

alone. I've such a lot of things to think over—this jacket, among others, and that fiend in spectacles who's always jabbing spoons down my throat."

This went on for ten days. At last it became evident to me that "Fuzzles" was beloved of the gods, who meant to call him hence. On the evening before his death, directly I knocked at the door, there was a shambling sound in the passage, and "Fuzzles," a wraith in white flannel, crawled slowly along the hall towards the front door, but lay down half-way with a feeble wag of his tail. I picked him up, and carried the poor little wasted thing back to the kitchen, where Eliza, the maid, wept over him without concealment.

"He's been in to say good-bye to missis, sir," she said. "Twice this afternoon he's crawled into the droring-room and laid his head up against her dress, just looking solemn-like, and not saying nothing. He's a-goin' fast, sir. You mark my words. He's a-goin' fast!"

The next morning "Fuzzles" had a fit, and the doctor sent for a chemist with instructions to bring and administer poison. "Fuzzles" took the poison languidly, rolled over on his side with slowly-glazing baby eyes, gave one sigh, and was no more. When I returned in the evening, I found Eliza sitting in the kitchen, her apron over her head, and "Fuzzles'" customary corner vacant. My wife was on the verge

of tears. Someone knocked at the front door, and we both started nervously.

"It's the boy come to take 'Fuzzles' away," said my wife, clutching my arm.

We heard the boy's heavy lumbering steps go slowly down the passage. Presently he came blundering back. Then he knocked the box against the wall and half-dropped poor "Fuzzles," but recovered himself with an effort.

"It sounds like a coffin being taken away," said my wife.

The boy's footsteps receded across the hall, he noisily slammed the door, we heard the front gate open, his footsteps grew fainter and fainter, and Eliza came in with her best black bonnet on.

"What's the matter, Eliza?" I asked.

Eliza checked a fresh outburst with difficulty.

"It ain't right not to see 'im buried, sir. Won't you and missis come too?"

We all crept after the boy at a respectful distance until he entered the field which he had selected for "Fuzzles'" last resting-place. From behind an ancient oak we watched the interment with mingled emotions. At length the boy patted down the sod with his spade, and went away blithely whistling. Then Eliza, my wife, and I crept homeward through the shadows, feeling almost as if we had lost a little child.

A CHAT WITH LADY HALLÉ.

BY THE BARONESS VON ZEDLITZ.



LADY HALLÉ.

(Photo Fratelli, Vianelli, Venice.)

VIOLIN playing has, during the last century, attained a high degree of real excellence in England, although, we regret to say, not particularly through the instrumentality of English executants. On the contrary, England has produced but few solo violin players of eminence, and violin virtuosity has, as a rule, been most ably represented in this country by foreigners.

Although we may not claim her as our own, by reason of her alien birth and extrac-

tion, we are proud to know that the subject of this word-sketeh, Lady Hallé, has settled down on British soil, and has chosen her home in our very midst.

Her inherent genius, coupled with early and strict training, undoubtedly has contributed much to the shining success with which, since the date of her earliest musical reminiscences, she has displayed and perfected the brilliant gifts bestowed upon her by Queen Nature.

The power of really pure interpretation on the violin has not been bestowed upon many women, and Lady Hallé may be said with truth to have been the first girl-artist who had the pluck to stand by her inclinations, and who refused to allow herself to be disheartened by outward considerations not consistent with her inborn principles and predilections with regard to her executive art.

At the tender age of seven her wonderful powers began to assert themselves, but—she tells me—they had to be exercised almost by stratagem.

When I had the pleasure of a chat with Lady Hallé some days ago at her charming home, she was kind enough to give me some interesting details concerning her eventful career.

"My parents didn't want me to play the violin," said Lady Hallé, after we had fallen out of the ordinary routine of small talk, "but my brother Victor, who was then preparing to study with my father, inspired me with the notion that there was more to be

got out of his child-violin—a mere toy, without much feeling or tone—than he seemed able to draw forth with his bow.

"It absolutely fascinated me so that I had no rest until I had handled it myself.

