

vol. 2, p. 185

MOZART (Leopold) the father, was the son of a bookbinder at Augsburg. He studied music at Salzburg, was entered as a chorister in the chapel there in 1743, and in 1762 obtained the situation of second chapel-master. He was still living in 1785, in which year he visited his son in Vienna, for the last time. This is the latest information that we have of him. Of his works the following deserve to be mentioned: "*Der Violinschule 2te und vermehrte auflage*," Augsburg, 1770; "*Bastien und Bastienne, Operetta*."

p. 186

“La Cantatrice ed il Poeta, Intermezzo à 2 Personne;” and *“Musikalische Schüttenfahrt, arrangirt für P. F.,”* Leipsic.

MOZART (Johann Chrysostomus Wolfgang Gottlieb) was born at Salzburg, on the 27th of January, 1756. His father having in an unusual manner influenced the destiny of his son, and both unfolded and modified his genius, we think it necessary, in the first place, to give a short account of his career. Leopold Mozart was the son of a bookbinder at Augsburg; he studied at Salzburg, and, in 1762, was admitted as one of the musicians of the prince-archbishop of Salzburg, and was also nominated sub-director of the chapel of that prince. The duties of his station leaving him much leisure, he gave lessons on the violin and in musical composition; he also published an instruction book for the violin, which met with great success. He married Anna Maria Pertl; and it has been remarked by many as a singular circumstance, that this couple, who gave birth to an artist so happily endowed with the genius of harmony, were universally remarked in Salzburg on account of their extreme beauty. Of seven children, the fruits of this union, two only survived, a girl, named Mary-Anne, and a son, the subject of our present memoir.

This son had scarcely attained the age of three years when his father began to instruct his sister, then about seven years of age, on the harpsichord. From that period young Mozart began to display his astonishing abilities for music. His greatest delight was to endeavour to find out thirds on the harpsichord, and nothing could equal his pleasure when he discovered that harmonious concord. Arrived at the age of four, he had learnt, almost voluntarily, to play several minuets and other pieces of music on the harpsichord. To learn a minuet he required rather more than half an hour, and scarcely double that time for a much longer piece; after which he would perform them with the greatest accuracy and perfectly in time. And at the age of five years, so rapid was his progress, that he already composed some trifling pieces of music, which he performed to his father, who carefully preserved them, to encourage his rising talent. Previous to this period, and ere the little Mozart had discovered any predilection for music, his greatest delight was in the games which usually interest children of that age, and for them he would even sacrifice his meals. He ever displayed proofs of the greatest sensibility and affection; and would frequently ask, perhaps ten times a day, to those around him, “Do you love me very much?” and when in joke they would reply no, tears would immediately escape from his eyes. As soon as he had the slightest notion of music, his love for the gambols of his age entirely vanished, and, for any amusement to please him, it became necessary, in some way, to introduce music with it. A friend of his parents frequently amused himself by playing with this intelligent child; sometimes by conveying toys in procession from one room to the other; whilst he, who had nothing to carry, sang a march, or played it on the violin.

During a few months Mozart attached himself with great avidity to the ordinary studies of youth, and during that period even sacrificed to them his love for music. Whilst learning arithmetic, the tables, chairs, walls, and even the floors, were scrawled with figures. The energy of his mind enabled him easily to fix his attention on any new object that presented itself. Music, however, soon became again his favourite pursuit; and his taste for it soon gained such an ascendancy over him, that he gave himself up, without reserve, to the occupation nature had apparently prescribed for him. His progress never slackened. Mozart the father, upon returning one day from church with a friend, found his son occupied in writing. “What are you about there, my dear?” he demanded. “I am composing a concerto for the harpsichord; I have already almost finished the first part.” “Let us see this scrawl.” “No, if you please, I have not yet finished it.” His father however took the paper, and showed it to his friend; it was a perfect scrawl of notes, hardly

p. 187

legible from the blots of ink. The two friends began to laugh heartily at this scribbling; but Mozart, the father, having considered it attentively, "See, my friend," said he, "how exactly it is composed by rule; 'tis a pity we cannot make out something of this piece; but it is too difficult, nobody could play it." "It is a concerto," replied the young Mozart, "and it should be well studied before being performed. See, this is the way you should begin." He then commenced playing it; but only succeeded in the performance sufficiently to discover his idea. Indeed, the composition was a multitude of notes placed exactly according to rule, but which presented such amazing difficulties, that the most able musician would have found it impossible to execute them.

When he had attained the age of six years, all Mozart's family, consisting of his father, mother, sister, and himself, removed to Munich. Here the elector heard the two children perform, who received unbounded applause. In the autumn of this year, (1762) the two young virtuosos were presented at the imperial court. The famous Wagenseil happened to be in Munich. Young Mozart, who already preferred the approbation of a good master to that of any other, begged the emperor to allow Wagenseil to be present at his performance. "Send for him," said the child, "he understands the thing." Francis I. desired Wagenseil might be called, and resigned to him his place at the harpsichord. "Sir," said the young virtuoso, then six years old, "I am going to play one of your concertos, you must turn over the leaves for me."

One day performing again at court, the emperor Francis I. said in joke to the young performer: "It is not very difficult to play with all the fingers; but to play with one finger, and with the notes hid, would indeed excite admiration." Without the least appearance of surprise at this strange proposal, the child immediately began to play with one finger, and with all the precision and neatness imaginable. He then begged to have a veil, that he might hide the notes of the instrument; and thus he continued to play equally as well as if he had long been accustomed to this style of performance.

Hitherto our young musician had merely performed on the harpsichord; but his great genius outstripped all instruction. He had brought with him from Vienna to Salzburg a small violin, and he was in the habit of amusing himself with this instrument. Wenzl, an able violinist, presented himself one day to Mozart, the father, to ask his opinion of six trios he had just composed. It was agreed that they should be tried, and that Mozart, the father, should play the bass, Wenzl the first violin, and Schachtner, trumpeter to the archbishop of Salzburg, who happened to be with Mozart at that moment, the second; but the young Mozart entreated so earnestly to be permitted to take this last part, that his father, though at first much offended by his importunity, at the intercession of Schachtner, at length consented to let him perform on his little violin, assisted by his friend Schachtner. The father had never before heard his son's performance on this instrument; but his admiration was scarcely exceeded by his astonishment, when Schachtner, laying aside his violin, declared he was entirely useless. The child executed with equal success all the six trios.

