

starts off, but settling down to about eight or ten knots per hour, when it gets warmed up to its work. This is the old "Nantucket sleigh-ride." The whale having tired itself by running, the boat is hauled up by the line, and side by side the crew, with hair standing on end, and the affrighted whale, startled anew by the close proximity of so strange a load, rush through the surging and fast-receding waters. The officer "gets a set" with his hand-lance, and plunges about five or six feet of cold iron into the lungs of the victim, and perseveres without ceasing in the up and down motions, familiarly known as "churning," as the boat persistently clings to the whale, until the spout of the unfortunate cetacean is tinged with the crimson of its own life-blood. The muscles of the strong arms now relax upon the lance, the boat is laid off, and the dying whale swims round and round in an unbroken circle. This is the "flurry." Death is now merely a question of time. The blood ejected through the spiracles now becomes as thick as tar. It is not only a belief of whalers, but it is usually the fact, that the whale, during its dying moments, so times its encircling path as to place its

head to the sun. It now makes a heavy lurch, the sea is lashed into a maëlstrom of bloody water, and the ponderous whale rolls heavily on its side, or partly on its back, with the fin projecting above the water. This is "finning out." A one-sided jury would say that the whale died of hemorrhage of the lungs. To use a paradoxical expression, some dead whales are not always dead. It may be in a comatose state, but averse to vivisection; and when the men again approach it, and cut holes through the lips to make the line fast, to tow it to the vessel, a demolished boat or loss of life and limbs may be the reward. Hence the more cautious whalers "prick his eye," and if the whale does not flinch, it is supposed to be dead. Several boats take their position in line like a tandem team of horses; the tow-ropes are properly adjusted, and the men with merry boat-song begin the laborious and monotonous task of towing the whale to the vessel. A dead whale may be towed more easily head first, and it is also worthy of mention that a dead whale, when cast adrift, will beat to windward, the natural motions of the flukes having a tendency to propel the body.

James Temple Brown.

FRANZ LISZT.



HE young men of to-day can hardly imagine the *éclat*, the magical prestige, with which the name of Liszt flashed upon the horizon of the young musicians of the early part of the Second Empire—a

name so foreign to the ears of a Frenchman, sharp and hissing as the edge of a sword that cuts through the air, torn by the Slavic Z as by a stroke of lightning. The artist and the man seemed to belong to fairyland. After having embodied on the piano the spirit of romanticism, Liszt, leaving behind him the glittering trail of a meteor, disappeared for a while behind the curtain of clouds which then veiled Germany—a Germany different from the one of our day; a mass of little kingdoms and independent duchies, bristling with turreted castles, and preserving even in its Gothic script the look of the middle ages, every trace of which had disappeared from France, in spite of the efforts of the poets to restore its beauty.

The greater part of the pieces which Liszt published seemed beyond the possibility of any executant but himself, and were so indeed, if played according to the old methods, which required perfect immobility of the whole body, the elbows close to the side, and allowed only a

limited action of the forearm. It was known that at the court of Weimar, disdainful of his former success, he was occupied with serious composition, dreaming of a renovation of art—a purpose which excited much anxious comment, as is always the case when a new world is to be explored or an accepted tradition broken. Moreover, the impressions left by Liszt in Paris gave ample ground for all sorts of surmises. Even the truth did not always appear probable when it was told about him. It was said that at a concert of the Conservatory, after the "Pastoral Symphony" of Beethoven had been performed, he had dared to play the whole composition over again alone, the amazement of the audience being quickly replaced by a tremendous enthusiasm. Again, it was said that another day, bored with the docility of the public,—tired of seeing this lion, ready to tear to pieces any who displeased it, forever fawning at his feet,—he determined to rouse it, and amused himself by coming late to a concert at the Italiens, and calling on some fine ladies in their boxes, laughing and chatting, until the lion began to growl and roar. At last he seated himself at the piano, when the fury abated, the only demonstrations being those of pleasure and admiration.

Many things more are told of him, which are hardly within the limits of this article. Only

too much has been said of his success with the women of his day, his taste for princesses, and all the exterior phases of his personality. It is high time for us to take account with more care of his serious side, and of the important rôle which he played in contemporary art.