"In those days there was rather a strong prejudice against violin-playing among our sex; it was not considered a graceful accomplishment nor a womanly one, but I found it impossible to crush the desire within me to draw the bow across the strings of my brother's violin; so I lay in watch for the moment when he would go out, and then stole to his room in order to shut myself up and indulge in the sweet notes of the instrument.

"Forbidden fruit, indeed, and therefore all the more luscious to taste!

"To begin quite at the commencement of my career, however, I should tell you that I was born in Brünn, Moravia, my birthday being the 21st of March, 1840. My father held the position of organist and Capellmeister at the Cathedral of that town, and the Neruda family dates back, musically, to the seventeenth century. The earliest musician of our name was Jakob Neruda, who died in 1732.

"His sons were also musicians, and when they died the sons of the younger offspring of Jakob Neruda, called Baptiste Georg, left two sons behind him, both of whom became chamber-musicians at the Court of Dresden. The elder of these brothers was the grandfather of my father.

"It was necessary to go back a little in the history of our family in order to show you that there was a very excellent *raison d'être* for my early musical proclivities.

"It became evident to my parents that a career lay before me, although they were quite averse to my taking to the violin. They wanted me to play the piano; but as a child I hated the idea. Matters continued in this wise for some time, I always secretly increasing my power over the instrument, without informing my parents of the progress I had made, until one day by accident my father heard the strains of music emerging from my brother's room, and, overjoyed at the progress he believed his little son to have made, he rushed upstairs and *discovered his mistake!*"

"What happened then, Lady Hallé?" I asked, becoming keenly interested in the turn of events.

"Well," she replied, after a pause, "my father was very much disappointed and pleased at the same time. I feared that the discovery would lead to a strict prohibition on the part of my parents of my ever touching a violin again.

"But I was overjoyed when my father took me in his arms, his eyes moist with tears, showing me that his artistic nature (for he was every inch a musician) had experienced pleasurable appreciation at the surprise that came upon him, in spite of my brother's backwardness; and from that day forth my father devoted his spare time to the development of my talent.

"Yes, my first laurels were earned at an absurdly



LADY HALLÉ.

(From a drawing by Lady Lindsay.)

early age, and this circumstance, like the origination of my career, occurred, so to speak, by accident. I was practising one day with my father as usual, for we were very industrious and ardent in our devotions to music, when Professor Jansa rushed in unexpectedly to see my father on some matter concerning a concert which he was arranging. This incident occurred in Vienna. On hearing me play Jansa—I can see his face before me now—appeared to be electrified, and almost beside himself with joy. Nothing would do but I must play at his concert, which suggestion was at first pooh-poohed by my father, but then taken seriously into consideration after the continuously urgent entreaties pressed upon him by Jansa.

"I think I was the least preoccupied member of the trio, for the importance of facing an audience at that age was a thing unknown to me.

"I played at Jansa's concert and achieved a phenomenal success at my first appearance on the platform; I believe that, *entre autres*, I ventured upon a sonata of Bach, which elicited a veritable deluge of applause. After that Jansa became my master."

"Who were your subsequent teachers, Lady Hallé?"

"I have never studied under any others than my father and Jansa.

"I thoroughly disapprove of the system of changing schools so prevalent just now. One master only should develop and train the flexible, impressionable growth of interpretation, so that the young shoots in the form of impressions may not wander adrift and lose themselves in the ocean of infinity. Is it not better to adopt one particular manner of expression

and express one's self well than to try several methods and interpret these indifferently?

"We each have sympathies and special affinities which we should endeavour to portray with our own individuality.

"It is a thousand pities that beginners are sometimes placed under the direction of mediocre teachers. It is suggested that they will not require a good master until their talent is more advanced, and then, when they have wasted years of fruitless labour, and have acquired much that is deteriorating to their technique and style, they find themselves placed under a first-class tutor, who will not tolerate their faults—by this time deeply rooted—and who, in dealing peremptorily with badly-acquired habits, often crushes an intelligence which might have blossomed into something better than good.

"Genius should be dexterously trained from youth upwards, or it loses much of its inborn strength.

