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## CONTENTS.

Corelli, . . . . .	225
Spohr, . . . . .	228
A Settled Fact—In Three Parts, . . . . .	229
Ritualism, . . . . .	230
Matters Theatric, . . . . .	230
Musical Items, . . . . .	231
Musical Movements, . . . . .	232
Fighting Hard to Hold their Ground, . . . . .	232
Journalism after the style of the N. Y. Weekly Review, . . . . .	233
Mr. G. S. Melbye, the Artist, en route, . . . . .	233
Terrace Garden Concerts, . . . . .	233
New Music, . . . . .	233
Correspondence, . . . . .	234
Musical Letters by Ferdinand Hiller, . . . . .	235
Musical Similarities, &c., . . . . .	236
Musical and General Gossip, . . . . .	240

## CORELLI.

### CHAPTER I.

It was towards the close of the year 1670, just as Giambattista Bassini—one of the best, or rather the only good violin-player then living in Rome—was setting down with his numerous family to discuss the merits of a large dish of Risetti, when an aged servant entered the room and announced to the master of the house the arrival of a handsome young man, who brought him news and letters from the worthy organist of Fusignano in Calabria.

We must here observe that Father Bassini, as he was called by his pupils, and all the artists in Rome, was very accessible, and that any one, even without any particular recommendation, could gain admission to him. The mere name of "Artist" was sufficient to call into exercise his fatherly care for any one who applied to him; for all, who had devoted themselves to music, appeared to him to belong to one family, of which he, with full propriety considered himself one of the most active members. However the introduction from the organist of Fusignano, his old and faithful friend, caused the

young stranger to be received like some long and anxiously expected guest.

Bassini was so much delighted, that his hands actually trembled, as he opened the letter of the organist, and his eyes filled with tears when he glanced over the well known writing. Having read it, he embraced the youth and imprinted a fatherly kiss upon his fair locks.

"The blessing of the Lord be upon you, my son!" said the worthy old man, with emotion. "Master Munari informs me, that you exhibit great talent for the sublime art—(this was the expression which Bassini generally used for music, and more particularly for the violin.) I shall very soon discover if this be so or not, and in consideration of the interest which you have awakened in my old friend and myself, I will tell you candidly what I think of your musical talent and what you may expect from it. Give him my Amati; we will see what he can do!"

The face of the youth was covered with blushes, as he glanced at all the members of the artist's family, who, on their part, encouraged with friendly looks his timidity. He then lifted up his eyes, pressed the violin to his shoulder, and began, without any prelude, one of those old melodies, which by their impressive simplicity have lived to the present time.

As the last chord died away, Bassini nodded his head in token of his approval, and remained silent for some moments, apparently lost in meditation.

"My son," said he after some hesitation, "you have played a good melody tolerably well; but in vain do I, (a veritable repository of all ancient and new compositions) try to recollect whether I have ever heard it before. There is in your playing an expression which pleases me; but you still need strength in your fingering and correctness in your intonation. The Aria, which you have played, is a master piece; and now I will show you how such music ought to be played."

Bassini took the Amati and, aided as much by his wonderful memory as by the simplicity of the air, played it with that passionate

power which characterised his talent. While he imparted to this melody an indescribable charm by the magic of his masterly execution, the young musician endeavored in vain to suppress the tears, which were rolling down his cheeks.

"Try not, my son, to hide your emotions! These are yet the only indications of devotion to your art, that I have observed in you. Soul is the foundation and object of music—its Alpha and its Omega. But tell me now, though I am almost ashamed to ask you such a question, who is the composer of this beautiful Aria! I must confess, to me it is new."

"It is myself," modestly replied the youth.

"Stop, my friend," said the master knitting his brows, "I confess my memory deserted me at this moment, but notwithstanding this, you should not make sport of an old practitioner. The musician who created this melody is a master and I herewith declare that I should be happy to give my hand to him, whoever he be, as a token of my high esteem of so able a colleague."