Each succeeding day discovered fresh proofs of the talents of this extraordinary child. He could distinguish and point out the slightest variation of sound; and every false or even harsh tone, not softened by some harmony, was torture to him. Thus during his infancy, and till he had attained the age of ten years, he had an invincible horror to the sound of a trumpet, when not used in concert with other instruments; when any one showed him a trumpet, it made nearly the same impression upon him that a pistol would on other children if turned towards them in joke. His father imagined he might cure this dislike by sounding a trumpet in his presence, and tried the experiment, notwithstanding the entreaties of the young Mozart that he would spare him this torment; but at the first

p. 188

blast, he became quite pale, fell on the floor, and convulsions would to all appearance have ensued, had he not immediately ceased to play. Since his first trial on the violin, he frequently made use of that of Schachtner, which he admired much for the softness of its tone. One day Schachtner came to visit Mozart, the father, and found young Wolfgang performing on his own little violin. "What is your violin about?" was the first remark of the child to Schachtner, and then he continued to play some trifling airs. At length having reflected some moments, he said to Schachtner, "Why did not you leave me your violin tuned to the same pitch as it was the last time I used it? It is a half a quarter of a tone lower than this one of mine." They at first laughed at this extreme exactness; but Mozart, the father, who had frequently occasion to observe his son's singular memory for retaining sounds, desired Schachtner's violin might be brought, and to the astonishment of all present, it actually proved to be half a quarter of a tone below that of the child's.

Though this wonderful boy could not fail to observe the astonishment and admiration which his talents excited, he became neither forward nor vain; a man in talent, he ever remained in all other respects the sweetest tempered and most submissive of children. He never appeared the least out of humour with the commands of his parents, of whatever nature they might be. Even when he had practised music nearly the whole day, he would continue to do so without the slightest impatience, if such were his father's wishes. He understood and complied with their most trivial signs, and would not even accept a sugar plum, without the previous permission of his parents.

In July, 1763, when Mozart had just attained his seventh year, his whole family left Germany. The fame of the young musician had then spread through Europe. He had already excited the greatest admiration at Munich, and successively at all the electoral courts. In the month of November he arrived in Paris, and was introduced to play the organ at Versailles, in the king's chapel, and in the presence of the whole court. His success in France, as well as that of his sister, almost amounted to enthusiasm. A portrait of his father, standing between himself and sister, was engraved after a design of Carmontel. It was at Paris that Mozart, then seven years of age, composed and published his two first works. They were extremely good; but, it is universally allowed, were retouched by his father. In 1764, he left Paris for England, where he was received with equal approbation, both at court and in the city. The two children then began to perform concertos, written in dialogue, on separate harpsichords. Some of the most difficult pieces of Bach, Handel, and other masters, were also presented to the young Mozart, who performed them all at first sight with the greatest possible accuracy, and in the strictest time. One day, in the presence of the king, he executed, from a written bass alone, a piece which formed the most enchanting harmony. At another time, Christian Bach, music-master to the queen, took the little Mozart on his knees, and played a few bars. Mozart then continued the air, and they thus performed an entire sonata with such precision, that those who were present imagined it was played by the same person. (For further interesting particulars of Mozart's performances in England, see the Hon. Daines Barrington's *Miscellanies*, and the *Philosop. Transac.*)

During his residence in England, that is to say, at the age of eight years, he composed six sonatas, which he dedicated to the queen and had printed in London.

He returned to France in 1765, and in passing through that country he performed on the organ at most of the churches and monasteries, and from thence continued his journey into Holland, and at the Hague composed a symphony for full orchestra, on occasion of the installation of the prince of Orange. Here the two children had a serious illness, which nearly proved fatal to them both.

The Mozart family then returned to Paris for two months, after which they bent their

p. 189

steps towards their native country. Soon after their return to Munich, the elector proposed to the young Mozart a musical theme to develop. He immediately obeyed in presence of the elector; and, without the assistance of any instrument, wrote out the music, and afterwards performed it, to the great admiration of the court and all present.

Having returned to Salzburg towards the close of the year 1766, Wolfgang abandoned himself with renewed ardour to the study of composition, Emmanuel Bach, Hasse, and Handel being his guides and model, though he had by no means neglected the study of the ancient Italian masters.

In 1768, the children performed at Vienna in the presence of the emperor Joseph II, who ordered young Mozart to compose the music to the opera buffa entitled "*La Finta Semplice*." It was approved both by Hasse and Metastasio, but was never performed. At this time it not unfrequently occurred, that at the houses of the chapel-masters Bono and Hasse, Metastasio, the duke of Braganza, the prince de Kaunitz, &c. the father would beg that an Italian, or any other melody might be given to his son, when Wolfgang would immediately subjoin all the instrumental in presence of the whole assembly.

At the consecration of the church belonging to the Orphans'-house, he composed the music of the mass, and of a motet, and though then only twelve years of age, conducted this musical solemnity in the presence of all the imperial court.

In December 1769, he went with his father into Italy, having some months previously to his departure been nominated concert-master to the archbishop of Salzburg. It may easily be conceived that our young virtuoso was received in the most flattering manner in a country where music and the arts are so highly cultivated.

He first exhibited his talents at Milan, principally at the house of count Firmian, governor-general. Nor was he permitted to leave Milan till after he had engaged to return and compose the first opera for the carnival of 1771. At Bologna, the celebrated P. Martini and other musical directors were transported with delight and admiration on hearing the boy execute the most difficult fugues on the harpsichord without hesitation, and with the greatest possible precision.

He likewise excited equal admiration at Florence, in which city he became acquainted with Thomas Linley, who was then about his own age. Linley was a pupil of Martini, the celebrated violinist, and performed on that instrument with equal grace and skill. The friendship of these two boys soon became excessive. The day of their separation Linley gave his friend Mozart a copy of verses which he had requested of the celebrated Corinna on that occasion; he accompanied the carriage of Wolfgang to the gate of the town, where they parted, both bathed in tears. He arrived at Rome in the Passion-week, and on the Wednesday evening went with his father to the Sixtine chapel to hear the celebrated *Miserere*; a composition which it had been prohibited either to give or take a copy, on pain of excommunication. Aware of this prohibition, the boy listened so attentively, that on his return home he noted down the whole piece. On Good-Friday the same *Miserere* was again executed. Mozart was again present, and, during the performance, held his musical manuscript in his hat, by which means he was enabled to make the necessary corrections. This anecdote created a great sensation in Rome. Soon afterwards, Wolfgang was requested to sing this *Miserere* at a concert, accompanying himself on the harpsichord. The first soprano, (Cristofori) who had sung it at the chapel, was present, and acknowledged with surprise, that Mozart's copy was both complete and correct. The difficulty of this undertaking was much greater than may be imagined. But we beg to be allowed to digress a little here, for the purpose of introducing some details concerning the Sixtine chapel and this remarkable *Miserere*.

