CHOPIN

IN MEMORY OF THOSE
GONE BEFORE

CONTENTS

PREFACE

"No weight, nor mass, nor beauty of execution can outweigh one grain of fragrant thought."

JOHN RUSKIN.

If ideal fancies in poetry are the reflection of all elements existing in nature, how much more must their reflection throw light on the imagination of a musical mind! George Sand somewhere said, after listening to a wondrous song: "The power of music is inexhaustible; words cannot reach it. The noblest passions of our soul are inarticulate. —Language ties us down, and here is where the musician has the advantage of the poet."

So music, as it were, soaring into the free empyrean of feeling, less trammelled than poetry, without words speaks.

Music completes in color of sounds, the fantastic, romantic or deep melancholy picture of the poet's song, and reaches the

heights of wonder in the thinking soul.

As we stroll through the isle of Majorca, it is not so much the blue sky, the silver cloud, the mountain stream, the sea, the tempest, the monastery—not these but their influence upon the mind of the musician that we think on.

The artist is he who most delicately mirrors the world about him. We demand of art that it take the material, as a cloud, a flower, a smile, and mold it into the spiritual, changing mortality into the immortality of thought.

A composition of Chopin's often embodies pictures of the passing days.

Where for instance can we find reflected a more perfect tone picture of the elements of nature, or the emotions more truly expressed, than in Chopin's Sonata.p. 35?—Beginning with quiet thoughtfulness, changing after the first four bars into intense restlessness and struggles, relieved by the *sostenuto*, first so blissfully hopeful, growing in its intensity, suddenly interrupted by doubts and fears, the two elements combating

with each other, end in a firm resolve.—In the second movement, resolve battles on in firm sternness until the divinely sweet voice of hope comes to its softening relief After repeated strife with the resisting element, these sweetly hopeful tones, die out with a sense of resignation, in their dreamy consciousness of the inevitable, of the last, the heaviest blow.—We hear the solemn strains of the funeral march, in it all burning emotion repressed and only an undercurrent of tears rolling on between. In the Presto, the passion breaks lose, first *sotto voce*, in the murmuring distance, than louder sounds "the rush of the torrent, the hurried sweep of the clouds, the hoarse monotone of the sea, broken by the whistling of the storm, the frightened plaint of the seabird, borne through the fitful gusts of air,—perchance a great fog descending suddenly like a shroud and penetrating"—the soul of man moaning, storming and raving in agony over the buried lost.—This Sonata truly speaks of a life's drama.

Thought is the essential beauty in Chopin's

tone poems, and we learn that to grasp the meaning of a composition and to work it out in the spirit and thought of its conception is the great art in the interpretation of the works of this great genius.

May this little book further the supremely beautiful in music—the art of thinking! And may we all be filled with gratefulness to George Sand, the woman who, so richly endowed with intellectual power, in her keen appreciation of nature, her exalted love of all things human, her artistic perceptions of the beautiful, was more than any other the medium through which Chopin received impressions.

May we not say she was the human hand through which he clasped the Eternal?

It is most fitting that her hand should pen for us these sketches of Chopin's character and genius; happily, indeed, if between the lines we see in outline the woman herself, great in noble aspiration, broad in humanity, sympathetic and loving,—herself an inspiration.

L. W.

There is a spirit beautiful and pure in its ideality that I recall in my thoughts of the dead and of that better world, in whose light divine and clear, we shall know one another better than upon this earth.

I speak of Frederic Chopin, who was my guest during the eight years of my seclusion at Nohant.

CHOPIN

START FOR MAJORCA

In 1838, when my son Maurice had been definitely intrusted to my charge, I resolved to seek for him a milder climate than that of France. I wished at the same time to secure for myself a peaceful spot in which I could unite work and quiet study; for time is gained when one withdraws from society.

While I was making preparations for my journey, Chopin, whom I saw daily, and for whose genius and character I had the warmest sympathy, constantly said to me that if he were in the place of Maurice, he should surely regain his health.

I believed him, but I was mistaken. Hoping for the restoration of his strength, I decided to take him as well as Maurice. His friends had long been urging Chopin to pass

some time in the south of Europe. It was thought he had a consumptive tendency. The physician Gaubert examined him and declared that this was not the case, saying "you will, in fact save him, with good air, exercise and quiet." Chopin's friends knowing well he would never leave the Paris life unless drawn to do so by one devoted to himself and ardently loved by him, warmly urged me to grant the desire which was as gratifying as it was unexpected.

I did wrong in yielding to their wishes and to my own anxiety, as the result proved. To go alone among strangers, with two children, one, already ill, the other, restless with health and vigor,—this was enough, without taking to my heart a new anxiety, and assuming the responsibility of a physician.

But Chopin's health was at that time such as to reassure us all. I besought him to carefully consider his moral force, for never without terror had he been able to conceive the idea of leaving Paris, physician, associations, home—and piano. Chopin was a

man of strong habit, and any change, however slight, was an overwhelming event in his life.

I left Paris, saying to Chopin that I should pass several days at Perpignon; if he did not join us there at a certain time, I should pass into Spain.

I had chosen Majorca on the authority of persons who believed they knew well both the climate and the resources of the country, of which I myself was perfectly ignorant.

In case Chopin should follow out his dream of travel, our common friend Mendizable, a man as excellent as noted, was to go to Madrid and accompany him to the frontiers.

I started in November with my children and a maid. I stopped the first evening at Plessis. We journeyed easily, making many turns and stops, traveling for the travel as much as for a destination.

We sailed down the Rhone as far as Avignon, from which place we passed to Vancluse, one of the loveliest spots on earth, well deserving the love of Petrarch and the immortality of his verse.

We stopped a few days at Nimes, where Chopin arrived the second day. He had borne the journey very well. He did not greatly suffer from the voyage to Barcelona, nor thence to Palma. The weather was propitious. We perceived the heat increase from hour to hour.

ARRIVAL IN PALMA

When we reached Palma, the heat was like that experienced in our month of June. A fortnight before, we had left Paris in extremely cold weather. It was a great delight after having felt the first approach of winter to leave the enemy behind us. It was an added pleasure to visit a city possessing so much of what is beautiful and rare.

But the difficulty of finding rooms soon filled our thoughts. We came to see that the Spaniards who had recommended Majorca as a most hospitable place and one full of resources, had been greatly deceived, as well as ourselves. In a country so near the great civilizations of Europe, we were hardly able to find a shelter for ourselves.

This difficulty in securing a place for the

feet to rest, should alone have taught us the character of Majorca, and have induced our immediate return to Barcelona, where at least there is a miserable inn called significantly" Hotel of the four Nations."

At Palma it is necessary to be expected several months, and to have been announced to at least twenty important persons, unless you expect to sleep in the open air.

All that we possibly could obtain was two small bedrooms furnished most miserably, and in matter of food, pepper and garlic at discretion.

In less than an hour we discovered that unless we accepted this reception as perfectly satisfactory, we should be regarded with suspicious eyes and considered either dangerous characters or fools. Woe to him who is not contented in Spain! The slightest look of disaffection one might show on finding vermin in the beds or scorpions in the soup would draw upon himself the profound contempt and indignation of all.

We were careful not to complain and little by little we learned to understand the lack of resources and hospitality.

We were about to quit Majorca, when, with all good intentions, the evil service was rendered of securing us the rental of a country-house

It was the villa of a wealthy countryman, who relinquished his home to us for about a hundred francs a month. The furniture was most primitive, beds of two cross-pieces of wood on which were placed two planks and a thin mattress; chairs of straw; tables of rough wood; the walls bare, whitened with chalk and as excess of luxury, windows furnished with glass in most of the rooms.

The house was large, airy, too airy, well arranged, and pleasantly situated at the foot of mountains, in a rich valley bounded by the yellow walls of Palma, the massive cathedral, the sea sparkling in the horizon.

The first days in our retreat were filled with walking and strolling to which the soft climate invited, as well as the novelty and charm of our surroundings.

MAJORCA

It was the first time I had seen vegetation and physical aspects of soil essentially different from those of the temperate regions.

When I visited Italy, I landed on the plains of Toscana, and the grandiose idea that I had conceived of the country prevented my appreciation of the pastoral beauty. On the banks of the Arno, I imagined myself on the banks of the Indus, and I reached Venice without being affected or astonished by anything.

But at Majorca I had no comparison to make with known sites. Men, houses, plants, and even the smallest pebbles of the road had a wholly distinctive character.

My children were so impressed with this that they made collections of everything, and filled our trunks with bits of quartz and colored marble. The peasants on seeing us gather even dead branches, considered us either apothecaries or idiots.

Majorca, is truly the Eldorado of painting. There all is picturesque from the cabin of the peasant, built in Arab style, to the babe

draped in its rags and "triumphant in its squalidness grandioso."