Without replying a word, the young musician took one of the many violins, which were suspended around the room, tuned it and gave father Bassini a sign to commence the piece again; he then accompanied him in such a masterly manner, that, a certain similarity excepted, he seemed to play quite a new piece. After having played it through, the young man continued to improvise a number of variations, in which he developed the principal idea without any confusion, producing it under different forms, conducting the listener, as it were, through a magic garden, and finally ending with a brilliant finale, after having given the most splendid proofs of his wonderful abilities.

The old musician sat for some time perfectly silent, and as if struck dumb, and regarded the youth with looks expressive of the greatest astonishment, whilst resting his violin upon the left knee and holding the bow in his right hand.

"Munari is right," he continued at last, and tendered Corelli his hand. "You are

an artist from whom we may justly hope for the fulfilment of our highest expectation; but he has sadly mistaken your true vocation. You will become a great composer, but only an indifferent violin player."

"Excuse me, master," answered the stranger blushing, "but you have to-day been already once in error; and perhaps you may deceive yourself again in regard to my talent for the violin. Munari is accustomed to say, that, in order to become a pope, one needs only a strong will; and thus I intend to become a violin-player not inferior to yourself."

"What is your name?"

"Archangelo Corelli."

"Well then, Corelli! you shall become an honor to our art, and your fame shall at some future period efface the name of your teacher, old Bassini, from the memory of posterity."

"Do I understand you rightly! You will take me under your tuition?"

"Yes, from this very moment. Since it is your will to become a violin-player of the first class, and since you have courage enough to undertake the necessary studies, I for my part, will certainly not be the man to draw you from so noble an intention."

"But," said the youth, drops of perspiration gathering on his brow, "there is yet a little difficulty."

"You mean to say, a great difficulty, my son! and that is, that you have not a single Roman dollar in your pocket; is it not so? Now, I certainly do not think that a well-filled purse is at any time superfluous, but in your case it is not absolutely necessary. Poverty is the parent of Genius; my own talent had no other nurse. Of six children which my good Lilia presented to me, there are only four remaining; you shall be the fifth, and the only difference will be that we shall have to sit a little closer around the table; and now children embrace each other and then quick to work, for the Almighty only favors large families, if they are industrious."

The young people, who possessed a great share of their father's vivacity, hastened to Archangelo and embraced him heartily. Nelia also, a tall and pretty maiden, of about nineteen or twenty years, offered him without embarrassment her brownish cheek, which the young stranger slightly touched with his trembling lips. The two elder sons then left the house to give instructions, the younger one commenced practising, and Nelia sat down to her piano, whilst Bassini, himself, to avoid the noise of the instrument and the equally noisy conversation between his wife and the servant, went to his room in the upper part of the house, where he gave the new pupil his first lesson.

Archangelo's character was gentle and bashful, but at the same time frank and simple, and after a few days he felt so much at home with honest Giambattista, that he seemed to be altogether one of the family. Nelia alone excited a kind of fear in him, for which he could not account to himself. As soon as a glance from the black eyes of the pretty maiden encountered his, Archangelo would suddenly lose the thread of his conversation, cast down his eyes and become strangely confused. However, there was nothing very distinguished about Nelia's appearance excepting her tall and commanding figure, of which even a princess need not have been ashamed. Her eyes were glowing with that overflowing pleasure, which is the best symbol of youth; and her beautiful mouth,

which, although somewhat large, was adorned with a splendid double set of pearls, was enhanced by a continual smile playing around her rosy lips.

Thus it happened that the merry being often caused by her presence, or some mischievous attention, no slight uneasiness to the poor youth, who, however, notwithstanding all this, succeeded in passing his time very agreeably, divided as it was by his constant practice or the recreations of the artist family, in which he, of course, also participated. Our whole life consists only of contrasts and unaccountable singularities, and thus it happened that Archangelo felt at last a peculiar charm in the aversion which took possession of him when near the maiden, and that Nelia on her part soon experienced some embarrassment in the midst of her playfulness. Archangelo like a young eagle in a short time accustomed himself to look into the sun, without being obliged to cast down his eyes, whilst Bassini's daughter veiled her looks with that modesty, which is innate to every woman. If a warm hand presses another, which is cold, the warmth of one passes over and mingles with the cold of the other, or the reverse; at any rate the result will be always the same, namely, both will after awhile have the same degree of warmth—there will be a perfectly equal temperature. And such was the case with the relative position of these young people towards each other; he lost his bashfulness and she became more reserved, until their reciprocal conduct became tinged with that delicious color, created by budding love.

