MOZART'S

DON GIOVANNI.

CHARLES GOUNOD.

THE translators beg to thank Messrs. Novello for their courteous permission to quote from Lady Macfarren's English version of the Operatic text.

MOZART'S

DON GIOVANNI;

A COMMENTARY

BY

CHARLES GOUNOD.

TRANSLATED FROM THE THIRD FRENCH EDITION

BY

WINDEYER CLARK,

Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Music,

AND

J. T. HUTCHINSON,

Professor of Singing and Associate Royal Academy of Music.

ROBERT COCKS & Co.,

6, NEW BURLINGTON STREET, LONDON, W.

BY SPECIAL APPOINTMENT

Music Publishers to H.M. The Queen and H.R.H. The Prince of Wales.

1895.

PREFACE.

DON GIOVANNI, that unequalled and immortal masterpiece, that apogee of the lyrical drama, has attained a hundred years of existence and of fame*; it is popular, universally accepted, and consecrated for ever. Is it understood? This wondrous example of truth of expression, beauty of form, appropriateness of characterisation, deep insight into the drama, purity of style, richness and restraint in the instrumentation, charm and tenderness in the love passages, loftiness and power in pathos—in one word, this finished model of dramatic music—is it admired, is it loved as it should be? I may be permitted to doubt it.

The score of *Don Giovanni* has exercised the influence of a revelation

* It was first performed at Prague, Oct. 29, 1787.

upon the whole of my life; it has been and remains for me a kind of incarnation of dramatic and musical infallibility. I regard it as a work without blemish, of uninterrupted perfection, and this commentary is but the humble testimony of my veneration and gratitude for the genius to whom I owe the purest and most permanent joys of my life as a musician.

There are in history certain men who seem destined to mark, in their own sphere, a pinnacle beyond which it is impossible to advance. Such was Phidias in the art of sculpture, and Molière in that of comedy. Mozart is one of these men; *Don Giovanni* is such a pinnacle.

One word as to the aim of this book. I dedicate it especially to young composers, and to those who take part in the interpretation of *Don Giovanni.* It is not here my intention to teach either the one or the other, but I have thought that in presence of beauties so profound and delicate, distributed with such profusion in this imperishable masterpiece, it would not be use-

less to make known and to record the impressions and emotions of a musician who has loved it unswervingly and admired it unreservedly.

DON GIOVANNI.

Intuition, the spontaneous penetrating insight of genius, is nothing but an unconscious philosophy; it is reason perceived by feeling, which is, in man, the first phase of creative power, Hence the infallibility of genius; it *sees*, we *reason*. I shall endeavour to point out what Mozart has seen.

A COMMENTARY
ON
DON GIOVANNI.

THE OVERTURE.

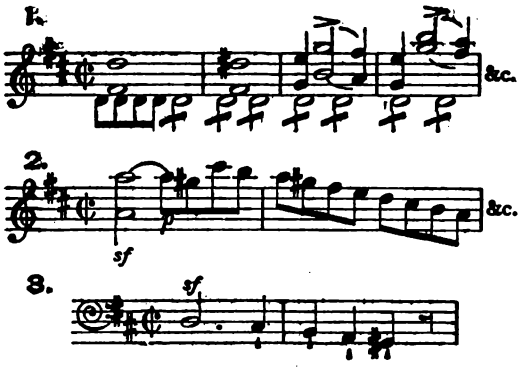
FROM the beginning of the Overture, Mozart is completely in the spirit of the drama, of which it is an epitome. The first chords, so powerful and solemn with their syncopated rhythm, establish at once the majestic and formidable authority of Divine justice, the avenger of crime. After the first four bars (which are rendered yet more terrible by the silence which completes the second and the fourth) there commences a harmonic progression, the sinister character of which freezes one with terror, as would the appearance of a spectre. We shall find this same passage recur in the last scene of the

drama, when, in response to the invitation to supper, the statue of the Commandant arrives at the house of the assassin. There is nothing to equal the tragic tranquility of this series of chords, the linking together of which is one of the innumerable inspirations of this unique musician. They are sustained by a rhythm whose fatal persistence suggests that mercy is no longer possible for this impenitent being, who has defied the world by his crimes and heaven by his blasphemies. Everything in this tremendous introduction breathes terror and inspires awe: the persistent and unfathomable rhythm of the strings, the sepulchral timbre of the wind instruments, wherein the intervals of an octave from bar to bar resemble the steps of a stone giant, the minister of Death; the syncopations of the first violins, which, starting at the eleventh bar, probe the innermost recesses of this dark conscience; the figure of the second violins, which entwines like an immense reptile around the culprit, whose stubborn resistance struggles blindly and

insultingly to the end; the scales, those affrighting scales, ascending and descending, which manifest themselves like the billows of a tempestuous sea; the menace suspended over the head of the criminal by the solemnity of this impressive opening; everything, in fact, in this prodigious page is of the highest tragical inspiration—the force of terror could go no further.

But suddenly, and with feverish audacity, the *Allegro* breaks out in the major key: an *Allegro* full of passion and delirium, deaf to the warnings of Heaven, regardless of remorse, enraptured of pleasure, madly inconstant and daring, rapid and impetuous as a torrent, flashing and swift as a sword, overleaping all obstacles, scaling balconies and bewildering the alguazils. With regard to rhythm, there are to be met with here two kinds of accent that Mozart specially affected. The first, which is to be found in the third and fourth bars, is the dwelling upon the second beat of the bar (which in C time is a weak beat, but which has the effect of syncopation on the half

of the first beat in ¢, duple time). This gives to the rhythm, especially in a quick movement, an air of eagerness, of impatience, of breathlessness, which well expresses the dissolute career of Don Giovanni among those pleasures so quickly forgotten, so constantly renewed. The other accent is the *sforzando*, which gives much energy to the first beat, from which the rest of the musical phrase springs with such flexibility and lightness. Examples:



But how many salient points and piquant incidents there are to admire in this overture, the dazzling fancy of which, it has been said, only cost its

author the labour of a night! From the first, what sonority is obtained with so few notes and by such simple means! What youthfulness of manner and what lordly magnificence are there in bars 8 and 9 of the *Allegro!* What brightness in the tone and the rhythm of the wind instruments which succeed the delicate and refined sonority of the strings! What impetuosity in the quaver figure, which, starting at bar 16, leads through such a vivid and fiery *crescendo!* What coaxing charm in the 3rds of the hautboys and clarionets in the 32nd bar! What vigour in the unison of bars 47 and 48 against the sustained notes of two trumpets and two horns! And how tumultuous, yet still clear, is the effect of the double imitation in canon, commencing at the 55th bar! What ingenious counterpoint appears at bar 102 in that marvellous conjunction of wind instruments in imitation, and the figure of the violins, full of roguishness and gaiety! Finally, what grace and unexpected freshness in the modulation to F, which links the Overture to the—

RISING OF THE CURTAIN.

ACT I.—No. 1.*

LEPORELLO, Don Giovanni's valet, or, more exactly, his beast of burden, is alone in the open air, awaiting his master, who has penetrated by night into the palace of the Commandant, in order to carry off the noble and beautiful Donna Anna. Instantly, from the first notes of the symphony, the orchestra shivers with Leporello (chicken-heart!) who is benumbed more by fear than cold, and starts at the slightest sound. In two bars Mozart has depicted his man:

> "Rest I've none by night or day,
> Scanty fare and doubtful pay,
> Every whim I must fulfil;
> Take my place whoever will!"

After the complaints so ludicrously emphasised by the employment of the

* I adopt here, for the division into numbers, the order of the Italian score, which is in two acts.

same form of passage four times, Leporello grows bold:

"I myself will go a-courting,
I the gentleman will play,
But with him no more I'll stay."

Thereupon, observe the air of resolution and gallantry assumed by the orchestra. And then

"Gaily he within is sporting,
I must keep off all intrusion,
For his lordship needs seclusion,
I myself will go a-courting."

He has made up his mind.

"But I think I hear him coming,
I'll keep safe out of his way."

Again the orchestra depicts new fears, and Leporello prudently steps aside, while a tumultuous passage introduces the desperate struggle between Donna Anna and her would-be ravisher. What a hand-to-hand encounter, what energy in her despairing cry,

"Help, oh heaven, will none befriend me?"

What a marvellous painting is given by the orchestra of this breathless contest! Remark also the utterances

of the poltroon Leporello. In the presence of such truthful expression the eyes might be closed; the music renders the drama visible.

Awakened by the cries of his daughter, the Commandant appears, sword in hand, and demands satisfaction for the outrage. Swords are crossed, and after some rapid passes, which the scales in the violins and basses seem to make scintillate in the obscurity, the Commandant falls, mortally wounded.

Here occurs a short Trio of incomparable majesty, a masterpiece of tragic expression, and one of the most imposing pages of musical drama that it is possible to conceive. As usual, the situation is defined from the first note. There is no hesitation, no useless preamble; the lugubrious gravity of the movement, the rhythmical uniformity of the violin triplets over the holding-notes of the wind instruments, the basses—abashed, as it were, by the murder—marking with icy regularity the first and third beats of the bar, the appropriate employment (with pro-

digious ease and freedom) of the three bass voices, each according to its character, all of these bestow upon this never-to-be-forgotten scene an impression of awe and astonishment that has not been surpassed by the pen of Dante or the chisel of Michael Angelo. This Trio concludes with five bars for orchestra, so striking that they deserve to be the object of special analysis—yes, five bars have been sufficient for Mozart to manifest the power of his genius, as one instant sufficed for the "Let there be light" of the Creator. The reason is that genius expresses by a single word what it sees at a single glance, and that this word is the *exact name* for the thing seen. This absolute accuracy of expression never relaxes for a moment in this master of masters, the truest and most beautiful, the most human and the most divine of all.

What can be more mournful than the chromatic phrase which descends slowly, as if exhausted by the blood which oozes from the wound! How

the eyelids droop over that look which will soon be extinguished for ever! How life struggles to re-assert itself, by a last effort (at the third bar), only to relapse finally upon that terrifying chord which announces the departure of the soul, and the commencement of the rigidity of death.

Thus terminates this powerful Introduction, the most beautiful exposition of the lyrical drama known to me.

No. 2.

MEANWHILE, Donna Anna, who has escaped from the hands of her assailant, re-enters with her betrothed, Don Ottavio. Let us follow, step by step, note by note, this scene of sustained and inexpressible beauty. First, what anxiety, what bewilderment of restlessness in the four bars which precede the recitative, "*Ma qual mai s'offre, oh Dei, spettacolo funesto agli occhi miei!*" ("What is this I behold; can I believe my senses!") At sight of the body extended upon the ground, the poor agitated girl has instinctively divined that it is her father. With what forebodings does she hasten, panting and maddened by terror. Alas! it is he; it is indeed he! "*Il padre, padre mio, mio caro padre!*" What a tender and at the same time distracting sob is that which occurs at the resolution of the dominant 7th chord in the key of A flat. What union of

grief and indignation in the declamation of the following words: "*Ah! l'assassino mel trucidò!*" And then there is a flood of tears, which, where everything is so admirable, must be specially admired: this touching plaint of the voice in dialogue with that of the orchestra, and the ascending progression of chords which affects everything with ghastly reality. "*Quel sangue—quella piaga—quel volto tinto e coperto del color di morte.*" Oh! the sad harmony following upon the last words "*di morte*"; how mournful and gloomy it is! And that which succeeds it—the measured and palpitating rhythm of the four crotchets. "*Ei non respira più! fredde le membra!*" How the trembling hands of the poor girl long to restore this adored parent to life. At last she is overpowered by despair, at the return of those three exclamations, still more poignant than the first time, "*Il padre, padre mio, mio caro padre!*" This last cry, and the chord which accompanies it, cause her to burst into tears; it is the climax of grief.

But that which one cannot too often remark, nor too often endeavour to make understood, that which renders Mozart an absolutely unique genius, is the constant and indissoluble union of *beauty of form* with *truth of expression*. By this *truth* he is *human*, by this *beauty* he is *divine*. By truth he touches us, he moves us, we recognise each other in him, and we proclaim thereby that he indeed knows human nature thoroughly, not only in its different passions, but also in the varieties of form and character that those passions may assume. By beauty the real is transfigured, although at the same time it is left entirely recognisable; he elevates it by the magic of a superior language, and transports it to that region of serenity and light which constitutes Art, wherein Intelligence repeats, with the tranquility of Vision, what the heart has experienced in the trouble of Passion.

Now the union of truth with beauty is Art itself.

Let us return, however, to the analysis of this admirable scene.