The country is richer in vegetation than Africa and possesses the same breadth of calm and simplicity. It is a green Switzerland under the sky of Calabria, with all the solemnity and silence of the Orient.

In Switzerland, everywhere, the rolling torrent and the passing cloud, impress upon the aspects of the country a mobility of color and a continuity of movement, which eludes the brush of the painter. Nature seems to mock the artist.

In Majorca, nature invites and woos him. Vegetation assumes strange forms, but it does not offer that rioting disorder in which the lines of a Swiss landscape too often disappear. The top of the cliff is sharply outlined under the bright sky; the palmtree hangs gracefully over the precipice and no capricious breeze disturbs the majesty of its foliage. Everything, even the stunted cactus on the roadside, seems to pose with a sort of vanity to do pleasure to the eye.

The isle owes its varied aspect to the con-

stant changes offered by a soil ploughed and furrowed by great inundations like those of the primitive world. Within a few leagues, most diverse scenes are to be found. About us the cultivated hillocks presented a verdure disposed in grades irregularly grouped about the hills. This terrace-like culture, found in all parts of the isle subject to the rains and sudden overflows of the streams, is well adapted to trees, and gives to the country the appearance of an admirably kept orchard.

To our right, the hills gradually rose from the gently sloping pasturage to the fir-covered mountain.

At the foot of the mountain there flowed in winter and during the storms of summer a torrent, which, at our arrival, presented only a bed of pebbles. But the lovely moss that covered these stones, the little bridges, green from the dampness, broken by the force of the currents and half hidden in drooping branches of the willows and poplars, the interlacing of the luxuriant trees, which drooped in a bower of verdure from one bank to the other, a slender thread of water

coursing its noiseless way among the rushes and myrtle, and always some group of children, of women, and of goats, made of this spot an adorable bit for painting.

We went every day to walk in the bed of the torrent, and we called the place Poussin for the beauty, the freedom, the melancholy solitude recalled to us the favorite sites of this great master.

VOICES OF NIGHT

We had been here eight weeks when the rains began. Until then the weather had been divine; the citrons and myrtles were still in flower and in the early days of December, I remained in open air on a terrace until five o'clock in the morning enwrapped in the pleasure of a delightful temperature. Nor is my enthusiastic love of nature able to render me insensible to the slightest cold. Beside, notwithstanding the moon lighted landscape and the perfume laden air which surrounded me, my vigil was not exciting. I was not there like a poet seeking inspiration, but like a bird that contemplates and listens. I was occupied, interested, I re-

member, in noting the sounds of the night.

It is beyond question, each country has its own harmonies, cries, mysterious murmuring, and this material language of the earth is one of the most strangely marked characteristics by which the traveller is impressed.

The mysterious sound of the water against the cold cliffs of marble, the heavy step of the *sbirros* on the quay, the sharp cry of the fieldmice, pursuing one another over the slimy flagstones; in short, the furtive and strange sounds dimly heard through the mournful stillness of the night in Venice, have no resemblance whatever to the monotone of the sea, the "who goes there?" of the sentinel, or the mournful song of the "serenos" of Barcelona. The constant crackling of the pine cones in the forests of Switzerland is wholly different from that crackling heard in the glacier.

In Majorca, silence is more profound than elsewhere. Occasionally it is broken by the little bell of the mules and donkeys in pasture, sounding more melodic than those of Swiss cows. The *bolero* sounds at all times

at night and in all places. There is not a peasant who has not his guitar, with which he walks at all hours.

From my terrace, I could also hear the sea, but so distant and so feeble as to strangely remind me of the charming and phantastic poetry of Djins:

* j'ecoute,
Tout fuit.
On doute,
La nuit,
Tout passe;
L'espace
Efface
Le bruit,

From the neighboring farm I heard the cry of an infant and the quieting song of the mother.

There were other sounds less poetic, recalling the grotesque character of Majorca.

From time to time the swine complained of the world. Then the *pagès*, the father of the family, would wake at the call of the beloved swine. I could hear him from his window scold in the voice of a magis-

* I hark, all melts away, we doubt this night. All passes, space effaces the sound.

trate the inmates of the adjoining barn. The swine seemed to understand and grew still. Then the *pagès*, to sleep the quicker, would begin to recite his rosary in a monotonous voice, which, according as sleep waxed or waned, increased or decreased like the distant murmur of the waves.

From time to time the pigs uttered cries: then the *pagés* would raise his voice without interrupting his prayers, and the beasts, quieted by an *ora pro nobis* or an *Ave Maria*, would be still.

As for the child, it doubtless listened, open-eyed in that sort of trance in which confused noises hold the earliest thought of the infant, still in the mysterious travail of expression.

But suddenly, after such nights of serene beauty, the deluge began. One morning after the wind had sighed around us all night with the falling rain, we heard at waking the sound of the torrent, beginning to make its way among the stones of its bed. By the following day, it leaped the rocks which barred its course.

The blossoms of the trees were pulled off, and the rain trickled into our poorly guarded rooms.

TROUBLES AND RELIEF

One cannot understand the slight precautions taken by the Majorcans against the scourge of wind and flood. Their illusion, or bragging spirit, is so great as to lead them to wholly deny these accidental inclemencies of their climate. To the very end of the two months of rain which we had to suffer, the people maintained that it did not rain at Majorca.

Had we but noticed the position of the mountain peaks and the common direction of the wind, we could have assured ourselves in advance of the inevitable suffering which awaited us.

Still another deception was in reserve for us. One of our number fell ill. Subject to irritation of the throat, Chopin was most sensitive to the dampness. The house became uninhabitable. The walls were so slight that the lime swelled like sponge. For my own part, never have I so suffered

from cold, although actually it was not very cold. The house without a chimney, was like a mantel of ice on our shoulders, and I felt myself paralyzed beneath it.

We could not accustom ourselves to the stifling odor of the cooking braziers, and Chopin began to cough. From that moment we became objects of terror and dread for the people. They judged us the victims of pulmonary consumption, which was the same as a contagious pest, according to their prejudicies.

One morning when we were in serious fears as to the duration of the rains and of our consequent sufferings, we received a most ferocious letter from Gomez, who declared in Spanish fashion, that we were sheltering a person whose disease was carrying contagion to the house and threatening the life of the Gomez family, in view of which, he prayed us to quit the "palace" without delay.

In itself, this was no cause of regret to us for we could not stay longer without fear of drowning in our rooms, but Chopin was not able to be moved without danger, especially

by Majorca transports and in such terrible weather. Beside, we knew not where to go, for the report of our sickness had spread, and we could not hope to find anywhere for any price a refuge even for a night.

We knew that the obliging ones who might offer would not themselves be allowed to escape the prejudice, and should we accept their kindness, we should draw upon them the stigma which weighed upon us.

Had it not been for the hospitality of the French Consul, who effected miracles to receive us beneath his roof, we should have risked camping in some cavern, in veritable Gypsy fashion.

Another miracle occurred, and we found a refuge for the winter. There was at the Chartreuse of Valdemosa a Spanish refugee, who had hidden there for some unknown political reason. In visiting Chartreuse, we had been impressed with the elegance of his manners, the melancholy beauty of his wife, and the rustic but comfortable furnishing of their retreat. The poetry of Chartreuse had bewitched me.

It happened that the mysterious couple wished suddenly to leave the country and were as pleased to cede to us their retreat as we were to acquire it. So, having been sheltered four blissful days at Palma in a house possessed of a chimney, we removed to Chartreuse, in the middle of December, on a day of sunshine, which was to become more and more rare for us.

VALDEMOSA

After crossing the fertile fields of Etablissement, we reached the broken and rolling grounds of wood and rocks and scattered pastures, with no positive character in their great variety.

Nowhere else, unless in certain valleys of the Pyrenees, has nature appeared to me so free and open in its charms as on these heaths of Majorca's vast open stretches, quite outside the pale of that perfect cultivation to which the Majorcans claim to have submitted the whole land.

Nothing is lovelier than these neglected lands, producing according to nature's wish, and committing no mistake: trees jagged

and gnarled, bending over with heavy foliage; frightful brambles; magnificent flowers; carpets of moss and rushes; spiny capers; delicate asphodels:—everything there assumed the form that was pleasing unto God,—ravine, hill, rocky pathway, road losing itself in an alluring stream, open prairie terminating in a precipitous mountain:—the forms of huge bowlders that one might think just fallen from the sky, the sunken roads beside the torrent, the sides thick with myrtle and honeysuckle,—perhaps the solitary figure of a woman, like an oasis in the midst of the wild place, raising her palm branch as if a beacon to guide the traveler in the solitude,—all was strange and new and beautiful.

