hungary, Scotland, Germany, Sicily, Spain, Russia, and every territory in Europe.† It is said of him, that with all the supplies of nature and subsidies of art, it was only under certain circumstances that he could command his imagination. Like Buffon, who, in order to insure success to his labours, found it necessary to put himself in full dress, Haydn was obliged to attend to the equipment of his person before he could depend on the powers of his mind; and was not in full possession of his genius till he had put on a ring presented to him by the liberality of Frederick the Second.‡

As the works of this master accumulated, his fame continued to spread, till his superiority, as an instrumental composer, became so prevalently acknowledged, that to offer a reward to the musician who should produce the best symphonies

* The incautious conduct of musicians and actors has, for a long while, placed their moral characters almost upon a level with those of priests and princes: in time, I fear, they will all be confounded.

† Paesiello often resorted to the same resource. It was upon an ancient air, supposed to be of Grecian origin, that he found his beautiful romance of *Nina*.

‡ Possessed of this *magic ring*, he might easily produce the sublimest music: the mystery is, how, before its presentation, he could compose so well as to merit the acquisition of such a charm.

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was rather a handsome mode of complimenting Haydn, than an invitation to the exertion of general talent. About the year 1760 such an instance occurred. It being, at that time, in contemplation at Madrid, to celebrate the funeral of Christ by a service denominated the *Entierro*, consisting of a sermon successively explanatory of the seven words pronounced by Jesus on the cross, and comprising intervals to be filled up by suitable compositions, an advertisement was circulated through Europe, tendering a liberal compensation to the composer who should furnish seven symphonies the most expressive of the sentiments connected with the sacred words. This was a task sufficiently fantastical to titillate the imagination, and excite the exertions, of any German composer; but Haydn was expected to undertake it, and every other musician was quiescent. He set himself to work, and in the fervour for imitation, which deteriorates too many of his composition (and from which even his great superior, Handel, was not wholly exempt), he composed those seven symphonies in which (as an infatuated devotee would say),

*“Spiego con tal pietate il suo concetto,
E il suon con tal dolcezza v’ accompagna,
Che al crudo inferno intenerisce il petto.”*

DANTE.

His thoughts so softly, sweetly, he explains,
Stern Hell relents, and owns the melting strains.*

BUSBY.

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But powerful and commanding as was the genius of Haydn in the province of *instrumental* composition - splendid and original as were his conceptions - judicious as we find their general arrangement - grand and varied as the effect he uniformly produces - nature had not crowned her gifts with that exalted, glowing, and intense feeling, which, not satisfied with sounds alone, pants for the riches of applied sentiment, and seeks them in the treasury of the poetic muse. He was not a great vocal composer. His *Armida*, *La vera Costanza*, and the *Speziolle*, saved from the conflagration of the archives of Eisenstädt, which destroyed his other operas, serve to inform us of the superiority of his cotemporaries Sacchini, Cimarosa, Zingarelli, and Mozart, in theatrical composition: and no critic will compare his masses and oratorios with even the least excellent of the sacred music of his great predecessor and countryman.* If, however, nature withheld from the native of Rohrau those exquisite sensations which delight in song, and which only song can express, it was, that she might be the kinder to the world of music. Pergolese and Leo, Scarlatti, and Gluck, Porpora and Picini, had almost perfected *vocal* composition; at animate its frame, and teach it the language of passion and surprise. He came, and effected his purpose. To hear the nobler portion of his symphonies, is to be justified in applying to their author the compliment paid by Pope to the immortal Handel:

*“To move, to stir, to shake the soul, he comes,
And Jove’s own thunder follows Mars’s drums.”*

* Haydn (some say Michael Haydn, the composer’s brother) employed these movements afterwards as accompaniments to vocal melodies, which his skill and ingenuity adapted to the prescribed harmony.

* Were I to make any exception to this general remark, it would be in favor of Haydn’s *Stabat Mater*, the beauty, order, and lucidity of which exhibits a copious portion of science, and its most felicitous application.

