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Venice, July 22, 1814.

You are desirous, my friend, of some information respecting the Life of Mozart. I have inquired for the best memoir of that celebrated man, and have had the patience to translate for you, the biographical notice published by M. Schlichtegroll. I now present you with it. Excuse its simplicity.

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LIFE OF MOZART.

CHAPTER I.

His Childhood.

THE father of Mozart had the greatest influence upon the singular destiny of his son, whose dispositions he developed, and perhaps modified: it is therefore necessary, in the first place, to say a few words concerning him.

Leopold Mozart was the son of a bookbinder of Augsburg. He pursued his studies at Salzburg; and, in 1743, was admitted into the number of the musicians of the prince-archbishop of that city. In 1762, he became sub-director of the prince's chapel. As the duties of his office did not take up the whole of his time, he employed a part of it in giving lessons on the violin, and teaching the rules of musical composition. He published "An Essay on teaching the Violin with Accuracy," which met with good success. He married Anna Maria Pertl; and it has been remarked, as a circumstance

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worthy the attention of an exact observer, that this couple, who gave birth to an artist so happily organized for musical harmony, were noted in Salzburg for their uncommon beauty.

Of seven children sprung from this marriage, two only lived; a daughter, Mary Ann, and a son, of whom we are now to speak.

John Chrysostom Wolfgang Theophilus Mozart, was born at Salzburg, on the 27th of January, 1756. A few years afterwards, his father discontinued giving lessons in the town, and determined to devote all the time which the duties of his office left at his disposal, to the superintendence of the musical education of his two children.

The daughter, who was rather older than Wolfgang, made great proficiency, and shared the public admiration with her brother, in the excursions which she afterwards made with her family. She married, in the sequel, a counsellor of the prince-archbishop of Salzburg, preferring domestic happiness to the renown of distinguished talent.

Mozart was scarcely three years old when his father began to give lessons on the harpsichord to his sister, who was then seven. His astonishing disposition for music immediately manifested itself. His delight was to seek for *thirds* on the piano, and nothing could equal his joy when he had found this harmonious chord. The minute details into

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which I am about to enter, will, I presume, be interesting to the reader.

When he was four years old, his father began to teach him, almost in sport, some minuets, and other pieces of music, an occupation which was as agreeable to the master, as to the pupil. Mozart would learn a minuet in half an hour, and a piece of greater extent in less than twice that time. Immediately after, he played them with the greatest clearness, and perfectly in time. In less than a year, he made such rapid progress, that, at five years old, he already invented little pieces of music which he played to his father, and which the latter, in order to encourage the rising talent of his son, was at the trouble of writing down. Before the little Mozart acquired a taste for music, he was so fond of all the amusements of his age, which were in any way calculated to interest him, that he sacrificed even his meals to them. On every occasion he manifested a feeling and affectionate heart. He would say ten times in a day to those about him, "Do you love me well?" and whenever in jest they said "No," the tears would roll down his cheeks. From the moment he became acquainted with music, his relish for the sports and amusements of his age vanished, or to render them pleasing to him, it was necessary to introduce music in them. A friend of his parents often amused himself in playing with him: sometimes they carried

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the playthings in procession from one room to another; then, the one who had nothing to carry, sung a march, or played it on the violin.

During some months, a fondness for the usual studies of his childhood gained such an ascendancy over Wolfgang, that he sacrificed every thing, even music, to it. While he was learning arithmetic, the tables, the chairs, and even the walls, were covered with figures which he had chalked upon them. The vivacity of his mind led him to attach himself easily to every new object that was presented to him. Music, however, soon became again the favorite object of his pursuit. He made such rapid advances in it, that his father, notwithstanding he was always with him, and in the way of observing his progress, could not help regarding him as a prodigy. The following anecdote, related by an eyewitness, is a proof of this.

His father, returning from the church one day with a friend, found his son busy in writing. "What are you doing there, my little fellow?" asked he. "I am composing a *concerto* for the harpsichord, and have almost got to the end of the first part." "Let us see this fine scrawl." "No, I have not yet finished it." The father, however, took the paper, and showed his friend a sheet-full of notes, which could scarcely be deciphered for the blots of ink. The two friends at first laughed heartily at this heap of scribbling, but, after a little time,

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when the father had looked at it with more attention, his eyes were fastened on the paper; and, at length, overflowed with tears of joy, and wonder, "Look, my friend," said he, with a smile of delight; "every thing is composed according to the rules; it is a pity that the piece cannot be made any use of, but it is too difficult; nobody would be able to play it." "It is a *concerto*," replied the son, "and must be studied till it can be properly played. This is the style in which it ought to be executed." He accordingly began to play, but succeeded only so far as to give them an idea of what he had intended. At that time, the young Mozart firmly believed that to play a *concerto* was about as easy as to work a miracle, and, accordingly, the composition in question was a heap of notes, correctly placed, but presenting so many difficulties, that the most skilful performer would have found it impossible to play it.

The young composer so astonished his father, that the latter conceived the idea of exhibiting him at the different courts in Germany. There is nothing extraordinary in such an idea in this country. As soon, therefore, as Wolfgang had attained his sixth year, the Mozart family, consisting of the father, the mother, the daughter, and Wolfgang, took a journey to Munich. The two children performed before the elector, and received infinite commendations. This first expedition succeeded

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in every respect. The young artists, delighted with the reception they had met with, redoubled their application on their return to Salzburg, and acquired a degree of execution on the piano, which no longer required the consideration of their youth to render it highly remarkable. During the autumn of the year 1762, the whole family repaired to Vienna, and the children performed before the court.

The emperor Francis I. said, in jest, on that occasion, to little Wolfgang; "It is not very difficult to play with all one's fingers, but to play with only one, without seeing the keys, would indeed be extraordinary." Without manifesting the least surprise at this strange proposal, the child immediately began to play with a single finger, and with the greatest possible precision, and clearness. He afterwards desired them to cover the keys of the piano-forte, and continued to play in the same manner, as if he had long practised it.

From his most tender age, Mozart, animated with the true feeling of his art, was never vain of the compliments paid him by the great. He only performed insignificant trifles when he had to do with people unacquainted with music. He played, on the contrary, with all the fire and attention of which he was capable, when in the presence of connoisseurs; and his father was often obliged to have recourse to artifice, in order to make the great men,

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before whom he was to exhibit, pass for such with him. When Mozart, at the age of six years, sat down to play in presence of the emperor Francis, he addressed himself to his majesty, and asked: "Is not M. Wagenseil here? We must send for him; he understands the thing." The emperor sent for Wagenseil, and gave up his place to him, by the side of the piano. "Sir," said Mozart, to the composer, "I am going to play one of your *concertos*; you must turn over the leaves for me."

Hitherto, Wolfgang had only played on the harpsichord, and the extraordinary skill which he displayed on that instrument, seemed to exclude even the wish that he should apply to any other. But the genius which animated him, far surpassed any hopes that his friends could have dared to entertain; he had not even occasion for lessons.

On his return from Vienna to Salzburg with his parents, he brought with him a small violin, which had been given him during his residence at the capital, and amused himself with it. A short time afterwards, Wenzl, a skilful violin player, who had then just begun to compose, came to Mozart, the father, to request his observations on six trios, which he had written during the journey of the former to Vienna. Schachtner, the archbishop's trumpeter, to whom Mozart was particularly attached, happened to be at the house, and we give the following anecdote in his words:

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"The father," said Schachtner, "played the bass, Wenzl the first violin, and I was to play the second. Mozart requested permission to take this last part; but his father reproved him for this childish demand, observing, that as he had never received any regular lessons on the violin, he could not possibly play it properly. The son replied, that it did not appear to him necessary to receive lessons in order to play the second violin. His father, half angry at this reply, told him to go away, and not interrupt us. Wolfgang was so hurt at this, that he began to cry bitterly. As he was going away with his little violin, I begged that he might be permitted to play with me, and the father, with a good deal of difficulty, consented. 'Well,' said he to Wolfgang, 'you may play with M. Schachtner, on condition that you play very softly, and do not let yourself be heard; otherwise, I shall send you out directly.' We began the trio, little Mozart playing with me, but it was not long before I perceived, with the greatest astonishment, that I was perfectly useless. Without saying any thing, I laid down my violin, and looked at the father, who shed tears of affection at the sight. The child played all the six trios in the same manner. The commendations we gave him made him pretend that he could play the first violin. To humor him, we let him try, and could not forbear laughing on hearing him execute this part, very

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imperfectly, it is true, but still so as never to be set fast."