Switzerland and Tyrol have not shown me this free and primitive creation which so charmed me in Majorca. In the wildest spots in the mountains of Switzerland, it seems that nature, delivered to the too rude influences of the atmosphere, has escaped the hand of man only to receive from heaven sterner constraints, having, like an ungov-

erned spirit delivered to itself,—to suffer the enslavement of its own proper passion.

In Majorca, nature unfolds beneath the caresses of a glowing sky, and smiles under the warm winds which sweep in from the sea; the bent flower rises with new life, the broken tree sends forth more numerous shoots, after every storm.

Although in truth there are no desert spots in this island, the absence of marked roads gives an air of abandon or of revolt, which must make it resemble those beautiful savannahs of Louisiana, seen in the cherished dreams of my youth.

From Palma to Valdemosa is a three-hours journey. For two hours one ascends gently; for the last, he enters the mountain and follows the well marked path, probably the ancient work of the monks. It is a narrow path, very steep, and the most dangerous part of the way. On it one first conceives the Alpine character of Majorca. It is in vain that the mountains rise precipitously from each side of the gorge, or that the torrent leaps from rock to rock;—it is only in the

heart of winter that these places assume the aspect assigned to them by the Majorcans. In the month of December, in spite of the recent rains, the torrent was still a charming stream, coursing its way between tufts of grass and flowers. The mountain was lovely, and the valley surrounding Valdemosa spread out before us like a spring garden.

To reach Chartreuse, one must go on foot the last part of the way, for no vehicle can traverse the paved way, admirable triumph of skill and labor, and offering at each step ravishing sights, whose beauty increases with the ascent.

I have never seen anything more lovely, and, at the same time, more sombre, than these perspectives where the green oak, the locust, the pine, the olive, the poplar and cypress, interlace their various shades in bowers of profound verdure; through which sumptuous wealth of grace and life, leaps the torrent. I can never forget a certain turn of the gorge, where, on the summit of a mount, is seen one of those pretty little Arab cottages, half-hidden in the fig-trees.

A great palm bending over the chasm, throws its silhouette in clear relief upon the sky.

When the sight of Paris mud and fog gives me the spleen, I close my eyes and see again that green mountain, the gray rocks and that solitary palm disappearing in the sky of rose.

The chain of Valdemosa rises from plateau to plateau, terminating in a dark background, surrounded by high mountains, and cleared at the north by a final plateau, at whose entrance reposes the monastery.

CHARTREUSE

The friars have by great labor reduced the ruggedness of this wild spot. They made a vast garden of the valley terminating the chain of mountains. This garden planted with palms and almond-trees rises in vast grades to the first mountain levels.

By moonlight, when the singularity of the terraces is concealed by shadows, one might think it an anphitheatre hewed for combats of giants.

In the center, beneath a group of palms, a stone reservoir receives the waters from the mountain, and dispenses them by canals

to the lower levels, quite like those surrounding Barcelona.

Such works of ingenuity and skill in Majorca, as in Spain, show the industry of the Moors. They traverse the whole interior of the island, and the water from the garden of the friars is carried to Palma, fresh and sparkling.

Chartreuse, situated on the last level of the mountain chain, opens to the north upon a spacious valley, which enlarges and rises gently to the rocky side, whose farther bound is washed by the sea.

Thus from this picturesque Chartreuse, one overlooks the sea on two sides. While you hear it roar on the north, you see it like a slender line of light beyond the mountains which approach it. To the south a vast plain unrolls. It was a spectacle of unequalled grandeur, framed on one side by black rocks covered with pines and, further on, by lofty mountains with the profile marked by superb trees, and the rounded eminences gilded by the setting sun;—the delicate outline of the trees, fine as a butterfly's

antennæ, black and clear as a pencil line of China ink, with a background of shining gold.

When the vapor of the mountain threw a transparent veil over the plain, one might believe it the sea. But the sea is farther away, and at the return of the sun, when the plain is like a blue lake, the Mediterranean throws its silver band about this dazzling picture.

It is a sight which overwhelms the beholder, leaving nothing to desire and nothing to imagine.

Here nature has created everything that artist could dream or poet fancy. Art could add nothing more. The mind is not always able to appreciate and comprehend the work of God, and fails of expression for this immensity of life which overwhelms and intoxicates.

It would be well for those whom the vanity of art consumes, to view such sights and to view them often. They would conceive more reverently that divine art which presides over the eternal creation of earth's beauty.

For myself, I have never been so impressed by the nothingness of words as in those hours of contemplation of Chartreuse; and often in the deepest sense, my heart was filled with the enthusiasm of religion, for which I could find no expression, but could only thank God that he had given me eyes to see.

But however beneficial and salutary the occasional view of such sublime spectacles may be, I feel their continual possession to be dangerous. One becomes accustomed to living under the empire of sensation and grows weak by excess of emotion.

The indifference of monks in general for the beauty of their monasteries is thus explained, as well as the slight regard of peasants for the loveliness of their mountains. We had no time to grow weary, for the fog descended usually at sunset and hastened the close of our short day. Until noon we were enveloped in the shadow of the great mountain on the left, by three o'clock we entered the shadow of the mountain on the right. But what beautiful effects of light, when the

oblique rays penetrating the openings in the rocks or cuts in the mountains, traced their crests of gold and purple on the plain.

THE CLOISTER

The Chartreuse monastery of Valdemosa accommodated exactly thirteen, and so escaped the ordinance of 1836 for the demolition of all monasteries containing less than twelve persons; but like all the others, the convent had been suppressed, considered as domain of the state. The Majorca state, not knowing how to utilize these vast edifices, had adopted the plan of renting the cells to whoever wished to occupy them.

Although the price was very low, the people of Valdemosa had not chosen to rent them, perhaps from devotion and from their regret for the monks—perhaps from superstitious dread,—which did not, however, prevent their dancing in the monastery in the time of carnival.

They regarded our presence in the venerable walls with an evil eye.

However, Chartreuse was occupied in the heat of summer by a class of humble citi-

zens of Palma, who sought the clear fresh air of the mountain.

While we were there, the sole occupants save ourselves were an apothecary, the sacristan, and Maria Antonia.

Maria Antonia was a sort of person-in-charge. Her cell was beside ours, and served us as kitchen, while she herself was supposed to see to our housekeeping affairs.

The second cloister has twelve rooms and two chapels. The arcades have a strange character, even in ruin. They are no longer supported, and when we traversed them by evening in stormy weather, we commended our souls to God, for no storm passed over Chartreuse that some bit of wall or fragment of arch, did not fall. Nowhere else have I heard the wind give forth such cries and accents of despair as in these hollow, sounding galleries. The rush of the torrent, the hurried sweep of the clouds, the hoarse monotone of the sea, broken by the whistling of the storm, the frightened plaints of the seabird, borne through the fitful gusts of the air,—perchance a great fog descending

suddenly like a shroud and penetrating the cloister by the broken arcades, rendering us nearlyinvisible to one another and converting our little girl guide into a dim phantom wandering through the galleries,—these and a thousand other details, forever fresh in my memory, made Chartreuse the most romantic retreat on earth.

When the weather was too bad to allow the mountain climb, we walked in the convent. I know not what curiosity led me to wish to surprise within these abandoned walls the secret of the monastic life. The traces were so recent, I seemed ever to hear the sound of the sandals on the stone floor, and the whispered prayer beneath the vaulted arches of the chapels.

In our rooms Latin orisons imprinted upon the walls, even of the innermost feelings of the heart, whereof I should not have expected prayer to reveal, were still visible.

As to my children, love of the marvelous led them to experience a passionate delight in these explorations.

My little girl expected to find no less than

a fairy palace of wonders in the nooks of Chartreuse; and my son hoped to discover the trace of some strange and terrible tragedy. I was often frightened to see them creep like cats over insecure boards and trembling arches, and when proceeding me by a few steps they disappeared in some turn, I fancied them lost and hastened my gait in a sort of superstitious terror.

It was in vain to claim immunity from superstitious feeling. Those sinister dwellings exercised their evil sway upon the imagination, and no brain, however calm, could hold itself steady within their influence.

I confess I have rarely traversed the cloister at night without certain mingled emotions of agony and pleasure, which I should not have wished my children to know, lest they too should share it.

However, they were quite devoid of any such feeling, and danced freely throughout the ruin, often accompanying me as late as midnight in the cemetery. But I did not let them go alone after we encountered a tall

old man walking in the shadow. He was an old servant in whom wine and devotion often produced a sort of craze.

He would come then to knock at our door at unreasonable hours; he would first call for Father Nicolas, a fixed idea in his wandering mind, and when tired with his efforts, would lie down on the feet of the Madonna, which was placed in a niche near our door; and here he would fall asleep, his open knife in one hand and his rosary in the other.

His bluster did not greatly trouble us, and as his noise and the sound of his stick on the stone floor gave ample warning of his approach, we were able to beat a retreat before his savagery, and the double oaken door of our apartment could have endured a more formidable siege.