There are generally thirty-two voices employed in this chapel, without any kind of instrument, not even an organ, to sustain

p. 190

them. This establishment had attained its highest degree of perfection towards the commencement of the eighteenth century; since which time, owing to the salaries of its singers having remained nominally the same, and therefore being in fact greatly diminished, whilst the opera has continued to flourish more and more, and the salaries of good theatrical singers have risen to an amount formerly unknown, the Sixtine Chapel has gradually lost its best performers.

The *Miserere*, which is sung twice during the Passion-week, and produces such an effect on strangers, was composed about two hundred years ago, by Gregorio Allegri, one of the descendents of Antonio Allegri, well known by the name of Corregio. When the *Miserere* begins, the pope and cardinals prostrate themselves on their knees. The last judgment, by Michael Angelo, painted above the altar of the chapel, is then discovered brilliantly illumined by tapers. As the service advances, these tapers are gradually extinguished. The forms of so many miserable creatures, painted with such terrible energy by Michael Angelo, now become more and more imposing, from being scarcely perceptible by the pale light of the remaining tapers. When the *Miserere* is just about to conclude, the chapel-master, who beats time, insensibly gets slower, the singers diminish the strength of their voices, the harmony vanishes by degrees, and the sinner, confounded before the majesty of his God, and prostrate before his throne, appears to await in silence the voice which is to pronounce his doom. This piece owes its sublimity more to the manner in which it is sung, and the place in which it is executed, than to any individual merit of its own. It was composed with the intention of being sung in a peculiar manner, so as to produce the most sublime effect, and which it would have been impossible to express by precision of notes. The singing is certainly, within the chapel, of the most affecting character. The same melody is repeated to every verse in the psalm; but this music, though precisely the same taken *en masse*, is not so in the detail. Thus it is easily understood, but yet never becomes tedious. It is the custom at the Sixtine chapel to accelerate or retard the time on certain notes, to swell or diminish the voices according to the sense of the words, and even to sing some of the verses quicker than others. The following anecdote will provide the extreme difficulty of young Mozart's undertaking, in singing the *Miserere*. It is related, that the emperor Leopold I., who was a great amateur in music, and likewise a good composer, sent an ambassador, requesting the pope to allow him to have a copy of the *Miserere* of Allegri, that he might use it in the imperial chapel at Vienna. This was accorded. The chapel-master of the Sixtine desired that a copy might be taken, which was immediately sent to the emperor, who had at that time the best singers of the age. Notwithstanding all their talents, the *Miserere* of Allegri produced no other effect at the court of Vienna than that of being considered as a most ordinary and dull chant. The emperor and all his court imagined that the chapel-master of the pope, wishing to keep the *Miserere* exclusively in the Sixtine chapel, had eluded the order of his master, and sent him some common and vulgar composition. The emperor immediately sent off a courier to the pope, to complain of this want of respect. The pope was so indignant at this disobedience of the chapel-master, that he immediately dismissed him from the situation he held, without even permitting him to vindicate his conduct. The poor man prevailed, however, on one of the cardinals to undertake to plead his cause, and explain, that the peculiar manner of executing this *Miserere* could not be expressed by notes, nor could any one sing it till after repeated lessons from the chapel singers, who possessed the tradition. His holiness, who did not understand music the least, could hardly comprehend how the same notes could produce a different effect at Vienna and at Rome. He, however, permitted the poor chapel-master to write his own defence, to send to Vienna, and in time he was received again into favour.

It was the remembrance of this well-

p. 191

known anecdote that occasioned such surprise among the Romans, when they heard a child sing this *Miserere* perfectly in the true style, after only two lessons; and nothing indeed is more difficult than to excite the astonishment of the Romans, as all merit diminishes greatly on entering this celebrated town, where all the fine arts, in the highest perfection, are constantly displayed.

It is perhaps the great success Mozart met with in singing this *Miserere*, or the effect that it produced on his own mind, that inclined him ever after to a solemn style of music, particularly to that of Handel and of the tender Bocherini.

From Rome the Mozarts continued their journey to Naples, where, performing on the piano one day at the *Conservatorio della Pietà*, the audience suddenly took it into their heads that a ring which he wore on his finger contained a charm; and at length, to pacify their doubts, he was obliged to take off the ring. The effect on this superstitious people may be imagined, when, having parted with the talisman, Mozart's music continued to be equally imposing. Wolfgang gave a grand concert at count Kaunitz's, ambassador from the emperor, and then returned to Rome. The pope, who had wished much to see him, now created him knight of the golden spur. In re-passing through Bologna, he received a still more flattering distinction. After the requisite proofs of his talent, which he afforded to all with unusual promptitude, he was named, by universal consent, a member of the Philharmonic academy. An anthem for four voices was then given him to compose, according to the idea formed of his talents: as was customary on such occasions, he was shut into a room alone, where he concluded his task in half an hour. His previous engagement now recalled him to Milan, otherwise he would have obtained, what was then considered the greatest honour to musicians that could be conferred in Italy, namely, that of composing the first *opera seria* for the theatre at Rome.