It was not till he had long been the subject of European encomium, that Haydn seriously mediated a temporary absence from his native country. At length, it happened, that deprived by death of the society of Mademoiselle Boselli, and pressed, almost at the same time, to visit Paris, Naples, Lisbon, Venice, London, and Milan, for the purpose of furnishing those cities with new operas, he was tempted to accept the proposals of my late friend, Mr. Salomon. That excellent violinist, conceiving that the presence of the German symphonist would impart not only a new importance, a fashion to his concerts, was happy in his power to persuade him to prefer England to the other countries to which his talents had been invited. With Salomon's proposal of having twenty concerts in the year, and giving him fifty pounds for each performance, Haydn complied; left for a short period (not without reluctance) his friend and patron, prince Nicholas; and, in the spring of 1790, arrived in London; where he remained a little more than a year. Besides the twelve new symphonies with which he delighted Salomon's subscribers, he produced a variety of instrumental pieces; and in ever instance, acquitted himself in a style worthy of his science, his genius, and his long established fame.

Not to fatigue, or disgust the reader with the puerile and ridiculous stories circulated, respecting the visit of a nobleman who requested his instructions in counterpoint; the composer's personal pursuit of a naval gentleman who, as he thought had paid him too liberally for the composition of a march; and the silly refusal of a strange music-seller (a

strange music-seller, certainly!) who refused to take his money for any compositions but Haydn's*—I shall content myself with observing, that the harmonious German's two greatest gratifications in London were those of hearing the performance of Handel's music at the *Ancient Concert*,[†] and visiting the *Philharmonic Society*. His general reception and treatment in London was honourable to the taste and liberality of the musical portion of its population, and so flattering to the feelings of the musician, that after returning to Germany for three years, and attending to the claims of his Prince, he, in compliance with an invitation from Gallini, then manager of the King's Theatre, repeated his visit. Gallini had engaged him to compose an opera, which was to be prepared with the greatest magnificence. The *Descent of Orpheus* furnished the subject; the composer commenced his task; but the manager not readily obtaining permission to open his theatre, Haydn grew tired of waiting, left *Orpheus* to descend as he could, and returning to Austria.[‡]

* If any thing can be transcend the absurdity of these frivolous conceits, it is the tale relating to the resignation of Prince Esterhazy's band, including Haydn's asserted freak of writing upon the latter page of each performer's part, "Put out your candle, and go about your business."

† The fact that Handel's music is better known, and more extolled, in England than in Germany, does not say much in favour of the genuine taste, or genuine patriotism, of the country which has supplied us with such magnanimous sovereigns.

‡ A story told of Haydn and Mrs. Billington, whom he visited during his second stay in England, must not be omitted. He found her sitting to Sir Joshua Reynolds. The picture represented her listening to the celestial choir. "The portrait," he exclaimed, "is a striking likeness; but Sir Joshua will pardon me, if I say, that he has made one very material mistake. The lady is listening to the angels; but the angles ought to have been listening to her."

In one of his visits to London, he had the satisfaction of an interview with the king and queen, by whom he was received in a manner honourable to all the parties. And the university of Oxford sent him a doctor's diploma. Nevertheless, it was expected that, *pro forma*, he should transmit a specimen of his musical qualifications. He accordingly sent one, consisting of a composition, so constructed, that it might be read in any way, backwards or forwards, from the top to the bottom, or from the bottom to the top, without being divested, either of air or harmony. A piece so composed is called a *Canon Cancrizans*: and the following is Haydn's *Academical Exercise*.

CANON CANCRIZANS. a 3 Voc.

Thy voice, O Har-mo-ni is di-vine.

Thy

Thy voice, O Har-mo-ni is di-vine.