But his obstinate attacks when sickness was with us, and the hours of repose which he spoiled for the invalid, ceased to be comic. However, we were obliged to submit to it, for there was no remedy to be found.

MYSTERIOUS SOUNDS

One evening we received a new surprise, one never to be forgotten.

It began with an inexplicable noise like the continuous rolling of a thousand bags of nuts over a floor. We hastened into the cloister to learn the cause. The place was sombre and deserted, as usual; but the sound drew nearer, and soon a feeble light glimmered through the vast arches. Little by little it grew brighter as the light of a thousand torches approached, and we saw advancing in the lurid light a batallion of most frightful creatures. It was no less than Lucifer in person accompanied by his court. The master devil was all black, furnished with horns, and having a face the color of blood. About him was a swarm of friends with birds' heads, horses' tails, and tinsel of all colors. Female imps, in habits of white and rose colors, were apparently being carried away by the evil gnomes.

For a few moments, even after learning the nature of the procession, I could hardly face the dreadful appearance, which the hour

as well as the place and the torchlight, served to render supernatural.

They were people of the village, wealthy farmers and well-to-do people who were celebrating Mardigras in the chapel of Maria Antonia. The strange noise which accompanied their march was due to the castanets, with which hideously masked boys played, making a continuous rumbling by whose measured beat the dancing was kept up. It needed real courage to endure it a quarter of an hour.

PERPLEXITIES

But as winter advanced, sorrow paralyzed my efforts of gayety or even of calmness. The condition of our invalid ruled in all; the wind howled through the ravine, the rain beat the windows, the voice of the thunder pierced our thick walls and silenced the laughter and play of my children. The eagles and vultures, enboldened by the fog, came and devoured our poor sparrows even on the pomegranate-tree beside my window. The wild sea prevented all embarcation, and we felt ourselves prisoners, far from all skillful

aid and from all sympathy. Death seemed hovering above our heads to descend upon some one of us, and we were alone to dispute with him his prey.

There was not a single human creature within our reach who would not have added his efforts to secure speedy death, that so the dreaded danger of infection might be removed.

This feeling of hostility was most saddening. We felt ourselves strong enough to fulfill for one another the cares of devotion denied us from outside. I believed that in such crises, the heart enlarges and love exalts itself to its greatest measure, in the sentiment of human oneness. But we suffered in soul from seeing ourselves among those who felt nothing of this, and for whom we could only feel sincerest pity.

I was deeply troubled by still other considerations. I had no scientific knowledge whatever of medicine, and it was necessary to be a skilled physician to attend to this sickness, the responsibility of which weighed upon my heart.

The doctor who visited us, whose talent and zeal I do not deny, mistook the case. Bronchitis had given place to a nervous irritation which produced many of the symptoms of phthisis of the larynx. The physician, who saw the symptoms only at occasional times and did not see those of an opposite character, advised a course adapted to consumptives,—bleeding, dieting, milk food; all of which was wrong, while bleeding would have been fatal. Chopin felt it instinctively, and I, who had been much with sickness, had the same presentiment. I feared at the same time to trust to this instinct, which might deceive me, and to oppose the judgment of the physician. When I saw the disease increase, I suffered unspeakable agony.

Bleeding would save him, was said and by refusing, he would die.

But an inner voice, even in my sleep, warned me that bleeding would kill him, and that I should save him by remaining firm. I believe this voice was Providence, and today our friend, the former terror of the Ma-

jorcans, is recognized as no more a consumptive than myself.

I thank heaven for that confidence which saved us.

Our diet was most limited. Although we perceived the bad effect of this, we had little choice between the fiery spices of the country or the most simple fair. Milk food, whose bad effect we learned later on, was fortunately, very rare in Majorca. At the time, we believed that milk would be beneficial, and tormented ourselves to obtain it.

There are no cows in those mountains and the goat's milk which was sold to us was mostly drunk on the way by the children who brought it, which did not prevent the pitcher arriving fuller than at its start; it was a miracle performed each morning for the boy who offered a prayer at the fountain of Chartreuse.

To end these prodigies, we procured a goat. The milk was delicate, but the goat liked it herself, especially when separated from the herd with which she had wandered; she fell into a spleen quite like our own.

Although the rarest and choicest grass and aromatic herbs were at her disposal, she would not be consoled for her captivity. She wandered desolate through the cloisters, bleating in a voice woful enough to split the stones. She gave so little milk that we forbade Maria Antonia to visit her. We even put the animal under lock in a little enclosure, and did the milking ourselves.

The milk mixed with the juice of almonds, pounded by the children and myself, formed a rather agreeable drink. It was difficult to obtain any better, for all the drinks at Palma were very unclean. Even sugar poorly refined, was black and oily.

One day we thought ourselves saved in seeing some violets in the garden of a rich farmer. He allowed us to pick some, to make an infusion, but when we had made our little package, he charged us three sous for each violet.

SIGHTS OF THE WAYSIDE

There remained only a few hours in which to work and walk; but these hours were well filled. The childern were attentive to

their study and we had only to step out of our den to be in a country which was rich and beautiful in nature's variety.

On every side encircled by a vast frame of mountains, some picturesque sight presented itself, a chapel, perched by some high cliff, a clump of oleanders in some crevice of the rocks, a hermit's hut near a spring of water guarded by roses, or a bower of trees enriched with moss and ivy. Whenever the sun showed itself an instant, all the plants, the stones and terraces, bathed by the rain, took upon themselves the most dazzling colors and reflections of wonderful freshness.

In the evening, the huge trees on some roads looked most remarkable. When one walked under their enormous shadows, he needed to forcibly assure himself that they were indeed trees; for if one trusted the eyes and the imagination, one would be seized with dread and fear in the midst of these fantastic monsters, bending over one, like great dragons with gaping mouth and outspread wings; some were twisted together like encircled serpents; others looked like

struggling giants. Here could be seen a centaur galloping off with some hideous gnome; there a nameless reptile devouring a quivering hind; in the distance a satyr dancing with a buck hardly less frightful than himself; sometimes a single tree, old and decayed, knotty and twisted, seemed like a dozen trees, and represented all these divers monsters under one head, terrible as that of the Indian fetiches, and crowned with a single green branch.

We had two remarkable walks. The one, I do not recall with pleasure, although the views were magnifient. But Chopin, then quite well, (it was at the beginning of our stay at Majorca) wished to accompany us, and suffered fatigue which started his illness.

Our goal was a hermitage situated on the seashore, three miles from Chartreuse. We followed the right arm of the chain, and climbed from hill to hill, over a stony way that bruised the feet, toward the north side of the isle. At each turn of the path we had the grand spectacle of the sea, visible at a considerable depth below us, beyond a stretch of glorious vegetation.

It was my first sight of a fertile seashore, covered with trees and green up to the very waves, without pale cliffs and desolate sands, or a slimy beach.

In all places that I have seen on the coasts of France, even on the heights of Port-Vendres, the sea has ever seemed foul and unsightly to approach.

The Lido near Venice, noted as it is, has sands of dreadful barrenness, peopled by huge lizards, which run by thousands beneath your feet, and seem to pursue one with ever increasing numbers.

At Rayant, at Marseilles, nearly everywhere, I believe, on our coasts, a girdle of slimy sea-weed and a sterile arena of sand spoil the approach to the water.

At Majorca, I saw the sea as I had dreamed of it, limpid and blue as the sky, gently undulating, like a field of grain planted in regular furrows, whose undulation is the poetry of motion.

Each step we took on the winding mountain furnished a new perspective, always of increasing sublimity.

However beautiful their surroundings, the hermits, four or five in number, had nothing of poetry in themselves.

On our return to Chartreuse we were assailed by a violent wind, which often overthrew us, and rendered our progress so difficult that Chopin was quite overcome.

THE PRELUDES

The poor great artist made a detestable invalid. What I had feared, alas, not enough, was now verified. He became entirely demoralized. Able to bear his suffering with considerable courage, he could not overcome the uneasiness of his imagination. The cloister was full of terrors and phantoms for him, even when he was well. He did not say this, and I had to guess and feel it. At my return from night explorations in the ruins with my children, I found him at ten o'clock in the evening, before his piano, pale, his eyes haggard, his hair on end. It needed some moments to recognize us. Then he would try to laugh, and would play for us the sublime creations of his imagination, the terrible and rending ideas, which had in

this time of solitude, of sadness, of terror, as it were, without his knowledge, taken possession of him.

It is thus that he composed the most beautiful of those short pages which he modestly entitled "Preludes." They are masterpieces of art. Many picture to the thought visions of the dead monks, and repeat to us the sad and mournful dirges which filled the ear of the musician. Others are sweet and sad, and came to him in hours of sunshine and health, with the laughter of children under the window, the distant sound of a guitar, the song of birds in the trees, in sight of the little pale roses which blossom under the snow. Others still are full of a mournful sadness, and while they charm the ear, rend the heart. There is one which came to him one dismal night of rain. It fills one's soul with agony and despair.