Every day afforded fresh proofs of Mozart's exquisite organization for music. He could distinguish, and point out, the slightest differences of sound, and every false or even rough note, not softened by some chord, was a torture to him. It was from this cause, that during the early part of his childhood, and even till he had attained his tenth year, he had an insurmountable horror for the trumpet, when it was not used merely as an accompaniment. The sight of this instrument produced upon him much the same impression as that of a loaded pistol does upon other children, when pointed at them in sport. His father thought he could cure him of this fear, by causing the trumpet to be blown in his presence, notwithstanding his son's entreaties to be spared that torment; but, at the first blast, he turned pale, fell upon the floor, and would probably have been in convulsions, if they had not immediately ceased.

After he had made some proficiency upon the violin, he occasionally made use of that of Schachtner, the family friend whom we have just mentioned, which he highly esteemed, because he drew from it sounds extremely soft. Schachtner, one day, came to the house, while the young Mozart was amusing himself with playing on his own violin. "What is your violin doing?" was the child's

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first inquiry; and he then went on playing fantasies. After a few moments' pause, he said to Schachtner, "Could not you have left me your violin, tuned as it was when I last used it? It is half a quarter of a note below this." They at first laughed at this scrupulous exactness; but the father, who had often observed his son's extraordinary memory for sounds, sent for the violin, and, to the great astonishment of all present, it was half a quarter of a note below the other, as Wolfgang had said.

Though the child every day beheld new proofs of the astonishment, and admiration, inspired by his talents, it neither rendered him proud, nor self-willed: a man in talent, in every thing else he was an obedient and docile child. Never did he appear dissatisfied with any thing that his father ordered. Even after playing the whole of the day, he would continue to do so, without showing the least ill-humor, when his father desired it. He understood, and obeyed the slightest signs made by his parents, and carried his obedience so far as to refuse the sweetmeats which were offered him, when he had not their permission to accept them.

In the month of July, 1763, when he was in his seventh year, his family set out on their first expedition beyond the boundaries of Germany: and it is from this period that the celebrity of the name of Mozart in Europe is to be dated. The tour

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commenced with Munich, where the young artist played a concerto on the violin, in presence of the elector, after an extempore prelude. At Augsburg, Manheim, Francfort, Coblentz, Brussels, the two children gave public concerts, or played before the princes of the district, and received everywhere the greatest commendations.

In the month of November they arrived at Paris, where they remained five months. They performed at Versailles, and Wolfgang played the organ of the king's chapel before the court. They gave in Paris two grand public concerts, and universally met with the most distinguished reception. They were even so far honored as to have their portraits taken; the father was engraved between his two children, from a design of Carmontelle's. It was at Paris that Mozart composed and published his first two works, one of which he dedicated to the princess Victoire, second daughter of Louis XV., and the other to the Countess de Tesse.

In April, 1764, the Mozarts went to England, where they remained till about the middle of the following year. The children performed before the King, and, as at Versailles, the son played the organ of the royal chapel. His performance on the organ was thought more of, at London, than his exhibitions on the harpsichord. During his stay there, he and his sister gave a grand concert, all the symphonies of which were his own composition.

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composed six sonatas, which were engraved at London and dedicated to the queen.

In the month of July, 1765, the Mozart family returned to Calais, from whence they continued their journey through Flanders, where the young artist often played the organs of the monasteries, and cathedral churches. At the Hague, the two children had an illness which endangered their lives, and from which they were four months in recovering. Wolfgang composed six sonatas for the piano-forte during his convalescence, which he dedicated to the princess of Nassau-Weilbour. In the beginning of the year 1766, they passed a month at Amsterdam, from whence they repaired to the Hague, to be present at the installation of the prince of Orange. Mozart composed for this solemnity a *quodlibet* for all the instruments, and also different airs and variations for the princess.

After having performed several times before the Stadtholder, they returned to Paris, where they stayed two months, and then returned to Germany, by Lyons and Switzerland. At Munich, the elector gave Mozart a musical *theme*, and required him to develop it, and write it down immediately, which he did in the prince's presence, without recurring either to the harpsichord or the violin.—After writing it, he played it; which excited the greatest astonishment in the elector and his whole court. After an absence of more than three years,

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they returned to Salzburg, towards the end of November, 1766, where they remained till the autumn of the following year; and this tranquillity seemed further to augment the talents of Wolfgang. In 1768, the children performed at Vienna, in presence of the emperor Joseph II., who commissioned Mozart to compose the music of an opera *bulfa*,—the *Finta Semplice*. It was approved of by Hasse, the chapel-master, and by Metastasio, but was never brought on the stage.

On many occasions, at the houses of the professors Bono, and Hasse, of Metastasio, of the duke of Braganza, of prince Kaunitz, the father desired any Italian air that was at hand to be given to his son, who wrote the parts for all the instruments in presence of the company. At the dedication of the church of *The Orphans* he composed the music of the mass, the motet, and a trumpet duet, and directed this solemn music, in presence of the imperial court, though he was at that time only twelve years old.

He returned to pass the year 1769 at Salzburg. In the month of December, his father took him into Italy, just after he had been appointed director of the archbishop of Salzburg's concert. We may imagine the reception given in that country to this celebrated child, who had excited such admiration in the other parts of Europe.

The house of Count Firmian, the governor-general,

was the theatre of his glory at Milan. After having received the poem of the opera to be performed during the Carnival of 1771, and of which he undertook to write the music, Wolfgang quitted that city in the month of March, 1770. At Bologna, he found an enthusiastic admirer in the celebrated Father Martini, the same person of whom Jomelli came to take lessons. Father Martini, and the Bologna amateurs, were transported at seeing a child of thirteen, whose small stature made him appear still younger, develop all the subjects of fugues proposed by Martini, and execute them on the piano-forte, without hesitating, and with the greatest precision. At Florence, he excited similar astonishment by the correctness with which he played, at sight, the most difficult fugues and themes, proposed to him by the marquis de Ligneville, a distinguished amateur.

We have an anecdote respecting him, during his residence at Florence, which does not immediately relate to music. He became acquainted, in that city, with a young Englishman, of about his own age, whose name was Thomas Linley. He was a pupil of Martini, and played on the violin with admirable skill, and gracefulness. The friendship of the two boys became quite ardent, and, on the day of their separation, Linley gave his friend Mozart some verses, which he had procured for the purpose, from the celebrated Corinna. He accompanied

him to the gate of the town, and their parting was attended with a copious effusion of tears.

In the passion-week, the Mozarts repaired to Rome, where, as may be supposed, they did not fail to hear the celebrated *Miserere* performed in the Sixtine chapel, on the evening of Ash-Wednesday. As it was said, at that time, that the pope's musicians were forbidden to give copies of it under pain of excommunication, Wolfgang determined to commit it to memory, and actually wrote it all down on his return to his inn. The service being repeated, on Good-Friday, he again attended with his manuscript in his hat, and had thus an opportunity of making some corrections. The story was much talked of in Rome, but the thing appeared so incredible, that, in order to ascertain its truth, the child was engaged to sing this *Miserere* at a public concert. He executed it to perfection, and the amazement of Cristofori, who had sung it at the Sixtine chapel, and who was present, rendered the triumph of Mozart complete.