The sum Haydn carried with him from London, was augmented by the profits of a few concerts, which he gave on his return through Germany.* As the pay of a German prince, notwithstanding his natural hauteur, is less in cash than in complaisance, this increase of the composer's gains was very acceptable. He was now easy, and at leisure to enter upon a work of length. The majestic strains of Handel were still thundering in his ear; and he had two reasons for wishing to compose a second oratorio: first, the laudable ambition would be gratified, if aspiring to, or contending with, the sublimity of his great countryman; secondly, he would, by even a moderate imitation of such a solid grandeur, obliterate the remembrance of his former failure in that province of composition. It was scarcely yet forgotten, but soon might be, that his *Tobias*, produced in 1774, was not a very splendid performance. At the age of sixty-three, he commenced what he evidently intended for his greatest work. At the end of 1795 he began his oratorio of the *Creation*, and at the beginning of 1798 completed the undertaking, saying, "I have spent much time over the piece, because I intended it should last." In the succeeding Lent it was performed, for the first time, at Schwartzemberg palace, at the request and expence of the *Dilettanti Society*. It was received, says a writer, who tells us he was present, with the most rapturous applause; and I can easily believe him; because the audience were unacquainted with the sublime loftiness, and profound contrivance of Handel, and went to the Schwartzemberg Palace with ears and minds prepared to be enchanted. But what are the real and prominent features of this composition? A series of attempted

* He received here about fourteen hundred pounds.

imitations of many things inimitable by music, the sudden creation of light happily expressed by an unexpected burst of sound, airs not abundantly beautiful or original, smothered with ingenious accompaniments, and choruses in which the composer toils under his incumbent weight, labours in fugue, copies with a faint pencil the clear luster of a glorious prototype, and supplies the absence of true taste and dignity, with congregated powers of a complicated band.* My respect for the great talents of Haydn obliges me to be sorry that his judgment did not forbid his compromising himself in oratorical composition. In his operas and cantatas, his failure was only partial, in his oratorios, almost total. But it should be the first policy of so great an artist, *never* to be seen failing; never to let it appear that he can fail.†

About two years after the production of his *Creation*, Haydn composed his *Seasons*. In this piece he was more successful, because he was less out of his natural tract. Not including the complicated grandeur of numerous voices and instruments, that ponderous combination and multiplied intertexture and evolution, manageable only by such powers as those of the composer of *Samson*, the *Messiah*, and

* If in any one of the melodies of the *Creation*, I could discover the celestial grace of Sacchini, in the recitatives of the profound science of Sebastian Bach, or in the choruses, a single sample of that transcendent force of imagination, profound adjustment of parts, or sublimity of aggregate effect, so uniformly conspicuous in Handel, I would allow Haydn to be an oratorio composer.

† Haydn (a Catholic) really was, or really thought of himself, very religious. At his first sitting down to the composition of his *Creation*, he prayed the *Virgin* to enable him to praise God worthily. The *Queen of Heaven*, sensible of his circumscribed powers, or of her own, or of both, does not appear even to have made the attempt.

Israel in Egypt, -- the *Seasons*, lay within the compass of his strength, and only betrayed his *awkwardness*. It is not a little curious, that a master, whose whole *distinguishing* greatness lay in the instrumental province of his art, should conclude his career with a vocal composition. The *Seasons* was his last production.*

Soon after this, his once comprehensive and expatiating mind became so imbecile as to be reduced to two ideas; the apprehension of bodily sickness, and the dread of lacking support. His constant and almost sole enjoyment now consisted in sipping tokay.† In 1805 he became so debilitated and disabled, as to give birth to the report of his death. The Paris papers echoed the moral announcement: and that once illustrious body, the *National Institute*, (of which he was a member) acknowledged his claims to his honourable notice, by the celebration of a mass to his memory. The intelligence of this funereal deploration, bestowed upon a living man amused him exceedingly: even the grateful impression made by so marked an honour on his still susceptible heart, did not prevent his pleasantly exclaiming, "O, why did not the learned and liberal body apprise me of their munificent intention, that I might be present to beat time to the performance of my own mortal rites!"