Maurice and I left him quite well that day to go to Palma. The rain came on, the torrents were loosed. We travelled three leagues in six hours, returning in the midst of the flood at midnight without shoes, through unspeakable dangers.

This was a beautiful country where I was in danger of being drowned together with my poor boy of fourteen; but courage did not fail him, nor did I lose the power of seeing how grandly, on that terrible night, nature revealed herself; how she revelled *archi*-romantic, *archi*-mad, *archi*-sublime!

It was in the season of winter rains. The morning was favorable and the roads passable; but while we were coursing the city, the rain began to fall in torrents. At Majorca a permanent cloud envelops the island and remains until it discharges itself; it may be for forty or fifty hours, or four and five days. It rains during this time without stop and without diminution of force.

We ascended the mountain to the west, advancing slowly in our *birlocho* and hoping to reach Chartreuse in three hours; we spent seven, and found our only bed to be with the frogs in the bosom of some unexplored lake. The driver was in a very bad humor; he had opposed a thousand difficulties against the start; his horse was unshod; his mule lame; his axle broken; I know not what else!

We had begun to know the Majorcans, and would not be convinced; we forced him to mount his seat, where he presented the most sorrowful figure imaginable. He did not sing;—he had death in his soul. Hoping to frighten us, he began by taking the very worst of the seven roads known to him.

It became worse and worse, until soon we encountered the torrent. We entered it but we did not emerge from it. The torrent, still at ease in its narrow bed, had passed over into the road, and had become a rushing river whose surging waters met us with sound and fury.

When the crafty driver, who had counted on our weakness, saw that our purpose was firm, he lost courage and began to swear in a way to make the sky fall.

The culverts of cut stone which carry the water to the town were so full that, like the frog in the fable, they had burst; and had spread the water in great pools and lakes and seas over the whole country.

Soon the surly driver received a bath to his knees, which he well deserved.

The poor chaise closed quite well, and as yet we were dry; but moment by moment the water rose. We were advancing at chance, receiving frightful shocks, and falling into holes, each of which, it seemed would be our sepulcher. At last we gave a pitch which made the mule stop to gather his senses before final distruction;—the driver arose and began to climb along the banks of the road, at the elevation of his head. He stopped in recognizing in the dim light that this bank was neither more nor less than the canal of Valdemosa become a river which from place to place poured itself over in cascades upon our path, which also had become a river at a lower level.

Then was a tragicomic moment. I felt some fear for myself, but greater for my child. I looked at him. He was laughing at the appearance of our driver who, standing with his legs stretched wide apart on his brancard, was surveying the abyss, and no longer had the least desire to amuse himself at our expense.

When I saw my son so tranquil and gay,

I took courage, I renewed my trust in God and felt that my child carried with him the instinct of his destiny. I relied upon that presentiment which children cannot express, but which shows itself like a flitting cloud through a ray of sunlight on their forehead.

The driver seeing no way to abandon us to our unhappy fate, resigned himself to sharing it with us, and became suddenly heroic. "Do not fear, my children," he said in a paternal voice. Then he uttered a loud cry and whipped his mule, which stumbled, fell, rose, stumbled again, and finally rose, half drowned. The chaise pitched from side to side. Still, it survived! It gave forth most sinister groans; it made most remarkable jerks, and came forth from this trial triumphant, like a boat which has struck the rocks without being crushed.

We appeared saved; we were dry. But before reaching the mountain, our cart had many times to do the service of a ship at sea. At last we reached the ascent; but there the mule, exhausted and frightened by the noise and the wind in the mountain, be-

gan to draw back to the very edge of the precipice. We each pushed a wheel, while the driver pulled master Aliboron by his long ears. This process was many times repeated to the end of two hours of ascent, in which time we had not made a half league; the mule came to a stop on the bridge. He trembled in every limb. We decided to leave the man, the coach and the beast, and to reach Chartreuse on foot.

It was no slight undertaking. The steep path was an impetuous torrent, against which we had to fight our way by force. Unexpected floods, leaping from the rocks with thundering voices, often poured down upon us. Many times we had to pass at our peril through them with all possible haste, fearful that in a moment they would become impassable.

The rain fell in great sheets; immense clouds, blacker than ink, covered each instant the face of the moon. Then enveloped in impenetrable darkness, beaten by wind and rain, feeling the treetops bend over our heads, listening to the cracking of pinetrees and

the rolling of stones on every side, we were compelled to wait, as the poet says—until Jupiter had snuffed the candle.

In these intervals of darkness and of light, the sky and the earth, now dark, now illuminated, reflected in the sinister light the strange and fantastic figures of darkness. Whenever the moon shot forth its light and tried to claim a bit of azure, cleared for the moment by the wind, quickly the sombre clouds, like grim specters of the night, swathed in the folds of their shrouds the moon and its light. They swooped down upon it, rending themselves apart to show but for an instant the beautiful golden orb of light and help.

The mountain resounding with cataracts, the trees uprooted by the tempest, the howling of the wind and the dark forms of the night—it was chaos. We thought of the witches' meeting, conceived in a dream and drawn with a pencil dipped in the dark waters of Phlegethon and Erebus. Hardly was the infernal picture presented to our eyes before the moon, swallowed by these

monsters of the air, disappeared, leaving us in dark limbo, where we ourselves seemed like clouds, to be floating on, for we would not even see the ground on which we risked our feet. At last we reached the roadway of the last mountain ascent escaping the water-courses, and were out of danger.

We were overcome by our weariness and very nearly barefooted. Three hours had been spent in the last league.

We hurried home in consideration of the uneasiness of our invalid. His anxiety had been bitter, but it had in a way, congealed into the quiet of despair, and he was while weeping, playing that wonderful "prelude" (before mentioned) but seeing us enter, he arose, uttering a great cry. Then with a wild air and in a strange voice, he said to us: "Ah! I knew that you were dead!"— When he had recovered himself and saw the condition in which we were, he was ill from the restrospective imaging of our dangers; he confessed to me later that he had seen it all in his thought, and becoming unable to distinguish imagination from reality, he had

quieted himself by playing at the piano, persuaded that he too was dead. He saw himself drowned in a lake. The heavy icy drops of water fell in measured beat upon his breast. When I made him listen to the sound of the rain-drops which fell indeed in measured time upon the roof, he denied having heard them. He was even displeased with my explanation of imitative harmony. He protested, and he was right, against the trifling effect of these imitations for the ear.

His genius was full of the mysterious harmonies of nature, and in his musical thought these were rendered, not by servile repetition of exterior sounds but with the freshness and beauty of a new creation. All his composition of that particular evening was full of the sound of raindrops which resounded on the tiles of our solitary country house, but in the rendering of his imagination, they became the tears of heaven falling upon his own heart.

CHOPIN'S GENIUS AND CHARACTER

The genius of Chopin has never been surpassed in the depth and fullness of senti-

ment and emotion. He has made an instrument speak the language of the infinite. Often in ten lines that a child might play, he has introduced poems of unequalled elevation, dramas unrivalled in force and energy. He did not need the great material methods to find expression for his genius. Neither saxophone nor ophicleide was necessary for him, to fill the soul with awe; without church organ or human voice he inspired faith and enthusiasm. He was not known; he still is not, by the crowd. Before his works can become popular, great advance must be made in discrimination and in the intelligent appreciation of music as an art.

The day will come when his music will be arranged for orchestra without change of the piano score, when all the world will know this genius as great, as perfect, as intelligent, as that of the greatest masters whom he assimilated. He preserved an individuality even more powerful than that of Sebastian Bach, more exquisite than that of Beethoven, more dramatic than that of Weber. He combines the three, but is him-

self: which is to say, more delicate in taste, more severe in the grand, more reaching in sorrow. Mozart alone is superior, because Mozart had the calm of health and consequently the fulness of life.

Chopin knew his own strength, his own weakness. His weakness indeed was in the excess of that thought which he could not direct or rule. He could not like Mozart (indeed Mozart alone could) compose a masterpiece in one *even* line of thought. His music was full of shades, of the unexpected. Sometimes, not often, it was fantastic, mysterious, unquiet. Although he felt a horror for what is not understood, his excessive emotions bore him unwittingly into realms known only to himself. I was perhaps for him a poor referee, for he consulted me as Molière his servant; because from my intimate acquaintance with him, I was able to identify myself with him in every fiber of his being.

For eight years of daily initiation into the secret inspiration, his musical meditations revealed to me the rapture, the bounds,

the victories, or the tortures, of thought. I understood him, indeed, as he did not understand himself. A critic who had been less a part of Chopin himself might have caused him to be more intelligible for others.