The difficulty of what he thus accomplished is much greater than may at first be imagined. But, for the sake of explanation, I shall enter into a few details respecting the Sixtine chapel, and the *Miserere*.

In this chapel, there are usually not less than thirty-two voices, without an organ, or any other

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instrument to accompany or support them. The establishment reached its highest perfection about the commencement of the eighteenth century.—Since that time, the salaries of the singers at the pope's chapel having remained nominally the same, and consequently being really much diminished, while the opera was rising in estimation and good singers obtained premiums, before unknown, the Sixtine chapel has gradually lost the talents it originally possessed.

The *Miserere*, which is performed there twice in passion-week, and which produces such an effect upon strangers, was composed, about two hundred years since, by Gregorio Allegri, a descendant of Antonio Allegri, better known by the name of Correggio. At the moment of its commencement, the pope and cardinals prostrate themselves. The light of the tapers illumines the representation of the last judgment, painted by Michael Angelo, on the wall with which the altar is connected. As the service proceeds, the tapers are extinguished, one after the other, and the impression produced by the figures of the damned, painted with terrific power by Michael Angelo, is increased in awfulness, when they are dimly seen by the pale light of the last tapers. When the service is on the point of concluding, the leader, who beats the time, renders it imperceptibly slower; the singers diminish the volume of their voices,

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and the sinner, confounded before the majesty of his God, and prostrated before his throne, seems to await in silence his final doom.

The sublime effect of this composition depends, as it appears, on the manner in which it is sung, and the place in which it is performed. There is a kind of traditional knowledge, by which the pope's singers are taught certain ways of managing their voices, so as to produce the greatest effect, and which it is impossible to express by notes.* Their singing possesses all the qualities

One thing of great importance to the effect of a musical composition, for the expression of which no written characters were formally employed, is accent.

By accent in music, is to be understood the manner in which sounds are uttered, without reference to their loudness, or softness, or to their pitch in the musical scale. The same note may be struck on a drum, with a glove, or with a stick, but the accent of it will be different. The note of a harpsichord-wire is the same with that of a piano-forte, but the accent is not so, the sounds of the one being produced by a quill, those of the other by a hammer.

The natural accent of all the instruments is different, but the performer is enabled to vary it at pleasure, by certain methods of playing. This is particularly the case with the violin, on which every variety of accent may be produced by means of the bow. We recommend the treatise of M. Baillet, on this subject, to every student.

As no characters have yet been adopted, that will sufficiently express these varieties, it is evident that the kind of accent given to any note, will depend on the taste and

which render music affecting. The same melody is repeated to all the verses of the psalm, but the music, though similar in the masses, is not so, in the details. It is accordingly easy to be understood, without being tiresome. The peculiarity of the Sixtine chapel, consists in accelerating or retarding the time in certain expressions, in swelling or diminishing the voice according to the sense of the words, and in singing some of the verses with more animation than others.

The following anecdote will show still more clearly the difficulty of the exploit performed by Mozart in singing the *Miserere*.

It is related that the emperor Leopold I., who was not only fond of music, but was himself a good composer, requested of the pope, through his ambassador,

fancy of the performer, and it will not therefore appear surprising, that the effect of the same music should often be very different, as in the case of the *Miserere*.

But though the *species* of the accent is left thus undecided, its *place* depends on certain laws, derived from the same principles as those which regulate the cadences of poetry, and the euphony of language in general; namely, that the ear requires the observance of a certain proportion in the distances at which the emphatic notes or words recur.

These proportions will vary, according to the time of the music, and the species of versification; and hence arises the difficulty of translating the words of a piece of vocal music, without destroying that *unity of accent* which should always subsist between them.

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a copy of the *Miserere* of Allegri, for the use of the imperial chapel at Vienna. The request was complied with, and the director of the Sixtine chapel caused a copy to be written out, which was immediately transmitted to the emperor, who had in his service the first singers of the day.

Notwithstanding their talents, the *Miserere* of Allegri produced, at Vienna, no more effect than the dullest common chant, and the emperor and his court were persuaded that the pope's chapel-master, desirous of keeping the *Miserere* to himself, had eluded his master's orders, and sent an inferior composition. A courier was immediately despatched to complain to the pope of this want of respect, and the director was dismissed without being allowed to say a word in his own justification. The poor man, however, prevailed on one of the cardinals to intercede for him, and to represent to his holiness, that the manner of performing the *Miserere* could not be expressed in notes; but required much time, and repeated lessons from the singers of the chapel, who possessed the traditional knowledge of it. The pope, who knew nothing of music, could scarcely comprehend how the same notes should not be just as good at Vienna, as at Rome. He, however, allowed the poor chapel-master to write his defence to

the emperor, and, in time, he was received again into favor.

It was this well-known anecdote, which occasioned the people of Rome to be so astonished when they heard a child sing their *Miserere*, correctly, after two lessons. Nothing is more difficult than to excite surprise in Rome, in any thing relating to the fine arts. The most brilliant reputation dwindles into insignificance in that celebrated city, where the finest productions of every art are the subjects of daily and familiar contemplation.

I know not whether it arose from the reputation which it procured him, but it appears that the solemn and affecting chant of the *Miserere* made a deep impression on the mind of Mozart, who showed, ever afterwards, a marked preference for Handel, and the tender Boccherini.

CHAPTER II.

Sequel of the Childhood of Mozart.

FROM Rome the Mozarts went to Naples, where Wolfgang played on the piano-forte at the *Conservatorio della Pietà*. When he was in the middle of his sonata, the audience took it into their heads, that there was a charm in the ring which he wore. It became necessary to explain to him the cause of the disturbance which arose, and he was at last obliged to take off this supposed magic circle. We may imagine the effect produced on such an auditory, when they found, that after the ring was taken off, the music was not the less beautiful. Wolfgang gave a second grand concert, at the house of prince Kaunitz, the emperor's ambassador, and afterwards returned to Rome. The pope desired to see him, and conferred on him the cross and brevet of a knight of the Golden Spur. At Bologna, he was nominated, unanimously, member and master of the Philharmonic Academy. He was shut up alone, agreeably to usage, and in less than half an hour he composed an anthem for four voices.

Mozart's father hastened his return to Milan, that he might attend to the opera which he had

undertaken. The time was advancing, and they did not reach that city till the close of October, 1770. Had it not been for this engagement, Mozart might have obtained what is considered in Italy the first musical honor, — the composition of a serious opera for the theatre of Rome.

On the 26th of December, the first representation of the *Mithridates* took place, at Milan. This opera, composed by Mozart, at the age of fourteen, was performed twenty nights in succession; a circumstance which sufficiently indicates its success. The manager immediately entered into a written agreement with him for the composition of the first opera for the year 1773. Mozart left Milan, which resounded with his fame, to pass the last days of the carnival at Venice, in company with his father. At Verona, which he only passed through, he was presented with a diploma, constituting him a member of the Philharmonic Society of that city. Wherever he went in Italy, he met with the most distinguished reception, and was generally known by the name of the Philharmonic Knight: *Il Cavaliere Filarmonico*.

When Mozart returned with his father to Salzburg, in March, 1771, he found a letter from Count Firmian, of Milan, who commanded him, in the name of the empress Maria Theresa, to compose a dramatic cantata on occasion of the marriage of the arch-duke Ferdinand. The empress had chosen

the celebrated Hasse, as the oldest professor, to write the opera, and she was desirous that the youngest composer should undertake the cantata, the subject of which was *Ascanius in Alba*. He undertook the work, and in the month of August, set out for Milan, where, during the solemnities of the marriage, the opera and the serenade were performed alternately.