The influence of Liszt on the destiny of the piano was immense. I can best compare it with the revolution brought about by Victor Hugo in the mechanism of the French language. This influence was more powerful than that of Paganini in the world of the violin, because Paganini dwelt always in an inaccessible region where he alone could live, while Liszt, starting from the same point, deigned to descend into the practical paths where any one could follow who would take the trouble to work seriously. To play like him on the piano would be impossible. As Olga Janina said, in her strange book, his fingers were not human fingers; but nothing is easier than to follow the course he marked out, and in fact every one does follow it whether he knows it or not. The great development of sonority of tone, with the means of obtaining it, which he invented, has become the indispensable condition and very foundation of modern execution.

These means are of two kinds: the one pertaining to the technical methods of the performer, especially gymnastic exercises; the other to the style of writing for the piano, which Liszt completely transformed. Beethoven, scornfully ignoring the limits of nature, imposed his tyrannous will upon the strained and overtaxed fingers, but Liszt, on the contrary, takes them and gently exercises them in their own natural direction, so that the greatest amount of effect they are capable of producing may be obtained; and, therefore, his music, so alarming at first sight to the timid, is really less difficult than it appears; for by hard work the whole body is brought into play and talent is rapidly developed. We owe to him also the invention of picturesque musical notation, thanks to which, by an ingenious disposition of the notes, and an extraordinary variety in presenting them to the eye, the author contrived to indicate the character of a passage, and the exact way in which it should be executed. To-day these refined methods are in general use.

But above all we owe to Liszt the introduction on the piano of orchestral effects and of sonority, so far as these are possible on that in-

strument. His method of attaining this end—a method not indeed within the reach of every one—consists in substituting in the transcription a free translation for a literal one. Transcription thus understood and practised becomes in a high degree artistic; the adaptations by Liszt for the piano of the symphonies of Beethoven—above all that of the Ninth for two pianos—may be regarded as masterpieces in this line. To be just, and to give every one his due, it must be said that the colossal work of arranging Beethoven's nine symphonies for the piano had already been attempted by Kalkbrenner, who deserves great credit for it; and although he was not strong enough for the task,



FROM A PHOTOGRAPH IN POSSESSION OF MME. MUNKACSY.

LISZT'S LAST WALK, AUGUST 15, 1886.

this attempt very probably gave the first start to Liszt's glorious work.

Liszt, undeniably the incarnation of the genius of the modern pianoforte, saw his compositions, for this very reason, discredited and spoken of scornfully as "pianist's music." The same disdainful title might be applied to the work of Robert Schumann, of which the piano is the soul; and if no one has thought of reproaching him, it is because Schumann, in spite of great effort in that direction, was never a brilliant performer; he never left the heights of "legitimate" art to revel in picturesque illustrations on the operas of all coun-

tries. But Liszt, at that time, without caring what was said of him, scattered lavishly and at random the pearls and diamonds of his overflowing imagination.

Let me say in passing that there is a great deal of pedantry and prejudice in the scorn which people often affect for works like the "Fantaisie" on "Don Juan," or the "Caprice" on the "Faust" waltz. There is more talent and real inspiration in such works than in many compositions we see produced every day, more serious in appearance, but of empty pretentiousness. Has it ever occurred to any one that the greater part of the celebrated overtures,—those of "Zampa," "Euryanthe," and "Tannhäuser," for example,—are really only fantasies on the motives of the operas which they precede? By taking the trouble to study the fantasies of Liszt, it will easily be seen to what degree they differ from any sort of *pot-pourris*—pieces where tunes of an opera taken at random only serve as a canvas for arabesque, garlands, and ribbons. It will be seen that the author knew how to draw the marrow from any bone; that his penetrating genius knew how to discover and fructify an artistic germ, however hidden under vulgarities and platitudes. When he attacks a great work like "Don Juan" he brings out the principal beauties, and adds a commentary which helps us to understand and appreciate its marvelous perfection and perennial youth.

The ingenuity of his pianoforte combinations is simply prodigious, as the admiration of all who cultivate the piano testifies; but I think perhaps the fact has not been sufficiently noticed that in the least of his arrangements the intelligence of the composer makes itself felt, the characteristic "earmark" of the great musician is apparent, for an instant.