For a contemplative mind, which without any sensual egotism,—without object and without reflection (we mean without calculation) gives itself up entirely to the bliss of love, that moment in which the hearts of the lovers understand each other without either having expressed a single word of love, for such a mind, we repeat, that moment is the happiest and most delightful of the entire passion. Archangelo, who was naturally not communicative and who had accustomed himself to restrain his emotions, in order to heighten them still more, loved with all his heart and soul, and was inwardly satisfied that his love was returned. But this was about all that he desired, for the imagination of the young artist was a sanctuary, which prevented any unholy thoughts from rising in his bosom; his love for the art burned with so bright a flame, that all other passions could not compete with it.

With the maiden however it was very different. The continued silence of her lover appeared almost insufferable to her fiery Italian blood, and the natural liveliness, predominant in the character of all the Bassinis. Her disposition was somewhat passionate, but she had been educated according to the principles of strict virtue, and possessed moreover so good an opinion of her own charms, that she had not the remotest idea of having recourse to those expedients, which are at every lady's command, in order to hasten the declaration which she had been expecting for so long a time. However weeks and months passed—and Archangelo made not the least attempt to use more forcible language than that of tender looks and half suppressed sighs; thus it happened that the reservedness of the young artist had finally such an unpleasant effect upon Nelia's heart, as to compel her to resort to a stratagem, which in the end proved most injurious to her.

Among the many artists, who visited Bassini's house, there were some young musicians who could well vie with Corelli in point of outward appearance, without however possessing the expression of such true purity, as was indicated in his blooming face. Nelia now pretended to listen with more pleasure, than she really felt, to their flatteries. Archangelo, observing this felt much grieved, but his modesty would not permit him to express any complaints or even to show by his looks, the pain which it caused him; and if Nelia went so far as to break forth in exaggerated praises of his rivals, whom she pretended to prefer, poor Corelli would honestly agree with her in all she said about them, and restrain his tears, until he was alone. And the maiden, not perceiving the result of her dangerous undertaking, became still more annoyed at the increasing reservedness of her timid lover, and continued to flirt more than ever.

Amongst the young men, who were most anxious to gain Nelia's favor, there was one of her father's pupils, who, descended from a noble Neapolitan family, studied music for his own amusement. Lorenzo di Montserrat (this was his name) was rather good looking, but endowed with a merely ordinary intellect; which, however, did not prevent him from having an exceedingly high opinion of himself. His family, the head of which had the title of Principe, (a title very frequently to be met with in Italy,) asserted that they were the descendants of a younger branch of the family of Montserrat, that had produced so many valiant champions at the time of the Crusades.

Nelia, who did not consider Lorenzo very dangerous on account of his personal appearance, as well as on account of the great disparity in their relative stations, appeared to show more preference for him than for the other young men of her acquaintance. No doubt, she was instigated to this by a certain pride, of adding so noble an acquisition to the already large number of her admirers, or by a secret wish to excite Archangelo's jealousy. But whatever reason she had to act in this manner, we regret to say that she gave such proofs of being prepossessed in Lorenzo's favor, that she excited the apprehension of her parents, and caused the Neapolitan cavaliero to almost lose his senses, whilst poor Archangelo was also nearly distracted.

However, this little intrigue was soon to come to an end. Giambattista Bassini requested an explanation from Lorenzo, and as the latter could not bear the idea of being separated from his beloved Nelia, whilst he could freely dispose of his hand and fortune, he signified his readiness to marry the daughter of the musician. The parents, not doubting in the least Nelia's sincere love for the nobleman, gave their consent. The wedding day was appointed, and the bride loaded with the congratulations of all her friends and relations. At first, Nelia felt much concerned about this unexpected result of coquetry, but very soon Archangelo's seeming indifference required, as it appeared to her, the sacrifice of her own affection; the prospect of a splendid future made her head swim, and without any very long resistance she consented. Her hesitation, very naturally, was ascribed to her maiden modesty, and her emotion, which she did not well succeed in suppressing, made her look only still lovelier to her future husband.