In 1772, he composed for the election of the new archbishop of Salzburg, the cantata entitled *Il sogno di Scipione*; and at Milan, where he passed the winter of the year following, he wrote *Lucio Silla*, a serious opera, which had twenty-six successive representations. In the spring of 1773, Mozart returned to Salzburg, and during some excursions which he made in the course of this year to Vienna and Munich, he produced various compositions of merit, as, *La Finta Giardiniera*, an opera buffa, two grand masses for the elector of Bavaria's chapel, &c. In 1775, the archduke Maximilian spent some time at Salzburg, and it was on this occasion that Mozart composed the cantata entitled *Il Re Pastore*.

The early part of the life of Mozart is the most extraordinary: the details of it may interest the philosopher, as well as the artist. We shall be more concise in our account of the remainder of his too short career.

CHAPTER III.

ARRIVED at the age of nineteen, Mozart might flatter himself that he had attained the summit of his art, since of this he was repeatedly assured, wherever he went; — from London to Naples. As far as regarded the advancement of his fortune, he was at liberty to choose among all the capitals of Europe. Experience had taught him that he might everywhere reckon on general admiration. His father thought that Paris would suit him best, and, accordingly, in the month of September, 1777, he set out for that capital, accompanied by his mother only.

It would have been, unquestionably, very advantageous to him to have settled there, but the French music, of that time, did not accord with his taste; and the preference shown for vocal performances would have given him little opportunity of employing himself in the instrumental department. He had also the misfortune to lose his mother in the year after his arrival. From that time, Paris became insupportable to him. After having composed a symphony for the *Concert spirituel*, and a few other pieces, he hastened to rejoin his father in the beginning of 1779.

In the month of November, of the year following,

he repaired to Vienna, whither he had been summoned by his sovereign, the archbishop of Salzburg. He was then in his twenty-fourth year. The habits of Vienna were very agreeable to him, and the beauty of its fair inhabitants, it appears, still more so. There he fixed himself, and nothing could ever prevail upon him afterwards to leave it. The empire of the passions having commenced in this being, so exquisitely sensible to his art, he soon became the favorite composer of his age, and gave the first example of a remarkable child becoming a great man.*

To give a particular analysis of each of Mozart's works would be too long, and too difficult; an amateur ought to know them all. Most of his operas were composed at Vienna, and had the greatest success, but none of them was a greater favorite than the *Zauber-Flöte*, which was performed one hundred times in less than a year.

Like Raphael, Mozart embraced his art in its

Mozart composed the music of the opera of *Idomeneus* under the most favorable circumstances. The elector of Bavaria, who had always shown him distinguished favor, requested him to write this opera for his theatre at Munich, the orchestra of which was one of the best in Germany. Mozart was then in the full bloom of his genius; he was in his twenty-fifth year, and passionately enamored of Mademoiselle Constance Weber, a celebrated actress, whom he afterwards married. The family of his mistress opposed the match, on account of his unsettled

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whole extent. Raphael appears to have been unacquainted with one thing only, the mode of painting figures on a ceiling, in contracted proportion, or what is termed *fore-shortening*. He always supposes the canvass of the piece to be attached to the roof, or supported by allegorical figures.

As for Mozart, I am not aware of any department in which he has not excelled; operas, symphonies, songs, airs for dancing,—he is great in every thing. Haydn's friend, the Baron Von Swieten, went so far as to say, that, if Mozart had lived, he would have borne away the sceptre of instrumental music, even from that great master. In the comic opera Mozart is deficient in gayety. In this respect he is inferior to Galuppi, Guglielmi, and Sarti.

The most remarkable circumstance in his music, independently of the genius displayed in it, is the novel way in which he employs the orchestra,

habits, his having no permanent situation, and because his manners had hitherto been far from exemplary.

He was desirous of showing to this family, that, though he had no settled rank in society, he nevertheless possessed the means of obtaining consideration, and his attachment to Constance supplied him with the subjects of the impassioned airs which his work required.— The love and vanity of the young composer, thus stimulated to the highest pitch, enabled him to produce an opera, which he always regarded as his best, and from which he has frequently borrowed ideas for his subsequent compositions.

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especially the wind instruments. He draws surprising effects from the flute, an instrument of which Cimarosa hardly ever made any use. He enriches the accompaniment with all the beauties of the finest symphonies.

Mozart has been accused of taking interest only in his own music, and of being acquainted with none but his own works. This is the reproach of mortified vanity. Employed all his life in writing his own ideas, Mozart had not, it is true, time to read all those of other masters. But he readily expressed his approbation of whatever he met with that possessed merit, even the simplest air, provided it was original; though, less politic than the great artists of Italy, he had no consideration for mediocrity.

He most esteemed Porpora, Durante, Leo, and Alessandro Scarlatti, but he placed Handel above them all. He knew the principal works of that great master by heart. He was accustomed to say; "Handel knows best of all of us what is capable of producing a great effect. When he chooses, he strikes like the thunder-bolt."

He remarked of Jomelli, "This artist shines, and will always shine, in certain departments; but he should have confined himself to them, and not have attempted to write sacred music in the ancient style." He had not much opinion of Vincenzo Martini, whose *Cosa rara* was at that time

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much in favor. "There are some very pretty things in it," said he, "but, twenty years hence, nobody will think of it."

We possess nine operas composed by Mozart to Italian words: *La Finta Semplice*, comic opera, his first essay in the dramatic department: *Mithridate*, serious opera: *Lucio Silla*, serious opera: *La Giardiniera*, comic opera: *Idomeneo*, serious opera: *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and *Don Giovanni*, composed in 1787: *Così fan tutte*, comic opera: and *La Clemenza di Tito*, an opera of Metastasio, which was performed, for the first time, in 1792.

He wrote only three German operas, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *Der Schauspieldirector*, and *Die Zauber-Flöte*, in 1792.

He has left seventeen symphonies, and instrumental pieces of all kinds.

Mozart was also one of the first piano-forte players in Europe. He played with extraordinary rapidity; the execution of his left hand, especially, was greatly admired.

As early as the year 1785, Haydn said to Mozart's father, who was then at Vienna: "I declare to you, before God, and on my honor, that I regard your son as the greatest composer I ever heard of."

Such was Mozart in music. To those acquainted with human nature, it will not appear surprising,

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that a man, whose talents in this department were the object of general admiration, should not appear to equal advantage in the other situations of life.

Mozart possessed no advantages of person, though his parents were noted for their beauty. Cabanis remarks, that

"Sensibility may be compared to a fluid, the total quantity of which is determined; and which, whenever it flows more abundantly in any one channel, is proportionably diminished in the others."

Mozart never reached his natural growth. During his whole life, his health was delicate. He was thin and pale: and though the form of his face was unusual, there was nothing striking in his physiognomy, but its extreme variableness. The expression of his countenance changed every moment, but indicated nothing more than the pleasure or pain which he experienced at the instant. He was remarkable for a habit, which is usually the attendant of stupidity. His body was perpetually in motion; he was either playing with his hands, or beating the ground with his foot. There was nothing extraordinary in his other habits, except his extreme fondness for the game of billiards. He had a table in his house, on which he played every day by himself, when he had not any one to play with. His hands were so habituated

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to the piano, that he was rather clumsy in every thing beside. At table, he never carved, or if he attempted to do so, it was with much awkwardness, and difficulty. His wife usually undertook that office.

The same man, who, from his earliest age, had shown the greatest expansion of mind in what related to his art, in other respects remained always a child. He never knew how properly to conduct himself. The management of domestic affairs, the proper use of money, the judicious selection of his pleasures, and temperance in the enjoyment of them, were never virtues to his taste. The gratification of the moment was always uppermost with him. His mind was so absorbed by a crowd of ideas, which rendered him incapable of all serious reflection, that, during his whole life, he stood in need of a guardian to take care of his temporal affairs. His father was well aware of his weakness in this respect, and it was on this account that he persuaded his wife to follow him to Paris, in 1777, his engagements not allowing him to leave Salzburg himself.