Infirm as he was at this time, his decay (both corporeal

* After this piece, he did not, strictly speaking, *compose* any thing. The quartetts he attempted were never finished: and the few publications he subsequently sent to the press, consisted only of old Scotch tunes, to which he condescended to subscribe new basses.

and mental) permitted him to live till the year of 1809, when he expired at Gumpendorf, aged seventy-eight years.*

The great outlines of Haydn's character, as a man and a musician, though few, are strong and decisive. His heart and mind were superstitious, impassioned, affectionate, friendly, simple, and honourable. His genius, original and powerful, but limited in its range, was incapable of superior excellence in the sublimer sphere of composition, but shone with an unequalled luster, in the tract to which his judgment generally restricted his exertions.

An elegant and correct edition of his works, consisting of symphonies, quartetts, pieces for the Baryton, and divertimentos for various instruments; concertos for the violin, concertos for the organ and harpsichord, and sonatas for the piano forte; masses and offertories, oratorios, and German and Italian operas; cantatas, English airs, ballads, &c. &c. has been published at the Bibliothéque Nationale, in Paris.

MOZART

To pass from the contemplation of talents and science, similiar to those of Haydn, to the review of the powers, natural and acquired, of a composer like Mozart, is to experience the pleasure of that transition which carries the delighted observer from one enamelled lawn to another; or to a garden, in which the flowers, though not precisely of the same genus as those of the first, nor so disposed as to present to the dazzled eye the same earthly constellations, equally emulate the sidereal brightness, and seem but to display the beauty of another hemisphere. But the beautiful

* Shortly after his death, Mozart's *Requiem* was performed in the Scotch church at Vienna, in honour of his memory; and at Breslau, and Paris, similar respect was paid to his departed talents.

progeny of Mozart, if not more brilliant, were less uniform, than the equally-durable ever-blooming offspring of Haydn; and only required a soil longer exempt from the disappointing blast of mortality, to be no less numerous.

John Chrysostom Wolfgang Theophilus Mozart, the only surviving son of Leopold Mozart, sub-director of the chapel of the Prince Archbishop of Salzburg, was born in that city on the 27th of January, 1756. He had a sister four years older than himself, for the sake of whose musical education and his own, his father declined the employment of general teaching. For a while, their progress was nearly equal; and their performances on the piano-forte excited the admiration of all by whom they were heard. Theophilus was scarcely five years old, when his inventive genius prompted him to commence composer. From the moment that the harmonic science began to unfold to him its treasures, he resigned for their acquisition, all the trivial amusements of his years, retaining only his attachment to reading and arithmetic. His progress was so rapid, that his parent and their friends regarded him as a prodigy. It is confidently stated, that while yet in his early childhood, he had the courage to undertake the composition of a concerto for the harpsichord. When in the middle of his adventurous task, his work was interrupted by the curiosity of his father, who, upon examining a sheet full of blotted notes, discovered proofs, that extorted tears of joy. This wonderful demonstration of premature talent, induced in the elder Mozart the resolution to exhibit the abilities both of his son and daughter, at the different courts of Germany: and before the boy had attained his sixth year, he accompanied his father, mother, and sister, to Munich. The first expedition was highly successful. The young performers astonished and delighted the Elector; and were so encouraged with the high commendations their execution

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received, that at their return to Salzburg, they redoubled their application, and acquired such a command on the harpsichord, that in the autumn of 1762, a second journey was resolved on; and the family going to Vienna, the children were heard at court, when the Emperor, Francis I. expressed his pleasure and surprise at their performances.*

Hitherto, the young musician's practice had been confined to the harpsichord: but bringing with him from Vienna a small violin, he no sooner reached Salzburg, than his genius, urged by his curiosity, explored its scale and character, and soon became familiar with all its arcana. So steady and unremitted were his advances in the different departments of music in which his attention was engaged, that the prospect of new wonders was continually extended, and unvaryingly realized. The exquisite organization of his ear was offended with passages, the trivial irregularity of which escaped common susceptibility; the difference of half a quarter of a note was to him as discernible as that of a semitone; and the least possible dissonance positive torture.+

Mozart's application to the violin gave variety to the attractions of his genius; and before he had completed a year's practice on that instrument, his father was tempted to take him

* Things are related of Mozart's childhood, to which the judgement of men is not always adequate. Without any regard to rank, he uniformly suited his choice of pieces to the musical knowledge of his auditory. Even the German Emperor was not allowed to witness the full fire and force of his execution, till a distinguished master was made on of the party. Seating himself at the harpsichord, he coolly said to his Majesty, "M. Wagenseil is not here. Let him be sent for. He understands what he hears."