Archangelo was too intimately connected with the family to be forgotten on so import-

ant an occasion. The younger sons of Bassini rushed to his little corner under the terrace of the house, and conducted him in triumph before the assembled family, where Master Giambattista, with his sonorous voice, informed him of the arrangement which destroyed all his innocent joys, all his dreams of future happiness, and all his blissful anticipations. Unable to suppress his despair at the melancholy intelligence just announced to him, the unfortunate Archangelo sent forth one scream of indescribable anguish, and fell to the ground as if dead.

Very fortunate indeed was it for Nelia that the attention of every one was drawn to the unhappy youth, for thus they could not perceive the frightful paleness which covered her face when she, in so painful a manner, became aware of a passion which she shared, and which condemned her, at the same time, to unspeakable grief for the rest of her life.

Corelli was no longer able to conceal his love for Nelia, and as the wedding was to take place in a few months, the young artist felt it impossible to remain any longer in the same house with her he loved so passionately. At this, the honest Giambattista, who considered Archangelo as one of his own children, felt grieved beyond measure, as it would have made him very happy indeed if he could have given him his daughter, before he so unexpectedly affianced her to a nobleman. He felt the more grieved, since he was himself compelled to deprive his pupil of the asylum which he had so kindly offered to him; however, the pride of the young artist spared him at least that vexation. Corelli was not to be seen throughout the whole day; but in the evening, when all the family had assembled for the evening prayer, he appeared before them with a small bundle, which contained all he possessed. The paleness of his face, and the grief expressed in his features, served to make him look more interesting than ever.

"Master," said he, with his voice scarcely audible, "Master, give me your blessing before we part."

"You already have it, my son!" exclaimed the worthy man, pressing the youth tenderly to his heart. "May the Almighty bless and protect you," continued he, placing his hands upon Archangelo's head; "he has already made of you a good man and an excellent artist; may he continue to unfold the precious qualities of your mind and heart, and you certainly will fill the world with your fame."

Whilst the father addressed him in this manner, the three sons had surrounded Corelli and were freely adding their tears to his, for every one of them loved him as a brother.

"And now tell me, my son, what do you intend to begin? Will you return to Fusignano in order to bury the talent which our Creator has bestowed upon you? This would be a great sin; for old Munari is not able to finish the work that he commenced."

"I am not going to Fusignano, master. Signor Matteo Simonelli, the chapel master of the Holy Father, will receive me as his pupil."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Giambattista, clasping his hands with astonishment. "Matteo Simonelli is an excellent master, and a thousand times more able than I, to conduct you safely through all the difficulties of your divine art; but his avarice is as well known as his great talents; and you are not rich

enough, Archangelo, to pay for his instructions."

"But I am young enough to render him services for services."

"Ah! I understand!" replied Bassini, and he trembled with indignation, "Here you were like a child of our family, and there you must—O Nelia! Nelia!" continued the master, wringing his hands, "how great a sacrifice I have to make for your happiness!"

But Nelia did not hear him; the poor maiden had fled to her chamber, and there, hiding her head in the pillow of her bed, to stifle her heart breaking sobs, she commenced the apprenticeship of a lady of rank, by cursing her pride, her coquetry, and the miserable future which she had prepared for herself.

#### CHAPTER II.

This unfortunate event, however, could not smother the passion of the two young lovers, but as from that moment it ceased to be lawful, we will not further enter into the details of their innumerable sufferings.

The proud family of Signor Lorenzo di Monteserrato had felt themselves exceedingly mortified by this *mesalliance*, and as they would not permit him to present his wife to them, while all the rest of the Neapolitan nobility would not associate with him, he left Italy and went to Paris, where Signora di Monteserrato in a very short time appeared with the greatest splendor in the circles of the highest aristocracy. Shortly afterwards, Corelli, not being able to resist his passion, went also to Paris, although on foot, carrying nothing with him except his violin, on which instrument he was already considered one of the best performers. He had wandered to France, to make his fortune, and succeeded in making crowns, but alas! when he returned to his native land, he carried with him a heart filled with despair.