But this man, so absent, so devoted to trifling amusements, appeared a being of a superior order as soon as he sat down to a piano-forte. His mind then took wing, and his whole attention was directed to the sole object for which nature designed him, *the harmony of sounds*. The most numerous

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orchestra did not prevent him from observing the slightest false note, and he immediately pointed out, with surprising precision, by what instrument the fault had been committed, and the note which should have been made.

When Mozart went to Berlin, he arrived late in the evening. Scarcely had he alighted, when he asked the waiter of the inn, whether there was any opera that evening. "Yes, the *Entführung aus dem Serail*." "That is charming!" He immediately set out for the theatre, and placed himself at the entrance of the pit, that he might listen without being observed. But, sometimes, he was so pleased with the execution of certain passages, and at others, so dissatisfied with the manner, or the time, in which they were performed, or with the embellishments added by the actors, that, continually expressing either his pleasure, or disapprobation, he insensibly got up to the bar of the orchestra. The manager had taken the liberty of making some alterations in one of the airs. When they came to it, Mozart, unable to restrain himself any longer, called out, almost aloud, to the orchestra, in what way it ought to be played. Everybody turned to look at the man in a great coat, who was making all this noise. Some persons recognised Mozart, and, in an instant, the musicians and actors were informed that he was in the theatre. Some of them, and amongst the number a

very good female singer, were so agitated at the intelligence, that they refused to come again upon the stage. The manager informed Mozart of the embarrassment he was in. He immediately went behind the scenes, and succeeded, by the compliments which he paid to the actors, in prevailing upon them to go on with the piece.

Music was his constant employment, and his most gratifying recreation. Never, even in his earliest childhood, was persuasion required to engage him to go to his piano. On the contrary, it was necessary to take care that he did not injure his health by his application. He was particularly fond of playing in the night. If he sat down to the instrument at nine o'clock in the evening, he never left it before midnight, and even then it was necessary to force him away from it, for he would have continued to modulate, and play voluntaries, the whole night. In his general habits he was the gentlest of men, but the least noise during the performance of music offended him violently. He was far above that affected or misplaced modesty, which prevents many performers from playing till they have been repeatedly entreated. The nobility of Vienna often reproached him with playing, with equal interest, before any persons that took pleasure in hearing him.

CHAPTER IV.

AN amateur, in a town through which Mozart passed in one of his journeys, assembled a large party of his friends, to give them an opportunity of hearing this celebrated musician. Mozart came, agreeably to his engagement, said very little, and sat down to the piano-forte. Thinking that none but connoisseurs were present, he began a slow movement, the harmony of which was sweet, but extremely simple, intending by it to prepare his auditors for the sentiment which he designed to introduce afterwards. The company thought all this very common-place. The style soon became more lively; they thought it pretty enough. It became severe, and solemn, of a striking, elevated, and more difficult harmony. Some of the ladies began to think it quite tiresome, and to whisper a few criticisms to one another; soon, half the party were talking. The master of the house was upon thorns, and Mozart himself at last perceived how little his audience were affected by the music. He did not abandon the principal idea with which he commenced, but he developed it with all the fire of which he was capable; still he was not attended to. Without leaving off playing, he began to remonstrate

rather sharply with his audience, but as he fortunately expressed himself in Italian, scarcely anybody understood him. They became however more quiet. When his anger was a little abated, he could not himself forbear laughing at his impetuosity. He gave a more common turn to his ideas, and concluded with playing a well-known air, of which he gave ten or twelve charming variations. The whole room was delighted, and very few of the company were at all aware of what had passed. Mozart, however, soon took leave, inviting the master of the house, and a few connoisseurs, to spend the evening with him at his inn. He detained them to supper, and, upon their intimating a wish to hear him play, he sat down to the instrument, where, to their great astonishment, he forgot himself till after midnight.

An old harpsichord tuner came to put some strings to his travelling piano-forte. "Well, my good old fellow," says Mozart to him, "what do I owe you? I leave to-morrow." The poor man, regarding him as a sort of deity, replied, stammering and confounded, "Imperial Majesty! . . . Mr. the *maître de chapelle* of his imperial majesty! . . . I cannot . . . It is true that I have waited upon you several times. . . . You shall give me a crown." "A crown!" replied Mozart, "a worthy fellow, like you, ought not to be put out of his way for a crown;" and he gave him

some ducats. The honest man, as he withdrew, continued to repeat, with low bows, "Ah! Imperial Majesty!"

Of his operas, he esteemed most highly the *Idomeneus*, and *Don Juan*. He was not fond of talking of his own works; or, if he mentioned them, it was in a few words. Of *Don Juan* he said, one day, "This opera was not composed for the public of Vienna, it is better suited to Prague; but, to say the truth, I wrote it only for myself, and my friends."

The time which he most willingly employed in composition, was the morning, from six or seven o'clock till ten, when he got up. After this, he did no more for the rest of the day, unless he had to finish a piece that was wanted. He always worked very irregularly. When an idea struck him, he was not to be drawn from it. If he was taken from the piano-forte, he continued to compose in the midst of his friends, and passed whole nights with his pen in his hand. At other times, he had such a disinclination to work, that he could not complete a piece till the moment of its performance. It once happened, that he put off some music which he had engaged to furnish for a court concert, so long, that he had not time to write out the part which he was to perform himself. The emperor Joseph, who was peeping everywhere, happening to cast his eyes on the sheet which Mozart

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seemed to be playing from, was surprised to see nothing but empty lines, and said to him: "Where's your part?" "Here," replied Mozart, putting his hand to his forehead.

The same circumstance nearly occurred with respect to the overture of *Don Juan*. It is generally esteemed the best of his overtures; yet it was only composed the night previous to the first representation, after the general rehearsal had taken place. About eleven o'clock in the evening, when he retired to his apartment, he desired his wife to make him some punch, and to stay with him, in order to keep him awake. She accordingly began to tell him fairy tales, and odd stories, which made him laugh till the tears came. The punch, however, made him so drowsy, that he could only go on while his wife was talking, and dropped asleep as soon as she ceased. The efforts which he made to keep himself awake, the continual alternation of sleep and watching, so fatigued him, that his wife persuaded him to take some rest, promising to awake him in an hour's time. He slept so profoundly, that she suffered him to repose for two hours. At five o'clock in the morning she awoke him. He had appointed the music copiers to come at seven, and, by the time they arrived, the overture was finished. They had scarcely time to write out the copies necessary for the orchestra, and the musicians were obliged to

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play it without a rehearsal. Some persons pretend, that they can discover in this overture the passages where Mozart dropped asleep, and those where he suddenly awoke again.

Don Juan had no great success at Vienna at first. A short time after the first representation, it was talked of in a large party, at which most of the connoisseurs of the capital, and amongst others Haydn, were present. Mozart was not there. Everybody agreed that it was a very meritorious performance, brilliant in imagination, and rich in genius; but every one had also some fault to find with it. All had spoken, except the modest Haydn. His opinion was asked. "I am not," said he, with his accustomed caution, "a proper judge of the dispute: all that I know is, that Mozart is the greatest composer now existing." The subject was then changed.

Mozart, on his part, had also a great regard for Haydn. He has dedicated to him a set of quartetts, which may be classed with the best productions of the kind. A professor of Vienna, who was not without merit, though far inferior to Haydn, took a malicious pleasure in searching the compositions of the latter, for all the little inaccuracies which might have crept into them. He often came to show Mozart symphonies, or quartetts, of Haydn's, which he had put into score, and in which he had, by this means, discovered some inadvertences

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of style. Mozart always endeavoured to change the subject of conversation: at last, unable any longer to restrain himself, "Sir," said he to him, sharply, "if you and I were both melted down together, we should not furnish materials for one Haydn."