Applied to such a pianist, who draws from the piano the soul of music, the term "pianist" ceases to be an insult, and "pianist's music" becomes a synonym for musician's music, and indeed who, in our time, has not felt the powerful influence of the piano? This influence began before the piano itself—with the well-tempered clavichord of Sebastian Bach. From the day when the "temperament"¹ of the scale introduced the interrelation of sharps and flats,

¹ TEMPERAMENT.—In music, the principle or system of tuning in accordance with which the tones of an instrument of fixed intonation are tuned, or those of the voice or of an instrument of free intonation are modulated in a given case. The relative pitch of the tones of an ideal scale may be fixed with mathematical precision. An instrument tuned so as to produce such a scale, or a voice or instrument using the intervals of such a scale, is said to be tuned or modulated in *pure* or *just temperament*. So long as these tones only are used, no further adjustment is necessary. But if modulation be attempted, so that some other tone than the original one becomes the key-note, one or more intercalary tones are required,

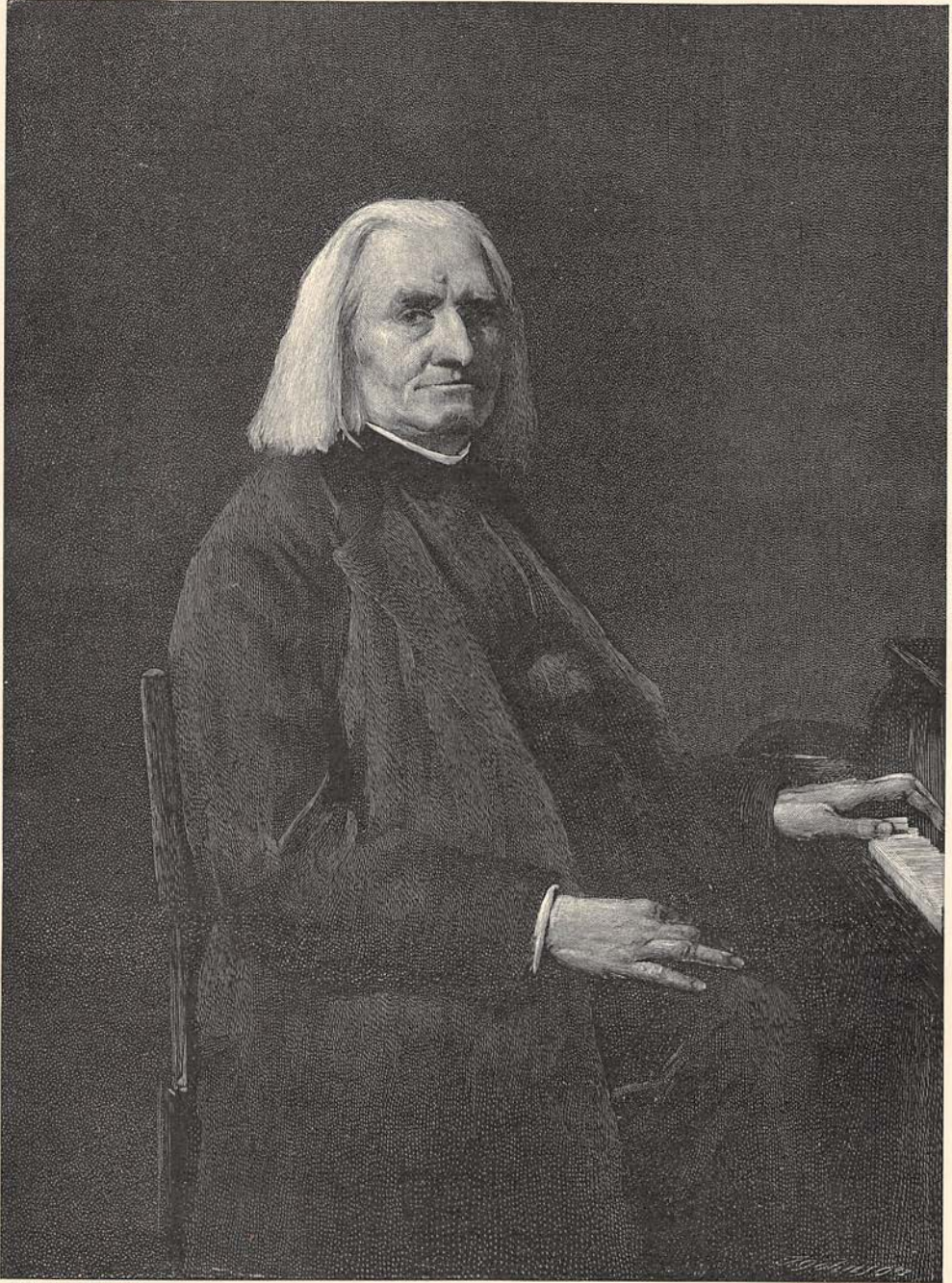
and made the practice of all keys allowable, the spirit of the clavier entered the world. The invention of hammer mechanism, secondary from the point of view of art, has produced the progressive development of a sonority unknown to the clavichord, and immense material resources which, by the introduction of the unlimited use of the heretical enharmonic system, have made the piano the devastating tyrant of music.²