After that last despairing cry: "*Padre amato!*" Donna Anna again falls prostrate beside the corpse: "*Io manco, io moro!*"

What perfection, and at the same time what nobility of expression are found in the two bars for orchestra which precede the words "*Io manco*" and which are reproduced, with still more enfeebled effect before the words "*Io moro!*" Suddenly Don Ottavio addresses the servitors of Donna Anna, who have hastily assembled in response to the cries of their mistress. "*Ah, soccorete, amici, il mio tesoro.*" What eagerness and solicitude is there in the broken rhythm of the orchestra! And he, the unfortunate lover, what sufferings does he endure for the sake of her whom he loves, and with what anxiety does he watch her slightest movements! "*Il duolo estremo la meschinelli uccide!*" ("Her grief extreme hath cruelly overwhelmed her!") But no. "*Già rinviene*" ("She awakens"). "*Datele nouvi ajuti*" ("Newly revives her sorrow"). At last Donna Anna

regains consciousness and murmurs feebly "*Padre mio!*" "*Celate,*" exclaims Don Ottavio, "*allontanate agli occhi suoi quell' ogetto d'orrore.*" ("Hasten, and bear away ere she perceive it this memorial of terror.") Then turning towards Donna Anna: "Look up, my dearest, oh, turn to me." But she rises, and in a superb burst of indignation, exclaims—

"Cruel, why art thou near me?
Leave me alone to perish,
Since he I most did cherish
Is lost for evermore!"

What resolute energy in the opening attack of the voice, which precedes the orchestra, upon the words "*Fuggi, crudele, fuggi,*" to return almost immediately to an expression of grief at the words: "*Lascia, che mora anch' io.*"

What is so marvellous in Mozart is the ease with which he, so to speak, gives to each word its exact value and meaning in the sentence, without detracting in the least from the unity of style and character of the musical phrase. Every idea flows from the

fountain-head with such abundance that nothing seems to lack spontaneity, although each detail satisfies the most rigorous demands of thoughtful reflection. This is because true genius is the highest form of judgment, whose privilege it is to attain its end with directness and infallibility, as common sense reaches its aim without having need to climb the successive degrees of logical reasoning: genius is an authority both on account of its evident truth, and its captivating beauty.

At the sight of Donna Anna's tears, Don Ottavio responds, accompanied by a most caressing violin figure, displaying a tender compassion at the words: "*Senti, cor mio deh senti, guardami un solo istante, ti parla il caro amante, che vive sol per te.*"

"Listen to me, oh, listen,
Turn but thine eyes upon me,
I know thou'lt not disown me,
Who love thee evermore."

There is much charm and touching grace in Donna Anna's reply; great

dignity and noble simplicity in this very natural conflict between her grief as a daughter and her tenderness as a lover! Each note in the stifled voice, in the subdued and restrained emotion of the orchestra, translates faithfully the reserve that is momentarily imposed upon love by grief. "*Tu sei—perdon, mio bene, l'affano mio, le pene. Ah, il padre mio dov'è*"?

"'Tis thou—forgive, oh dearest,
Of all now left me the nearest.
My father I would see!"

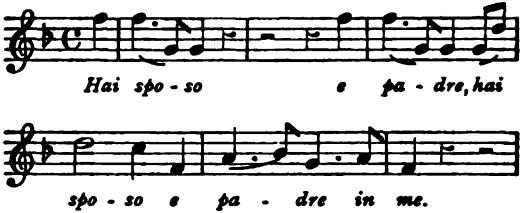
What could be more noble and more purely sympathetic than the arpeggios of the first and second violins, which seem for a moment to pour the balm of pity upon the open wound of grief!

Don Ottavio responds: "*Lascia, o cara, la rimembranza amara, hai sposo e padre in me!*"

"Hush, oh, dearest,
Breathe not the word thou fearest;
Thou'st husband and father in me!"

There could be nothing more loyal, more generous or more protecting than the intonation of the interval of the 7th upon the words "*Hai sposo, hai*

padre," nothing firmer or more reassuring than the last two bars: "*Hai sposo e padre in me.*"



Beneath such accents are revealed a heart and an arm which can be relied upon without fear.

After this touching dialogue, the repetition of which gives greater breadth to the phrase and more intensity to the expression, Donna Anna yields herself entirely to the desire for vengeance. "Ah!" she exclaims proudly, "if thou canst, avenge him, swear it by heaven above." "I swear it!" Don Ottavio replies resolutely, "I swear it by our love." Immediately bursts forth the magnificent peroration, full of both decision and anguish, "*Che giuramento, oh Dei!*"

The two lovers retire. Don Giovanni reappears with Leporello, and a

rapid dialogue in recitative ensues between master and servant.

The *recitativo secco*, which is to be met with for some time after Mozart in the Italian masters of the early part of this century (among others in the operas of Rossini), is no longer in use. It was called "*recitativo al cembalo*," because it was accompanied (by the conductor himself) upon a small *clavecin* placed in front of him and backing upon the prompter's box.

This kind of recitative had great advantages. Apart from the fact that it permitted the composer to glide rapidly over all those parts of the dialogue which were not to be set as musical numbers, it gave rest to the attention, and displayed so much better the worth of the pieces really devoted to the expression and the development of the interesting scenes.

Nowadays, in lyrical works everything is treated with almost equal importance, which occasions not only great length of performance, but also a monotony which promptly becomes fatiguing to the auditor. Recitative,

pure and simple, answered ingeniously by its vivacious style and by a kind of musical familiarity for all those minute stage details which enter much more into the domain of conversation than into that of the musical drama.

Don Giovanni succeeds in imposing silence upon his valet, whose admonitions bore him, by remarking that he perceives a woman coming. "Let us watch this fair lady; step aside here with me."

No. 3.

ELVIRA appears, Elvira the despised love, the slighted wife, the exasperated spouse, always searching for her unfaithful husband, and vowing to avenge herself if she should find him. Indignation, jealousy, rage, all of these are expressed by the orchestra from the first bar of the symphony which precedes this marvellous number.

"Where shall I find a token to guide my steps to thee?
My heart is nearly broken, the world is dark to me!"

In Mozart the expression is always so perfectly and so absolutely accurate that the musical phrase depicts even the gestures and attitudes of the personages speaking; it really portrays them, both in mind and body. This is especially apparent ten bars after the entry of the voice, where one almost seems to be in the clutches of jealousy, described by the darting passages of the violins, violas, and basses which occur in this piece of instrumentation,

so restrained and yet vibrating with truth of expression, upon the words :—

> "Ah! if he stood before me,
> Fiercely his vows I'd spurn!"

What a delightful "aside," at once caressing and voluptuous, is that of Don Giovanni :—

> "Look yonder, 'tis a damsel
> Who's by her swain forsaken!"

Observe the cooings of a libertine compassion upon the words "*Poverina, poverina!*" and the enchanting cajolery of the orchestra at "*Cerchiam di consolare il suo tormento.*" ("I think I'll go and try just to console her.") Thereupon Leporello ventures to remark pertinently :—"No doubt, like many others you'll cajole her."

Don Giovanni approaches and recognises Elvira.

Here the recitative re-appears. After several embarrassed—and embarrassing explanations, Don Giovanni escapes, leaving Donna Elvira with Leporello. "Pray, Ma'am, be comforted," says he, "for you are not, nor have been, and neither will be, or the

first or last of them. Look here now, see this not small volume, 'tis almost full of the names of his fair ones; town and village, distant countries, yes, foreign nations, can witness bear to his infatuations."

No. 4.

WE must follow, step by step, this masterly air, so justly celebrated, which abounds with points of humour and raillery.

What delicacy and what sobriety of instrumentation is here! At the beginning, though only the stringed instruments are employed, there is always completeness in the harmony of the second violins and violas which accompany the alternate phrases of the first violins and of the basses.

At the 16th bar the horns appear; their fanfare, mingled with the laughter of the flutes and bassoons, emphasises with an air of braggadocio this list of fair ones who have been deceived. At the same time the descending staccato scales of the first violins reappear after the recital of each series of conquests by this indefatigable but inconstant lover: six hundred and forty here, two hundred and thirty there, a hundred in France,

ninety-one in Turkey; but in Spain, ah! in Spain, a thousand and three! In the orchestra there is immediately an ostentatious display of boastfulness, and an accumulation of nuances accompany the recital of this fabulous enumeration of countesses, waiting-maids, rustic beauties, courtly dames and maidens — in short, women of every rank and of every age.

Observe the snarling mockery of the wind instruments during this inexhaustible recapitulation, the bantering summing-up of all his successes in the palaces or in the streets; notice how the face of this chattering servant is brightened with a trivial joy, and yet the music never loses its air of distinction while depicting this triviality.

Then follows an *Andante* full of grace and cajolery attendant upon another kind of description, that of the different attractions needed by the noble gallant in order to vary his pleasures and re-awaken his desires.

With what admirable art (I have already spoken of it, and shall often

have to do so again), with what admirable art does Mozart reconcile the delineation of each detail and the necessary structure of the whole musical phrase in its logical unity.

There is here, it seems to me, a striking analogy between that perfection and that facility of craftsmanship which are met with in the masterpieces of painting and sculpture; every detail is most scrupulously observed, and nothing disturbs the tranquil balance of the work as a whole.

This second part of the air is an impressive and sustained example of the innate delicacy and instinctive scrupulousness with which the innocence of genius abounds, and that sure instinct that spontaneously fashions every detail (however transient it may be) in each one of the features that compose the interest and mobility of life, the ensemble of which would escape the most sustained efforts of scrutinising observation.

Let us analyse minutely this fidelity to details, united to so much

tranquility and freedom in the general contour of the piece.

"Is a maiden fair and slender,
He will praise her for modest sweetness,
Then the dark ones are so tender!
Lint-white tresses shew discreetness."

Sixteen bars are sufficient for Mozart to make a finished portrait of these three kinds of beauties.

What flexibility and grace there is in the first eight bars, so calmly proceeding upon a tonic pedal, and how charming is the momentary diversion to the chord of the sub-dominant, at the end of the sixth bar, returning at once (and with what ease!) by the chord of the dominant in the seventh bar, to the conclusion upon the tonic in bar eight. Eight bars for a phrase perfect and complete in harmony and melody, perfect and complete as a portrait also! What a privilege, among so many others, is that rapidity of glance and conciseness of language which permits genius to say so many things in so few words without omitting anything essential to the perfection of the picture. In the four bars that

follow, which are devoted to "the brunette," there is great decision of attitude, we see that this "brunette" is resolute and determined. In the other four bars, dedicated to "the fair one," the phrase becomes caressing, and inclines with a graceful inflexion towards the expression of sweetness.

Next follows the recital of the Don's preferences according to the seasons:—

> "When 'tis cold he likes her portly,
> In the summer, slim and courtly";

then on a pompous ascending passage, the majestic presence of the "tall and haughty"; a figure in the contrary direction describes the gracefulness of the "tiny one," so well expressed by the rapid articulation of the syllables in a phrase descending through the vocal compass, just as one lowers the hand towards the ground in describing anyone of small stature. However, all these youthful varieties are not sufficient for Don Giovanni. He must even have those of mature age, if only as *specimens* in the collection.

Nevertheless, it is the young, the uninitiated, for whom he has a pre-

dominant passion. No matter to him if a woman be rich, beautiful, or ugly: provided it be a petticoat he asks nothing more.

There is, in the conclusion of this number, starting at the words "*delle vecchie jà conquista*," a crowd of details, each one finer and more piquant than the preceding. Thus, at the words, "That their names may grace these pages," there is an interrupted cadence upon the chord of B flat, which seems to say:—"Even the old ladies, isn't it shameful?"

At the phrase, "*Non si picca, se sia ricca*,"—("poor or wealthy, wan or healthy,"—the inspiration of Mozart produces an almost unheard-of accuracy of expression; it is the succession of trills which, after being heard on the first beat for five bars, heightens the effect still more at the sixth bar by marking each one of the three beats with great spirit.

It would be impossible to render in more felicitous style the cynical indifference with which this man, steeped in sensuality, consigns one after the

other, his innumerable and unhappy victims, to the region of forgetfulness.

One point which deserves particular mention is the touch of musical comedy by which this lengthy enumeration is terminated at the words *"Pur che porti la gonella, voi sapete quel che fà."*

> "He to win them makes his duty
> And, you know it, not in vain."

There is upon the words "*voi sapete*" such an astounding aggregation of details, so full of significance in the choice of rhythm and timbre, that, in spite of its apparent reticence, we fully understand what is in question at "*voi sapete.*" There is not a note, not a rest, not a sound which does not contribute its clear though subdued share to this coarse diagnosis, which the divine hands of genius alone could attempt without raising a blush, so completely do they purify everything they touch.

First we must notice the expressive reserve of the basses, playing softly by themselves on the first beat of the bar (*Andante*, bar 63), the notes be-

ing quitted immediately as if they were embarrassed at what is going to be said, and the comical *sotto voce* of the strings, whose bashful reticence is so pleasantly and so unostentatiously scoffed at by the two hautboys and the bassoon; then the detached notes of the solo bassoon mingling its mocking "ha ha's" with the fresh and youthful laughter of the flute: all of this is so absolutely perfect in discernment and so powerful in portrayal that I cannot find its equal in the dramatic music of any other composer.

Observe the treatment of the orchestra here; observe it, with its exact balance between what is *necessary* and what is *sufficient*, fulfilling its true mission, that of participation, not self-assertion, reconciling, with as much reserve as precision, the thousand nuances of a character with its undisturbed unity; abiding, with the wise economy of real power, in the exact medium of intensity and length in the dramatic situations, neither overpowering nor feeble, never having anything too much, yet having all

that is necessary. Ah! how far removed are we from that ponderous and pretentious bombast that is supposed to be touching when it is really overwhelming, and which mistakes heaviness for richness, and bathos for grandeur! But to proceed.