He had had in his youth ideas which were free and gay. He composed Polish songs and unpublished romances, of charming frankness and sweetness. Some of his works are still like pieces of crystal enclosing pure sunshine. But how very rare and short are these quiet moods of ecstasy and raptures! The song of the lark in the sky, the soft floating of the swan in the motionless water, are for him sudden glimpses into the beauty of nature's serenity. The plaintive cry of the eagle on the rocks of Majorca, the sharp whistle of the north wind and the mournful desolation of the yew trees covered with snow, made a far deeper impression upon him than did the perfume of the oranges, the delicate grace of the vines, or the Moorish melodies of the laborers.

Such was his character in all things. Sensitive for a moment to the sweetness of love

and the kindly smiles of fortune he was for days, for entire weeks, bruised by the awkwardness of some indifferent person or by the trifling vexations of every day life. Strange to say, the little ills troubled him more than the greater. He seemed, in the first place, unable to understand the latter, and, in the second place, not fully to realize them. The depth of his emotions therefore was by no means in relation to their causes.

As to his deplorable state of health, he accepted it heroically in the real dangers; and he tormented himself most miserably in the trifling changes. This holds true for all those whose nervous system has been developed to excess.

With his exaggerated sensibility, his horror of discomfort, and the refined needs of his physical well-being, at the end of a few days of illness, he conceived a detestation of Majorca. It was impossible to escape, he was too weak. When he was better, contrary winds held the coast, and for three weeks the steamboat was unable to leave the port. It was the only means of travel

and indeed hardly deserved the name.

Our stay at the Chartreuse of Valdemosa became forthwith an agony for him, a misery for me.

Charming, sweet, and gay in society—ill—Chopin was hopeless in the seclusion of intimacy. No spirit was nobler, more delicate, more generous; no friendship more loyal and faithful, no wit more brilliant in gayety, no intelligence more earnest and complete in what was in his domain; but, alas! on the other hand, no humor was ever more fitful, no fancy more cloudy, unrestrained, frenzied, unchecked, no sensitiveness more impossible to satisfy.

And nothing of all this was his fault; it was due to his illness. His spirit was flayed to the quick. The fold of a rose-leaf, the shadow of a fly, caused him excruciating agony. Except myself and my children, everything under the Spanish sky caused in him revolt and antipathy. He chafed more with impatient longing for the departure than from the actual embarrassments of the stay.

DEPARTURE FROM CHARTREUSE

We were at the end of winter able to reach Barcelona, and from there, Marseilles. I left Chartreuse with mingled joy and sorrow. I could easily have passed there two or three years alone with my children. We had a trunk full of good elementary books, and I had the time to explain them to the children. The sky had become magnificent for us; the isle, an enchanted spot. Our romantic life charmed us. Maurice seemed to be gaining strength, and we on our side only laughed at the privations. I could have had good hours of work without distraction. I was reading fine works of philosophy and of history when I was not nurse, and the invalid himself would have been adorably good if he had been able to get well. With what poetry did his music fill that sanctuary, even in time of his greatest disturbances. And Chartreuse was so beautiful with its festoons of ivy, the bloom so splendid in the valley, the air so pure on our mountain, the sea so blue on the horizon—it is the loveliest spot I have ever seen!

And I had not completed my joy in it! Not daring to leave the sick one, I could go out with my children only a few moments each day, often not at all. I was ill myself from fatigue and indoor life.

Fine weather returned, and the Majorca steamer was able to resume its weekly trips to Barcelona.

The invalid was in no condition to make the passage, but he was still less able to endure another week in Majorca. The situation was frightful; there were days when I lost all hope and courage.

To add to our misery, the people about us gave us their edifying talk concerning the future life—"this consumptive," said they, "will go to hell, first because he is consumptive, and secondly because he does not go to confessional. Therefore when he is dead, we will not inter him in holy ground, and no one will allow him burial; his friends will have to do as they can. We shall see how they will get out of the difficulty. We shall not mix ourselves in the trouble, not we indeed." At last we left the place.

ON THE STEAMER

Civilization began in Majorca with the exportation of hogs. It is therefore due to the pig that ever I was able to visit the isle of Majorca; for if I had wished to go there three years earlier, the long and perilous voyage of coasting vessels would have made it impossible for me.

A pretty little English steamer is able in good weather to transport once a week two hundred hogs and a few passengers besides, to Barcelona.

It is needless to describe with what tenderness the beasts are treated, and how joyfully they are disembarked at last.

The captain is a very good man, who, by force of long association with swine has assumed a certain likeness in voice and appearance.

If a passenger complains of the noise, the captain answers that the sound of gold is in it. If some sailor's wife speaks of the odor which infects the whole boat, her husband warns her that silver does not smell bad, and that without the hogs, she would have no

silk dress, no bonnet from France, no mantilla from Barcelona. If any one is sea-sick, he can expect no care from the people of the boat, for the hogs, too, have the same illness, with them accompanied with languor and a disgust of life, which has to be combatted at any price.

Then the captain, laying aside all compassion and sympathy in order to preserve the existence of his swine, armed with a whip, launches himself into their midst, followed by the sailors and cabin-boys, each seizing whatever first presents itself; in a moment, the whole herd is beaten and routed and forced to rise and stir about, thus overcoming the disastrous effect of the ship's rolling.

When we returned from Majorca to Barcelona, in March, the heat was stiffling; but we could not stop on deck. Even had we been able to brave the danger of being crushed by some ill-humored pig, the captain would not have allowed us by our presence to annoy the swine.

They were usually quiet the first part of

the night; but later they would become disturbed and restless in their sleep. Then the whipping would be administered; and regularly each quarter hour we were wakened by the most frightful cries and squeals of pain and rage on the part of the beaten hogs, so that often we believed the troop would devour the whole ship.

After we had cast anchor, we entertained the hope of separation from so strange a company, and indeed that of the islanders was beginning to be equally oppressive to us; but we were not allowed to get to the air until after the landing of the hogs.

We might have suffocated in our cabins, and none would have cared, so long as there was a pig to put ashore or to whip.

I myself do not fear the sea, but Chopin was dangerously ill. The passage, the stench, and the loss of sleep, had all increased his suffering. The captain gave us no other attention than to tell us not to use the best bed in the cabin for the sick man, because, according to the Spanish prejudice, every sickness is contagious, and as he ex-

pected to burn the bed on which the invalid slept, he wished it to be the poorest

A fortnight later on a French boat, the captain forced us to accept his own bed for Chopin.

Whence I conclude that man is not exclusively good on one corner of the earth, nor exclusively bad on another.

CHOPIN'S IMPROVEMENT

At Marseilles, Chopin was examined by the celebrated doctor Cauvieres, who at first considered his case very grave, but afterward thought there was reason for much hope in view of his rapid gain. He reasoned that long life might be assured to him by great care, and he lavished upon him all his skill. This excellent physician was like a father to us and made our life charming; he cared for the invalid, he walked with the children; he filled me, if not with security, at least with hope, with confidence, and with intellectual content.

Seeing Chopin gain strength with the return of spring and receiving benefit from the gentle treatment, he favored our plan of

passing a few days at Gênes. It was a rare pleasure to behold again the fine buildings and beautiful pictures of this charming city.

On our return, we had on the sea a rough wind, which made Chopin ill, and we spent several days of repose with the dear good doctor.

I took to Nohant, Maurice cured and Chopin on the way to become so. But after a few days it was Maurice's turn to become the most ill; his heart again became affected; but under my friend's excellent treatment, his health began at once to grow better and he was eventually quite restored.

As to Chopin, Dr. Papet found no pulmonary trouble, only a slight chronic affection of the larynx, which he was unable to cure, but concerning which he saw no reason to be seriously alarmed.

DOUBTS AND FEARS

After the Majorca voyage, I wished to so arrange my plan of life as to enable my son to continue his work without depriving him of fresh air and action.

In this period of irresolution concerning

the plan of life best adapted to the welfare of my children, a serious doubt arose in my conscience. I questioned if I ought to accept the decision of Chopin to attach his life to mine. I should not have hesitated to say no, had I then known how little a quiet life and the solemnity of the country suited his mental and physical well-being.

I assigned his horror of Majorca to the excitement of fever and to the decided ill character of our Majorca residence.

Nohant offered quieter conditions, a less austere retreat, surroundings more sympathetic, resources in case of illness. Papet was a skillful and affectionate physician for Chopin. Fleury, Duteuil, Duvernet, Planet, and especially Rollinat, were at first dear to him, loved him, and, like myself, were disposed to spoil him.

My brother was living but a half league from us. His high spirits and never failing gayety, the originality of his wit, his ardent enthusiasm for Chopin's genius, and his constant deference toward him, found favor with the artist, so essentially aristocratic in his tastes.