From this heresy, to be sure, proceeds nearly the whole of modern art. It has been too rich in results to allow us to deplore it, but it is nevertheless a heresy, destined to disappear some day,—a day probably far distant, but inevitable,—in consequence of the same revolution that gave it birth. What will remain then of the art of to-day? Perhaps Berlioz' alone, who, not having used the piano, had an instinctive aversion to enharmonic writing. In this he is the opposite of Richard Wagner, who pushed this principle to its extreme limits, and who was the embodiment of the enharmonic system. The critics, and in their turn the public, have nevertheless put Wagner and Berlioz in the same box—a forced conjunction that will astonish future ages.

Without wishing to linger too long over the fantasies which Liszt wrote on the motives of operas (there is a whole library of them), we should not forget to mention his "Illustrations du Prophète," which comes to a climax as dazzling as it is unexpected, or the "Fantaisie and Fugue" for organ on the chorale "Ad nos, ad salutarem undam." This last is a link between the arrangements, more or less free, and the original work of the author. It is a gigantic composition, the performance of which lasts not less than forty minutes, and it has this distinctive characteristic, that the theme does not once appear alone in its integrity. It runs through the whole, but below the surface, just as the sap circulates through a tree. The organ is treated in an unusual way, which greatly augments its resources. The author seems to have foreseen by intuition the recent improvements in the instrument, just as Mozart in his "Fantaisie and Sonata in C Minor" divined the modern piano. A colossal instrument easily handled, a performer thoroughly familiar with the mechanism of the organ and piano, are in-

and the relative pitch of some of the original tones has to be altered. To fit an instrument for varied modulations, therefore, either a large number of separate tones must be provided for, or the pitch of some of them must be slightly modified, so that a single tone may serve equally well for either of two or more tones whose pitches are theoretically different.—THE CENTURY DICTIONARY.

² ENHARMONIC.—Pertaining to a use of notes which, though differing in name and in position on the staff, refer on instruments of fixed intonation, like the pianoforte, to identical keys or tones.—THE CENTURY DICTIONARY.



PAINTED BY MUNKACSY.

ENGRAVED BY T. JOHNSON.

FRANZ LISZT.

dispensable to the proper execution of this piece, which means that the opportunities of listening to it under good conditions are exceedingly rare.

The "Soirées de Vienne," the "Rhapsodies Hongroises," although built upon borrowed themes, are genuine artistic creations, where the author manifests a most subtle talent. The Rhapsodies may be considered as illustrations of that curious and interesting book written by Liszt on the music of the gipsies. It is entirely wrong to consider them merely brilliant pieces. In them we find a reconstruction and, if we may so say, a civilizing of a national music of the highest artistic interest. The composer did not aim at difficulties (which did not exist for him), but at a picturesque effect, and a vivid reproduction of the outlandish orchestra of the Tziganes (gipsies). Indeed, in his works for the piano he never makes virtuosity an end, but always a means. If not judged by this standard his music becomes the reverse of what it was intended to be, and is rendered unintelligible.