No. 5.

WE are now in the midst of country revels. Two young peasants who are betrothed, Zerlina and Masetto, come upon the scene, all bedecked with flowers and ribbons, as gay as larks, and are followed by their companions, assembled to celebrate the wedding. Here the colouring of the artist, always true and accurate in expression, changes as if by enchantment. There is a freshness of tone, a sprightliness of rhythm, a heartiness of mirth, redolent of country life. A short duet, full of laughter and freedom, is interrupted here and there by the joyous acclamations of the peasants: it is like a flight of butterflies across an atmosphere of sunshine.

No. 6.

DON GIOVANNI and Leporello enter. Mozart here resumes the brisk and familiar form of simple recitative which enables him to glide rapidly over the facetious words and compliments offered by Don Giovanni to all these pretty maidens, and especially to Zerlina, with whom he is longing to be alone. Accordingly he enjoins Leporello to entice her betrothed (Masetto) away,* and then begins the celebrated and delightful duettino "*Là ci darem la mano.*"

It is marvellous to see here, as everywhere in the Opera, how exact Mozart's taste is in the just proportion of accent and expression. There is neither weakness nor exaggeration. No useless developments, yet nothing lacking. The proportions of the piece, por-

* No mention is made by M. Gounod of the song for Masetto, which here follows in the original, but which is frequently omitted in performance.—(*Translators.*)

trayal of the characters, combination of instruments, and blending of the various tone-colours, all reveal that certainty of insight which is the mark and secret of authority. Can there be anything more coaxing, more enticing, than the opening phrase uttered by Don Giovanni:—

"Give me thy hand, oh fairest,
Whisper a gentle 'Yes,'
Come, if for me thou carest,
With joy my life to bless."

Are not impatience and ardour of sensual desire hidden under the mask of this gentle persuasion? And the response of Zerlina (repeating the same musical phrase), is it not stamped by that languor of resistance which is already a weakness, and which is emphasised by the addition of two bars before the full close (bars 16, 17). Then the gallant is more and more pressing. The dialogue becomes very animated, each singing but two bars:

"Come, dearest, let me guide thee."

Accompanying this *Mezzo-forte* by the wind instruments, Mozart at once

gives prominence to the longings of the singer; Zerlina, in two bars also, and with timid grace, replies:—

"Masetto sure will chide me."

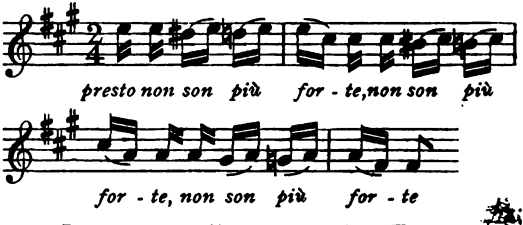
Don Giovanni responds in a two-bar phrase:—

"I'll change thy fortune."

Zerlina, her will becoming weaker and weaker, says:—

"Ah, that I could deny thee."

Then the opening subject reappears, but now broken, divided between the two voices, which thus continue the contest up to the moment when Zerlina finally yields, repeating three times a melodic progression, which grows fainter by each repetition being a third lower than the preceding:



"Let us go," urges the Don, and "Let us go," cries she in her turn with resolute gaiety.

Then this charming duet is completed by a joyous peroration in $\frac{6}{8}$ time, characterised by the sprightliness of childhood and the heedlessness of youth.

No. 7.

DONNA ELVIRA, the indignant wife, now appears, and surprises her faithless husband in the very act of abduction. Recitative, "Leave her, thou vile seducer," &c., &c. Here follows an air, characterised by great hauteur and dignity.

> "The traitor means deceit,
> His flattery heed thou not."

says Elvira to Zerlina. Nothing could better express the resentment of a woman outraged in her love. It might be thought that this air makes useless repetition of the sentiments of jealousy and rage which are found in the commencement of the Terzetto, No. 3, and which is in reality nothing but an air for Donna Elvira interrupted by the "asides" of Don Giovanni and Leporello. But, apart from the fact that the situation is different, the sentiment is of another shade. Here one feels that Elvira is dominated by a sentiment of contempt, and that

she seeks above all to cast shame upon the revolting conduct of her husband, who is not only unfaithful, but also an ungovernable libertine. The rhythm of this fine piece depicts admirably that revulsion of feeling which causes the blood to rush to the face in an outburst of indignation. However, it is not impossible that Mozart may have written it at the solicitation of the singer in order to give a little more importance to the part of Elvira. Composers are occasionally obliged to yield to the demands of those who interpret their works, under penalty of discontenting them and making them dissatisfied with their rôles.

In the score of "Don Giovanni" there are two or three other numbers upon which I shall have occasion to make the same remark, that, notwithstanding their intrinsic value (which cannot be disputed), do not, perhaps, owe their situation in the work solely to dramatic considerations.

No. 8.

THE quartet "*Non ti fidar, o misera*" is a faultless model of dramatic music. The characters and the situations are here treated with that unerring instinct which one cannot cease to admire, so entirely does it satisfy at one and the same time the demands of the most rigorous analysis and the requirements of the most complete synthesis. Donna Elvira's opening phrase is full of dignity and unwavering accusation :

"Oh, ere thou trust in him, beware!
His heart is cold as stone;
Know that his vows are writ in air,
I their deceit have known."

Mozart gives to his characters a musical contour of such striking accuracy that it is impossible to be deceived about the qualities of each; he draws them and paints them so that they stand out bodily before our eyes. Be it a "*grand seigneur*," like Don Giovanni, a nobleman like

Don Ottavio, a "*grande dame*," like Donna Anna or Donna Elvira, rustics such as Zerlina or Masetto, a dignitary like the Commandant, or a valet like Leporello, the musical form is *always* a faithful, distinct, and striking reflexion of the personage; it reproduces the character, the language, the rank, the manner—noble or plebeian; and that not by the convenient and commonplace process of artificial unity, which consists of fastening a phrase, like a label, upon an individual —a formula which, once adopted, is reproduced with obstinate persistence. Unity, with Mozart, is identity, not monotony; he shows us the same individual under a variety of circumstances: it is analogous to the character of a handwriting, which is always apparent, notwithstanding that it is composed of different letters. The "asides" of Donna Anna and Don Ottavio, starting from bar 10,

"Heaven! a noble lady this!"

are marked by a feeling of respect, of sympathy, I was almost going to say of favourable prepossession for the

plaint uttered in such accents of truth. Don Giovanni interposes, with affected and ironical compassion :—

> "Poor girl, she's quite demented,
> I sorely do lament it!
> The fit may be prevented
> If she's by me besought."

There is in this thought a disdain, a superciliousness, a lack of heart and of pity expressed with marvellous simplicity of means. Nothing could render more appropriately the phrase : "Poor girl, she's quite demented." But Elvira protests : "The traitor, oh believe him not!" (bar 28). What energy is there in thus giving him the lie, as she draws herself up proudly! How well the intonation expresses the sudden gesture! As to the two witnesses of this altercation, one feels that they are confused ; their hesitating accents contrast with the impetuous outbursts on the part of Donna Elvira (bar 36). The doubt and uncertainty are accentuated again from bars 40 to 49. At bar 50 indecision is at its height : they question and consult each other. What is happen-

ing; who is the dupe here? What is one to believe?

DON OTTAVIO (*aside*).
Is she injured or deceiving?
Ere we part from her I'd know!

DONNA ANNA (*aside*).
Great her sorrow, past relieving,
But no madness doth she show.

DON GIOVANNI.
While they scan me, unbelieving,
From their presence I'll not go.

DONNA ELVIRA.
Friends, his wiles are past conceiving,
Falsehood he will ne'er forego.

Underlying these four "asides" there is an instrumental phrase of twelve bars (three for each character), which represents in a most striking manner stupefaction, anxiety, and astonishment, and is one of those inspirations that immediately arrest the attention and imprint themselves in the memory, so vividly do they picture the situation. It is the gift of ethical resemblance carried to its highest point. Where can there be found among the works of Mozart any form which does not reveal consummate powers of portrayal. A few bars

farther on (bar 68), in a subdued voice and with rapid articulation, Don Giovanni murmurs prudent advice into the ear of Donna Elvira.

" Zitto, zitto, che la gente,
Si raduna a noi d'intorno ;
Siate un poco più prudente,
Vi farete criticar."

(Hush, be still, thy silly raving
Will a rabble gather round us;
Thy unwomanly behaving
Makes me quite of thee ashamed.)

She responds :

" Non sperarlo, o scellerato.
Ho perduto la prudenza,
Le tue colpe ed il mio stato
Voglio a tutti palesar !

(Villain, darest thou to blame me ?
Through the world I will pursue thee,
As a traitor I'll proclaim thee,
For by thee I am defam'd !)

At this point an impetuous passage occurs, alternating between the voice and the orchestra, with such skill displayed in the gradations of sonority that the accompaniment never smothers the vocal part. What a masterpiece is this quartet, and what

a lesson of powerful expression combined with economy of means!

Donna Elvira withdraws, and in a short recitative Don Giovanni makes his excuses and takes leave. Donna Anna and Don Ottavio are left alone, and then bursts forth one of the finest instances of musical and dramatic eloquence that it is possible to conceive.

No. 9.

By the inflexion of his voice and the accent of his words, Donna Anna recognises her betrayer: her looks follow him, and, no longer in doubt, she exclaims: "*Don Ottavio! son morta!*" Nothing can equal the impression of agitation produced by this forcible entrance of the orchestra; it is the letting loose of a wild flood of instrumental declamation; a turmoil of terror and bewilderment. *In one bar* the thunderbolt falls upon the unhappy Donna Anna. One bar of the orchestra! And with what power is it reproduced, increasing throughout the course of this prodigious recitative, of which not a note must be lost. The climax is reached at the affrighted cry "*O Dei! quegli è il carnefice del padre mio!*" ("Oh, Heaven! that was the murderer of my dear father!") Breathlessly she relates the occurrences of that fearful night. "No

longer can I doubt—his words at parting, his soft and honey'd voice, all bring before me, past the chance of a doubt—the vile intruder who dared into my chamber." The subsequent narration is prefaced by a single bar for the strings, which is in itself a stroke of genius. With two chords Mozart conveys instantly the impression of darkness by passing, through a chord of the dominant 7th, from the key of G minor to that of E flat minor. This sudden appearance of a new key suffices to suggest the night: we feel that we are in darkness. But listen to the sequel, starting at the words "*Tacito a me s'appressa.*" ("Silently he drew near me.") The whole of this passage is rendered with an extraordinary animation and sense of confusion. At the words "*Io grido!*" the initial bar reappears, upon which rests the expression of all this perturbation. There is not a single note which does not captivate and retain our attention. "*Alfine,*" resumes Donna Anna, "*il duol, l'orrore dell' infame attentato accrebbe si la lena*

mia, che a forza di svincolarmi, torcermi e piegarmi, da lui mi sciolsi." ("At last my dread, my horror of the dastardly ruffian lent strength unwonted for the moment; I struggled with tortuous writhings; fearfully, with an effort, I flung him from me.") Here, again, this desperate struggle is visibly portrayed to us; we *see* it, thanks to the employment of syncopation and the wild bowing of the violins, which seems to tear the strings. But this is not all. "*Allora rinforzo i stridi miei, chiamo soccorso; fugge il fellon, arditamente il seguo fin nella strada per fermarlo, e sono assalitrice d'assalita. Il padre v'accorre, vuol conoscerlo, e l'iniquo che del povero vecchio era più forte, compie il misfatto suo, col dargli morte!*" ("Aloud, then, I clamoured for assistance, called on the household; he sought to fly, but boldly I pursued him into the street, that we might trace him, becoming of my assailant the assailer. 'Twas there that my father straightway challenged him, and the villain, by whose strength he was easily over-

powered, stayed not his guilty madness, gave him the death-blow.")

This narration, the poignancy and truth of which cause a shudder, is linked to one of the highest inspirations that ever flowed from the pen of a musician. In a paroxysm of avenging fury Donna Anna turns to Don Ottavio:

" Or sai, chi l'onore
Rapire a me volse,
Che fù il traditore
Che il padre mi tolse.
Vendetta ti chieggio,
La chiede il tuo cor.
Rammenta la piaga
Del misero seno,
Rimira di sangue,
Coperto il terreno,
Se l'ira in te langue
D'un giusto furor."

("The wretch now thou knowest
Who sought my betraying,
And vengeance thou owest
My father's foul slaying.
For justice I sue thee;
I ask of thy troth.
Remember, when wounded,
His life-blood was flowing;
Unsolaced, unshriven,
He heard not my crying;
My heart will be riven
If thou break thy oath.")