Several writers on music have affirmed that Lully, who was then in the zenith of his glory, became jealous of the young virtuoso, and that on this account he had caused him so much vexation that Corelli was obliged to leave Paris. But these assertions are not correct; we have sufficient proofs in our possession to satisfy any one that Lully treated his countryman with the greatest kindness, introducing him at the concerts of the court and profiting by every opportunity in which Corelli's talent might appear to the greatest advantage. The artist soon found means to see Nelia again, and to make her faithless to her husband. The guilty happiness of the lovers, however, soon became known, but Lorenzo was the last to hear of it. He instantly applied for a *lettre de cachet*, to have Corelli arrested; but the latter, informed of it in time, made his escape. Six months afterwards, Nelia, who had become reconciled to her husband, died in giving birth to a daughter, and many people, at that time, appeared to have serious doubts as to the real father of the child.

#### CHAPTER III.

It was in 1782, about thirty-five years after the events just related, that one evening, at the commencement of the winter season, the theatre at Naples, then one of the most magnificent in the world, shone in the greatest splendor. The yellow wax candles, which had supplanted the lights commonly used for the stage and the chandeliers, indicated that the king himself would attend the performance,

and the crowds which had besieged the theatre from an early hour in the morning, and which were now thronging the whole building, were proof enough that some very extraordinary performance was to be offered on that night.

And so it was. Corelli, whom Mattheson calls the "Prince of all musical artists," and to whom Gasparini gives the name of "Il vero Orfeo di suo tempo;" Corelli, the greatest violin-player of Italy, was to appear on that night for the first time before a Neapolitan audience.

The king at last arrived, and took his seat in a richly decorated open box, which, according to the custom of those times, had been erected on the proscenium. The audience received him with the usual applause, and the orchestra executed an overture composed by Alessandro Scarlatti. However, the overture, which a few days before had made a *fiore* among all the dilettanti, was but coldly received, everybody being apparently too impatient to see and hear the great *maestro*. The last chord of the overture had been struck, and instantly the deepest silence prevailed the whole building, when Corelli made his appearance, preceded by a servant in the royal livery, who carried the celebrated Amati of the late Giambattista Bassini upon a velvet cushion, ornamented with the royal coat of arms.

On seeing him coming forward, the whole audience rose *en masse*, and the king having given the sign to the assembled populace, by applauding himself, the whole building fairly shook with the thunders of *vivas* and *bravos*, which, for several minutes, were repeated again and again.

Corelli was at that time approaching his sixtieth year. His face had, notwithstanding the wrinkles of old age, retained the full expression of benignity and gentleness, which had, in former years, invested him with so peculiar a charm. Although all Europe was filled with the fame of this great musician, he had travelled but little, because he preferred to live at Rome in peace and quiet, or, as some say, because he feared to raise the jealousy of his contemporary violin players. He certainly had, by this time, become fully accustomed to receive applause and honors of every description for his wonderful talent, but the Romans were so used to his magic notes that, whenever they heard him, they expressed their delight less noisily, considering him, as it were, as one of their own people; what wonder then, that the mad enthusiasm which the Neapolitans expressed on his appearance, caused the old man the greatest astonishment and filled his eyes with tears of joy?

Corelli played two pieces on that memorable evening, and delighted his audience to such a degree that they were quite beside themselves and no longer knew how to express their great gratification. This was the greatest triumph of his whole life, but alas! it was to be his last.

A contemporary writer in speaking of Corelli, makes the sagacious observation, that the career of an artist is often subject to strange vicissitudes; thus it was with the great violin-player. A few days afterwards, he was pressingly invited to play once more before the court, alone. He consented, and executed a sonata from his justly much admired Fifth Collection. The king, however, found the *adagio* too long and tedious, and withdrew. The above-mentioned writer says that the king had felt offended by the great

applause with which the artist had been received at the theatre; his own reception appearing quite insignificant in comparison with that of Corelli, and that he took this method of making him atone for the ovation which the people thought fit to honor him with. But whatever reason the king had for acting thus, Corelli did not feel the least embarrassment, but continued to play. The courtiers, however, by whom he was surrounded, were too strict observers of etiquette to applaud a composition which had already been condemned by the silence of the king himself; and thus it happened that, by the time the concert was finished, all of them were talking and laughing as loudly as they could.