It is a strange fact that this great artist and pianist has not poured his genius into his original pianoforte compositions. Excepting always the magnificent "Sonata,"—a bold and stirring work which has no equal in contemporary music,—Schumann and Chopin easily outdo him in this field. Nevertheless the "Méditations Religieuses" and the "Années de Pèlerinage" contain some beautiful pages; yet the work is incomplete—the wing seems to beat and break against an invisible dome, one knows not how; the author seems to exhaust himself trying to reach an inaccessible ideal; and we feel a sense of uneasiness hard to define, a painful anxiety followed by insuperable weariness. I should except the "Scherzo" and "March,"—a dazzling and bewildering wild huntsman's ride, the execution of which, unhappily, is not easy to attain,—and the triumphant "Concerto in E Flat"—but in this last the orchestra comes to the rescue, the piano alone being insufficient. The same may be said of the "Mephisto Waltz" (No. 1), written at first for the piano, but with the ultimate purpose of arranging it for the orchestra, which was done later.

In the "Études" especially, as with Cramer and Clementi, we find the grand style and the great musician. These *études* the composer probably did not consider of as much importance as some others of his works for the piano. One of them, "Mazeppa," easily passed from piano to orchestra, and became one of the "Poèmes Symphoniques."

In these celebrated poems, so variously criticized, together with the symphonies "Dante" and "Faust," we are in the presence of a new Liszt—the Liszt of Weimar, the great, the true, whom the smoke of the incense burned on the altars of the piano had too long concealed from

view. Boldly entering the path opened by Beethoven with the "Pastoral Symphony," and so brilliantly trodden by Berlioz, he leaves the worship of pure music for that of so-called "program music," which claims to depict clearly and definitely both characters and feelings. Plunging headlong into harmonic novelties, he dares what none other has dared before him; and if it sometimes chances that, to use the ingenious euphemism of one of his friends, he passes the limits of the beautiful, yet even here he makes some happy hits, and also some brilliant discoveries. The mold of the ancient symphony and the hoary overture is broken, and he proclaims the reign of music freed from all rules except those only which the author himself makes to fit the environment in which he has chosen to work.

With the orchestral sobriety of the classic symphony, he contrasts all the wealth of the modern orchestra, and, as he has by marvels of ingenuity reproduced this wealth on the piano, he now, turning the brilliant light of his virtuosity upon the orchestra, creates a new orchestration of infinite richness, by making use of the hitherto unexplored resources which the more perfect manufacture of instruments, and the increased development of technic in the performers, put at his command. The methods of Richard Wagner are often cruel. He does not take into account the fatigue which results from superhuman efforts. He constantly demands the impossible. One must get through it in the best way possible. The methods of Liszt are not open to this criticism. He demands of the orchestra all that it can give, but no more.

Like Berlioz, Liszt made expression the object of instrumental music, which tradition consecrated to the worship of form and impersonal beauty. Not that Liszt neglected these things. Where do we find purer form than in the second part of "Faust" ("Gretchen"), in the "Purgatory" of Dante, or in "Orpheus"? But it is in the exactitude and intensity of his expression that Liszt is really incomparable. His music speaks, and will be heard, unless the ears are wilfully closed beforehand by prejudice. It utters the inexpressible.

Perhaps he made the mistake (very excusable according to my way of thinking) of believing too implicitly in his own creation, of wishing to impose it on the world too soon. Owing to the attraction of an enormous, almost magical, prestige, and a personal magnetism which few men possessed in a like degree, he gathered about him and fanaticized a cluster of young and ardent minds, blindly devoted to him, who asked nothing better than to take part in a crusade against old dogmas, and to preach the new gospel. These hair-brained fellows, who feared no exaggeration, treated

the symphonies of Beethoven, with the exception of the Ninth, as useless old rubbish, and everything else in like manner.