A painter, who was desirous of flattering Cimarosa, said to him once, that he considered him superior to Mozart. "I, Sir," replied he smartly; "what would you say to a person who should assure you that you were superior to Raphael?"

CHAPTER V.

MOZART judged his own works with impartiality, and often with a severity, which he would not easily have allowed in another person. The emperor Joseph II. was fond of Mozart, and had appointed him his chapel-master; but this prince pretended to be a *dilettante*. His travels in Italy had given him a partiality for the music of that country, and the Italians who were at his court did not fail to keep up this preference, which, I must confess, appears to me to be well founded.

These men spoke of Mozart's first essays with

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more jealousy than fairness, and the emperor, who scarcely ever judged for himself, was easily carried away by their decisions. One day, after hearing the rehearsal of a comic opera (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), which he had himself demanded of Mozart, he said to the composer: "My dear Mozart, that is too fine for my ears; there are too many notes there." "I ask your majesty's pardon," replied Mozart, dryly; "there are just as many notes as there should be." The emperor said nothing, and appeared rather embarrassed by the reply; but when the opera was performed, he bestowed on it the greatest encomiums.

Mozart was himself less satisfied with this piece afterwards, and made many corrections and retrenchments in it. He said, in playing on the piano-forte one of the airs which had been most applauded; "This is very well for the parlour, but it is too verbose for the theatre. At the time I composed this opera, I took delight in what I was doing, and thought nothing too long."

Mozart was not at all selfish; on the contrary, liberality formed the principal feature of his character. He often gave without discrimination, and, still more frequently, expended his money without discretion.

During one of his visits to Berlin, the king, Frederic William, offered him an appointment of 3,000 crowns a year, if he would remain at his

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court, and take upon him the direction of his orchestra. Mozart made no other reply, than "Shall I leave my good emperor?" Yet, at that time, Mozart had no fixed establishment at Vienna. One of his friends blaming him afterwards for not having accepted the king of Prussia's proposals, he replied: "I am fond of Vienna, the emperor treats me kindly, and I care little about money."

Some vexatious intrigues, which were excited against him at court, occasioned him, nevertheless, to request his dismissal; but a word from the emperor, who was partial to the composer, and especially to his music, immediately changed his resolution. He had not art enough to take advantage of this favorable moment, to demand a fixed salary; but the emperor himself, at length, thought of regulating his establishment. Unfortunately, he consulted on the subject a man who was not a friend to Mozart. He proposed to give him 800 florins (about 100*l.*) and this sum was never increased. He received it as private composer to the emperor, but he never did any thing in this capacity. He was once required, in consequence of one of the general government orders, frequent at Vienna, to deliver in a statement of the amount of his salary. He wrote, in a sealed note, as follows: "Too much for what I have done; too little for what I could have done."

The music sellers, the managers of the theatres,

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and others, daily took advantage of his well-known disinterestedness. He never received any thing for the greater part of his compositions for the piano. He wrote them to oblige persons of his acquaintance, who expressed a wish to possess something in his own writing for their private use. In these cases he was obliged to conform to the degree of proficiency which those persons had attained; and this explains why many of his compositions for the harpsichord appear unworthy of him. Artaria, a music seller, at Vienna, and others of his brethren, found means to procure copies of these pieces, and published them without the permission of the author; or, at any rate, without making him any pecuniary acknowledgment.

CHAPTER VI.

ONE day, the manager of a theatre, whose affairs were in a bad state, and who was almost reduced to despair, came to Mozart, and made known his situation to him, adding, "You are the only man in the world who can relieve me from my embarrassment." "I," replied Mozart, "how can that be?" "By composing for me an opera to suit the taste of the description of people who attend my theatre. To a certain point you may consult that of the connoisseurs, and your own glory; but have a particular regard to that class of persons who are not judges of good music. I will take care that you shall have the poem shortly, and that the decorations shall be handsome; in a word, that every thing shall be agreeable to the present mode." Mozart, touched by the poor fellow's entreaties, promised to undertake the business for him. "What remuneration do you require?" asked the manager. "Why, it seems that you have nothing to give me," said Mozart; "but, that you may extricate yourself from your embarrassments, and that, at the same time, I may not altogether lose my labor, we will arrange the matter thus: You shall have the score, and give

me what you please for it, on condition that you will not allow any copies to be taken. If the opera succeeds, I will dispose of it in another quarter." The manager, enchanted with this generosity, was profuse in his promises. Mozart immediately set about the music, and composed it agreeably to the instructions given him. The opera was performed; the house was always filled; it was talked of all over Germany, and was performed, a short time afterwards, on five or six different theatres, none of which had obtained their copies from the distressed manager.

On other occasions, he met only with ingratitude from those to whom he had rendered service, but nothing could extinguish his compassion for the unfortunate. Whenever any distressed artists, who were strangers to Vienna, applied to him, in passing through the city, he offered them the use of his house and table, introduced them to the acquaintance of those persons whom he thought most likely to be of use to them, and seldom let them depart without writing for them *concertos*, of which he did not even keep a copy, in order that, being the only persons to play them, they might exhibit themselves to more advantage.

Mozart often gave concerts at his house on Sundays. A Polish count, who was introduced on one of these occasions, was delighted, as well as the rest of the company, with a piece of music for

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five instruments, which was performed for the first time. He expressed to Mozart how much he had been gratified by it, and requested that, when he was at leisure, he would compose for him a trio for the flute. Mozart promised to do so, on condition that it should be at his own time. The count, on his return home, sent the composer 100 gold demi-sovereigns, (about 100*l.*) with a very polite note, in which he thanked him for the pleasure he had enjoyed. Mozart sent him the original score of the piece for five instruments, which had appeared to please him. The count left Vienna. A year afterwards he called again upon Mozart, and inquired about his trio. "Sir," replied the composer, "I have never felt myself in a disposition to write any thing that I should esteem worthy of your acceptance." "Probably," replied the count, "you will not feel more disposed to return me the 100 demi-sovereigns, which I paid you beforehand for the piece." Mozart, indignant, immediately returned him his sovereigns; but the count said nothing about the original score of the piece for five instruments; and it was soon afterwards published by Artaria, as a quatuor for the harpsichord, with an accompaniment for the violin, alto, and violoncello.

It has been remarked, that Mozart very readily acquired new habits. The health of his wife, whom he always passionately loved, was very delicate.

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During a long illness which she had, he always met those who came to see her, with his finger on his lips, as an intimation to them not to make a noise. His wife recovered, but, for a long time afterwards, he always went to meet those who came to visit him with his finger on his lips, and speaking in a subdued tone of voice.

In the course of this illness, he occasionally took a ride on horseback, early in the morning; but, before he went, he was always careful to lay a paper near his wife, in the form of a physician's prescription. The following is a copy of one of these: "Good morning, my love; I hope you have slept well, and that nothing has disturbed you: be careful not to take cold, or to hurt yourself in stooping: do not vex yourself with the servants: avoid every thing that would be unpleasant to you, till I return: take good care of yourself: I shall return at nine o'clock."

Constance Weber was an excellent companion for Mozart, and often gave him useful advice. She bore him two children, whom he tenderly loved. His income was considerable, but his immoderate love of pleasure, and the disorder of his affairs, prevented him from bequeathing any thing to his family, except the celebrity of his name, and the attention of the public. After the death of this great composer, the inhabitants of Vienna testified

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to his children, their gratitude for the pleasure which their father had so often afforded them.