This misfortune, if it can be called so, was too easily repaired to affect Corelli's peace of mind seriously. He knew very well that the public was ready to give him the most splendid satisfaction, and that amongst them he would find more sincere admirers of his talent than he really needed to counterbalance the voices of the royal flatterers. He announced a concert for the following day.

The king did not go to the theatre, but Corelli's reception was even more enthusiastic than at his first concert. The artist played the same sonata which had made *fasco* before the court. The adagio which had caused the king to retire, produced a most wonderful effect upon the audience; and yet this piece was destined to prove fatal to the great *maestro*.

Corelli was accustomed to play without having any music before him, and whilst he executed the most difficult passages, his eyes would wander all over the room, as if his playing was nothing but the effect of the most simple mechanism. He had just commenced the second part of the sonata, when he was suddenly seized with the greatest astonishment. In the midst of a party of splendidly dressed ladies and gentlemen, Archangelo had recognized his *Nelia*, whose death had caused him so much grief, sat there in all her gracefulness, and her matchless beauty appeared to have arrived at a high degree of maturity. How his heart throbbed at the sight of this woman, the first and only love of his whole life! However, it required not much reflection to prove to him the impossibility of her being *Nelia*, for this lady appeared to be, at the uttermost, but thirty-five years old, and *Nelia*, he was certain, was a few years older than himself.

Whilst the virtuoso was thus a prey to his doubts and astonishment, he did not observe that his whole audience was, in the meantime, under the influence of quite a different kind of surprise. Without knowing it, Corelli, while executing a difficult passage, had changed the key, and played a minor strain, while the orchestra accompanied him in the major key. Alexander Scarlatti, who directed the orchestra himself, tried in vain to correct the error, and make the solo player aware of his absence of mind. Corelli became quite disconcerted, and made more and more mistakes, till he found it impossible to continue. Distracted and almost mad, he left the stage, and a moment afterwards it was announced to the audience that *il virtuosissimo di violino* was, on account of sudden indisposition, not able to go on with the concert.

Corelli felt deeply the public disgrace which he had thus brought upon himself, but even this did not cause him so much restlessness as the desire to dispel his uncer-

tainty respecting the strange apparition in the theatre. He tried all possible means to acquaint himself with the name of the lady who so much resembled his beloved *Nelia*, and finally succeeded. A friend informed him that it was the Princess *Cassarini*.

After a few hours' sleep, during which his excitement had somewhat subsided, it suddenly struck him, that this lady, who had reminded him so much of his love, could be no one else than his own daughter, and this idea filled the heart of the old man with so consoling a balm, that for some time he entirely forgot his old grief and his recent disgrace. The happiness of seeing his daughter, and pressing her, if only for a moment, to his bosom, appeared to him to be a sufficient compensation for a long, joyless, and painful existence. The rest of the night he passed in pleasant dreams of paternal love, and in the morning, as soon as etiquette would permit, Corelli went to the palace of the Princess *Cassarini*, who, in reality, was the daughter of the late *Lorenzo di Montserrat*.

After the first words of a cool and haughty reception, the artist began to think that he probably would have some difficulty in bringing the conversation to a subject which so nearly affected the honor of a noble family. He then concluded it very probable that his daughter would rather wish to be considered the descendant of a noble family, than to acknowledge herself the fruit of an illegitimate passion. And this supposition of Corelli became almost a certainty, when he, intimidated by his daughter's coolness, tried to allude, in a somewhat hesitating manner, to his former connection with *Nelia*.