On the 26th of December, 1770, two months after his arrival at Milan, having at that time not quite accomplished his fifteenth year, he produced his "*Mithridate*," a serious opera, which had a run of twenty representations. To judge of its success, it will be sufficient to state, that the manager immediately made a written engagement with him for the composition of the first opera for the year 1773. This opera was called "*Lucio Silla*," which was equally successful with that of "*Mithridate*," and was performed twenty-six times in succession. During the period which elapsed between these two representations, he first quitted Milan, to pass the few last days of the carnival at Venice; and at Verona, which he only passed through, they presented him with a patent, as member of the Philharmonic society of that town. He also composed, in 1771, at Milan, "*Ascanio in Alba*," and in 1772, at Salzburg, "*Il Sogno di Scipione*," for the election of the new archbishop of Salzburg. Being invited subsequently to Vienna, Munich, and Salzburg, he composed, amongst other works, "*La Finta Giardiniera*," opera buffa, two grand masses for the chapel of the elector of Bavaria, and one for the archduke Ferdinand at Salzburg; and on the occasion of the archduke Maximilian remaining for a few days at Salzburg, the cantata, "*Il Re Pastore*." This was in 1775. He had now, it may be said, attained the highest perfection of his art, as his fame had spread from one end of Europe to the other; and though only nineteen years of age, he could now make choice of any capital in Europe to establish himself. His father conceiving that Paris would be most suitable for him, in 1777 he commenced his second journey into France, accompanied by his mother. Here he had the misfortune to lose her, which rendered his residence in Paris insupportable; added likewise to the state of vocal music in that capital, which did not suit his taste, and thus obliged him to compose entirely for instruments. Having, therefore, produced a symphony at the spiritual concerts, and a few other instrumental pieces, he returned to his father at the commencement of the year 1779.

p. 192

He next composed the opera of "*Idomeneo*," under the most favourable auspices, having been called to Vienna by the commands of his sovereign the archbishop of Salzburg. Whilst there, the elector of Bavaria requested an opera for the theatre of Munich. Mozart was then five and twenty, and being deeply in love with a young lady to whom he was afterwards united, love and ambition combined to exalt his genius to the highest degree, and he produced this opera of "*Idomeneo*;" which he always considered as among his best, and from which he has even borrowed many ideas for subsequent composition.

From Munich, Mozart went to Vienna, where he entered the service of the emperor, to whom he remained attached the rest of his life; and though he was but indifferently treated, persisted in refusing many more advantageous offers which were made to him on the part of other sovereigns, and particularly by the king of Prussia.

The following anecdote will prove the truth of this assertion. In one of his journeys to Berlin, the king, Frederic William II., offered him three thousand crowns per annum if he would remain at his court, and superintend his orchestra. Mozart only replied, "Ought I to quit my good emperor?" notwithstanding, at this period, he had no fixed salary at Vienna. One of his friends reproaching him with the imprudence and folly of not accepting the advantageous proposition of the king of Prussia: "I like to live at Vienna," replied Mozart, "the emperor is fond of me, and I don't value money."

Some vexatious occurrences at court excited him, however, to demand his dismissal of Joseph; but one word from the prince, who really loved his composer, and more particularly his music, made him instantly change his mind. He was not sufficiently cunning to take advantage of this favourable opportunity to demand a fixed salary; but the emperor at length decided this himself: unfortunately, however, he consulted some enemies of Mozart as to what would be right to give him, and they proposed the small sum of eight hundred florins. This was never augmented. He received it as chamber composer, but in that capacity he never did any thing. At one time he was legally asked, in consequence of one of those general orders of government so frequent at Vienna, what pension he received from the court? He wrote back word in a sealed note: "Too much for what I have done: too little for what I might have done."

"*L'Enlevement du Serail*" was performed in 1782. Joseph II remarked to Mozart, "It is too grand for our ears; there are a prodigious quantity of notes." "That is precisely the thing," replied the young artist. It was during the composition of this opera that he married Miss Weber, a musical amateur of the first merit. He had two children by this marriage.

It was Joseph II who desired Mozart to set the music the "*Marriage of Figaro*," a piece then much in vogue at all the theatres. He obeyed, and this opera was performed at Prague the whole of the winter of 1787. Mozart went that winter himself to Prague, and there composed for the Bohemians his opera of "*Don Giovanni*," which met with still more brilliant success than even the "*Marriage of Figaro*." The first representations of "*Don Giovanni*" were not very well received at Vienna. Its merits were one day discussed at a large assembly, where most of the connoisseurs of the capital were assembled, and amongst others, Haydn; Mozart not being himself present. Everyone agreed in considering it a work of great merit, brilliancy, and richness of imagination; but each found something to blame. All had given their opinion, with the exception of Haydn. At length, they begged he would do so likewise. "I am not capable of judging in this dispute," he replied with his usual modesty; "all that I know is, that Mozart is certainly the greatest composer now in existence." Mozart acted at all times with the same generosity towards Haydn. A composer of Vienna of some merit, but who could not in any way perceive or appreciate the beauties of Haydn, enjoyed a spiteful pleasure in

p. 193

discovering every trifling incorrectness which crept into the compositions of that great master. He perpetually came to Mozart with the greatest glee, to display any symphony or quatuor of Haydn, in which, after having put it into score, he had discovered some little negligence of style. Mozart always endeavoured to change the subject of conversation; his patience at length being totally exhausted, "Sir," he replied one day in a rather abrupt manner, "if you and I were melted down together, we should not even then make one Haydn." Mozart also dedicated a work of quatuors to Haydn, which may be looked upon as the best he ever produced in this style. He observed, that this dedication was due to him, as it was from Haydn he first learnt this species of composition.

The death of this great genius took place on the 5th of December, 1792, when he had not attained his thirty-sixth year. Indefatigable to the last, he produced in the concluding few months of his life, his three *chefs-d'œuvres*, "*The Enchanted Flute*," "*Clemenza di Tito*," and a "*Requiem*," which he had scarcely time to finish.

It was during the composition of the first of these operas, that he began to be subject to fainting fits. He was particularly partial to his opera of "*The Enchanted Flute*," though he was not very fond of some particular morceaux in it, which had been the most admired by the public. The state of debility in which he was precluded the possibility of his leading the orchestra more than the nine or ten first representations. When he was no longer able to attend the theatre, he would lace his watch by his side, and appeared to follow the orchestra in idea: "There is the first act over," he would say; "Now they singing such or such an air," &c.; and then a fit of melancholy would seize him, and he fancied that he should not long enjoy life.

A singular incident accelerated the effect of this fatal presentiment, and as this incident was the occasion of his composing his famous *Requiem*, one of his *chefs-d'œuvres*, we shall enter into minute details concerning it.