At first all went well, and I finally accepted the idea that Chopin could rest and regain his health among us for several summers; his work required him to pass the winters in Paris.

However, this alliance to our family of one who was new in my life caused me serious reflection. I shrank from the task about to be imposed upon me, which task I had believed ended at the completion of our journey to Spain.

Maurice might at any time fall ill again; and how could I consecrate the serene quickening hours of my life to a second invalid, far more difficult to nurse or to console than my son.

A certain terror took possession of me in view of the new responsibility. I was not under the illusion of love. I had for the artist a sort of maternal affection, very intense and very true, but which could not for an instant put aside my maternal instincts.

I was still sufficiently young perhaps to need to be on my guard against the passion of love. That contingency of my age, my

situation, my artist life, frightened me, and I resolved as I was, to yield to no influence which could distract me from my children. I saw a danger, small but possible, even in the tender friendship that Chopin inspired in me. However, after reflection, this danger disappeared from my thought, even assuming the quite opposite character of a preventive against the emotions which I wished no more to feel.

One more duty in my life, already so full, and whelmed with weariness, seemed to me one more safeguard for that austerity toward which I felt myself drawn with a religious enthusiasm.

If I had followed out my idea of remaining at Nohant all the year, of renouncing the arts, and of devoting myself to the instruction of my children, Chopin would have been saved from the danger which threatened him without my knowledge,—of becoming too absolutely attached to myself. As yet his affection for me was such as to be readily turned aside; it was not exclusive. He talked with me of a romantic attachment

that he had in Poland, of two experienced later in Paris, which he could still resume, and especially of his love for his mother, the only real passion of his life, although he was accustomed to living at a distance from her. Forced to leave me for his profession, which was his honor indeed, since he lived by his work, six months of Paris would have restored him, to his habitudes of elegance, of exquisite success, of intellectual alliance. I could not doubt this, I did not. But fate brought us into lines of long association, which strengthened without our perceiving it.

SETTLEMENT IN PARIS

Foiled in my efforts to teach my children, I formed the resolution of consigning their education to better hands, and with this end in view I established a half year residence at Paris. I rented on Rue Pigalle two cottages in pleasant grounds. Chopin domiciled himself in Rue Tronchet; but his lodging was damp and cold. He began again to cough seriously, and I found myself obliged either to resign my duties as nurse or else

to spend my life in goings and comings impossible.

He on his part to save me trouble, came every day with distorted face and extinguished voice to say he was perfectly well. He asked to dine with us and went away in the evening shivering in his hack.

Seeing how badly he felt to so interrupt our family life, I offered to rent him a part of one of our cottages. He accepted with joy, established himself there, and received his friends and gave his lessons without disturbing me. Maurice had his apartment under Chopin's.

The grounds were pretty and large enough for play and gayety. We had professors of both sexes, who did their best. I received few but my intimate friends. From time to time the young friends and relations of my children and myself gathered with us, filling the place with innocent joy and mirth.

Thus I lived alternately at Nohant summers, at Paris winters, without separating from my son who knew how to busy himself always and everywhere.

Chopin passed two or three months each year at Nohant, I prolonged my stay there quite into winter, and on reaching Paris always found my "*old invalid*" as he called himself, desiring my return but not regretting the country, which he loved only for a fortnight, and beyond this period endured for my sake.

We had left the lodging of rue Pigalle which displeased Chopin, and moved to Orleans square, where the good Marliani had arranged family life for us. She occupied a fine apartment between our two. We had only a large yard neat and dry to cross to be together, sometimes at Marliani's, sometimes at my rooms, again at Chopin's, when he was disposed to play for us. We dined together at Marliani's, sharing the expenses.

It was a very good association and economical, like all unions. It allowed me to receive my formal callers at Madame Marliani's and my more intimate friends in my own room, and to withdraw for work whenever it suited me.

Chopin also was delighted to have a fine

parlor isolated, where he could go to compose or to dream. But he loved society and made little use of his sanctuary except for lessons. It was in Nohant where he most created and wrote.

CHOPIN'S CHARACTERISTICS

Of all the troubles which I had to undergo and to fight against, the suffering of my half sick invalid was not the least. Chopin was always wishing for Nohant and still could never endure the place. He was essentially a man of society, but not too ceremonious or extended, only the society of his intimate friends, receptions of twenty. He loved the hour when the crowd goes and the few associates gather about the artist to draw from him by friendly urging the best of his inspiration. It was at such times only that he expressed all his genius and talent. It was then too that having brought his hearers into deep thoughtfulness or grave sadness,—for always his music produced in the soul profound discouragement, especially when he improvised,—suddenly, as if to remove the impression and remem-

brance of pain from others as well as from himself, he would turn to a mirror, unobserved, arrange his hair and cravat, and suddenly display himself transformed into the sturdy Englishman, the silly old man,—perchance a ridiculous sentimental English lady, or a sordid Jew. He always chose sad types, however droll they might be. These were perfectly conceived by him and so delicately rendered that one could not sufficiently admire them.

The world of fancy from which he drew such charming creations rendered him the life of those chosen circles, and his friends found it hard to tear themselves away from him. His nobleness, generosity, native pride, self-respect, the absence of all vanity and pretension, the exquisite delicacy of his intercourse, his fine comprehension of the art of behavior,—all this made him a most delightful friend.

To take Chopin from this life of indulgence and to place him in one of simplicity, of sameness, of constant study, him who had been raised in the lap of princesses,—it was

to deprive him of the breath of his life. Grant that this was an artificial life, for like a society lady he retired after the gayety of the evening, with wasted nerves, weakened strength, to pass a feverish, restless night. This life by its brilliancy compensated for its shortness and suited him better than the restrained intimacy of a single family.

At Paris he was the ruling spirit of twenty or thirty different circles, which he in turn charmed with his presence.

Chopin was not naturally exclusive in his affections; he yielded to the affinities *en rapport* with himself. His spirit impressionable to all beauty, all grace, to every smile, gave itself to all with inexpressible spontaneity. It is true that he was easily disenchanted; an awkward word, a sinister smile, lost his favor instantly.

He loved most ardently three women the same evening, but left them at the close of the fête with no thought of any one of them, while each of the three believed she was the one who had exclusively charmed him.

It was so in his friendships. He was enthusiastic at first sight, repelled and attracted in turn, living in infatuation, charming for those who were the objects of it, but full of secret dissatisfaction for himself, which unrest poisoned his dearest affections.

A single instance which he himself related to me shows how little love he granted in comparison with what he required from others.

He was deeply in love with the granddaughter of a noted music master and was thinking of asking her in marriage, while at the same time he was considering uniting himself to a Polish lady, his loyalty appearing on neither side, and his wandering passion floating between the two.

The young Parisienne received him with favor and all went well, until one day when he visited her in company with another musician then more celebrated in Paris than himself, she chanced to offer the celebrity a chair before doing so to Chopin. He never visited her again and immediately forgot her.

Not that he was unimpassioned or cold. Far from that, he was ardent and full of devotion, but not exclusively and continuously toward the same person. Among five or six ardent affections, he yielded himself in turn now to one and now to another.

His was the extreme artistic temperament not fitted to a long life. He was consumed by his dream of the ideal, which could neither tolerate nor pity the customs of the world. He had no common ground on which to meet human nature He made no terms with the actual. Herein lay his vice and his virtue, his greatness and his misery. Implacable toward the slightest fault, he entertained the highest enthusiasm for the least real light, his exalted imagination making every possible effort to behold in it the sun.

So it was at once sweet and terrible to be the object of his preference, for he magnified one's light, and overwhelmed one by being disenchanted at the first suspicion of shadow in that light.

PRINCE CAROL

It has been claimed that in one of my stories I depicted Chopin's character with great exactness of analysis. It is a mistake, made by finding a few traits of character like his, and so inferring the rest,—an easy but unsafe way of judging. Liszt himself in a Life of Chopin, exuberant in style, but full of good points, has been misled the same.

I represented in Prince Carol the character of a man decided in his nature, exclusive in his feelings and in his exactions.

Chopin was not such a one Nature designs not as art, however realistic it may be. Nature has caprices, inconsistencies, probably not actual but mysterious. Art, in rectifying these inconsistencies, shows itself too narrow to have committed them.

Chopin was the expressed form of the magnificent inconsistencies which God alone can allow himself to create, which have their own individual logic. He was modest by principle and sweet by habit, but he was imperious by instinct and full of just pride

which was unconscious of itself. Hence the sufferings he did not analyze, and which were occasioned by no determined cause.

Beside, Prince Carol is not an artist. He is a dreamer and nothing more; not having genius, he cannot hold the rights of genius. It is so far from being the portrait of a great artist that Chopin reading the manuscript each day on my desk, had not the slightest reason to be deceived—he so suspicions in all!