"Enough of this," interrupted the princess drily, "I do not wish to hear anything which may lessen the esteem which I owe to the memory of my mother. I know very well that French levity tried to circulate some strange rumors in regard to her, but the *Marchese di Montserrat*, my father, soon silenced these calumniators, and thus preserved the honor of his house. Signor *Corelli*," she continued, in a tone which made chords that had long been sleeping in the heart of the aged master, vibrate again, "you felt indisposed last night; even your most sincere admirers could not help observing that you did not feel in your usual mood. No doubt it was only a transitory attack, which, I hope, will have no bad consequences."

"I thank you sincerely," replied the artist with affecting simplicity, "but I feel that it will cost me my life." And bitter tears chased each other down his cheeks.

"I am truly sorry for you," replied the princess, haughtily. "I shall order my people to carry you home in my sedan chair, and to-morrow I hope to hear that you feel better."

"To-morrow," said Corelli, "to-morrow I shall be no longer in Naples."

Some writers have ascribed the deep melancholy which from that moment took possession of the great artist, to the little sensation which his return produced at Rome, where *Valentini*, a very mediocre violin-player, was just then the lion of the day. But this is an error, or rather a calumny on his noble mind. The momentary, and, probably, on his part, voluntary forgetfulness, in which Corelli buried himself, was not sufficient to drive him to that gloomy melancholy which hurried him, in a very short time, to his grave. The memoirs of the Cardinal *Ottoboni*, in whose palace he dwelt, are sufficient

proof to refute the absurd assertion, and the extravagant splendor of his funeral obsequies gave evidence that his contemporaries knew well how to appreciate the loss of such an artist.

[From the London Musical World.]

SPOHR.

BY ROBERT SCHUMANN.

SYMPHONY NO. 6, "THE HISTORICAL" (Op. 116). PERFORMED AT LEIPSIK, JANUARY 7, 1841.

The most interesting feature of the concert, without dispute, was Spohr's new Symphony, which every one was eager to hear. In the programme it was entitled: "Historical Symphony in the style and taste of four different periods. First movement, *Bach* and *Handel*, 1720; *Adagio*, *Haydn* and *Mozart*, 1780; *Scherzo*, *Beethoven*, 1810; *Finale*, the most recent period, 1840."

This new Symphony of Spohr's, if we are not mistaken, was written for the London Philharmonic Society, by whom it was first performed about a year ago. It has been already sharply attacked in England, and it is to be feared that in Germany also it will meet with severe criticism. It certainly is a curious fact that of late years so many attempts should have been made to imitate the music of the past.\* About three years ago, *Otto Nicolai* gave a concert in Vienna, at which he performed a series of compositions "in the style and taste of former centuries." *Moscheles* wrote a piece in honor of *Handel* and in his style. *Tambert*, amongst others, has very recently published a "Suite" which is intended to display the old forms—and so on. Spohr himself preceded his Symphony with a Violin Concerto entitled *Sonst und Jetzt* (Past and Present) the idea of which is somewhat similar to that of the work before us. Against this there is nothing to be said. Such attempts may pass for studies, and are of the same nature as the fashion for *rococo*, which has lately become so prevalent. But that Spohr should be the one to adopt such ideas, a finished, exclusive master, who never lets anything pass his lips which has not had its source in his very heart, and who is always recognizable by his first chord—cannot fail to interest everyone. And he has accomplished his task almost as we should have expected; he has set himself to submit to the outward forms of the different styles, while otherwise he remains the same master that we have so long known and loved; in fact, it only brings out more prominently the peculiar form of his individuality, in the same way that a man with some distinguishing natural trait never so easily betrays himself as when masked. *Napoleon* once went to a masked ball. He had hardly been there an instant before, as usual, he folded his arms. Like wildfire, a whisper of "The Emperor!" ran through the place. Just so during the Symphony, one kept hearing "Spohr, Spohr," in every corner of the room. His best disguise, I thought, was the *Mozart* and *Haydn* mask; the *Bach* and *Handel* one greatly lacked the nervous compactness of the original countenances, and still more so

\* What would Schumann have said if he could have seen the flood of "suites" and other pieces in ancient form which have been poured upon the world since his removal from the indefatigable (and uninspired) pen of *Lochner*, *Esser*, *Raff*, and other worthies?