During the last years of Mozart's life, his health, which had always been delicate, declined rapidly. Like all persons of imagination, he was timidly apprehensive of future evils, and the idea that he had not long to live, often distressed him. At these times, he worked with such rapidity, and unremitting attention, that he sometimes forgot every thing that did not relate to his art. Frequently, in the height of this enthusiasm, his strength failed him, he fainted, and was obliged to be carried to his bed. Every one saw that he was ruining his health by this immoderate application. His wife and his friends did all they could to divert him. Out of complaisance, he accompanied them in the walks and visits to which they took him, but his thoughts were always absent. He was only occasionally roused from this silent and habitual melancholy, by the presentiment of his approaching end, an idea which always awakened in him fresh terror.

His insanity was similar to that of Tasso, and to that which rendered Rousseau so happy in the valley of Charmettes, by leading him, through the fear of approaching death, to the only true philosophy, the enjoyment of the present moment and the forgetting of sorrow. Perhaps, without that high state of nervous sensibility which borders on

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insanity, there is no superior genius in the arts which require tenderness of feeling.

His wife, uneasy at these singular habits, invited to the house those persons whom he was most fond of seeing, and who pretended to surprise him, at times when, after many hours' application, he ought naturally to have thought of resting. Their visits pleased him, but he did not lay aside his pen; they talked, and endeavoured to engage him in the conversation, but he took no interest in it; they addressed themselves particularly to him, he uttered a few inconsequential words, and went on with his writing.

This extreme application, it may be observed, sometimes accompanies genius, but is by no means a proof of it. Who can read Thomas's emphatic collection of superlatives? Yet this writer was so absorbed in his meditations on the means of being eloquent, that once, at Montmorency, when his footman brought him the horse on which he usually rode out, he offered the animal a pinch of snuff. Raphael Mengs also, in the present age, was remarkable for absence, yet he is only a painter of the third order; while Guido, who was always at the gaming table, and who, towards the conclusion of his life, painted as many as three pictures in a day, to pay the debts of the night, has left behind him works, the least valuable of which is more pleasing than the best of Mengs, or of

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Carlo Maratti, both of them men of great application.

A lady once said to me, "Mr. _____ tells me that I shall reign for ever in his heart; that I shall be sole mistress of it. Assuredly I believe him, but what signifies it, if his heart itself does not please me?" Of what use is the application of a man without genius? Mozart has been, in the eighteenth century, perhaps the most striking example of the union of the two. Benda, the author of "Ariadne in the Isle of Naxos," has also long fits of absence.

CHAPTER VII.

IT was in this state of mind that he composed the *Zauber-Flöte*, the *Clemenza di Tito*, the *Requiem*, and some other pieces of less celebrity. It was while he was writing the music of the first of these operas, that he was seized with the fainting fits we have mentioned. He was very partial to the *Zauber-Flöte*, though he was not quite satisfied with some parts of it, to which the public had taken a fancy, and which were incessantly applauded. This opera was performed many times,

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but the weak state in which Mozart then was, did not permit him to direct the orchestra, except during nine or ten of the first representations. When he was no longer able to attend the theatre, he used to place his watch by his side, and seemed to follow the orchestra in his thoughts. "Now the first act is over," he would say, "now they are singing such an air," &c.; then, the idea would strike him afresh, that he must soon bid adieu to all this for ever.

The effect of this fatal tendency of mind was accelerated by a very singular circumstance. I beg leave to be permitted to relate it in detail, because we are indebted to it for the famous *Requiem*, which is justly considered one of Mozart's best productions.*

This great work is a solemn mass in D. minor for the burial of the dead, hung round with the funeral pomp and imagery which the forebodings of the author inspired. At its opening, the ear is accosted by the mournful notes of the *Corni di bassetto*, mingling with the bassoons in a strain of bewailing harmony, which streams with impressive effect amidst the short sorrowful notes of the accompanying orchestra.

The *Dies iræ* follows in a movement full of terror and dismay. The *Tuba mirum*, is opened by the sonorous tromboni, to awaken the sleeping dead. Every one acquainted with the powers of this instrument, acknowledges the superiority of its tones for the expression of this sublime idea.

One day, when he was plunged in a profound reverie, he heard a carriage stop at his door. A stranger was announced, who requested to speak to him. A person was introduced, handsomely dressed, of dignified and impressive manners. "I have been commissioned, Sir, by a man of considerable importance, to call upon you." "Who is he?" interrupted Mozart. "He does not wish to be known." "Well, what does he want?" "He has just lost a person whom he tenderly loved, and whose memory will be eternally dear to him. He is desirous of annually commemorating this mournful event by a solemn service, for which he requests you to compose a *Requiem*." Mozart was forcibly struck by this discourse, by the grave manner in which it was uttered, and by the air of mystery in which the whole was involved. He engaged to write the *Requiem*. The stranger

Rex tremendæ Majestatis, is a magnificent display of regal grandeur, of which none but a Mozart would have dared to sketch the outline. It is followed by the beautiful movement *Recordare*, which supplicates in the softest inflexions. The persuasive tone of the Corni di bassetto is again introduced with unexampled effect.

It is too evident where the pen of our author was arrested; and this wonderful performance is very absurdly finished by repeating some of the early parts of the work to words of a very contrary import. The *Lux æterna*, is a subject worthy of the pen of Beethoven, and it is to be hoped he will yet finish this magnificent work, in a style worthy of its great projector. G.

continued, "Employ all your genius on this work; it is destined for a connoisseur." "So much the better." "What time do you require?" "A month." "Very well; in a month's time I shall return. What price do you set on your work?" "A hundred ducats." The stranger counted them on the table, and disappeared.

Mozart remained lost in thought for some time; he then suddenly called for pen, ink, and paper, and, in spite of his wife's entreaties, began to write. This rage for composition continued several days; he wrote day and night, with an ardor which seemed continually to increase; but his constitution, already in a state of great debility, was unable to support this enthusiasm: one morning he fell senseless, and was obliged to suspend his work. Two or three days after, when his wife sought to divert his mind from the gloomy presages which occupied it, he said to her abruptly: "It is certain that I am writing this *Requiem* for myself; it will serve for my funeral service." Nothing could remove this impression from his mind.

As he went on, he felt his strength diminish from day to day, and the score advanced slowly. The month which he had fixed being expired, the stranger again made his appearance. "I have found it impossible," said Mozart, "to keep my word." "Do not give yourself any uneasiness," replied the stranger; "what further time do you

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require?" "Another month. The work has interested me more than I expected, and I have extended it much beyond what I at first designed." "In that case, it is but just to increase the premium; here are fifty ducats more." "Sir," said Mozart, with increasing astonishment, "who, then, are you?" "That is nothing to the purpose; in a month's time I shall return."

Mozart immediately called one of his servants, and ordered him to follow this extraordinary personage, and find out who he was; but the man failed for want of skill, and returned without being able to trace him.

Poor Mozart was then persuaded that he was no ordinary being; that he had a connexion with the other world, and was sent to announce to him his approaching end. He applied himself with the more ardor to his *Requiem*, which he regarded as the most durable monument of his genius. While thus employed, he was seized with the most alarming fainting fits; but the work was at length completed before the expiration of the month. At the time appointed, the stranger returned, but Mozart was no more.

His career was as brilliant as it was short. He died before he had completed his thirty-sixth year; but in this short space of time he has acquired a name which will never perish, so long as feeling hearts are to be found.

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Monticello, August 29, 1814.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It appears that the only works of Mozart known at Paris, are *Figaro*, *Don Juan*, and *Così fan tutte*, which have been performed at the Odeon.

The first reflection which offers itself on *Figaro*, is, that the sensibility of the musician has led him to convert into serious passions, the transient inclinations which, in the piece of *Beaumarchais*, amuse the agreeable inhabitants of the *Château* of *Aguas-Frescas*. In the latter, Count Almaviva has a fancy for Susanna, — nothing more; and is far from feeling the passion which breathes in the air,

"Vedrò, mentr' io sospiro,
Felice un servo mio!"