+ So delicate was Mozart's auditory nerve, that he had passed his tenth year, he could not bear the sound of a trumpet. It is even affirmed, that he turned pale at its blast.

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and his sister, beyond the boundaries of Germany. On his road, the boy performed to the Elector a violin concerto, preceded by an extempore prelude, which astonished his Serene Highness. At Augsburg, Manheim, and Frankfort, Coblenz, and Brussels, the two children gave public concerts, when their auditors were equally delighted and amazed. Arrived at Paris, Theophilus performed on the organ of the king's chapel before the court, gave, in conjunction with his sister, public concerts; and the Parisians, captivated with their performance, requested their portraits, which accordingly were painted by Carmontelle, whose pencil represented them, together with their father, who was seen between his extraordinary offspring. Celebrity as a public performer was not sufficient to satisfy the ambition of a mind capacious and aspiring as Mozart's, and soon afterwards the picture of his person was accompanied with exhibitions of his genius, presented to the public in two sets of sonatas.*

From Paris the Mozarts traveled to London, where they continued from April 1764 to the middle of the following year. During this interval, the children gave a public concert, all the symphonies of which were the compositions of Theophilus; they also performed before the king, and, as at Versailles, the separate powers of the future composer of the *Zauber Flotewere* exercised on the organ of the chapel royal. The difficulties of Handel, Sebastian Bach, and other great and intricate fugists, vanished before the mastering though youthful hand of Mozart: an on one occasion he produced from a given bass, an extempore piece full of melody. While delighting and surprising the English with his powers as an organ, harpsichord, and violin performer, he

* One of these works was dedicated to the Princess Victoire, the other to the Countess de Tessé.

published a set of six sonatas, providing the wonders of which nature is capable, in a child only eight years of age.

In July, 1765, the family passed over to Calais; and after an illness of four months, suffered by himself and sister at the Hague, Mozart produced there six sonatas for the harpsichord, which he inscribed to the Princess of Nassau-Wielbour. He performed repeatedly before the Stadtholder; and for the installation of the Prince of Orange, which took place the following year, the juvenile abilities of the native of Salzburg were selected, for the composition of a *Quodlibet* for all the instruments, the excellence of which well justified the choice. From the Hague, the itinerant parties returned to Paris, from that city passed through Lyons and Switzerland, to Germany, and, in November, 1766, after an absence of more than three years, arrived at Salzburg. In the autumn of the following year, they again departed; and in 1768, the children were heard at Vienna, by Joseph the Second, by whom Mozart was commissioned to compose an opera buffa; the *Finta Semplice*.*

The acute observation, power of abstraction, and comprehensive intellect, of Mozart, were strikingly evinced in the faculty he possessed of writing extempore accompaniments. A naked air, or melody, whether Italian, or of any other description, placed suddenly before him, he would without once stopping his pen, write parts for all the instruments in presence of the largest company. The thorough knowledge of a band, and the rapid and accurate conception necessary to this, was truly wonderful in a boy not turned twelve; and corresponds with his ability to direct, at that age, a numerous

* Both Hasse (the maitre de chapelle) and Metastasio, were pleased, or affected to be pleased, with the music; but for some reason that was not explained, the piece was never brought forward.