Thus they disgusted, instead of carrying with them, the great mass of musicians and critics. When these wars were at their height, Liszt, battling proudly with his small but valiant band, became infatuated with the works of Richard Wagner, and brought out "Lohengrin" triumphantly on the Weimar stage,—a work which no theater had ventured to produce, although it had already been published. In a pamphlet, "Tannhäuser" and "Lohengrin," which made an immense impression, he announced himself as the prophet of a new doctrine. It would be difficult to give any idea at the present day of the tremendous efforts he used, together with all his enormous influence, to spread the works of Wagner, and to place them in the theaters hitherto most violently opposed to them. We are free to suppose that Liszt, knowing himself to be powerless alone to move the world, dreamed of an alliance with the great reformer, in which each would have had his part to play, the one reigning on the stage, the other in the concert-hall; for Wagner proclaimed everywhere that he wrote works of a complex nature, in which music was only a part, forming with poetry and scenic representation an indivisible whole. But Liszt, great and generous soul, always ready to devote himself to a noble cause, had not taken into account the domineering spirit of his dangerous and colossal protégé, who was incapable of sharing the empire of the world even with his best friend.

We know now, since the publication of the correspondence between Liszt and Wagner, on which side the devotion was. The great artistic movement started by Liszt was turned against him: his works were thrown out of the concert-hall to make room for those of Wagner, which, according to the theories of the author himself, were written especially for the theater, and could not be heard elsewhere without danger of becoming unintelligible. Taking up again the arguments of the classic school, the Wagnerian critics undermined the foundations of the works of Liszt, by preaching the dogma of pure music, and declaring descriptive music heretical. Now it is evident that one of the greatest forces of Wagner, one of his most powerful means of affecting the public, had been precisely this development of descriptive music, carried to its extreme limits. He performed almost a miracle in this line, when he succeeded during the whole of the first act of "The Flying Dutchman" in making us hear the sound of the sea without interfering with the dramatic action. He has created a whole world in this style. How are we to explain such a contradiction? In a way as in-

genious as it is simple. "Yes," they say, "music has a right to be descriptive, but only on the stage." Miserable sophism! On the contrary, thanks to scenic representation, to the "stage setting," and so on, the theater is the very place where music can without great sacrifice be entirely devoted to the expression of sentiment. What becomes of the overtures and the fragments of Wagner's works when they are performed in the concert-hall, if they are not descriptive instrumental music, otherwise called "program music"? What, then, is the prelude to the third act of "Tannhäuser," which claims to relate all that takes place in the *entr'acte*, to give a history of the pilgrimage to Rome and of the malediction of the Pope? And what signifies the deference shown by Wagnerians to the works of Berlioz, who did not write a note of "pure music"? Enough has been said on this subject. The spectacle of ingratitude and dishonesty is too disheartening to dwell upon long.

Let us rather ascend the luminous summits of the works of the master, regretfully passing by many compositions of great interest, such as the marches, choruses, the "Prometheus," etc., in order to contemplate the great religious compositions into which he has poured his purest genius—the "Masses," the "Psalms," the "Christus," and the "Legend of St. Elizabeth." In these serene regions the "pianist" disappears. A strong tendency to mysticism, which shows itself from time to time in his compositions, finds here its place and its entire development. It is present even in the piano pieces, where it produces sometimes a strange effect, as in "Les Jeux d'Eau de la Ville d'Este," in which harmless cascades become finally the dayspring of life, the fountain of grace, with scriptural quotations.

To the surprise of many Liszt has made use of the voice with consummate art, and he has studied thoroughly and treated with perfect correctness Latin prosody. The great composer of fantasies is a faultless liturgist. The perfumes of incense, the play of colors in stained-glass windows, the gold of the sacred vessels, the wonderful splendor of the cathedral, are reflected in his masses with deep sentiment and penetrating charm. The Credo in his mass composed for the cathedral in Gran, with its magnificent ceremonial, its bold and beautiful harmonies, and its powerful coloring, its dramatic effect, never theatrical and especially appropriate to and admissible in the mysteries of the church, is alone sufficient to place the composer in the front rank of the great musical poets. Blind is he who does not see it!