One day when Mozart was plunged into a profound reverie, he heard a carriage stop at his door. A stranger was announced, who begged to speak to him: a middle-aged man, well dressed, and of a noble and imposing appearance, was then shown in. "I am commissioned, sir," he said, addressing Mozart, "by a person of rank, to call on you." "Who is that person?" interrupted Mozart. "He does not choose to be known," replied the stranger. "Very well; what does he wish?" "He has just lost a friend who was very dear to him, and whose memory he must eternally cherish; and intending to celebrate her death by a solemn service every year, wishes you to compose a *Requiem* for the occasion." Mozart was much struck at the grave manner and tone of voice in which this address was pronounced, and with the mystery which appeared to envelope this adventure. He promised to compose the *Requiem*. The unknown continued: "Exert all your genius in this work; you will labour for a connoisseur in music." "So much the better." "How long will you require to do it?" "A month." "Very well; I will return in a month. How much will you charge for the work?" "A hundred ducats." The unknown counted them immediately on the table, and disappeared.

Mozart remained plunged for some moments in profound reflection; then suddenly demanded a pen, ink, and paper, and notwithstanding the remonstrances of his wife, began to write. This rage for composing continued several days; he wrote almost the whole day and night, with increasing ardour as he advanced; but his health, already feeble, could not long support this enthusiasm, and one morning he fell senseless on the floor, which obliged him for a time to suspend his labours. Two or three days after, his wife endeavouring to divert his attention from the melancholy ideas which possessed it, he replied quickly, "I am persuaded that I am composing the *Requiem*

p. 194

for myself; it will do for my funeral service." Nothing could dispel this idea from his mind.

As he continued his work, he felt his strength diminishing from day to day, whilst his score advanced slowly. The month he had requested being expired, the stranger one day suddenly reappeared. "I have found it impossible," said Mozart, "to keep my word." "It is of no consequence," replied the stranger. "How much more time do you require?" "A month. The work has become more interesting than I imagined, and I have extended it to a much greater length than I had at first intended." "In that case it is right to augment the price; here are fifty ducats more." "Sir," said Mozart, more astonished than ever, "who are you, then?" "That has nothing to do with the subject; I shall return within the month." Mozart immediately called one of his servants and desired him to follow this extraordinary man, and find out who he was; but the awkward servant returned, saying he could not trace his steps.

Poor Mozart now took it into his head that the unknown was not a being of this world, and that he had been sent to warn him of his approaching end. He applied with greater diligence than ever to his *Requiem*, which he looked upon as the most lasting monument of his genius. During this labour, he frequently fell into alarming fainting fits. At length the work was finished before the month was quite expired. The unknown returned at the stated time and claimed the *Requiem*—*Mozart was no more!*

The day of his death he desired the *Requiem* might be brought to him. "Was I not right," he said, "when I assured you I was composing this *Requiem* for myself?" and tears escaped from his eyes. It was his last farewell to his art: his widow has preserved the score.

"*Idomeneo*" and "*Don Giovanni*" were his favourite operas. He did not like to speak of his own works, and if he did, it was in as few words as possible. With regard to "*Don Giovanni*," he said one day, "That opera was not composed for the public of Vienna, it suited better the audience at Prague; but to say the truth, I composed it solely for myself and friends."

When an idea struck him, nothing could divert him from his occupation. He would compose in the midst of friends, and passed whole nights in the study of his art. Sometimes he only just finished a piece in time for its execution; this occurred in the case of his overture to "*Don Giovanni*," which he composed the night preceding the first representation, and after the last general rehearsal of the opera had taken place. Some people have imagined they have perceived in this overture the passages where Mozart was overcome by sleep, and those where he suddenly awoke.

Mozart judged his own works with severity. One day, when performing one of the most admired airs of the "*Enlevement du Serail*," "That is good in a room," he observed; "but for the theatre, it is too insignificant. When composing it, I felt much delight in it, and thought nothing too long."

No musician has ever embraced the art so extensively. He excelled in all styles, from the symphony to the dance; from operas to the most simple ballads. As a virtuoso, Mozart was one of the first pianists in Europe. He played with the most rapid execution, and his left hand was particularly correct and excellent.

But his most brilliant and solid glory is founded upon his talents as a composer. His compositions are principally admired for the amazing fertility of the ideas, the clear and happy designs, and systems followed up with much dexterity, but in which the most profound science is never destructive of grace; his works are also remarkable for a new and ingenious arrangement of the orchestra and wind instruments. Lastly, he had an extraordinary talent for introducing into his accompaniments the richness of symphony combined with unrivalled expression, energy, and fancy.

p. 195

A genius so brilliant could not fail to excite the most lively enthusiasm. Numbers of servile imitators endeavoured to follow his footsteps; but as is generally the case, the beauties of the model degenerated into errors in their hands. They have only succeeded in patching up heavy and common designs with endless trouble and pedantic affection. They have, it is true, like Mozart, loaded their full pieces with the whole mass of instruments, but they have been unable to produce any great effect; and the vocal parts, equally dull and insignificant, are lost in the noise of the orchestra. They have forgotten that two things are essentially requisite to form a good composer; innate genius, and a style, resulting from well-directed study.

Gifted with every natural talent, Mozart and Gluck studied the best Italian masters in the very bosom of that country, and on the Italian language which inspired them, they composed their principal *chef-d'œuvres*. They have thus traced the path which must be pursued by all who would attain to the same degree of perfection.

Mozart has been accused of interesting himself in his own music alone, and of being acquainted with no other compositions. There is a little exaggeration in this reproach. His whole life was thoroughly occupied in either composing or travelling, so that he had little time to attend to the compositions of others; but he approved with the greatest candour every thing that was really good: he was the enemy only of mediocrity in talent. He did justice to the most simple music, as long as there was some traits of originality or genius in it.

Extreme disinterestedness united with benevolence were the principal traits in the character of this great man: he gave without discrimination, and expended his money without any prudence.

Music-sellers, managers, and other avaricious people, greatly abused his known disinterestedness. For this reason few of his compositions for the piano were of the slightest profit to himself. He wrote them generally out of good-nature for his friends, who expressed a wish to possess some piece from his hand for their own particular use: in such cases, he was obliged to conform to the degree of talent which each person possessed, which accounts for the many compositions for the harpsichord that appear so little worthy of him. Artaria, a music-seller at Vienna, and some others in his line, found means to procure copies of these pieces, and published them without the permission of the author, and without offering any remuneration.