orchestra, in the performance of a mass of his own composition produced for the dedication of the church of *The Orphans*, and repeated before the imperial court. Mozart, at his return to Salzburg, was appointed master of the archbishop's concert; but a journey to the *Land of Music* being deemed necessary to the completion of his knowledge and the full formation of his taste, he, the following December, resigned his station, and set out with his father for Italy. Arrived at Milan, he, at the house of Count Firmian, received the words (*la scrittura*) of the opera intended for performance during the carnival of 1771, engaging to produce music. From Milan he went to Bologna, at which city he found Father Martini, who proved a warm and encouraging admirer of his genius. The facility and skill with which a boy of thirteen treated the most difficult fugue-subjects that could be proposed, charmed and surprised the learned and ingenious Italian, and conciliated and fixed his relationship. Soon afterwards, the Marquis de Ligneville, a distinguished amateur of Florence, heard with equal astonishment his extempore development of fugues and themes. In the Passion Week, he arrived at Rome; when hearing at the Papal Chapel the performance of the *Miserere*, a composition copious in its plan, intricate in its score, and forbidden to be copied, and thinking his mind capable of retaining the whole, he went home the moment the performance was finished, sat down, and made out, by memory, so correct a transcript that very few of the passages required correction. All Rome was amazed; but only musicians could know the real magnitude of the exploit.*

Naples was the city next visited by the Mozarts. At the

* This story contains one of two wonders: either a miraculous truth, or a marvelous falsehood.

Conservatorio alla pietà, the young German surprised his auditory with the style in which he executed a sonata on the piano-forte.* His second performance was at the mansion of Prince Kaunitz, the imperial ambassador. The Pope's curiosity was awakened. Theophilus obeyed his invitation, and received from his holiness the cross and brevet of a knight of the *Golden Militia*. His return to Bologna was honoured with the directorship of the Philharmonic Academy. From Bologna he hastened to Milan, to attend to the opera, the composition of which he had undertaken for the approaching carnival. December the 26th it was performed under the title of *Mithridates*. To say that such a production never before issued from the pen of a composer only fourteen years of age, would be partially veiling the splendor of a prodigy. Its excellence would have honoured mature manhood, aided by long experience. The piece was performed twenty successive nights, and every night excited the highest applause. The manager, eager to avail himself of such extraordinary talents, immediately agreed with him for the composition of an opera for the year 1773.

Mozart, while Milan was resounding with his praise, quitted that city for Venice, to pass there the last days of the carnival. The Philharmonic Knight, (*Il Cavaliere Filarmonico*) for so this musical prodigy was now styled throughout Italy, passing through Verona, was presented with a diploma, constituting him a member of the Philharmonic Society of that city. On his return from Venice to Salzburg,

* So extraordinary was his performance, that the ring he was in the habit of wearing was imagined by his *enlightened* auditors to contain a *charm*. Murmurs arose. Informed of the cause, he took off the *magic circlet*, and renewing his marvelous execution, necessitated the supposition of an *invisible witchery*.

in March 1771, he found a letter from Count Firmian, of Milan, requiring him to compose a dramatic cantata, called *Ascanius in Alba*, written for the celebration of the marriage of the Archduke Ferdinand. The well-known Hasse produced an opera for the same occasion; and, in the following August, the youngest theatrical composer living had the honour of competing with one of the best established and most admired masters of his time. Moving now with an accelerated motion, his career became rapid. In 1772, the election of the new bishop of Salzburg called for his production of a cantata, entitled, *Il Sogno di Scipione*; at Milan, in the year following, he composed *Lucio Silla*, a serious drama, and *La Finta Giardiniera*, an opera buffa; in 1774, he wrote two grand masses for the chapel of the Elector of Bavaria; and in 1775, for the Archduke Maximilian, who spent some time at Salzburg, composed his celebrated cantata, entitled, *Il Re Pastore*.

Mozart now, by universal consent, stood at the summit of his profession. Admiring Europe opened her ear for the display of his powers; and Paris was the next chosen scene of his exertions. For that capital he accordingly departed in Sept. 1777, accompanied by his mother. Two causes, the discrepancy of the French taste and his own, and the death of his mother, prevented his remaining at Paris more than eighteen months. During that period, however, he composed a symphony for the *Concert Spirituel*, and several other pieces, the easy and elegant beauties of which even the then French taste admitted and admired.