"The violin is, next to the voice, the most powerful exponent of musical feeling, and requires to be dealt with poetically, simply, and yet characteristically.

"The player during his period of experiment should try to adopt a style in unison with the nature and idealism of his instrument if he desires to obtain brilliant and beautiful effects. These last named can only be ensured by entirely abandoning one's self to the devotional study of one's art, for nothing is more painful than a crude, erring technique or a want of

feeling and refinement in the production of musical sounds on this particularly subtle instrument.

"On the other hand, there is nothing more divine, nay heavenly, than the nobility and grandeur of a perfect interpreter of the literature of the violin—heavenly indeed, for we can trace its religious influence back to the year 1650, in which we find that the clergy, once having discovered the artistic capabilities of the violin, were not slow to introduce it to the services of the Church.

"The violin," continued my hostess, "is generally acknowledged to be the most popular and useful of all portable musical instruments; besides, is it not the principal one figuring in a stringed orchestra?"

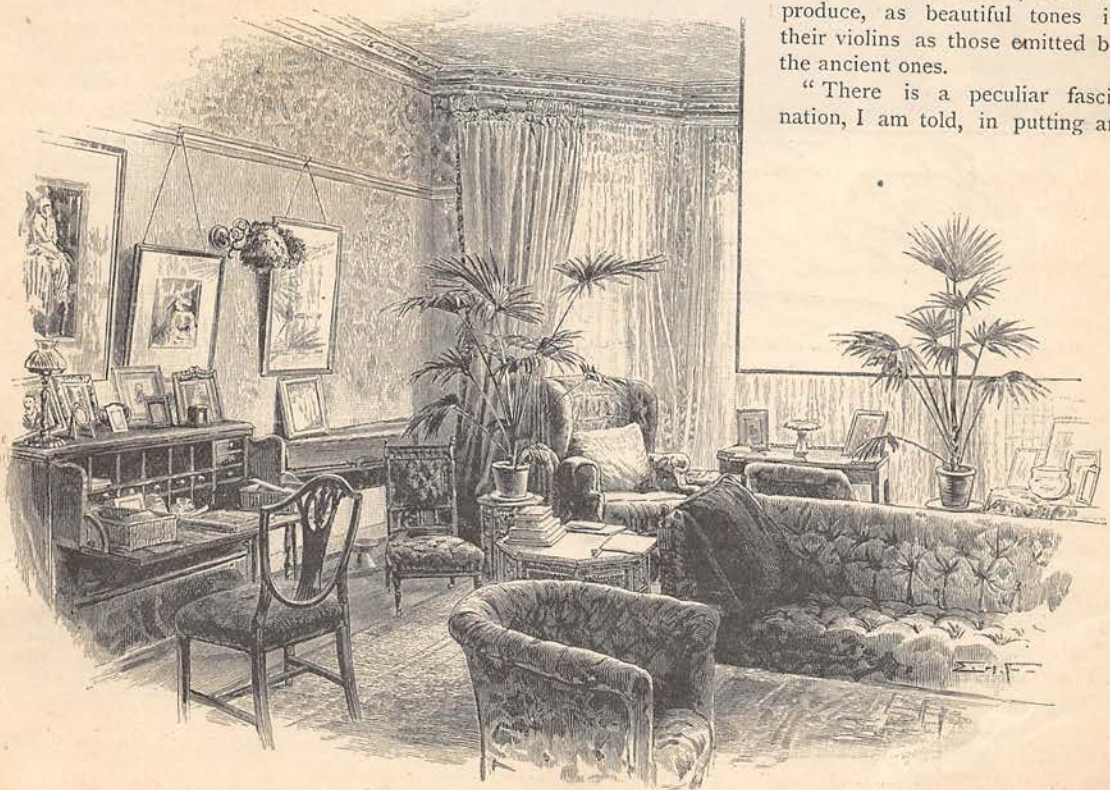
"One question, Lady Hallé. Do you consider violin playing a facile accomplishment?"

"Yes; certainly. There is none that can be so easily mastered, if the learner sets about his task in the right way; for the fiddle exercises a subtle charm over the mind—a charm which furnishes much good suggestion for conceiving and executing the ideal of the composer."