One day the manager of a theatre, whose affairs were in a very desperate state, presented himself to Mozart, stating his embarrassments, and adding, "You are the only man in the world who can relieve me from my difficulties." "Me," replied Mozart, "how so?" "By composing for me an opera entirely adapted to the taste of those who frequent my theatre; it may to a certain degree be a work both to please connoisseurs and to your own glory; but above all, remember it is to please a class of people who do not understand fine music. I will take care to let you have the poem directly, and that the scenery shall be beautiful; in a word, let it be entirely conformable to the present taste." Mozart, softened by the entreaties of the poor man, promised to undertake the matter. "How much do you ask for this?" replied the manager. "Why you have nothing to give," said Mozart: "listen, however, we can arrange it in the way that your mind may be at ease, and that I may not entirely lose the fruits of my time and trouble. I will give the score to you alone, you may pay me what you choose, but on this express condition, that you upon no account let any one have a copy: if the opera gets about, I will sell it to some other manager." The director, charmed with the generosity of Mozart, exhausted himself in promises. Mozart immediately set about the music, and composed it exactly in the style directed. The opera came out, the theatre was filled, and its beauties were extolled throughout Germany; some weeks after it appeared at five or six different theatres, but without

p. 196

any one having received their copies with the cognizance of the distressed manager. Mozart was very prompt in acquiring new habits. The health of his wife was very precarious; he was passionately fond of her; and in a long illness she had, he always advanced to meet those who came to see her, with his finger to his lips, as a sign they should not make a noise. His wife got well, but long after he always met his friends when they came to see him with his finger to his mouth, and speaking in a whisper.

During her illness, he would sometimes ride out very early alone, but always, before going, left a small note for his wife by her bedside, in the form of a prescription from a physician. The following is a copy of one of them: "Good day, my dear love, I hope you have slept well, and that nothing has disturbed you; be careful you do not take cold, and that you do not hurt yourself in stooping: do not vex yourself with the servants; avoid all uneasiness till my return; take great care of yourself. I shall be home at nine o'clock."

Constance Weber was an excellent companion for Mozart, and frequently gave him very prudent advice. Mozart's income was considerable; but owing to his love of pleasure, and the embarrassment of his domestic affairs, he left his family but the glory of his name, and the protection of the public of Vienna. After his death, the inhabitants of Vienna testified their gratitude for the pleasures he had afforded them by their kindness to his family.

In the latter years of Mozart's life, his health, which had always been delicate, rapidly declined. Like all people of strong imagination, he was ever anticipating future evil, and the idea that he should live but a short time continually haunted his mind: at those periods he would labour with such energy, rapidity, and force of attention, that he frequently became totally indifferent to all that did not concern his art. Everybody perceived he was ruining his health by this excessive study. His wife and friends did all they could to draw off his attention; and for their gratification he would frequently accompany them in their walks and visits, and would quietly allow himself to be conducted any where by them, but his mind was always wandering. He seldom overcame this habitual and silent melancholy, but when the idea of his approaching dissolution awakened him to renewed terrors. His wife, distracted with fear at his singular habits, endeavoured to draw around him all those friends in whose society he most delighted, and took care they should arrive about the time when, after many hours of labour, he naturally required recreation and repose. These visits pleased him, but never made him desist from pursuing his studies: they talked, they endeavoured to engage him in conversation, but all to no purpose; and if they actually addressed him, he would make some reply totally unconnected with the subject, or else answering in monosyllables, and would immediately continue to write.

Mozart laboured under a weak state of health during his whole life; he was thin and pale, and though the shape of his face was singular, his physiognomy had no striking character in it, but that of extreme irritability. His countenance varied every instant, but indicated nothing further than the pain or pleasure of the moment. He had a habit which is generally supposed to denote stupidity; namely, perpetual motion of the body, and was continually either twirling his hands, or striking his feet upon the ground. There was no other peculiarity in his habits, further than his passionate fondness for billiards. He had a billiard table at his own house, on which he played every day, sometimes even alone. His hands were so decidedly formed for the harpsichord, that he was extremely unskilful at any thing else. At dinner his wife almost always carved his food; and if he happened to be obliged to do so himself, he performed it with the greatest difficulty and awkwardness.

This same man who, as an artist, had attained the highest degree of excellence from his earliest youth, ever remained a child in all the other relations of life. He

p. 197

had no self command; order in his domestic affairs, a right employment of his money, temperance, or a reasonable choice in his pleasures, were not amongst the virtues he practised; indeed, he was ever led astray by the pleasures of the moment. His mind was constantly absorbed in a mass of ideas which rendered him totally incapable of reflection on what we call serious subjects, so that, during his whole life, he was in want of a guide to direct him in the passing business of the day. His father was fully sensible of his weakness, which made him request his wife to accompany their son in his journey to Paris in 1777, his own engagements at Salzburg precluding the possibility of his absence from that town. With all these eccentricities, Mozart became a being of a superior order, directly he placed himself before the piano. His soul then rose above all the weaknesses of his nature, and his whole attention seemed rapt in the sole object for which he was born, *the harmony of sounds*. The fullest orchestra did not prevent his observing the slightest false note. And he would point out with the most astonishing precision the exact instrument on which the error had been committed. Mozart, when he went to Berlin, did not arrive there till late in the evening. He had scarcely stepped from the carriage when he asked the waiter of the inn what opera was to be performed that night? "*L'Enlevement du Serail*," was the answer. "That is delightful," he hastily replied, and immediately was on his road to the theatre. He placed himself at the entrance of the pit, to hear without being seen; but he soon found himself close to the orchestra, at one moment praising the performance of particular airs, and at another exclaiming against the manner in which certain parts were performed. The director had allowed himself slightly to vary one of the airs: when they came to it, Mozart, unable any longer to contain himself, in a loud voice corrected the orchestra, and told them the manner in which they should play the movement. All eyes were fixed on the man in a great coat who occasioned such confusion. Some persons immediately recognized Mozart, and in a minute the musicians and actors learnt that he was amongst the spectators. Several of the performers, amongst the others a very good singer, were so much struck with this information, that they refused to appear on the stage. The director complained to Mozart of the dilemma in which he found himself placed: the great composer instantly repaired behind the scenes, and succeeded, by the praises he bestowed on the general performance, in making them continue the opera.