Boldness of style, nobility of form, authoritative accent, inconsolable grief, all contribute to the sublimity of this immortal page. From the first bar the style is dignified and majestic, the injunction resolute and irresistible. The orchestral basses emphasise energetically the imperious character of the gesture, indicated by a single stroke of this infallible master's pencil. There is nothing more natural or more touching than the tears that gush out (bar 7) at the words "*Che il padre mi tolsi*," and after them the imprecation reappears with new power, induced by the imitation of the voice by the basses at the words "*Vendetta ti chieggio.*" And then the sobbing recommences (bar 17), breathless and suffocating, to give place (bar 33) to the return of the cry for vengeance, at the recapitulation of the first phrase: "*Or sai, chi l'onore.*"

One must thoroughly appreciate the wonderful science of Mozart to understand with what an incredible restraint in the employment of the instruments

he should have attained such richness of colouring combined with such power of expression. We remain astonished that by such simple means, and with so few notes, his instrumentation should be always so full and sonorous. That is, and it cannot be said too often, the result of that profound and unfailing judgment which never goes beyond the limits of necessity. Anything that is superfluous encumbers the score, and makes it heavy instead of enriching it. It is so with the art of Michael Angelo, wherein the muscular function is not impeded by the presence of those obstructions, those redundancies which detract from the play and the elasticity of the tissues, and only produce a diminution of energy. Hence, so much perspicuity of plan, elegance of form, flexibility and animation of movement. Mozart combines the perfection of plastic beauty with truth of pathos. Like that head of Niobe that is rendered so profoundly sorrowful by a slight deflection of the eyebrow, the most poignant anguish never interferes in the works of Mozart

with the serene tranquility of the form.*

* In the original, Donna Anna now makes her exit, and a recitative for Don Ottavio leads to his Aria "*Dalla sua pace,*" of which there is here no description by M. Gounod.—(*Translators.*)

No. 10.

STILL trembling at the crime of his master and the tragic end of the Commandant, Leporello appears hurriedly. "I'll stay with him no longer," says he, "I will not have this madman for a master! See, there he comes; look at him, so cool, just as if nothing e'er had happened."

Don Giovanni, quite bewitched by the pretty faces of the rustic beauties, exclaims: "These country girls with their gay sports invite me; we will return to them." All this is in rapid recitative, which leads to the vivacious Aria "*Fin ch'han dal vino.*" It may be said that in this song "care is thrown to the winds." Its animation is as that of one possessed, and its dizzy progress never halts for a moment. The movement indicated by the master is *Presto*, $\frac{2}{4}$ time, which is evidently only meant to have one beat in the bar. It is clear that Mozart has wished to avoid the impression of

a second beat (the weak beat), which would have taken away from the rhythm its power and impetuosity. There is, then, to the listener, only the effect of the strong accent, and it is this which gives to the air such a striking character of energy and ardour. In addition, the four quavers, throbbing without intermission all through the accompaniment, depict perfectly the breathless excitement of this votary of pleasure.

No. 11.

MASETTO re-enters, followed by Zerlina, with whom he is having a lover's quarrel. "Faithless girl! no longer I'll bear your caprices," &c. Zerlina makes the best excuses she can. This little outburst of vexation, rapidly rendered in simple recitative, leads to the charming cantilena "*Batti, batti, O bel Masetto.*"

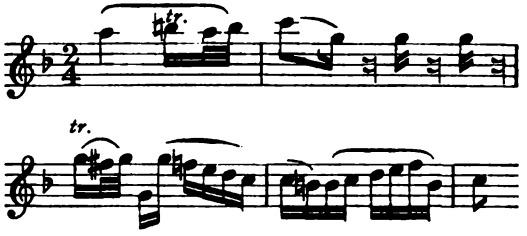
The score of Don Giovanni is truly a great work, for there is not one of its numbers that is not in itself a masterpiece. I think there can be no doubt—as I have before remarked—that certain numbers, or at least, certain portions of them, have been written in deference to the wishes of those who played the various characters. This compliance (which, though not always indispensable, may be sometimes inevitable), is not carried so far as to introduce in the work anything that might be regarded as a blemish. The exquisite taste of Mozart sufficed to remove the

reproach of vulgarity even from that which was unnecessary; and it follows that, in Don Giovanni, all which is required musically for the situations or the characters is absolutely irreproachable and perfect.

Let us return to this delightful inspiration, "*Batti, batti.*" One is tempted to ask if Mozart ever had to seek for the musical form of his characters. That form suits so perfectly that they seem themselves to have suggested the music which represents them.

Can one imagine anything more coaxing, more pacifying, more submissive than the opening: "Canst thou see me unforgiven?" &c. Notice first the voice part, which is doubled in the octave by the violins in a most caressing manner; then observe the persistent accompaniment of the violoncello solo, in a figure which streams uninterrupted throughout the piece; all of this is characterised by a persuasiveness in the smile, look, and attitude that is irresistible. The first sixteen bars establish at once the

melodic form with the repose of tonality that reveals the strength of inspiration, and which, moreover, is most enchanting to the ear and the mind of the listener. It is, too often, the absence or poverty of ideas which leads to that abuse of modulation so frequent in a multitude of modern compositions. Tonal unity is dreaded as a weakness, and composers launch out into endless harmonic digressions, the inevitable result being most wearisome monotony. Another charm of Mozart's music is the intimate relationship which binds together the different phrases of the musical sentence, giving it that logical character the secret of which belongs to him more than any other composer. The strain which commences at the 17th bar is a striking example of this. It seems as if nothing else could have been there but what *is* there, so natural and entirely satisfactory is the progression. This period of eight bars, or rather of four bars repeated, expresses with rare felicity the submission of Zerlina, ready to endure anything.



And then, starting at bar 25, what touching resignation is indicated in the responsive figure of the voice and violoncello—a figure which is repeated four times consecutively, leading to the charming *sforzando*, *piano*, which is the climax of the suppliant expression in bars 29 and 30, and which takes a still stronger character of self-accusation in bars 31 and 32, leading through bars 33 and 34 to the exquisite close of this delightful melodic period! Then ensues a beautiful re-entry of the initial theme (bars 35 to 52), this time varied by a graceful embroidery that gives it new charm. The eight succeeding bars (53 to 60) have a delicacy of expression, an accuracy of portrayal that is truly marvellous. "Ah!" says Zerlina, assured of her conquest, "confess it, thou no longer canst with-

stand me." Only the unfailing instinct of Mozart could have conceived and expressed the thousand nuances of coaxing, the dove-like cooings, the lamb-like gentleness, the seductive glances—in one word, the whole array of fascinations of which a woman is so complete a mistress when she wishes to effect a reconciliation.

These qualities abound in the eight bars which terminate the *andante*. Starting at bar 52, how happily the shakes of the first and second violins in octaves express poor Masetto's bursts of sulkiness! He tries not to give way, but finally yields, as is ever the case. The violoncello passages seem to insinuate her roguish glances at the bumpkin, while the triple repetition of the music in bars 53 and 54 is full of persuasive entreaty. Finally, bars 59 and 60, wherein the syncopations of the voice part are blended so archly with the quicker notes of the violoncello, show us the triumph of Zerlina.

At last she is victorious. "*Pace, pace, o vita mia!*" she exclaims. A delightful *allegro* (or rather *allegretto*)

in $\frac{6}{8}$ time, full of frolic, celebrates this happy reconciliation, while a most delicious solo for the violoncello ripples an accompaniment.

Mozart, divine Mozart! To know thee is to worship thee. Thou art the personification of perpetual truth, perfect beauty, inexhaustible charm; always profound, yet always clear; combining the entire knowledge of humanity with the simplicity of childhood! Thou hast experienced all things, and expressed them in a musical language that never has, and never will be, surpassed.

"'Tis no use my resisting," says Masetto; "little witch, you've cajol'd me." Suddenly the voice of Don Giovanni is heard from within, giving orders for the preparation of the *fête*. Terror of Zerlina. "Ah, Masetto! Hark! 'tis his lordship; how his voice makes me tremble!" "Why do you thus change countenance?" responds Masetto. "Ah! there is something between you, and you dread I should know it."

This little scene is in rapid recitative.

No. 12.

HERE begins the grand Finale of the first act. It is a striking commencement. "Quickly, quickly," sings Masetto, "I'll outwit him; in some nook I'll creep and watch him. None will see me, here in safety I can wait." From the first bar the listener is aware that this is to be a Finale of vast proportions. And, as a matter of fact, its various movements are throughout of the highest order of beauty. The first fifty bars reveal the feverish agitation of the unhappy Masetto, once more doubting the fidelity of Zerlina. His restlessness is depicted by the first notes of the orchestra—a tremolo which is at once both comical and impressive. Bars 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 express particularly his mistrust and suspicion.

At bar 51, accompanied by a brilliant fanfare for the full orchestra, Don Giovanni appears, followed by the peasants, who are about to cele-

brate the *fête* to which he has invited them. Upon a charming *decrescendo* of the voices and orchestra the rustics withdraw; Zerlina endeavours to hide herself by mingling with them, but Don Giovanni, who has never lost sight of her, bars the way. Then follows an *andante* in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, a marvel of grace and captivation, accompanied by the gentle whisperings of the orchestra.

ZERLINA.

In this arbour I will hide me,
None my presence here perceiving.

DON GIOVANNI.

Sweet Zerlina, I'm beside thee (*detains her*).
To escape a lover's glance will ne'er succeed.

Does not one seem to see the precaution with which the little Zerlina goes upon tip-toe during the exquisite dialogue of the voice and the first violins in the first five bars? And with what cat-like dexterity does Don Giovanni extend his claw over Zerlina (bars 8 and 9) in order to seize her as she passes! "If thou'rt kind," says she, with languid resistance, "I pray

thee leave me." His only reply is a caressing entreaty to stay.

From bar 10 to bar 29 we are enveloped by an ineffable charm, and I do not believe that the trembling of the tender passion could be expressed in language more delightful and captivating.

I know no one but Mozart that could have discovered, with a certainty as unfailing as it is complete, the musical form of all emotions, and of all their nuances of passion and character. Passions and characters constitute the whole of the human drama, and therein Mozart is without a rival.

Don Giovanni is a heartless libertine. Therefore it is not the tenderness of love but the longings of desire that Mozart has so marvellously rendered in this inimitable dialogue between the Don and Zerlina; in it we find again, perhaps with heightened expression, the sentiment of the duet "*La ci darem la mano.*"

Can anything be imagined more suave, more pleading, than this little

phrase of two bars, short, yet so fully expressive of Zerlina—"*Ah! lasciate mi andar via!*" the music of which is exactly repeated by Don Giovanni at the words "*Nò, nò, resta, gioja mia!*" The four bars which follow are of the same style. Zerlina renews her supplications: "*Se pietade avete in core!*" (If thou'rt kind, I pray thee leave me!") "*Si ben mio,*" responds Don Giovanni, "*son tutto amore!*" ("All my heart's thine own, believe me!") Here the expression of his caresses and of the intoxicating atmosphere reaches a climax; everything seems to breathe danger. To the enchanting vocal melody, doubled by the flute, the hautboy, and the bassoon, is added the sustaining figure of the basses, *and, above all,* the inexpressible cajolery of the first violins seems to envelop the whole with an air of voluptuous magnetism.

Don Giovanni is about to carry away the faltering Zerlina, but he has reckoned without Masetto, who stands erect before him. "Masetto!" he exclaims. "Yes, Masetto," is the

response. "So surly, wherefore, pray?

"Zerlina here is sighing
Because the hours are flying,
And thou from her away,"

replies the Don.

These eighteen bars teem with comicalities of great ingenuity. "Ha, ha! you are caught," say the horns, with their four clear notes, the last of them being sustained into the following bar, while the strings express the surprise and embarrassment of Zerlina. As to Don Giovanni, nothing disconcerts him; he is too accomplished a *roué* to lack assurance. Accordingly he treats the matter lightly, as is testified by the laughter of the flutes alternating with that of the first violins, whilst the bantering distinct notes of the horns reply to the bassoons, leading to a phrase of the most perfect irony, which this simpleton of a Masetto understands as a very flattering profession of civility.

Here ensues an instrumental combination, which, if I am not mistaken, Mozart was the first to introduce in

dramatic music. Ignoring for eight bars the regular orchestra, he employs a small supplementary band placed on the stage for the *fête* that Don Giovanni has prepared for the worthy peasants. This band will be utilised a little later on to show an ingenious example of counterpoint during the ball. Don Giovanni, Zerlina, and Masetto advance gaily towards the scene of the festivities. At the same moment Donna Anna, Donna Elvira, and Don Ottavio, all three masked, enter at the opposite side of the stage, still pursuing their relentless search for the guilty one. In a single bar, Mozart, with his own incredible promptitude of transition, establishes the new situation. The orchestra suddenly assumes a sombre and mysterious tone; it envelops itself with prudence and precaution, like the characters which it introduces. After two simple bars, which depict the grave and severe attitude of the new arrivals, the first and second violins commence a figure of staccato notes in octaves, which suggest, with

marvellous penetration, the mystery which these personages assume. It might be said that the orchestra also, like them, is concealing itself under a mask. Donna Elvira is the first to speak :

"We come in night and darkness,
By just resentment guided,
To Heaven we have confided
Our trust this woe to end."

Don Ottavio, who shares Elvira's feelings, is accompanied by the same figure of the orchestra, and beseeches Donna Anna to banish all fear. But she is dreading, for her lover's sake, the issue of this enterprise. "Our path is full of danger," says she with an anxiety that is faithfully delineated by the succession of sixths in the orchestra. This movement leads to a minuet played by the band on the stage.