After remaining some months with his father, to whom he returned in the beginning of 1779, he was invited to Vienna by the Archbishop of Salzburg. For that city, in the November of the same year, he departed; and, there, pleased with the place and its manners, and charmed with the beauty of its fair inhabitants, he fixed his future residence. At the

request of the Elector of Bavaria, he composed for the carnival of 1781, his opera of *Idomeneo*. The next year, the Emperor Joseph, desirous of improving the German opera, engaged him to compose, "*Da Entfa. hrung [sic] aus die Serail.*"* At this time he became passionately enamoured of Mademoiselle Weber, whom he soon afterwards married: and to this state of his heart and mind has been attributed the extreme delicacy and tenderness of many of the airs in this drama, the numerous and varied beauties of which were felt and rapturously applauded, both at Vienna and Prague.

At the first of these cities he composed most of his operas; and there his productions were most highly esteemed: but no one of his dramas could boast of greater favour than his *Zauber Flote* (magic flute), which in less than a year from the day of its first appearance, was honoured with more than a hundred repetitions.† His Marriage of Figaro gave a new feather to the wings of his fame; and reinforced by the captivating music of his *Don Giovanni*, composed for the opera-house of Prague, its elevation was consummated. But hitherto, his celebrity was destitute of

* The very flattering reception of this opera awakened Italian jealousy. The company then performing at Vienna contrived to half-persuade the emperor, that Mozart's score was too crowded and elaborate. The spirit with which the *master* repelled the presumptuous criticisms of fiddlers and singers conveyed to him through the medium of Joseph, was honourable to his independence. "This piece," said the emperor to him, one day, "is somewhat too fine for our ears, my dear Mozart: it is prodigiously full of notes." "It is, Sire," answered the *master*, "just as it ought to be."

solid advantage. No lucrative appointment, no settled income, rewarded his matchless and unrivalled assiduity: and, in 1788, the deranged state of his affairs declared the thoughtless ingratitude of his imperial and electoral admirers. To retrieve his finances, he meditated a journey to England, and even a permanent residence in a metropolis to which he had been repeatedly invited. His intention reached the ears of the emperor, the emperor opened his heart, appointed him composer of the chamber, and retained in his dominions a musician whose genius was one of their greatest ornaments.

That Mozart's application was intense, nine Italian, and three German operas, seventeen grand symphonies, and a variety of masses and cantatas, concertos and sonatas for keyed instruments, sufficiently attest. Music, indeed, was his constant employment; his business, and his recreation. If the day was devoted to composition, the greater part of the night was consumed in practice: and to ensure his rest, gentle violence was often necessary. That a constitution, no way athletic, should be found yielding to so severe a trial, will not surprise the reader; but, for the fact, that as health failed, the eagerness of the musician's industry increased, he will not very readily account. The date of his approaching dissolution, gave, it seems, new vigour to Mozart's exertions, and his study was often prolonged till he fainted. At length, an aberation of reason, similar to that experienced by Tasso and Jean Jacques Rousseau, reduced him to a state of settled melancholy, and constantly presented to his disturbed imagination the ghastly figure of Death.

This unhappy impression was strengthened by an occurrence that gave birth to his last, and, perhaps, noblest production. While he was confined to his bed, a stranger waited upon him from a catholic prince labouring under a

dangerous illness, for the composition of a Requiem. Mozart undertook the task. A month was required, and granted, for the work: the price asked was one hundred ducats, and the unknown visitor counted out, and left, double that sum. When he departed, the sick musician fell into a profound reverie; but soon recovering his ideas, called for pen, ink, and paper, and, notwithstanding the intreaties of conjugal tenderness and apprehension, began to write with an ardour, that, for several days, continued unabated, nor quitted him till he fell back senseless on his pillow. When, some days after he had been obliged to suspend his undertaking, Madame Mozart endeavoured to dissuade him from its prosecution, and to divert his mind from the gloomy predictions, he wildly and abruptly said, "I am writing this *Requiem* for myself: it will serve for my own funeral." This presentiment no reasoning could remove or shake. He proceeded, and became every day more enfeebled; the month expired, and the stranger applied for the promised piece. It was not ready. For its completion, the composer required another month. Another month was allowed; and adding to the price half the former payment, the applicant hastily retired. A servant, sent to follow him, was baffled by the superior art of incognito, and Mozart's disordered intellects perceived in him a being of another world, sent to announce his approaching end! This idea, while it depressed his spirits, exalted his genius, and fortified his resolution, to complete what, he trusted, would prove a durable monument of his taste and science. Persevering amid the most alarming fainting fits, he finished his work within the promised period, but fell a sacrifice to his pertinacious exertions. The stranger returned, and received the Requiem: but the composer was no more!

