

piano. When Rossini came in he gave me the orthodox Italian kiss, and was effusive of expressions of delight at my reappearance, and very complimentary on the subject of Felix. In the course of our conversation he was full of hard-hitting truths on the present study and method of vocalization. 'I don't want to hear any more of it,' he said; 'they scream. All I want is a resonant, full-toned voice, not a screeching voice. I care not whether it be for speaking or singing, everything ought to sound melodious.'" So, too, Rossini assured Moscheles that he hated the new school of piano-players, saying the piano was horribly maltreated, for the performers thumped the keys as if they had some vengeance to wreak on them. When the great player improvised for Rossini, the latter says: "It is music that flows from the fountain head. There is reservoir water and spring water. The former only runs when you turn the cock, and is always redolent of the vase; the latter always gushes forth fresh and limpid. Nowadays people confound the simple and the trivial; a *motif* of Mozart they would call trivial, if they dared.

On other occasions Moscheles plays to the *maestro*, who insists on having discovered barriers in the "humoristic variations," so boldly do they seem to raise the standard of musical revolution; his title of the "Grand Valse" he finds too unassuming. "Surely a waltz with some angelic creature must have inspired you, Moscheles, with this composition, and *that* the title ought to express. Titles, in fact, should pique the curiosity of the public." "A view un congenial to me," adds Moscheles; "however, I did not discuss it. . . . A dinner at Rossini's is calculated for the enjoyment of a 'gourmet,' and he himself proved to be the one, and he went through the very select *menu* as only a connoisseur would. After dinner he looked through my album of musical autographs with the greatest interest, and finally we became very merry, I producing my musical jokes on the piano, and Felix and Clara figuring in the duet which I had written for her voice and his imitation of the French horn. Rossini cheered lustily, and so one joke followed another till we received the parting kiss and 'good night.' . . . At my next visit, Rossini showed me a charming 'Lied ohne Worte' which he composed only yesterday, a graceful melody is embodied in the well known technical form. Alluding to a performance of 'Semiramide,' he said with a malicious smile, 'I suppose you saw the beautiful decorations in it?' He has not received the Sisters Marchisio for fear they should sing to him, nor has he heard them in the theatre; he spoke warmly of Pasta, Lablache, Rubini, and others, then he added that I ought not to look with jealousy upon his budding talent as a pianoforte-player, but that on the contrary, I should help to establish his reputation as such in Leipsic. He again questioned me with much interest about my intimacy with Clementi, and, calling me that master's worthy successor, he said he should like to visit me in Leipsic, if it were not for those dreadful railways, which he would never travel by. All this in his bright and lively way; but when we came to discuss Chevet, who wishes to supplant musical notes by ciphers, he maintained in an earnest and dogmatic tone that the system of notation, as it had developed itself since Pope Gregory's time, was sufficient for all musical requirements. He certainly could not withhold some appreci-

ation for Chevet, but refused to indorse the certificate granted by the Institute in his favor; the system he thought impracticable.

"The never-failing stream of conversation flowed on until eleven o'clock when I was favored with the inevitable kiss, which on this occasion was accompanied by special farewell blessings."

Shortly after Moscheles had left Paris, his son forwarded to him most friendly messages from Rossini, and continues thus: "Rossini sends you word that he is working hard at the piano, and, when you next come to Paris, you shall find him in better practice. . . . The conversation turning upon German music, I asked him 'which was his favorite among the great masters? Of Beethoven he said: 'I take him twice a week, Haydn four times, and Mozart every day. You will tell me that Beethoven is a Colossus who often gives you a dig in the ribs, while Mozart is always adorable; it is that the latter had the chance of going very young to Italy, at a time when they still sang well.' Of Webber he says, 'He has talent enough, and to spare' (*Il a du talent a revendre, celui-la*). He told me in reference to him, that, when the part of 'Tancred' was sung at Berlin by a bass voice, Webber had written violent articles not only against the management, but against the composer, so that, when Webber came to Paris he did not venture to call on Rossini, who however, let him know that he bore him no grudge for having made these attacks; on receipt of that message Webber called and they became acquainted.

"I asked him if he had met Byron in Venice?" "Only in a restaurant," was the answer, "where I was introduced to him; our acquaintance, therefore, was very slight; it seems he has spoken of me, but I don't know what he says." I translated for him, in a somewhat milder form, Byron's words, which happened to be fresh in my memory: "They have been crucifying Othello into an opera; the music good but lugubrious, but, as for the words, all the real scenes with Iago cut out, and the greatest nonsense instead, the handkerchief turned into a billot-doux, and the first singer would not black his face—singing, dresses, and music very good." The *maestro* regretted his ignorance of the English language, and said, "In my day I gave much time to the study of our Italian literature. Dante is the man I owe most to; he taught me more music than all my music-masters put together, and when I wrote my 'Otello,' I would introduce those lines of Dante—you know the song of the gondolier. My librettist would have it that gondoliers never sang Dante, and but rarely Tasso, but I answered him, 'I know all about that better than you, for I have lived in Venice and you haven't. Dante I must and will have.'"

VI.

An ardent disciple of Wagner sums up his ideas of the mania for the Rossini music, which possessed Europe for fifteen years, in the following: "Rossini, the most gifted and spoiled of her sons [speaking of Italy] sallied forth with an innumerable army of Bacchantic melodies to conquer the world, the Messiah of joy, the breaker of thought and sorrow. Europe by this time, had tired of the empty pomp of declamation. It lent but too willing an ear to the new gospel, and eagerly quaffed the intoxicating potion, which Rossini poured out in inexhaustible streams." This very well