Leporello opens the window, and, perceiving the three unknown maskers, draws his master's attention to them :

"Sir, see those charming maskers,
Here standing just below us!"

Don Giovanni, appearing at the window, replies:

"Hoping they may not know us,
Ask will they please ascend."

"That voice and manner, surely
'Tis he whom we are seeking!"

utter the three, aside. Leporello succeeds in attracting their attention. "What is your pleasure?" inquires Don Ottavio.

"My master sends to invite you
An hour with him to spend,"

answers Leporello, to which Don Ottavio responds:

"Thanks, we accept with pleasure."

Here occurs the celebrated and admirable trio, known generally as the "Trio of Masks."

This piece is one of the innumerable jewels which compose the diadem of the prince of music. It is marked *Adagio*, but the time-signature is ¢, which indicates that there should be but two beats in the bar.

The indications of a Mozart are not to be questioned, but accepted. That is a first principle. And then we must

endeavour to understand them. Now it is well known that in many an instance a bar of *adagio*, be it in duple, triple, or quadruple time, is composed of such a considerable number of short notes that it becomes necessary to sub-divide each beat into two or three, according to whether the time is simple or compound. This is a delicate question from the conductor's point of view, which I propose to consider in the Appendix to this book, wherein I shall speak of those concerned in the interpretation of the work, be they conductors or singers. In the present instance (the Trio of Masks) it seems to me that the imposing and solemn character of the piece *does not necessitate two beats only in the bar*, and that the alteration of 𝄵 into 𝄴 is more favourable than prejudicial to amplitude and nobility of execution. Beating two in the bar would, I believe, increase fatally the risk of dropping into a rate of movement that would be too quick to render faithfully the elevated inspiration of this piece, so majestic in its beauty.

The first two bars, with their notes detached from each other by rests, already forbode something solemn, demanding attention and contemplation.

This trio is, in effect, an invocation.

"Thou Power above, be near us,
Our hopes on Thee depend,"

say Donna Anna and Don Ottavio; and Donna Elvira, a prey to the violence of her resentment, cries:

"Thou wilt avenge and hear us,
To me Thou'lt justice send!"

Upon these few words Mozart has constructed an ensemble of such interest in the expression, such marvellous and appropriate vocal combination of the tenor and two soprano voices, such charm of melody, harmony, and instrumentation, that to hear it is truly to be enraptured. But it demands a rendering as perfect as the master's inspiration.

The entry of the two voices without accompaniment exacts irreproachable accuracy of intonation, the absence of which might compromise the whole

effect of this piece, which is only supported by a few subdued chords for the wind instruments, allowing the voice parts to manifest all their importance and clearness.

The engraved full score that I have before me is that of J. Frey, who was a publisher of 5, Place des Victoires. Unfortunately it is full of mistakes and misprints. Four important errors at least can be discovered in this trio alone.

I advise composers to impress upon their minds the flexibility of form and the purity of style with which the voices proceed and are combined in this admirable trio, so full and so noble that, notwithstanding its brevity, it gives the listener the impression of a movement of large proportions. One experiences an analogous feeling before Raphael's "Vision of Ezekiel," that celebrated picture, which, after the inspection of a few moments, appears gigantic, in spite of the smallness of its dimensions.

A brisk movement, *Allegro*, $\frac{6}{8}$, heralds the return of Don Giovanni,

already quite excited over this rural escapade. This brief *allegro* is full of heedless gaiety, which has no suspicion of the impending danger.

"Pretty maidens," says Don Giovanni, "now rest from your dancing." "Cooling drinks ye all want to refresh ye," adds Leporello. "Zerlina, be prudent!" implores Masetto. This dialogue, so full of freedom and animation, leads to a *Maestoso* in $\frac{2}{4}$ time.

Upon a lofty and dignified opening, wherein the brilliant sonority of the trumpets predominates, Leporello addresses the three masks, who have remained discreetly in the background:

> "Ye maskers fair, to greet you
> My master is advancing;"

to which the Don adds:

> "Come nearer, I entreat you,
> Welcome I say to all!"

They respond:

> "We thank your kindly greeting,
> We join your festive ball."

This reply, the music of which expresses the most exquisite politeness, leads to the beautiful ensemble "*Viva la libertà*," so noble and of such sump-

tuous sonority that its amplitude conceals the absence of development.

"Go thou," says Don Giovanni to Leporello, "and place the dancers," and again we hear the minuet that was previously played by the band upon the stage whilst Leporello was conveying his master's invitation to the three masks.

This time the minuet is assigned to the principal orchestra, while the members of the stage band divide into two groups. The first group play the strains of a new dance in $\frac{2}{4}$ time, the second group perform yet another *motif* in $\frac{3}{8}$ time—one of those contrapuntal combinations which were but child's play for the ingenuity of Mozart. The different dance rhythms of the three orchestras, the voices of the performers, the vigilant "asides" of Donna Anna, Donna Elvira, and Don Ottavio, the bad temper of Masetto, the trouble of Zerlina—all of these are expressed simultaneously, without the least confusion, and with consummate ease and dexterity. Don Giovanni is just disappearing with

Zerlina, while Leporello imprisons poor Masetto in a circle of dancers. Suddenly a cry is heard from behind the scenes. It is Zerlina, who, terrified by the advances of Don Giovanni, appeals for aid. At this moment the grandiose peroration of the important Finale to the first act commences.

Donna Anna, Donna Elvira, and Don Ottavio, who have not for a moment lost sight of the villain whom they are pursuing, appeal to the indignation of the surrounding throng. "Let us help this poor innocent!" exclaim all three. "Her cries come from this side," shriek the peasants; "force the door open!" Immediately the voices and the orchestra, in a unison that is like the surging of a furious sea, attack this door precipitately, crying, "We are near, thou art protected." At last the door is broken open, Zerlina reappears, distracted and affrighted, while Don Giovanni leads the terrified Leporello forward by the ear. "Here's the scoundrel," exclaims the Don, "just detected! Now receive thy just re-

ward. Wretch, thou diest!" This shameless ruffian, this brazen libertine, who, however, fears nothing, pretends to draw his sword and threaten his poltroon of a valet, who dares not murmur a word. The rhythm of the orchestra at this entry of Don Giovanni depicts the most consummate combination of insolence, audacity, and effrontery. After five bars there occurs an instrumental effect astonishing in its power of expression. The energetic chords of the strings, expressing the tyrant's brutality, are followed by a few notes of the wind instruments, which suggest by their timbre and arrangement the cold perspiration of Leporello. At the eleventh bar, accompanied by an orchestral figure full of determination and resolution, the authoritative tone of which is accentuated still more by the imitative passages to which it gives rise, the three masks exclaim successively:

DON OTTAVIO: Get you gone, sir!

DONNA ELVIRA: Falsehood here will not avail thee.

DONNA ANNA: Thou thyself art now ensnared.

Then they unmask, and Don Giovanni recognises all three. It is now his turn to be confused, intimidated, and abandoned by the orchestra, which only leaves to him the feeble chords of the wind instruments that have served to show the cowardice of Leporello. "Traitor!" they all exclaim, "nought can now thy fate retard." Don Giovanni is speechless, confounded by this universal execration. And then the terrible and scathing final period commences—full of threats of vengeance. It is a conflict, a tumult, a volcano of voices and orchestra, of incomparable power, although at the same time of miraculous brilliancy and simplicity. It proves that distinctness and truth of inspiration constitute a power which dispenses with prodigality or extravagance.

However, Don Giovanni takes courage again. The coda of the Finale shows him defying fortune, and still holding his head erect. "Not my custom 'tis to tremble," he cries defiantly, and upon a haughty outburst from the orchestra he draws his sword

and forces his way through the crowd, who dare not bar his progress.

Thus terminates the Finale of the first act—a truly extraordinary conception, as beautiful as it is powerful, as symphonic as it is dramatic, in which every element has its exact and complete part, wherein there is nothing lacking and nothing superfluous. It bears the impress of genius.

ACT II.—No. 13.

THE charming duet which opens this act consists of an altercation between Don Giovanni and Leporello. The latter, disgusted at the life led by his master, and which his master compels him to lead, tired of the indignities which he has to endure every day, declares that his patience is exhausted and that he is determined to leave.

"I'll not believe thee,"

says the Don,

"Whate'er thou say;"

to which Leporello responds:

"I would not grieve ye,
But I'll not stay."

The strings, with two hautboys and two horns, constitute the whole of the accompaniment, but every note has a meaning—nothing is unnecessary, and the sonority, though rich, is not overpowering. From a dramatic point of view it would be impossible for music to express this dispute between master

and man with greater accuracy of rhythm and intonation.

Then follows a brisk recitative, in which they endeavour to arrive at an understanding:

DON GIOVANNI: Leporello!

LEPORELLO: I hear, sir.

DON GIOVANNI: Come here; this will make peace between us.

LEPORELLO: What, sir?

DON GIOVANNI: Four gold pieces.

LEPORELLO: Oh! now listen. This is the last time I'll take such compensation. You'll find yourself mistaken if you think to soothe a man of my mettle, like those poor women, by coin and empty phrases.

DON GIOVANNI: There's enough on that score. Say, are you ready to do me a small service?

LEPORELLO: So you give up the women.

DON GIOVANNI: They're my first necessity of life, &c.

LEPORELLO: But what is your small service?

DON GIOVANNI: Have you seen the pretty damsel of Donna Elvira?

LEPORELLO: Not I.

DON GIOVANNI: It is your loss, then. I would fain try my fortune, and it has struck

me, as evening is upon us, 'twould make the jest new and more diverting if I put on thy cloak in this adventure.

LEPORELLO: I can see no occasion for this strange masquerading.

DON GIOVANNI: Delay me not. Delays in love are treasons.

No. 14.

I DO not think that there exists any piece of music more perfect than this trio.

Is it because I have a particular weakness for the constant and inexpressible charm which pervades it? I cannot say.

I seek in vain for any passage that is not of the most perfect beauty. I cannot find one. Musical art is displayed here in such perfection that were this the only specimen in existence, we should still possess the very essence of music. I know nothing in the world more exquisite.

Elvira is alone on the balcony. She is thinking, with the persistent fondness of true love, of him who returns her devotion by scandalous neglect.

"Oh! hush, sad heart, from grieving!
Thy days of joy are over;
The traitor with wiles deceiving,
Hath broke my heart in twain.

Such is the sentiment which fills the

first thirteen bars. Elvira accuses her heart; she reproaches it (bars 3, 4, 7, and 8) that it still beats for him who is unworthy; she resolves (bars 9, 10, and 11) to banish him from her memory; she is ashamed of her weakness (bars 12 and 13).

The varying phases of feeling could not be rendered more faithfully than is done here by means of rhythm, turn of the melody, accents, nuances, musical punctuation, harmony, and the different instrumental combinations.

The following phrase, comprising bars 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18, is an appeal to prudence and precaution:

"Softly," says Leporello, "'tis Donna Elvira; perchance you might regain her."

"Thou here awhile detain her," replies the Don; "I'll soon come back again."

The expression of these five bars is so striking that it would seem impossible to imagine anything more true. It is the absolute agreement of sound with sense.

The syncopation on the second

quaver of the bar, the figure of the bassoons imitated by the basses, and then reproduced by the flutes and clarionets, finally the mysterious accent of bar 18, all represent with marvellous accuracy the demeanour of people who seek to escape observation.

At bar 19 the figure of the first subject reappears. "Elvira, hear my sighing," murmurs Don Giovanni from beneath the balcony. The instinct of genius makes no mistake here. It is in the very phrases of Elvira that Don Giovanni finds the insolent expression of his false tenderness. This borrowing is an abuse of confidence, a musical forgery, which Don Giovanni perpetrates, uttering as his own the sincere language of his wife in order to deceive her the better. At bar 27 Elvira shudders.

"Ah! is it thou, ungrateful?"

And also in bars 27 and 28 the indignant accent of bars 9 and 10 is reproduced. But Don Giovanni appeases this transient resentment immediately. "'Tis

I," he exclaims, with an exaggerated affectation of sweetness.

"'Tis I, and fondly relying,
My love thou'lt not disdain."

"Strangely his words affect me,"

says Elvira, while Leporello mutters:

"She must be of the maddest
In him to trust again."

(Bars 32 to 36). An imitative passage of extreme elegance reproduces here the piquant and mischievous figure of bars 14 and 15. At bar 37 occurs a melodic phrase of a most caressing style, which is a foretaste of the famous serenade which Don Giovanni is about to warble to Elvira's waiting maid.

Bars 47, 48, 49, and 50 emphasise by the tremolo of the strings Elvira's resistance, whilst the wind instruments protest against the hypocritical tenderness of the voluptuary, who sings:

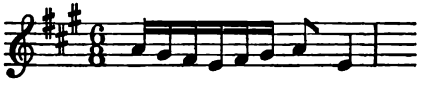
"Ah! do believe, I conjure thee."

While this proceeds, Leporello whispers to his master (bars 51 to 54),

"I cannot keep from laughing."