"Do you agree with the theory of an old fiddle being better than a new one?"

"A violin can only be well made to begin with, and one must not always judge the instrument by its outward appearance. Some of the old Cremona violins have been overrated by reason of the beauty of their ornate designs; but there is every reason to believe that the more modern master-makers have produced, and do produce, as beautiful tones in their violins as those omitted by the ancient ones.

"There is a peculiar fascination, I am told, in putting an



LADY HALLÉ'S BOUDOIR.



Your truly
 Wilma Hallé

(From a photograph, by permission of Messrs. Eglinton & Co., Limited)

old, disused violin through a course of rehabilitation, and in reawakening its old musical capacities. Thus the violin enjoys a sort of mysterious immortality, the effect of which is augmented by the often erroneous theory that no good makers of violins have existed since the Cremona days. The main excellences of a violin are purely mechanical; therefore let it not be judged by its outward appearance any more than a singing-bird be praised for its fine feathers.

"Remember the violin is quite three centuries old, and is practically the only instrument that has not undergone any radical change. Many futile attempts have been made to improve it, but all experiments have failed, and the violin will ever maintain its sway over all other musical instruments."

"Do you know to whom is attributed the invention

of the violin in the first instance?" I inquired later.

"It is commonly supposed," said Lady Hallé, "that a man of the name of Diuffoprugcar, born at Bologna, was the originator, and I am told that there exist three genuine violins of his making, dating back as far as 1520; but I believe that the authenticity of any date in a violin before 1520 is questionable."

"Which of the ancient makers, in your opinion, are most productive of perfection in tone qualities?"

"There you ask me a difficult question. I love my Stradivarius, and for me there exists not a violin to surpass it in the exquisite delicacy of its intonation. But we have it on the best authorities—to whose superior power I bow in submission—that for sweetness of tone and beauty of design the brothers Antonius and Hieronymus Amati are even now hard to beat."

After the Jansa concert Lady Hallé's (then Wilhelmine Neruda) career formed itself, and the little artist threw her heart and soul into her studies. We hear that in 1849 the gifted child made her first appearance in London on the 11th of June at the Philharmonic Concert, where she made her *début* before our warm-hearted English public, which has never forgotten her effective rendering of one of De Beriot's concertos, and ever since has recognised in her one of the most accomplished musicians of the century.

"By this time," continued Lady Hallé, while alluding to her subsequent studies, "I had travelled a great deal, having visited Leipzig, Berlin, Breslau, Hamburg, and other German cities, where I am bound to

say I met with friends who have remained so all my life, and advisers and just critics at whose hearts lay the interest of my future, and who counselled me for the best in all my undertakings."

"In what year did you first visit Paris?" I asked then.

"In 1864," was Lady Hallé's answer, "where I played at the Padeloup concerts, at the Conservatoire, and elsewhere. Here, too, I met with remarkable ovations and enthusiasm from the music-loving French, who have ever since accorded me a welcome which could hardly fail to surpass the expectations of even the most fastidious of artists."

"Did you ever compose any music for the violin, Lady Hallé?"