Music was, in fine, the great occupation of Mozart's life, and at the same time his most pleasing recreation. From his earliest infancy persuasion was never necessary to place him at the piano. On the contrary, it required care to prevent him from over fatiguing himself and injuring his health. He had always a marked predilection for performing at night. When he placed himself at the harpsichord at nine o'clock, he never quitted it till midnight, and indeed, at times, he was almost obliged to be forced from the instrument, or he would have continued preluding and trifling away the whole night. In the usual routine of life, he was the mildest of human beings, but the least noise during music would cause in him the most violent indignation. He was far above that affected and misplaced modesty, which requires so many professors of the art to be continually solicited before they will gratify the audience. Frequently some of the great lords of Vienna reproached him for performing indifferently to all who requested him. An amateur of that city hearing that Mozart was to pass through on one of his expeditions, engaged him to pass an evening at his house, and, on his accepting the invitation, assembled a numerous society, that they might have the satisfaction of hearing his wonderful performance. Mozart arrived, said little, and soon placed himself at the piano. Thinking that he was surrounded by connoisseurs, he commenced, in slow time, to execute some music replete with the softest harmony, wishing to prepare his auditors for the developement of the piece

p. 198

he intended to perform. The society found this very dull. Soon his air became more lively; this they thought rather pretty. He now changed the character of the music into a studied, solemn, elevated, and striking style of harmony, and at the same time far more difficult; some ladies in the assembly began to think it decidedly tiresome, and whispered to each other a few satirical words; soon, half the company began to talk. The master of the house was on thorns, and at length Mozart discovered the impression his music made on the audience. He, however, did not quit his first idea, but developed it with all the impetuosity of which he was capable. Still no attention was paid. He then began to remonstrate with his audience in rather an abrupt manner, though still continuing to play; fortunately his rebukes were in Italian, therefore few people understood him. Silence, however, was again in a degree restored. When his anger was a little appeased, he could not help laughing himself at his own impetuosity; he then tried a more popular style, and concluded by playing a well-known air, upon which he extemporized variations, and enraptured the whole assembly. Mozart soon after this left the room, having previously invited the master of the house and a few other select connoisseurs to join him at the inn, where he kept them to supper; and upon their begging him again to perform, he immediately complied, becoming once more so rapt in his subject that he forgot himself till midnight.

The following anecdote is also related of Mozart. An old tuner having put some strings to Mozart's harpsichord, "My good friend," said Mozart, "how much do I owe you? I leave this place to-morrow." The poor man, regarding him rather as a god than a human being, replied, totally disconcerted, humbled, and stammering, "Imperial majesty....Monsieur le Maître de Chapelle de sa majesté impériale....I cannot....It is true I have frequently been here....Well, give me a crown." "A crown!" said Mozart, "a good fellow like yourself deserves more than a crown," and he gave him several ducats. The good man retired, repeating still, with a very low bow, "Ah! Imperial majesty!"

"It is well known that the baron Van-Swieten, a great friend of Haydn's, said, "that if Mozart had lived, he would have plucked from Haydn the sceptre of instrumental music." In the opera buffa, however, he wanted gaiety, and in this respect he was inferior to Galuppi, Guglielmi, and Sarti.

Porpora, Durante, Leo, and Alexander Scarlatti, were amongst his most favourite composers; but he esteemed Handel more than any of them. He knew by heart most of the works of this great master. "Of all of us, he would say, "Handel understands best how to produce a grand effect; when he chooses it, he can strike like a thunderbolt." Of Jomelli, he said: "That artist has some points in which he shines and will ever shine; but he should not have left those points to endeavour to compose in the ancient church style." He did not admire Vincenzo Martini, whose "*Cosa rara*" was then meeting with great applause. "There are a few pretty things," he would say, "in it, but twenty years hence, no one will listen to them."

With regard to Mozart's opera of "*Figaro*," the first reflection that occurs is, that the musician, governed by his natural sensibility, has changed into real passion the trifling incidents which, in Beaumarchais, amused the amiable inhabitants of the castle of Aquas Frescas. It is however a *chef-d'œuvre* of tenderness and melancholy, and absolutely exempt from all importunate mixture of majesty and tragedy: no piece in the world can be compared to the "*Nozze de Figaro*."

As to the opera of "*Idomeneo*," it may be safely affirmed to be unrivalled, as well amongst his own operas, as amongst those of the finest composers. For the "*Flauto Magico*," it should be seen to form a correct idea of its beauties. It appears to be the sportive effort of a tender imagination, and does honour to Mozart's great talents.

p. 199

The all-romantic imagination of Mozart appears at its zenith in "*Don Juan*," this faithful delineation of so many interesting situations, and all of which are wonderfully portrayed by the rich talents of the composer. He has triumphed most completely in the discordant grandeur of the music, in the terrible reply of the statue: it conveys to the ear a horror equal to that of Shakespeare's most terrific passages. The fear of *Leporello*, when he decides not to speak to the commander, is displayed in a truly comic style, a circumstance unusual in Mozart's music. When "*Don Juan*" first appeared at Rome it did not fully succeed; the music was perhaps too difficult for the orchestra.

The piece of "*Così fan tutte*" would have flourished better in the hands of Cimarosa. Mozart never succeeded when the triflings of love were to be depicted, that passion having been with him, throughout his life, either a blessing or a misfortune. He succeeded therefore best in those characters where tenderness was to be developed, and not at all in such parts as the humorous old naval captain. It must be owned that, in the course of this piece, he has frequently taken shelter in his sublime harmony, as for instance, in the trio "*Tutte fan così*." (For a list of Mozart's works, see the Supplement to this Dictionary.)

MOZART, née Weber, (Constanza) wife of the preceding, and sister to the celebrated singer Mad. Lange, was born in Vienna. She was a good singer and pianist. In 1796, she visited Prague, Dresden, Leipsic, Berlin, and Hamburgh, in which places her husband's *Requiem* and *Clemenza di Tito* were performed, either wholly or in part, according to the circumstances, Mad. Mozart herself taking a part. It is said, however, that she was far inferior to her sister in singing. Notwithstanding this, she every where met an hospitable reception and the most active support after her husband's death, from a natural respect to all that belonged to that great man. She lived in 1812 at Vienna.

SUPPLEMENT

p. 561

MOZART, (Johann Chrysostomus Wolfgang Gottlieb.) The following list of the works of this renowned master, produced between the years 1784 and 1791, was drawn up by himself.