The syllabic descent of the voice part

has an extraordinary effect, and leads in a marvellous manner to the re-appearance of the opening subject, wherein the three voices are combined with incredible grace of form and harmony. But what is really remarkable is the manner in which Mozart has developed the figure



The first imitation begins in the octave above, then it appears in thirds, next in contrary motion, followed by a *crescendo* which leads to the *forte* at bar 72, succeeded by a *piano* staccato (bar 73) which depicts with extreme ingenuity Elvira's hesitation, Don Giovanni's snares, and Leporello's uncertainty as to the result of the shameful deception.

The ensemble terminates at the recapitulation of the music in bars 63, 64, 65, 66, and 67, followed by a coda of six bars founded upon the music of bar 12.

In the meantime Elvira descends from the balcony. The obscurity of

the night has hindered her from recognising Leporello, who, favoured by his disguise, begins to like the situation, and prepares to embrace Elvira.

Don Giovanni addresses and frightens them; then they fly. Once master of the place, he flirts with the waiting maid, singing a delightful serenade.

No. 15.

THIS serenade is a pearl of inspiration, alike in the elegance of its melody, harmony, and rhythm. Over the continuous accompaniments of the orchestra is heard a melodious figure assigned to the mandoline, the rhythmical division of which into six semiquavers and three quavers is most happy. The song itself is a masterpiece of grace and gallantry. In bars 15, 16, 17, and 18 there is a most enchanting harmonic progression; bars 20 and 21 express an intensity of longing and marvellous captivation—but someone comes. It is Masetto, who, accompanied by his friends, is seeking Don Giovanni in order to kill him.

"Who goes there?" "The servant am I of Don Giovanni." "The servant of that villain! These friends and I are seeking to kill him." "Very pleasant," says the Don; "I'll do my best to help you."

No. 16.

"Go half to left and half to right," &c.

This air, so little appreciated, is full of mischievous fun. Observe among other points the syncopated passage for all the strings at the words "*ferite, ferite!*" which is quite a stroke of genius.

The comrades separate, according to the instructions of the sham Leporello, during which time Don Giovanni retains Masetto, in order to whisper a few words to him. "Masetto, show your weapons." "They're good ones," he responds. "Look here, I have a musket; besides, there is this pistol." Thereupon Don Giovanni possesses himself of Masetto's weapons, and belabours him soundly. During the desperate cries of Masetto, who writhes with pain, Don Giovanni escapes and Zerlina appears. "Did I hear someone speaking? I thought it was Masetto. What has happened?" Masetto, groaning meanwhile, relates the circum-

stances. "Come, come," says Zerlina; "if that's the worst, there's no great harm done. Come with me home to supper, and give your faithful promise you'll never more be jealous; those bruises can be cured where love is zealous."

No. 17.—Air.

THIS number is a veritable masterpiece, of most penetrating charm and absolute beauty of form. The symphony is in itself perfection; it deserves particular examination. The listener is enraptured by the caressing figure of the violas and violoncellos

in bars 3 and 4. Bars 7 and 8 are of exquisite grace, and the repetition (upon the first beat of bar 8) of the dominant 7th chord which concludes the preceding bar produces a positively enchanting impression. Bars 17 and 18, with the shake of the first violins over the chords of the wind instruments, represent to us a coaxing and pretty smile, as does also the answer of the voice (bars 19 and 20) against the tranquil accompaniment of the strings. What could be more tender than the subject comprised in bars 24 to 32,

which leads in such a charming and simple way to the resumption of the initial phrase? And what persuasive power is displayed in the uniformity of bars 47, 48, and 49, followed by the delightful captivating glances of bars 50 and 51!

"Ah, well," says Zerlina, "the remedy for thy sufferings, dost thou know where it is? Place thy hand there upon my heart. Dost thou hear it beat?" Bars 62, 63, and 64, with the figure of the violins in octaves over the detached notes of the wind instruments, are absolutely delightful. Mozart alone possesses grace and charm in such a marvellous degree; he is irresistible. Masetto has been led away by Zerlina. Then Leporello enters, still clad in the garb of Don Giovanni, and much distressed at having to drag Madam Elvira everywhere, of whom he wishes to rid himself.

The scene changes. We are in a forest.* "It seems to me," says

* In the score of Bernhard Zugler the direction is—"A dark courtyard, with three doors, in front of Donna Anna's house."—(*Translators.*)

Leporello, "that I perceive the light of torches, which are advancing from this side." He trembles like a leaf.

"What fearest thou, my beloved?" says Elvira. "Oh, do not leave me; in mercy leave me not!"

And then commences the admirable sextet.

No. 18.

THIS stupendous piece, composed of successive episodes of the highest interest, is a model of dramatic music. From the first notes of the orchestra, in two bars only, Mozart makes us feel the terrors of the misguided Elvira in this solitary and sombre spot. The succession of thirds at the commencement seem already to spread an alarming shadow over Elvira; she has to grope her way. The whole of her phrase is accompanied by sudden starts in the orchestra, which are a striking representation of the palpitation of her heart.

Quite different is the trembling fear of Leporello. From the third bar one feels that he is only thinking of making his escape without a care as to what may happen to his unfortunate companion.

The orchestra depicts him prying into every corner, and bruising himself at every step, before he finds an out-

let. At last he succeeds, and it is marvellous to see how all of a sudden the voice and the orchestra glide away, as it were, on tip-toe. Here, again, the resemblance of the musical idea to the action on the stage is absolutely accurate.

At this point Donna Anna and Don Ottavio appear. The two instrumental bars which accompany their entrance are of sovereign beauty. There is, perhaps, no one but Mozart whose genius could concentrate with such power, yet with such slight means, the true and complete character of the personage who is to speak or act. At the entrance of Donna Anna and Don Ottavio the music assumes an incomparable nobility of expression and loftiness of accent.

The entire phrase of Don Ottavio, "*Tergi il ciglio*" ("Cease from grieving"), is of exquisite tenderness, combined with touching reserve and delicacy. It is not the accent of passion, but that of a profound and enduring love. Donna Anna's reply, "*Lascia almen alla mia pena*," is characterised

by superb dignity and elevation of sentiment; it is an inconsolable fidelity to that sorrow which speaks to her constantly of the father she has vowed to avenge. This phrase and that of Don Ottavio are accompanied by a continuous figure for the second violins, which seems to express the indissoluble bond that unites these two souls alike in tenderness and in sorrow. Suddenly a new and characteristic rhythm appears in the orchestra. The groping in the obscurity of the night is again indicated. Elvira and Leporello reappear on different sides of the stage.

"Oh! my husband, I have lost thee!"

sighs Elvira, in the utmost anxiety.

"Not for worlds I'd have her find me,"

says Leporello, in a transport of fear.

At last they both perceive an outlet, but at the moment of flight they are forced back on to the stage by the unexpected arrival of Donna Anna and Don Ottavio, Masetto and Zerlina, who take Leporello for Don Giovanni.

"Wretch! now we hold thee! Whither art going?" exclaim Zerlina

and Masetto, barring the way, while the poor devil pulls his hat over his eyes and turns up his collar to avoid recognition. The orchestra here adopts a firmly marked rhythm of thrilling energy. We feel that Leporello's arrest is imminent.

"Nought now can save thee!"

exclaim Donna Anna and Don Ottavio.

"Die thou perfidious one"

is the cry of all except Elvira, who, in supplicating tones, seeks to pacify their wrath.

"Oh, heaven, forbear ye,"

she pleads, and in the orchestra there reappears the panting rhythm that accompanied her terror and anxiety when she was seeking to recover her husband in the gloom of night. But they all indignantly reject the idea of pity. "No, no; he dies!"

Elvira implores earnestly, but in vain. The stubborn conflict between the two contrasted rhythms is strikingly expressive. In the midst of this turmoil Leporello gives himself up for

lost. With face still hidden in his cloak, he laments his fate in a tone of indescribable misery. The voice part, the strings, the wind instruments all portray him crawling at the feet of his accusers, pale with fright, a chicken-hearted poltroon with chattering teeth, while the basses of the orchestra are immovable as though paralysed. We cannot help admiring here, as elsewhere, the remarkable certainty and promptitude with which, without losing a moment, Mozart enters completely into the spirit of the characters and situation.

Leporello's whining, accompanied by the piteous supplication of the hautboys, is ended by an interrupted cadence, to which succeeds a new rhythm. Leporello makes himself known, to the stupefaction of all around. Eight bars are devoted to the expression of their surprise, then the abrupt rhythm reappears, showing the uncertainty in which each one is plunged. Finally there is a powerful *Allegro*, which forms the last section and the climax of this masterly sextet.

This *Allegro* is of colossal strength. Although there is no new time signature in the score, yet it seems to me without doubt that this movement should be beaten as ¢—that is to say, two in the bar, not four as in the preceding. A few words only are sufficient to furnish the material for this vigorous page.

"Fear and doubting quite distract me;
All my head is in confusion."

The piece is treated with the science of a consummate symphonist. We find, at the same time, the dazzling *verve* and radiant transparence which characterise the Italian genius of a Cimarosa or a Rossini.

Although Salzburg was his birthplace, Mozart was more Italian than German. Through his early travels in Italy he had assimilated its sunny temperament, imbibed its sunshine, and breathed the atmosphere of that enchanting country, which, second only to Greece, might have been the land of the gods.

In two strokes of the bow, as if by a magical transformation, the style of

the piece is completely changed. Leporello, who was a moment before crushed by a weight of terror, begins to recover himself, and contemplates the possibility of safety by flight. The agitated movement of the orchestra suggests that he has still a buzzing in his ears, and that at the first opportunity he will scuttle off as fast as his legs will carry him. His syllabic utterances, full of bewilderment, show us exactly what is passing in his mind (bars 17, 18, 19, and 20 of the *Allegro*), and especially from 27 to 35, when the unhappy servitor's confusion reaches a climax, and drives him distracted to the conclusion of his phrase, which is of irresistible effect. Sixty years after the day when I heard this immortal work for the first time I can still remember the frantic enthusiasm that was excited in the public by the powerful voice of Lablache—that actor of genius, that inimitable singer, who fired his audience with enthusiasm. But then what flashes of genius at every moment illumine the work of the master! What a thunderbolt is that

tremendous outburst of the bass voice, which splits open, so to speak, the terrible unison of the orchestra! Finally I must point out the superb vocal peroration that commences 27 bars before the end—a marvel of counterpoint and of harmonic combination.

No. 19.

LEPORELLO'S submission to the humiliating wishes of his master threatens to cost him dear, for each of the characters demands the privilege of being the first to make him expiate his faults. This unanimity furnishes material for Leporello to sing a characteristic air. It may be, speaking from a theatrical point of view, that this piece conduces to tedium in the sense that it is only a repetition of those fears of which Leporello has given such a complete exposition in the preceding sextet. Therefore it is generally omitted in the performance of the work. Finally Leporello succeeds in making his escape. Don Ottavio addresses those around him.

"Friends," says he, "this confirms me," &c.

No. 20.—Air.

THOSE who have never heard the celebrated tenor Rubini, the contemporary of Lablache and Mme. Malibran, can form no idea of the acclamations with which this famous air, "*Il mio tesoro intanto*," was received. The audience were in a frenzy of delight, and the illustrious *virtuoso* always received an encore. It must be admitted that he was an incomparable singer, and I shall never forget the religious silence with which he was listened to. Anyone who dared to breathe a word would have been remorselessly silenced. Ah! in those times people went to the theatre, not to gossip, but to listen to delightful music rendered in magnificent style by singers who were great musicians.

I should not be surprised if this air had been written at the request, or at least for the express use, of a favourite *virtuoso* in Mozart's day. Not only are the expression and the design

delightful, breathing all the freedom of a real inspiration, but the middle and the end of the song present vocal passages that can only be explained by the desire to display the singer's accomplishments. The song is, nevertheless, of exquisite sentiment and unequalled charm. The progression from bar 18 to bar 19 by the melodic figure of the voice part over the sustained notes of the horns is a genuine inspiration.

The scene now changes, and represents a cemetery. On an elevated pedestal is the marble statue of the Commandant. Don Giovanni enters, to escape, doubtless, from some pursuer, or to rid himself of the importunities of some damsel. He has scaled the cemetery wall, bursting with laughter.

"Ha, ha! most amusing," he chuckles; "they will not seek me here. What splendid moonlight; 'tis as light as in daytime! This is just such a night as suits for the chase of pretty damsels! . . . . I wish now I knew how the droll encounter ended

between that poor Elvira and Leporello." Leporello appears. "Ah!" he exclaims, "on your account I have almost been murdered."

A moment after, when the Don has made a laughing reply, a sepulchral voice, accompanied by lugubrious chords, resounds through the cemetery. "Your jest will turn to woe ere it is morning."

From this point to the end of the work every incident is highly dramatic.

"Who was speaking?" inquires Don Giovanni. "Oh," replies Leporello," some soul tormented, from the land of spirits, pays homage to your merits." The sepulchral voice continues: "Misguided, perverted; anger not the departed!"

These two utterances of the statue freeze us with terror.

To the chanting of this voice, funereal in itself, and still more so by the harmonies which sustain it, is added a particularly sinister sonority due to the appearance of the trombones, which Mozart here introduces for the first time in the opera. Combined with the

hautboys, the clarionets, and the bassoons, they produce an awe-inspiring impression.