"No, at least nothing worth speaking of. As a

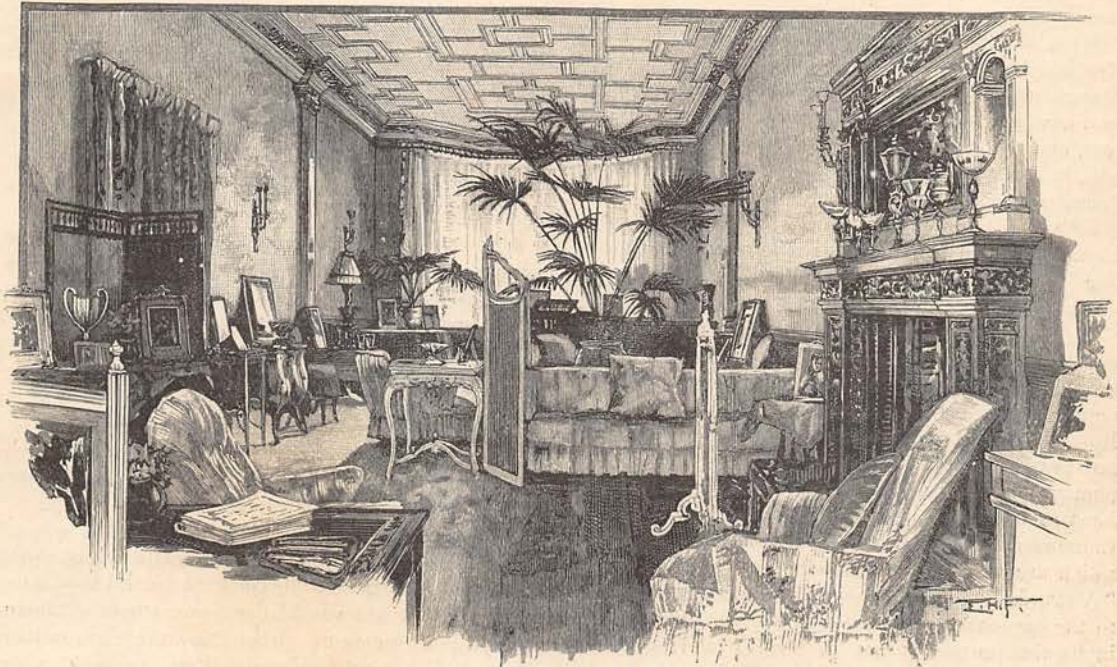
girl I may have indulged in one or two musical fancies, but as a rule I preferred other compositions to my own."

"And who are your favourite composers?"

"What a question to ask!" exclaimed Lady Hallé with warmth. "For an empire I could not specify any special favourites. *I love all music.* From Bach and Mozart to Chaminade there is such a wealth of great and noble works, each is so beautiful of its kind, that it would be difficult to specify anything individually.

ment quickly acquired; it demands a life of earnest study and undivided attention. I think I may say that, beautiful as this particular branch of music is, I would rather hear one who plays really well than ten who interpret indifferently."

To revert to the continuance of her career Mademoiselle Neruda entered into matrimony with a Swedish musician, Ludwig Norman, while she was in Paris. Her husband, however, died shortly after their marriage, and the distinguished violinist has since



LADY HALLÉ'S DRAWING-ROOM AND MUSIC-ROOM.

"When I play Brahms I am enraptured; then comes the passion and grandeur of Wagner; after that, I am bewitched by the beautiful simplicity of Bach or the wild impetuosity of Chopin; and thus each in his turn makes of me a most devoted slave."

"Will you show me your violin?" I begged, ere I took my leave, and Lady Hallé then proceeded to display a very costly Stradivarius which, she informed me, was the joint gift of Lord Dudley and the Duke of Edinburgh.

"How curious it is," I remarked, while examining the deft mechanism, "that such a simple-looking instrument should possess such a wealth of melody and charm!"

"Yes, indeed," was Lady Hallé's reply; "but, as I said before, it is not so easy to make it sing. That which is worth speaking is worth repeating; but it is hard to give the violin sympathetic speech unless the words you wish it to utter are the echo of your heart's own sentiments.

"How earnestly I would wish to impress upon all young girls that violin-playing is not an accomplish-

then been known in musical circles under the name of Norman Neruda.

In 1869 Madame Neruda visited England again and played at the Philharmonic Society on the 17th of May. At this stage of her career she was no longer the infant prodigy who had promised to become "somebody"; she had outstripped the years of infantine celebrity, and appeared before a critical audience in the zenith of her musical powers.

The fragile-looking child-artist had developed into a handsome, well-built woman whose brilliancy of talent and charm of execution electrified all those who heard her.

Joachim's opinion, expressed about her to Sir Charles Hallé, many years ago, was a very correct one, although (with his usual grace) he could not help praising a fellow artist without undervaluing his own unimpeachable talent.

This is what he said of her:—

"I recommend to your attention this young lady. Mark my word, when people shall have heard her play, they will not think so much of me."

And the public did, and does think very much of her, although they do not think any the less of Joachim.

on that account; *his* name is encircled by an aureole of fame which no lapse of time can dim.