In the "Christus," and in "St. Elizabeth," Liszt has created a kind of oratorio entirely different from the classical model, an oratorio separated into varied and independent scenes,

in which the picturesque is a marked characteristic. "St. Elizabeth" has all the freshness and grace of the legend which gave it birth, and one cannot help regretting, in listening to it, that the author did not write for the stage. He would have brought to it not only the secular note of his personal charm, but also a great dramatic sentiment, and a respect for the nature and powers of the human voice too often absent in the celebrated works which every one has heard. "Christus," which the author regarded as his most important work, is a composition of exaggerated dimensions, and goes beyond the bounds of human patience. Endowed with grace and charm rather than force and power, "Christus," heard in its entirety, is rather monotonous, but it is so written that it may be divided into separate parts, which can be performed in fragments without mutilating the whole.

Viewed as a whole, the work of Liszt is immense but unequal. There is a choice to make in the works which he has left us. Of how many great geniuses must the same be said! "Attila" does not make Corneille less great. The "Triple Concerto" of Beethoven, the variations of Mozart on "Ah! vous dirai-je, maman?" Wagner's ballet music in "Rienzi" do not diminish the fame of their authors. If then there are among the compositions of Liszt some useless works, there is nevertheless not one which does not bear the marks of his touch, the imprint of his personality. His great fault is that he lacks moderation; he does not stop himself in time, but loses himself in stupid digressions of wearisome length. He was aware of this himself, and anticipated criticism by noting passages in his compositions which could be left out. These cuts often detract from the beauty of the whole, and it is possible to find better ones than those indicated by the author. His music bubbles over with melody, a little too much for the taste of Germany, and for those who adopt her ideas—people who affect great scorn for all singing phrases, regularly developed, and can be pleased with nothing but polyphony, no matter how heavy, sulky, awkward, or confused. It makes no difference to some people that music is devoid of charm and elegance, or even devoid of ideas and correct composition, as long as it is complicated.

But the richness of melody in the works which now occupy us is balanced by as great a richness of harmony. In his bold search in the world of new harmony Liszt has far surpassed all that was done before him. Wagner himself has not attained the audacity shown in the prelude to "Faust," written in a hitherto unknown tonality, yet containing nothing to wound the ear, and in which it is impossible to change a single note.

Liszt has the inestimable advantage of hav-

ing typified a people: Schumann is the soul of Germany; Chopin of Poland; Liszt of the Magyar. He was a delightful combination of pride, native elegance, and wild, tameless energy. These traits lived and breathed in his marvelous playing, in which the most diverse gifts met—those even which seem to contradict each other, like absolute correctness combined with the most extravagant fancy. Haughtily wearing his patrician pride, he never had the air of "a gentleman who plays the piano." When he played his "St. François-de-Paule Marchant sur les Flots," he seemed almost an apostle. One could almost see the foam of the furious waves dashing upon his pale impassive face, with its eagle eye and clear, sharp profile. The most tremendously violent soundings of brass would be followed by the fine-drawn cobwebs of a dream. Entire passages were given as if they were parentheses. The remembrance of his playing consoles me for being no longer young. Without entirely agreeing with M. de Levy, who said that "Any one who could attain as great a technic would on that very account be farther removed from him," still it is certain that Liszt's prodigious technic was only one of the factors of his talent. It was not his fingers alone which made him such a marvelous performer, but the qualities of the great musician and the great poet which he possessed, his large heart, and his beautiful soul—above all, the soul of his race.

His great heart appears in all its nobility in the book which he wrote on Chopin. Where others would have found a rival Liszt saw only a brother-in-arms, and endeavored to show the great creative artist in one whom at that time the public still looked upon only as a charming virtuoso. He wrote French in an eccentric and cosmopolitan style, taking words out of his imagination, or anywhere else, as he had need of them; our modern symbolists have done far worse by us. Nevertheless the book on Chopin is most remarkable, and helps wonderfully in understanding and appreciating him. I cannot take exception to anything in it, save one severe criticism on the "Polonaise Fantaisie," one of the last compositions of its author. It is, to me, so touching! Discouragement, disillusion, religious thoughts, and hope and trust in immortality, all this in a winning and beautiful form. Is this nothing? Perhaps the fear of seeming partial, by always praising, inspired the criticism which surprises me so much. The same fear haunts me sometimes myself when I speak of Liszt. I have often been rallied for what they call my weakness for his music. But even if the feelings of gratitude and affection with which I am filled come before my eyes like a prism to color his image, I do not deeply regret it. But I owed him nothing, I had not

felt his personal fascination, I had neither seen nor heard him, when I fell in love with his first symphonic poems, which pointed out to me the path in which I was to find later my "Danse Macabre" and "Le Rouet d'Omphale," and other works of the like nature. I am therefore sure that my judgment is unbiased by outside considerations, and I am altogether responsible for my opinions. Time, which puts everything in its place, will be the final judge.