"It must be someone hiding by yon wall laughing at us," observes the imperturbable Don. Then, raising his eyes: "Say, can that hideous structure be the Commandant's statue? That inscription I'd like to hear." The stammering Leporello reads: "I here await the vengeance decreed by Heaven upon a base assassin." "An exquisite buffoonery!" says Don Giovanni; "Tell the old man I ask him to sup with me this evening!"

No. 21.—DUET.

THIS duet, although presenting a comic aspect, is profoundly tragical, not alone by reason of the surrounding circumstances, but by the powerful and terrible contrast between the sceptical insolence of Don Giovanni and the reverent silence which should reign in the cemetery. Even the fright of Leporello ceases to be ludicrous, so much is it mingled with the dread of sacrilege. But we must enter into a detailed examination of this number to see with what marvellous intelligence Mozart has seized upon the slightest incidents of this tragi-comic scene.

In the first two bars Leporello salutes the statue of the Commandant with affected assurance. Then he respectfully delivers his master's invitation, which costs him unheard-of efforts, as may be divined by the sudden start of the violins in bar 4. At the 6th bar he has no longer strength to continue, and shrinks with

fright. At bar 9 he trembles in every limb. In bars 10, 11, 12, and 13 Don Giovanni sharply addresses him: "Proceed at once or I'll spear thee; I'll kill thee at a blow." These four bars evince the sceptical braggadocio that is amused by the valet's dismay. At bar 20 there is the same attempt at civility from Leporello as at the beginning of the duet. Bar 28, a new threat from Don Giovanni: "Die, then!" "No, no!" ejaculates Leporello; "wait a moment, wait a moment!" and he continues politely. Here commences an orchestral dialogue of marvellous penetration, which analyses the physical and the inmost details of fear. In bars 32 and 33 Leporello places himself on guard against the blow which threatens his life; he seems to call to his aid the first and second violins, who respond with prudence. But in bars 34 and 35 danger is announced by the flutes and bassoons. Greater vigilance becomes necessary (bars 36 and 37), and at bars 38 and 39 the danger becomes more acute, causing him to redouble his precautions (bars 40, 41,

42, and 43). But, alas! his efforts are in vain. The disaster is complete, in spite of all the obstacles opposed to the course of events by the dissonances of 2nds which regularly succeed one another here. The whole of this period, from bar 32 to 43, occurs over a persistent throbbing of the violas that suggests a fixed and stupefied look which makes one die with laughter until the modulation at bar 44 reveals the catastrophe. And then, upon the tremolo of the violins and a disconsolate progression for the basses, the misery of the poor wretch is at its height; he speaks no more, but quakes and whines and bleats. "Thou fool," says Don Giovanni; "what's there to scare thee?" "O master," responds the other, "look yourself and spare me! See, with his head of marble he nods." And, in a rhythm that expresses his stupefaction with astonishing veracity, the voice and the orchestra imitate the nodding of the statue. "Give answer," demands Don Giovanni resolutely of the marble figure, "if thou hear'st me. Wilt thou

come to supper?" "Yea!" replies the statue, with an inclination of the head. A sustained note of the horn accompanies this answer with frigid effect, and its prolongation after the entry of the rest of the orchestra is like a funeral knell. This time Leporello is overcome, overwhelmed; from the orchestra is heard only a nervous tremour and chattering of teeth. As for Don Giovanni, he bears himself blithely, singing:

"He hath accepted duly;
Come, let us go make ready
To meet this stony guest."

Upon a rapid *decrescendo*, full of the boastfulness of Don Giovanni and of relief for Leporello, they hasten away. Thus terminates this wonderful duet, one of the most extraordinary delineations of character and of sensations that has ever existed in dramatic music.

No. 22.—Scena and Air.

THE scene changes and now represents the apartment of Donna Anna. Don Ottavio is beside her, and implores her to hasten their union. "Ah!" he exclaims, "since faithful love or prayers cannot move thee, too well I see that thou dost not love me." "Not love thee?" she answers; "Ah! ne'er believe it. Could I accept, while my tears yet freshly flow, the blest fulfilment of my heart's dearest wishes? . . . . Seek not to persuade me till my grief is assuaged."

This recitative of Donna Anna and the *Cantabile* which succeeds it are of the most elevated sentiment, in which all the scruples of grief and all the duties of a mourner are united to the noblest expressions of tenderness. The charming *Allegretto* which follows contains several florid vocal passages (bars 20-28) that were probably introduced by Mozart to display the virtuosity of the singer, as he already

had done in the air for Don Ottavio (No. 20). What grace and feeling are shown from bar 30 to the end of the air! What ardent hope (starting from bar 35) when the dwelling upon the second beat is so passionately marked! What secret and faithful tears, what stifled sighs, in bars 40 and 41, so expressive and so tender!

No. 23.—FINALE.

WE have arrived at the last tableau of this grand and noble drama. It comprises three important scenes, which are so closely linked together that Mozart has thought proper to group them under the one word—Finale, following the plan of the Finale to the first act. The scene represents Don Giovanni's banqueting hall, and he awaits the coming of the Commandant. A band of musicians occupy the back of the stage. Don Giovanni enters, richly dressed, accompanied by a joyous and careless orchestral fanfare.

> "Ah! I see the table's ready,
> Play a gay and festive measure;
> Costly is my cup of pleasure,
> And I'll drain it to the end."

Immediately the musicians on the stage strike up a series of pieces in different rhythms, whilst Leporello brings in the dishes and the choice wines which compose the repast, all

the while freely making observations on his master's gluttonous appetite. The whole of this scene is treated with gaiety, freedom, and charming grace, and is accompanied by very varied combinations of wind instruments. Suddenly Donna Elvira appears. She makes a last effort to bring her husband to a better mode of life, and hastens, not to re-awaken any tenderness in that fickle heart, but for the purpose of saving him, should it not be too late.

The entire movement is full of tender solicitude and earnest pleading. Don Giovanni, cruel and unmoved, only replies to her grief by bitter and humiliating raillery. Elvira, her courage exhausted, yet more broken-hearted than indignant, departs, leaving him to his impenitence. She has scarcely disappeared when she utters a cry of fear. She finds herself face to face with the *man of stone*, faithful to his appointment.

"A scream! What means it?"

says Don Giovanni.

"Go and see what is the matter."

Leporello goes towards the door, and immediately reappears, pale as death. The rhythm and instrumentation of this passage strike terror to the heart.

"Oh, good sir, for Heaven's sake,
Not a step do that way take," &c.

"Coward,"

says Don Giovanni.

"If I would be enlightened I must go myself."

He seizes a torch, advances to the door, and then recedes terrified. The statue is before him. Then commences that formidable interview, than which there is perhaps nothing more imposing in dramatic music.

The appearance of the spectre is accompanied by the sinister chords which occur at the opening of the Overture. I will not repeat here what I said at the commencement of this study as to the majesty of these terrible harmonies. They reappear in this formidable scene, and are rendered, if possible, still more imposing by being heard in the presence of the mysterious being whom they portray with so much power. Obstinately

incredulous, insolently impious and sacrilegious as he is, Don Giovanni begins to comprehend that this is no laughing matter, and that Divine justice is not a subject for sport. Nevertheless he endeavours to maintain a bold front until the end. "Ah, ah!" he says,

"Truly I did not expect it,
But anew I'll sup with thee.
Leporello, serve the table;
For my guest another cover."

"Halt!" interposes the Commandant.

"Earthly food he no longer desireth
Who of heavenly food hath partaken;
Cast away from thee now all such trifling,
Heed the sentence I hither have brought."

And, whilst the beads of cold perspiration stand on Leporello's forehead, Don Giovanni addresses his visitor:

"Well, what wouldst thou? I listen."

A harmonic progression of terrible import begins here, before which one can understand that the most resolute heart trembles with fright. Lugubrious harmonies, overwhelming rhythm, fantastic and sinister instrumentation all contribute to give this relentless

accuser an inexpressible authority. The Statue says:

"Thou didst thyself invite me,
For that I must requite thee;
Then answer me,
As my guest when shall I claim thee?"

At the words "thou didst thyself invite me," the orchestra proceeds by a series of four-bar phrases, the effect of the whole progression resembling the upheaval of immense waves, which mount, mount, mount always, ready to engulf the guilty one. By a powerful *sforzando* on the first chord of each phrase, Mozart has given the impression of a raging sea, the waves of which swell in a majestic *crescendo*, breaking into foam on the shore with a solemn sound. We see that this tempest will terminate the blasphemer's career, flight being no longer possible.

"My heart is firm within me;
I have no fear; I'll come,"

says Don Giovanni.

"Give me thy hand in token,"

replies the Statue.

"Take it then,"

adds the Don.

Immediately, as if by an electric shock, the orchestra is agitated, and writhes in frightful convulsions, announcing that the catastrophe is near.

"There's time yet for repentance,"

says the Statue.

"For me there's no repentance,"

ejaculates Don Giovanni.

This grievous struggle, this horrible agony, is a sublime and heartrending painting; it is the despair of the damned in the clutches of inexorable justice. Foaming with rage, spent with fatigue, Don Giovanni falls at last, as though crushed, at the feet of the statue, who pronounces with tragic slowness the supreme sentence:

"*Alas! It is too late.*"

At the same instant dreadful spectres emerge as from a flaming crater, and inclose Don Giovanni in an infernal circle. The doomed man cries in the height of fear:

"Is Hell let loose to torture me?"

And the phantom choir reply:

"Torments eternal await thee."

Don Giovanni expires at last in the

midst of a veritable musical conflagration, a double apotheosis of heavenly justice and human genius. Here ends, at least on the stage, this colossal work, the score of which contains several more very beautiful numbers which complete the immense Finale of the last act as it flowed from the pen of Mozart, but which, after the overwhelming effect of the scene which precedes them, are superfluous from a dramatic point of view, and offer an interest that is purely musical.

It is from Leporello, the only eye-witness, that the other characters in the drama learn the tragic end of Don Giovanni. Don Ottavio beseeches Donna Anna to consent to their union. She asks for a delay of another year, as she stills mourns the loss of her father. As to Leporello, whom the death of his master has left without employment, he dreams of finding a place in some hotel. All is finished by a moral reflection, in fugal form, "Such is the end of the evil-doer."

This is evidently very cold after the

deep impression which has been made, and the exigencies of the drama here outweigh the musical beauties, however striking they may be. A genius so vast and at the same time so delicate as that of Mozart would do justice even to these superfluities. It must be borne in mind that in his time the public wanted a moral ending, explicitly setting forth the facts themselves, and that they were perhaps also desirous of knowing what became of the other characters in the piece, once delivered from him who had been the cause of all their troubles. Be that as it may, the interest gradually decreased, for, as regards the drama, justice had been done, and from this no appeal could be made.

An Appendix printed at the end of the score contains several pieces added by Mozart after the first representations of his work. One might venture to say that these additions have been demanded by those interpreters whose parts appeared somewhat meagre, for they relate principally to the three less important *rôles*—

those of Donna Elvira, Don Ottavio, and Masetto. Amongst these additions it is necessary to cite a very beautiful air for Donna Elvira,* which still maintains its place on the stage, and, above all, the admirable recitative which precedes it, a true masterpiece of declamation and accompaniment. Also there is Don Ottavio's delicious *cantilene*, "*Dalla sua pace*," which is charmingly graceful and refined.

---

* "*Mi tradi.*"

APPENDIX.

MOZART'S music, so clear, true, natural, and penetrating, is, notwithstanding, seldom perfectly performed.

What is the reason?

This is the question I propose to examine, and, if possible, to make comprehensible to my readers in this Appendix. In the execution of the works of Mozart, it is necessary, before everything, to avoid *seeking for effect*. I mean here by the word *effect*, not the impression produced on the listener by the work itself, an impression of charm, grace, tenderness, terror—in a word, all the feelings which the musical text offers, or, at least, should offer, *by itself* in the form and portrayal—but that *exaggeration* of accent, light and shade, and time which too often lead the executants to substitute their own ideas for those of the author, and to distort the nature of his thoughts instead of reproducing them simply

and faithfully. When a great musician has written a work, and such a musician as Mozart, the least that one can do him the honour to suppose is that he has *wished* to write *what* he has written, and there are very strong presumptive reasons for saying that in trying to express *more* than Mozart has done they would express *less*.

What would be thought of an engraver who should replace by outlines and figures of his own those of a picture by Raphael?

Does an actor dare to introduce a phrase, a verse, a word of his own invention in a work of Racine or Molière?

Why should the language of *sounds* be treated with less respect than that of words?

Is the truth of expression less an obligation in one than the other?

What remains of a musical thought if executants distort accents, nuances, and the respective values of notes? Absolutely nothing. Many singers do not give the least thought to these matters. Preoccupied as they too

often are with the idea of gaining admiration for their voices, they sacrifice without scruple *the demands of expression to the success of the virtuoso,* and the lasting triumph of truth to the empty and evanescent gratification of vanity.