Thus died in his thirty-sixth year, a musician, whose native powers, seconded by an unremitting course of intense

study and sedentary practice, procured him a name that, while harmony is cultivated, melody cherished, and musical expression felt, will live in the admiration of mankind.

Mozart, with a genius not less vigorous than that of Haydn, possessed an imagination more versatile, and nerves more tremulous, than did the native of Rohrau. In *vocal* composition, especially the dramatical, the composer of the *Creation* cannot vie with him; and, perhaps, only years were wanting to the life of the latter, to render him, at least, as splendid, and quite as voluminous, a *symphonist*. His felicity in the use of wind instruments is so well known, that it would be superfluous to insist upon the unrivalled art he uniformly displays in their management. His accompaniments derive from his peculiar skill, a charm that no other resource of his genius could have supplied. But with Mozart, it was a natural resource. The breathing sweetness of the flute, pouring reediness of the hautboy, and mellow murmuring of the bassoon, accorded with the passive delicacy of his nerves, and lively tenderness of his sensations. When we consider how much, we are surprised to observe how variously, he wrote. His vocal compositions are scarcely more different from his instrumental, than from each other. The diversity, is as conspicuous as the beauty, of his melodies, and his imagination can scarcely be said to have ever failed.

Incessantly employed in original composition, his heart and mind were too full of his own productions, to permit his conversation to dwell much upon the works of other masters; but, nevertheless, he loved to speak of the excellencies of such composers as Porpora and Durante; Leo, and Alessandro Scarlatti; and his judgment fully apprized him of the transcendent powers of Handel, whom he placed above all other musicians. For Haydn he felt so high and distinguished

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a regard, that when an envious professor attempted to disparage the merits of the great symphonist, he angrily exclaimed, "Sir, if you and I were melted down together, we should not furnish materials for a Haydn."* This incident accords with the general description of his temper, which, though he entertained a proper sense of his own dignity, as a man of genius and science, was modest and unassuming. His disinterestedness often subjected him to the impositions of music-sellers and theatrical managers. From the greater portion of his piano-forte pieces, he never received any emolument. An infinite number of movements produced for the private accommodation of his friends and acquaintances were pirated and published. Among the chief of those dealers who found means to surreptitiously procure copies of his fugitive compositions, was Artaria of Vienna, who derived considerable profit from the depredations he committed; but never exercised the generosity of a highwayman, who returns to the rifled traveller a guinea, to pay his way on the road.

Mozart's disposition was kind and gentle, and his manners polite and frank. Constant as was his musical assiduity, he found leisure for other studies than those of sound; and besides a variety of useful information, acquired the knowledge of several languages. Regarded generally, he offers an extraordinary object for philosophic contemplation. The sublimity of his compositions was not more conspicuous than the simple cast of his personal character. Too modest for conceit, he was not greedy of applause; conscious of his

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real merit, was too just to himself to patiently hear it denied or disputed. Without affectation he exhibited his soul naked and undisguised; destitute of pride, he respected talent, however humble its sphere; and his own intellectual powers are summed up in the designation applied to him by the Italians—*Quel mostro d'ingegno*—that prodigy of genius.

* Haydn's liberality did not yield to that of his great contemporary. He declared that Mozart was the most extraordinary, original, and comprehensive musical genius ever known in any age.