And in the duet

"Crudel! perchè finora?"

we certainly do not recognise the man who says, in Act iii., scene 4, of the French play, "How is it that I am so taken with this whim? I have been on the point of abandoning it twenty times over. Strange effect of irresolution! If I was determined to have her, I should be a thousand times less desirous of her." How was it possible for the musician

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to give this idea, which, nevertheless, is very natural? How can a man be witty in music?

We feel, in the comedy, that the inclination of Rosina for the little page might become serious. But the state of her feelings, her reflections on the scanty portion of felicity allotted us by fate, all that agitation of mind which precedes the greater passions, is infinitely more developed by Mozart, than by the French author. We have scarcely terms to express this state of mind, which is perhaps better to be described by music, than by words.

The airs sung by the countess, therefore, represent an entirely new character; and the same may be said of that of Bartholo, so well marked in the grand air:

"La vendetta! la vendetta!"

The jealousy of Figaro, in the air,
"Se vuol ballar, signor Contino,"

is far removed from the frivolity of the French Figaro. In this sense, it may be said, that Mozart has disfigured the piece as much as possible. I am not sure that music could be made to represent French gallantry and trifling, in all the characters through four whole acts: it requires decided passions; joy, or sorrow. A smart repartee produces no effect upon the feelings, suggests no subject for meditation. When Cherubino leaps out of the

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window, "The rage for leaping may be catching," says Figaro; "remember the sheep of Panurge." This is delightful; but if you dwell on it for a moment, the charm disappears.*

I should like to see the *Noces de Figaro* set to music by Fioravanti. In Mozart, the true expression of the French piece is nowhere to be found, except it be in the duet

"Se a caso, madama,"

between Susanna and Figaro; and even here he is too much in earnest when he says:

"Udir bramo il resto."

Lastly, to complete the transformation, Mozart concludes the *Folle Journée* with the finest church chant that it is possible to hear; that which follows the word "Perdono," in the last finale.

He has entirely changed the picture of Beaumarchais. The wit of the original is preserved only in the situations; all the characters are altered to the tender and impassioned. The page is only just sketched in the French piece; his whole soul is displayed in the airs,

The allusion is to a story in Rabelais, in which the author ridicules the servility of the courtiers. Panurge, king of the Isle of Lanterns, has a flock of sheep, which, on seeing him dance, begin all to do the same, *par courtoisie*. T.

"Non so più cosa son,"
"Voi che sapete cosa è amore;"

and in the duet with the countess, at the conclusion, when they meet in the dark walks of the garden, near the grove of chestnut trees.

The opera of Mozart is a sublime combination of spirit and melancholy, of which we have no other example. The delineation of sad and tender sentiments is liable to become tiresome; but here, the brilliant wit of the French author, which appears in all the situations, effectually prevents the only defect which was in danger of occurring.

To be in the spirit of the original, the music should have been written conjointly by Cimarosa and Paisiello. Cimarosa only could have imparted to Figaro the brilliant gayety and confidence which belongs to him. Nothing can be more completely in this character than the air,

"Mentr' io era un fraschetone,
Sono stato il più felice;"

which it must be confessed is feebly given in the only gay air of Mozart's piece:

"Non più andrai, farfallone amoroso."

The melody of this air is even rather commonplace; it is the expression which it gradually assumes that constitutes its whole charm.

As for Paisiello, we need only bring to mind

the quintetto in the *Barbiere di Siviglia*, where he says to Basil,

"Andate a letto,"

to be convinced that he was exactly fitted to depict situations purely comic, and in which there is no warmth of sentiment.

As a work of pure tenderness and melancholy, entirely free from all unsuitable admixture of the majestic and tragical, nothing in the world can be compared to the *Nozze di Figaro*. I have pleasure in imagining this opera to be performed by one of the Monbelli as the Countess, Bassi as Figaro, Davidde or Nozzari as Count Almaviva, Madame Gaforini as Susanna, the other Monbelli as the Little Page, and Pellegrini as Doctor Bartholo.

If you were acquainted with these delightful voices, you would share the pleasure of this idea with me; but, in music, we can only talk to people of their recollections.

I might, with a multiplicity of words, succeed in giving you an idea of the *Aurora* of Guido, in the Rospigliosi palace, though you should never have seen it; but I should be tedious as a writer of poetical prose, if I were to give you the same detailed account of the *Idomeneus*, or the *Clemenza di Tito*, as I have done of *Figaro*.

It may be said, with truth, and without being chargeable with those delusive exaggerations to

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which one is perpetually liable, in speaking of a man like Mozart, that, absolutely, nothing is comparable to the *Idomeneus*. I do not fear to say, contrary to the opinion of all Italy, that to me, the first serious opera extant, is not the *Horatii*, but the *Idomeneus*, or the *Clemenza di Tito*.

Majesty, in music, soon becomes tiresome. The art is incompetent fully to give the spirit of Horatius, when he says,

"Albano tu sei, io non ti conosco più;"

and the patriotic feeling which is displayed in the whole of that character, while tenderness alone animates those of the *Clemenza*. What can be more affecting than Titus saying to his friend,

"Confidati all' amico: io ti prometto
Che Augusto nol saprà"?

His generous forgiveness at the conclusion, where he says,

"Sesto, non più: torniamo
Di nuovo amici,"

brings tears into the eyes of the most hardened traitors, as I have myself witnessed at Königsberg, after the terrible retreat from Moscow. On our re-entering the civilized world, we found the *Clemenza di Tito* very well got up, in that city, where the Russians had the politeness to give us

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twenty days' rest, of which, in truth, we stood greatly in need.

To form any idea of the *Zauber-Flöte*, it is absolutely necessary to have seen it. The story, which is like the wandering of a delirious imagination, harmonizes divinely with the genius of the musician. I am convinced, that if Mozart had been a writer, his pen would have been employed in depicting scenes like that where the negro, Monostatos, comes in the silence of the night, by the light of the moon, to steal a kiss from the lips of the sleeping princess. Chance has produced what the lovers of music never met with, except in Rousseau's *Devin du Village*. We may say of the *Zauber-Flöte*, that the same man wrote both the words and the music.

The romantic imagination of *Don Juan*, in which Molière has drawn so many interesting scenes, from the murder of the father of Donna Anna, to the invitation and terrible reply of the speaking statue, is altogether suited to the talent of Mozart.

He shines in the awful accompaniment to the reply of the statue, — a composition perfectly free from all inflation or bombast, — it is the style of Shakspeare in music.

The fear of Leporello, when he excuses himself from speaking to the commander, is painted with true comic spirit; a thing unusual with Mozart. On the other hand, men of feeling carry away a

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thousand melancholy recollections from this opera.
Even at Paris, who does not remember the passage,

"Ah! rimembranza amara!
Il padre mio dov' è?"

Don Juan did not succeed at Rome; perhaps, because the orchestra was unable to execute this very difficult music; but I doubt not that it will one day be a favorite there.

The subject of *Così fan tutte*, was formed for Cimarosa, and is altogether unsuitable to Mozart, who could never trifle with love, a passion that was always the happiness, or the torment, of his life. He has only given the tender part of the characters, and has entirely omitted the drollery of the satirical old sea-captain. He has sometimes escaped by the aid of his sublime science in harmony, as in the trio at the conclusion,

"Tutte fan così."

Mozart, philosophically contemplated, is still more astonishing, than when regarded as the author of sublime compositions. Never was the soul of a man of genius exhibited so naked, if we may be allowed the expression. The corporeal part had as little share as possible in that extraordinary union called Mozart. To this day, the Italians designate him by the appellation of "*quel mostro d'ingegno*"; that prodigy of genius.