It is hardly necessary to say that in thus permitting personal whims to replace obedience to the text, a gulf is created between the author and the auditor. What meaning is there, for example, in a prolonged pause on certain notes, to the detriment of the rhythm and the balance of the musical phrase? Do they reflect for an instant on the perpetual irritation caused to the listener — to say nothing of the insupportable monotony of the proceeding itself. And then what becomes of the orchestral design in this constant subordination to the singer's caprice? It is impossible to draw up a complete catalogue of abuses and licences of all sorts which in the execution alter the nature of the sense and compromise the impression of a musical phrase.

One may be permitted to remind musicians that want of attention to the following points causes nearly all the usual infractions of the rules of art and of good taste:

The rate of movement.
The light and shade.
The breathing.
The pronunciation.
The conductor.

I.—THE RATE OF MOVEMENT.

WHENEVER the real expression, the true character, the just sentiment of a piece depends upon the ensemble, the most important, the most indispensable condition is, undoubtedly, the exact and scrupulous observance of the time in which the composer has conceived it. The speed determines its general *character*, and, as this *character* is an essential part of the idea, to alter the time is to alter the idea itself to such a degree as to destroy sometimes the sense and expression.

It cannot be denied that a musical phrase may be absolutely travestied and disfigured by an excess of slowness or rapidity of the time in which it is performed. I could quote many examples. Here is one which I shall never forget, it shocked me so much. At a ball given by the Minister of State during the winter of 1854-55, if I mistake not, the old *contredanse*

(quadrille) was still in existence, or, rather, was just dying out. All of a sudden I heard the orchestra strike up the first figure. Horror! abomination! sacrilege! It was the sublime air of the High Priest of Isis in Mozart's "Il Flauto Magico" falling from the height of its solemn and sacred rhythm into the grotesque stamping of satin shoes and patent leather boots. I fled as if I had the devil at my heels!

However, a very incomplete idea of the importance of the musical movement would be formed if it were considered purely from a mathematical point of view only, and I shall now endeavour to consider the circumstances which might cause mathematical differences in the time, the music nevertheless retaining its identity of character and expression.

1st. The size of the building in which the performance is held. This is a question of acoustics and proportion. In a very large hall, a movement would bear to be taken less quickly than if executed in a smaller one.

2nd. The style of the executant, the amplitude of delivery, and the production of the voice.

I will cite here two famous examples—Duprez and Faure. When Duprez came to the Opera and filled the place which Nourrit had occupied with so much brilliancy and distinction for fifteen years, it was a complete revolution in lyrical declamation. Nourrit was a great artist; the dignity of his character, the culture of his intelligence, a constant care of truth in his varied and numerous *rôles* of the *répertoire* of that period—these qualities obtained for him not only the favour and esteem of the public, but an influence at the theatre which was felt by all around him. With rare talent as an artist he played the principal parts in all the grand operas, from "La Vestale," "Masaniello," and "Guillaume Tell," to "Robert le Diable," "La Juive," and "Les Huguenots," in the last of which he created the part of Raoul de Nangis, stamping it with an ineffaceable impression. His powerful acting so held

his audience, that he succeeded in making them forget that his voice was a little thin and guttural, and that he used the falsetto register too frequently. The coming of Duprez took everybody by storm. I was present at his *début*, which took place in the part of Arnold ("Guillaume Tell"). Duprez returned from Italy preceded by a great reputation and the well-known story of the chest C, which was to raise a tempest of applause at the end of the celebrated air of the last act. It was unnecessary to wait till then to know that the success of the great singer was assured. In two bars it was made. From the first verse of the recitative, "Il me parle d'hymen! Jamais, jamais le mien!" one felt that this was a transformation in the art of singing, and when Duprez finished the phrase of the duet in the second act, "Oh, Mathilde! idole de mon âme," there was a frenzy of enthusiasm throughout the house. He had a breadth of declamation and volume of tone which captivated the hearer, and the admirable melodies of

the great Italian master shone with a new lustre owing to the marvellous notes of his voice. The use of the chest voice and the amplitude of his declamation, permitted Duprez to take the time slower than his illustrious predecessor had done without appearing to alter it, so well did he know how to captivate the ear by the fulness of his voice, and to move the audience by his dramatic powers. Faure in our day has been a new and striking example of the same thing. He produces the sounds with such richness and fulness, he gives them such interest by a continual modulation of the tone (and occasionally, perhaps, a little more than is necessary), that one forgets the duration which he gives them, and which is hidden under his admirable method and his unrivalled pronunciation. To these illustrious names must be added those of Pauline Viardot, Miolan Carvalho, Gabrielle Krauss, the brothers De Reszke, Lassalle, and others who have understood the importance of declamation. But the preceding remarks on time have

nothing to do with the accent, which is also, from an entirely different point of view, a matter of great importance. Unfortunately, many singers of to-day do not sufficiently consider this subject, great detriment being thus caused to the music and considerable annoyance to both composer and conductor.

Much might be said upon this topic. I must be satisfied to touch lightly upon it, as this is not the place to set forth a complete course of musical education.

II.—THE BAR (*La Mésure*).

DISREGARD of the accent is one of the modern faults, it entirely destroys the musical equilibrium. Many singers regard the bar as an insupportable yoke, and as an obstacle to feeling and expression. They think that it makes machines of them, and that it takes away all grace, charm, warmth, and freedom in performance. Now it is exactly the reverse. The bar, instead of being the enemy to the musical phrase, gives protection and freedom to it. It is not difficult to demonstrate this. Let us consider it first as a principle of unanimity of performance. The essential character of the bar is the equality of the duration of the beats which compose it. If, then, inequality is introduced, the unity which is essential to the phrase, and which alone permits one to feel it, is destroyed.

2nd. If the misrepresentation of the bar is injurious to such an extent upon an isolated phrase, what confusion will it not bring in the execution of an ensemble? The effect would be indescribable.

3rd. There is still the orchestra to be considered. It presents a multitude of figures of accompaniment subjected to the laws of accent, and from which laws there can be no deviation under penalty of abominable confusion. Sixty or eighty musicians cannot be left in a state of constant uncertainty. Deprived of the word of command, they will not know what to do in order to avoid disorder and cacophony.

But the bar, which is a principle of order with regard to the rhythm, is no less essential to the expression. The idea of the bar includes that of rhythm, which is its characteristic sub-division.

To neglect the bar and its regulating influence injures the rhythm and the prosody.

These few reflections are sufficient to give an idea of the detrimental

effects which disregard of the accent may cause to musical works. Another question of extreme importance in the matter of musical expression is that of light and shade.

III.—The Nuances.

We understand by the word "nuance" the degree of intensity of any sound, whether it be produced by a voice or instrument. That is to say, the gradations of tone play in musical art a part analogous to that of proportion in the art of painting.

We see by this how the true observation of the nuances is indispensable to the faithful rendering of a musical phrase, and to what degree the thoughtless caprice of the executant can alter the sense and character to such an extent as to make it unrecognisable by substituting for the author's intentions and indications the nuances and accents of pure fancy. It is here that the independence of the singer most frequently finds the opportunity of giving free scope to his imagination, and Heaven knows how he uses it.

It matters little whether the accent be neglected, whether the prosody be sacrificed, whether the melodic figure

be altered, or whether affectation destroys the logical and natural movement of the musical phrase, provided that the *sound* be noticed and applauded *for itself*. These performers are entirely mistaken as to the function and *rôle* of the *voice*. They take the *means* for the *end*, and the servant for the master. They forget that fundamentally there is but one art, *the word*, and one function, *to express*, and that consequently a great singer ought to be first of all a great *orator*, and that is utterly impossible without absolutely truthful accent. When singers, especially on the stage, think only of displaying the voice, they should be reminded that that is a sure and infallible means of falling into *monotony;* truth alone has the privilege of infinite and inexhaustible variety.

IV.—The Breathing.

This important question of the breathing may be regarded under two distinct aspects—the one purely physical, the other purely expressive. Under the first it devolves upon the composer to write in such a way as not to exceed the power of the respiratory organs, under the penalty of seeing his musical phrase divided into fragments, which would disfigure it. But, as regards the expression, it is another thing. Here it is prosody and punctuation which determine and regulate the expression. Unfortunately this rule is seldom observed. A singer does not scruple to divide a section of a phrase, often even a word, in order to take breath, for the sake of a sound to which they wish to give exaggerated power and duration, to the detriment of the musical sense and the prosody, which ought to be the first consideration. It is ridiculous to introduce, for

example, a respiration between "my" and "love" in the phrase

"To thee I give my love"

—a respiration which nothing can justify; but then the singer has had the pleasure of showing off on a short syllable until all the breath has been used, just for the sake of gaining a noisy demonstration of conventional applause. Such licences simply disfigure the form of the musical idea, and are revolting to common sense.

V.—THE PRONUNCIATION.

THERE are two special points to observe in the pronunciation.

1st. It should be clear, neat, distinct, exact; that is to say, the ear ought not to be left in any uncertainty as to the word pronounced.

2nd. It should be expressive; that is to say, *to paint in the mind the feeling* enunciated by the word itself. All that concerns clearness, neatness, and exactness may be more properly classed as *articulation*. Articulation relates to the due formation of every sound in the word. Everything else may be described as *pronunciation*. It is by the latter that we make the word picture the thought, the feeling, the passion which it envelops. In short, the function of articulation is to form the material sounds of a word, whereas that of pronunciation is to reveal its inner meaning. Articulation gives clearness to the word; pronunciation gives it eloquence. True

instinct, though lacking culture, can make all these distinctions apparent. One cannot insist too much upon the value and interest which clear articulation and expressive pronunciation give to singing, so important are they. By the force of expression, they exercise such a power over the listener that they make him forget the insufficiency or the mediocrity of the vocal organ; whilst the absence of these qualities, though the voice may be the most beautiful in the world, leaves him unmoved.

The foregoing considerations show how much depends upon simplicity, sincerity, and freedom from all preoccupation as to personal success.

Can there be a higher ambition for a performer than to be an artist capable and worthy of interpreting Mozart's music, so pure and so true; or a more noble dream than to inspire love for the works of such a master, and thus contribute to the sacred and salutary devotion to the true and the beautiful? But, alas! in art, as in everything else, the abnegation of self

is rare, although it is the condition of all true greatness.

It remains only to speak now of the conductor, who plays such an important part in the performance.

VI.—THE CONDUCTOR.

THE conductor is the *centre* of the musical performance. This word, in itself, shows the importance and responsibility of his functions.

First of all, the unity of the movement, without which there is no possible ensemble, is in the hands of the conductor. That is self-evident, and does not need demonstration. It is on this point most necessary, and at the same time most easy, for the conductor to make his authority felt; his *bâton* is one of command.

But, apart from the ensembles, how often does this command degenerate into servitude? What compliance there is to the caprices of the singers, and what fatal neglect of the interests of art and the real value of the works performed!

However, it is not necessary that the rule of the conductor should amount to an unyielding and mechanical rigidity, which would be the absurd triumph of the *letter* over the *spirit*.

A conductor who would be like an

inflexible metronome throughout a musical composition would be guilty of an excess of strictness as unbearable as an excess of laxity.

The great art of the conductor is that power which may be called suggestive, and which elicits from the singer an unconscious obedience, whilst making him believe that it is his own will that he follows. In short, the singer must be persuaded and not constrained. Power is not in the will, but in the intelligence; it is not questioned, but it is felt. It behoves the conductor, then, to understand, and to make others understand, how much he will concede to them in the matter of time without altering the character of the movement. It is his duty to seize upon the difference between elasticity and stiffness, and to atone, without abruptness, for any momentary retardation by an imperceptible return to the normal and regular time.

It is also essential that the conductor should not mistake precipitation for warmth—the result would be to sacrifice the rhythmical power of

the declamation and the fulness of tone. It is commonly imagined that a *crescendo* ought to be *hurried*, and a *diminuendo* gradually slackened. Now, it is precisely the contrary which is nearly always the case. It stands to reason that one feels inclined to lengthen a sound in augmenting its intensity, and *vice versâ*. But this is not all.

It is an error to think that the conductor can make himself entirely understood by means of the *bâton* or the bow which he holds in his hand. His whole demeanour should instruct and animate those who obey him. His attitude, his physiognomy, his glance should prepare the singers for that which is demanded of them; his expression should cause them to anticipate his intentions, and should enlighten the executants.

Yet it is not necessary for him to indulge in wild gesticulations. True power is calm, and when the poet of antiquity wished to express the might of Jupiter, he represented him as making the whole of Olympus tremble at his nod. In short, the conductor

is the ambassador of the master's thought; he is responsible for it to the artists and to the public, and *ought to be* the living expression, the faithful mirror, the incorruptible depositary of it. One could write volumes upon the important duties of a conductor, and I certainly hold that these duties should be made the object of a regular course of lectures, the plan for which might be clearly indicated in the general musical education given by our conservatoires. Here is a want which I hope may be supplied in the future. Besides the considerable benefit which would accrue to the musical works, this would be an opening offered to a whole group of special aptitudes, which are as rare as they are necessary; it would also be a serious guarantee of authority to the artists.

And now, having written this book in all sincerity, I rely upon that of the reader to form an opinion of it. My only wish and hope has been to serve the interests of an art to which I have consecrated my life.

Printed by HORACE COX, Windsor House, Bream's Buildings, E.C.