At the Philharmonic Society M. Vieuxtemps had occasion to hear Madame Neruda, and was so deeply interested by the perfection of maturity into which the promise of childhood's genius had ripened that he endeavoured to persuade her to remain in London until the winter, and, in the end, she was induced to take the lead of the string quartet in the Monday Popular Concerts before Christmas, and at once assumed her proper place in the front rank of first-class violinists.

Here it is appropriate to mention that Sir C. Hallé obtained her services for his recitals in London and Manchester, and that she appeared in many provincial towns, where she met with equal and undaunted success, and that Sir Charles Hallé, having lost his first wife in the early days of wedlock, married Madame Neruda in 1888.

Lady Hallé has given concerts in Russia, Prussia, Denmark, Great Britain, etc., not forgetting Australia, and has received many testimonials and orders of distinction from crowned heads.

In her reception rooms I espied innumerable gifts and souvenirs, some photographic, others autographic, testifying to the esteem with which she is regarded by the Royal family, and especially by Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, of whom she possesses many portraits, all of which are signed. One photograph struck me particularly as being an excellent likeness of His Royal Highness the late Duke of Clarence and Avondale, taken with his mother, under which are inscribed the simple but touching words, "Alexandra, and my first-born," which seem to point to the burden of a distressing memory. Yet another interesting portrait is that of Her Royal Highness in her robes of Mus.Doc., also signed "Alexandra."

And now I would venture to speak of the personality

of this brilliant artist, and to add a few words in humble criticism of her executive talent. Lady Hallé possesses an unerring sense of artistic propriety and technical perfection, therefore the strongest feelings of form and sound are displayed in her fine renderings of no matter what composer. Pathos, dignity, and gracefulness are her chief means of expressing herself, while often she displays a fire of passionate emotion which tells us that the artist's heart and soul are devoted to her art.

The left-hand technique shows how capable she is of executing all difficulties without displaying any symptom of labour, and that the systematic perseverance with which she has applied herself to her studies has borne good fruits, of which the universal public is the happy recipient.

Her manner, which is gentle and courteous, has much refinement about it, and when roused to speak upon matters that interest her she becomes eloquent, while her looks imply that she seriously means what she says.

Her house and surroundings show her artistic fondness for rich warm colours and harmonious decorations, and her desire to have around her the counterfeit presentments of all her *confrères* in the musical world.

In Australia, when Lady Hallé, accompanied by her husband, Sir C. Hallé, gave a brilliant series of concerts, she was received with much favour, and at the conclusion of their visit to Melbourne, which lasted six weeks, a huge floral lyre was presented to her by the members of the Victorian orchestra as a token of their esteem and admiration.

That Lady Hallé has studied hard and has won her laurels through legitimate diligence is a fact of world-wide renown, and that this constant mental application has not spoilt her youthful enjoyment both of life and natural beauty may be gathered by the extraordinary charm of her artistic capabilities, as well as her amiability and cordiality as a hostess and friend.

BORROWED PLUMES.

BY JOHN K. LEYS, AUTHOR OF "THE LINDSAYS," ETC.

I.



"SO you think it will do, Alec?" said the little woman while her glance travelled from the canvas before her up to her husband's face and back again.

Alec Dering, caressing his chin with one hand, nodded twice or thrice—slowly, gravely, and approvingly.

"Yes, Annie,

I think it will do very nicely. There are several faults in it, to be sure; yet there is true feeling in it, and careful workmanship. I should not be a bit surprised if it were accepted."

A flush of pleasure overspread Mrs. Dering's piquant little face; and she threw at her husband a look in which gratitude was mingled with admiration.

"I shall be so awfully glad if it is accepted," she said, with a little sigh.

Dering did not like to hear the sigh. It pained him to think that his wife should be so anxious about her work, for he well knew that it was not the mere personal love of succeeding, nor even her love of art, which was at the root of her anxiety. She wished to be able to do something to keep the wolf from the door. The fierce creature was lying in wait outside, as Dering very well knew.

Often, lying awake in the night, he could hear the