The sympathy which the great artist was kind enough to feel for me has honored me with the following precious letters. As a rule there is too much praise (praise which I well know is in great part courtesy) to be appropriate to this article. But I cannot deny myself the pleasure of giving some extracts.

ROME, July 14, 1869.

DEAR AND HONORED FRIEND: Your kind letter promised me a number of your compositions. I have expected them . . . and meanwhile I want to thank you again for your Second Concerto, which I admire greatly. The form is new and very happy; the interest of the three movements increases continually, and you take an exact account of the piano effects, without sacrificing the ideas of the composer — an essential rule in works of this character.

To begin with, the prelude on the pedal point in G is striking and imposing. After such a felicitous inspiration you did wisely to repeat it at the end of the first movement, and to accompany it this time with some chords. Among the things which please me particularly, I note: the chromatic progression (last line in the prelude) and the one which alternates between the piano and orchestra (last measure on page 5), repeated afterward by the piano alone, page 15; the arrangement in sixths in triplets of eighth notes gives a fine sonorous effect, pages 8 and 9; it leads up superbly to the entrance of the fortissimo motive; the piquant rhythm of the second motive in the *allegro scherzando*, page 25. Perhaps this last would have gained by greater combination and development, either of the principal motive or of some accessory one. For example, this little bit of soothing counterpoint would not seem to me out of place:

Sua.....

Violoncelle pizzicato
et Basson.

&c.

. . . In pages 50 to 54, where the simple breadth of the period with the sustained chords of the accompaniment leaves it a little bare, I should like in it some incidental additions, and some polyphonic combinations, as the German ogres call it. Pardon me this criticism of details. I would not risk it, could I not assure you in all sincerity that as a whole your work pleases me particularly. I played it day before yesterday to Sgambati, of whom Planté will speak to you as an artist above the ordinary, and indeed more than that. . . .

At my age, the business of being a young composer is no longer appropriate, and there would be no other for me in Paris, as I could not carry on indefinitely that of the veteran pianist on the invalid list. Therefore, I have resolved not to concern myself with my compositions excepting to write them, without any thought of spreading them abroad. If they have any real value it will be found out soon enough, either during my life, or afterward. The sympathy of my friends, who, I flatter myself, are very well chosen, is amply sufficient to me. The rest of the world may say what they will.

ROME, December 6, 1881.

. . . No one realizes more than myself the disproportion in my compositions between the good intention and the results accomplished. Meanwhile I continue to write, not without fatigue, but from a deep inward need and old habit. But to aim high is not forbidden us; whether we touch the goal or not remains an open question. . . . You very kindly suggest my return to Paris. Traveling has become very burdensome in my old age, and I fear that I should be found out of place in great capitals like Paris or London, where no special obligation calls me. This fear does not make me ungrateful toward the public, and above all toward my friends in Paris, to whom I am so deeply indebted: I should not like to give up all idea of seeing them again, though the dismal execution of the "Messe de Gran" in '66, and the consequent talk, have left a painful impression upon me. Without false modesty or foolish vanity, I cannot place myself in the ranks of celebrated pianists wandering hopelessly amid compositions which have been failures.

Those who know my "Second Concerto" (in G minor) will notice that I did not profit by the suggestions of Liszt relating to the *scherzo*. This is not because I did not realize perfectly the justice of them. The counterpoint, which with charming hypocrisy he styles "soothing," would have greatly enhanced the passage which he mentioned. But I make it an invariable rule, in relation to my compositions (of whatever nature they may be), never to profit by any suggestion or outside influence. This is to me a question of honor. I do not think I have broken this rule in publishing in my "First Concerto" (in D major) the "facilités" which I owe to the ingenuity and indefatigable kindness of Liszt, who, to oblige me, did not disdain to descend to this humblest of work.

Camille Saint-Saëns.