However, later I have been told, by reaction, he imagined himself portrayed. Enemies of mine, calling themselves his friends, persuaded him the romance was a revelation of his character, as if tearing a suffering heart was not murder. Doubtless at the time he had forgotten the book. Would that he had re-read it!

That story was so foreign to our lives! It was quite the opposite. There did not exist between us the like intoxicating emotions nor suffering.—Our intimacy had no feature of a romance; its foundation was too simple, too serious to afford opportunity for

quarreling with each other. I accepted the whole life of Chopin, such as it was, outside even of my own. Having neither his taste nor his ideas beyond art, nor his political views, nor his admiration for actual achievement, I attempted no modification of his character. I respected his individuality, as I respected that of Delacroix and of my other friends engaged in different paths from my own.

On the other hand Chopin gave me—I may say honored me—with a kind of friendship which was an exception in his life. To me he remained always the same. Doubtless he had in regard to me few illusions, since I never descended in his esteem. It is the explanation of our long harmony.

Not sympathizing in my studies nor my researches, apart from my convictions,—enclosed by the Catholic dogmas, he said of me as mother Alicia in her last days said: "*Bah! Bah! I am sure she loves God!*"

We never reproached each other except once, which was, indeed, the first and last time. So elevated an affection should break,

if needs must be, but not waste itself in unworthy recriminations.

CHOPIN'S CHARACTER DEVELOPED

But if Chopin was with me devotion itself, grace, service, courtesy personified, he did not withal lay aside the asperities of his character toward those about me. Toward them the uneveness of his nature, in turn generous and changeable, gave itself free play, passing from infatuation to aversion in constant flux and reflux.

Nothing of his inner life ever appeared, of which his great works are the mysterious and vague expression, never betrayed by his lips. At least, such was his reserve for the seven years of our acquaintance that I alone could divine the inner thoughts, assuage and repress the explosion.

O why did not some combination of circumstances outside ourselves separate us from each other before the eight years!

We were not able to work that miracle of making him calm and happy, because God had not consented by allowing him a little health. But he declined sensibly, and I was

no longer able to conquer the increasing irritation of his nerves.

He sustained two terrible losses in the death of his friend, Doctor Manthuzinski, and soon after, that of his own father.

The Catholic faith throws dreadful terror upon death. Chopin instead of picturing for these pure souls a better life, had only frightful visions, and I was obliged to pass many nights in a room adjoining his, always ready to rise a hundred times from my work to repel the spectres of his dreams or restless thoughts.

The conception of his own death appeared to him attended by all superstitious imaginings of the Polish poetry.—He lived in the horror of old legends. Phantoms surrounded, enchained him, and instead of seeing his father and his friend smile down upon him in the light of faith, he pushed these gaunt faces from his and struggled to free himself from their icy hands.

Nohant had become distasteful to him. For a brief time in spring his return delighted him, but as soon as he applied him-

self to work, all grew dull about him. His creation was spontaneous, miraculous. He found it without seeking, without forethought. It came suddenly upon his piano, complete and sublime, as it sang itself in his head during a walk, and he hurried to hear it himself by giving it to the piano. Then began the most terrible labor I have ever witnessed. It was a series of efforts, of irresolution and impatience to re-seize certain details of the theme as heard in the mind's ear. What he had conceived as a whole, in writing he analyzed too much, and his failure in not reproducing it according to his idea, threw him into despair.

He would shut himself in his room for entire days, weeping, walking, breaking his pens, repeating and changing a measure a hundred times, re-writing, effacing, as many times, beginning afresh the next day with a minute and hopeless perseverance. He passed six weeks on a page to write it at last as he had done with the first stroke.

For a long time I was able to persuade

him to have confidence in the first inspiration. But when he no longer trusted my judgment, he reproached me gently for not having been severe enough with him, and for having spoiled him.

I often tried to draw him from his work, to get him to walk. Sometimes I conveyed my whole brood off in a pleasure wagon, and in spite of himself, I took him to the banks of the Creuse; and for two or three days wasted in sun and rain, through frightful roads, we would reach, laughing and famished, some magnificent site, where he seemed to regain his powers.

The weariness usually overcame him the first day; but he slept! By the last day in reaching Nohant he was reanimated, and with fresh spirit, he would find without great effort the solution of his work. But it was not always possible to induce him to leave the piano, which was more often his torment than his joy. Little by little he showed ill-temper when I disturbed him. I dared not insist. Chopin provoked was terrible, and as he was when with me, always

contented, he seemed ready to suffocate or die.

SEPARATION

My own life, always active and cheerful to appearance, had become in reality sadder than ever. I was at the point of despair in being unable to confer that happiness upon others which for myself I had renounced. I had more than one cause of sorrow against which I forced myself to resist.

Chopin's friendship had never been a refuge for me in sorrow. He had quite enough of his own individual trials to bear. Mine would have crushed him, and he knew them but vaguely, and understood them still less. He would have felt all things from a standpoint far different from mine.

My real support came from my son, who was of an age to share with me the most serious interests of life, and who by his evenness of mind, his precocious reason, and constant cheerfulness, sustained me.

As a consequence of the later relapses of the invalid, he became very gloomy, and

Maurice, who had loved him tenderly until then, was suddenly wounded by him quite unexpectedly for a trifling cause. They were friends the moment after; but the grain of sand had fallen into the quiet lake, and little by little the pebbles followed.

Often Chopin was irritated without any cause and sometimes even unjustly against good intentions. All this was borne; but one day, at last, Maurice, wearied out with the pinpricks, spoke of leaving the contest. That could not be. Chopin did not endure my necessary and legitimate interference. He said I did not care for him.

What blasphemy after those eight years of maternal devotion! But the poor bruised heart knew not its delirium. I thought that a few months passed in distance and silence would cure the wound and restore the quiet friendship and a just memory. But the revolution of February came, and Chopin could not tolerate any disturbance whatever in social forms. Free to return to Poland, certain of being tolerated there, he had preferred for ten years to languish far

from his family, which he adored, rather than to see his country changed. He had fled from tyranny as now he fled from liberty.

I saw him again a moment in March of 1848. I clasped his cold and trembling hand. I wanted to speak to him; he escaped.—It was my turn to say he no longer loved me. I spared him that sorrow, and committed all to the care of Providence and the future.

I was not to see him again.

Between us were unfeeling people; some too, who were good but did not understand the case; others were frivolous, and preferred not to concern themselves in delicate affairs. Gutmann was not with him.

I have been told that he called me, regretted me, and loved me filially until the end. It was thought right to hide all this from me until then; also to conceal from him that I was ready to run to him. If seeing me would have shortened his life by a day or an hour even, they did well. I am not of those who believe that things are

settled in this world. Perhaps they do but begin, for surely, they do not finish here. This life here below is a veil which suffering and sickness render more thick for some souls and this veil raises itself but for brief moments even for the strongest organizations, and is torn away from all by death.

HOPE AND TRUST

Nurse for quite a notable portion of my life, I have learned to accept without too great surprise and especially without rancor the transports of a soul at arms with fever. By the pillow of the sick I have learned to respect what is really their wish when well and free, and to forgive that which is the delirium of their fatality.

I have been paid for my years of watching, of anxiety and absorption, by years of tenderness, of confidence, of gratitude, which one hour of injustice and wandering has not cancelled before God. He has not punished; he has not even perceived that dark hour at which I wish not to recall the suffering. I bore it not with cold stoicism, but with tears and sorrow in secret prayer.

And it is because I have said to the absent, in life or in death: "Be blessed!" that I hope to find in the heart of those who shall close my eyes, the same benediction in my last hour.

In whatever affection I have failed however slightly, I have learned to pardon the failing of others to me.

Doubtless the many sorrows of life and the changeable character of fortune is apt to overwhelm us and to turn aside the mind from the serene contemplation of eternity. We need not humiliate ourselves too profoundly for this weakness. It is derived from the very nature of our sensibility.

The sad condition of our society and civilization causes this sensibility to be considered as weakness, but perchance the best of our weaknesses. It is the protest of our hearts, the morality of our lives.

He who could receive the blows of fortune without revolt would show a want of true wisdom, and would be constrained to regard the sorrows of his fellow creatures with the same stoical, brutal indifference.

Let us then suffer and be silent! God who sees our tears, and who, in his infinite calm, seems to us not to note, has himself placed in us the faculty of suffering, to teach us not to cause suffering to others.

As the physical world which we inhabit has been formed and prepared under the influences of volcanoes and storms, until fitted to the physical needs of man, so also the moral world wherein we suffer, is forming and preparing under the influences of bitter tears and burning aspirations until fitted to the moral needs of man.

Our days pass amid troubles without hope or confidence; although they may be barren and horrible, still, brightened by love for humanity, they become acceptable and, so to speak, sweetly bitter.

Let us aid one another not to lose hope!