1784.— *Conc. p. P. F.*; *Conc. p. P. F.*; *Ditto*; *Quint. p. P. F.*, av. *Oboe*, *Clar.*, etc.; *Conc. p. P. F.*; *Sonate p. P. F. et V.*; *Variat. p. P. F.*; *Concerto p. P. F.*; *Son. p. P. F.*; *Quat. p. 2 V., A., Vc.*; and *Conc. p. P. F.*

1785.— *Quat. p. 2 V., A., Vc.*; *Quat. p. detti.*; *Conc. p. P. F.*; *Aria, A te fra tanti*; *Conc. p. P. F.*; *Aria, Fra l'oscure*; *Andante p. V. princ.*; *Kantate, Die Maurerfreude*; *Fantasie p. P. F.*; *Lied, Das Veilchen*; *Maurerische Trauermusik*; *Quat. p. P. F.*; *Quat. p. l'Opera, Villanella*; *Terzetto p. le même Op.*; *Son. p. P. F. et V.*; and *Conc. p. P. F.*

1786.— *Der Schauspieldirektor*, opera; *Conc. p. P. F.*; *Duetto p. Idomeneo, Spiegarti*; *Scena con Rondo av. V. oblig.*; *Conc. p. P. F.*; *Le nozze di Figaro*, opera; *Quat. p. P. F., V., A., Vc.*; *Rondeau p. P. F.*; *Conc. p. Cor.*; *Trio p. P. F., V., et Vc.*; *Son. à 4 mains*; *Trio p. P. F., Clar., et A.*; *Quat. p. 2 V., A., Vc.*; *Variat. p. P. F.*; *Variat. à 4 mains*; *Trio p. P. F., V., Vc.*; *Conc. p. P. F.*; *Sinfonie*; and *Scena con Rondo, c. P. F.*

1787.— *6 Deutsche Tänze*; *Rondeau p. P. F., No. 1*; *Scena ed Aria, Non sò d'onde viene*; *Aria, Mentre ti lascio*; *Quint. p. 2 V., 2 A., Vc.*; *Quint. p. 2 V., 2 A., Vc.*; *Son. à 4 mains p. P. F.*; — *C, No. 1*; *Mus. Spass für 2 V., A., 2 Hor., u. B.*; *Lied, Abendempfindung*; *Lied, An Chloe*; *Kleine Nachtmusik f. 2 V., A., B.*; *Son. p. P. F. et V. — A*; *Il dissoluto punito, ossia il Don Giovanni*, opera; *Scena, Bella mia fiamma*; *Zwey Lieder*; and *Lied, Die Spinnerin*.

1788.— *Son. p. P. F.*; *Il Contredanses*; *6 Deutsche Tänze*; *Conc. p. P. F.*; *Aria, Ah scia ciel*; *Lied, Ich möchte wohl der Kaiser seyn*; *Adagio p. P. F.*; *Aria p. l'Op. Don Giov., Della sua pace*; *Duetto p. detta Op., Per quelle tue manine*; *Scena e Rondo p. detta. Mi tradi*; *Arietta: Un bacio di mano*; *Trio p. P. F., V., Vc.*; *Sinfonie*; *Sonate facile p. P. F.*; *Adagio in C min. à 2 V., A., Vc., p. une Fugue*; *Sonatine p. P. F. et V.*; *Trio p. P. F., V., Vc. — C*; *Canzonetta, Più non si trovano*; *Sinfonie G min.*; *Sinfonie C*; *Lied, Beym Auszug in das Feld*; *8 Canoni*; *Il Canoni*; *Trio p. V., A., Vc.*; *Trio p. P. F., V., Vc.*; *2 Contredanses*; *6 Deutsche Tänze*; and *12 Menuetten*.

1789.— *Arie, Ohne Zwang*; *Son. p. P. F.*; *6 Deutsche Tänze*; *Variat. p. P. F.*; *sur Menuet de Duport*; *Kleine Sigue [sic] f. Klavier*; *Quat. p. 2 V., A., Vc. — D*; *Son. p. P. F.*; — *D*; *Rondo p. Op. Figaro, Al desio*; *Aria, Alma grande*; *Arie, Schon lacht d. holde Frühling*; *Quint. p. Clarinette, 2 V., A., Vc. — A*;

p. 562

Aria, Chi sà chi sà; Aria, Vado, ma dove; Aria, Rivolgete à me; 12 Menuetten; and 12 Deutsche Tänze.

1790.— *Così fan tutte*. opera; *Quat. p. 2 V., A., Vc. – B; Quat. p. detti.. F; Quint. p. 2 V. 2 A. Vc. – D; and Ein Stück für eine Spieluhr F min.*

1791.— *Conc. p. P. F.; – B; Drey Deutsche Lieder; 6 Menuetten; 6 Deutsche Tänze; 4 Menuetten u. 4 Deutsche Tänze; 2 Kontratänze; 2 Men. u. 2 Deutsche Tänze; Kontratanz und 6 Ländler; Stück f. eine Spieluhr F min.; 2 Tänze; Aria, Per questa bella; Variat. p. P. F.; Quint. p. 2 V., 2 A., Vc.; Coro, Viviamo felici, Stück für eine Orgelwalze; Quint. p. Harmonica etc.; Ave verum corpus; Kantate, Die ihr des unermesslichen Weltalls; Die Zauberflöte, opera; La Clemenza di Tito, opera seria; Overture und Priestermarsch zur Zauberflöte; Conc. p. Clarinette; and Kleine Maurerkantate.*

Amongst the works of Mozart's youth we can name the following: *Apollo and Hyacinth*, a Latin drama, 1767, manuscript. This was written when its author was only eleven years of age. *Bastien and Bastienne*, operetta, 1768, manuscript; *La Finta Semplice*, opera buffa, Vienna, 1768; *Mitridate*, opera seria, Milan, 1771; *Il Sogno di Scipione*, serenata, 1772; *Lucio Silla*, opera seria, Milan, 1772; *La Finta Giardiniera*, opera buffa, Munich, 1774; *Il Re Pastore*, pastoral, Salzburg, 1775; *Entreactes and Choruses to Thamos von Egypten; Idomeneo*, opera seria, Munich, 1780; and *Belmont und Konstanze*, Vienna, 1782.