



[Handwritten signature]

GOTTSCHALK. – A SUCCESSFUL AMERICAN COMPOSER

By Mathews, W.S.B.

(Music, June 1892)

The generation which knew Moreau Gottschalk has nearly time - for this first of American pianists and composers (speaking chronologically and cosmopolitanly, was born in the year 1829, and was a few months younger than his great *confrere*, Dr. William Mason, who is still with us and still able to do great and epoch-marking work as his newly completed "Touch and Technic" shows. But Gottschalk was scarcely more of a familiar figure in America than many foreign pianists have been, especially such as Rummell, D'Albert and Paderewski. Gottschalk was indeed foreign to our northern soil. He was born in New Orleans, of an English father and a French Creole mother. His childhood therefore was passed in the semi-tropical climate of his native city, in a society easy, almost wealthy, and amid the picturesque racial conditions incident to the intermingling of French, Spanish, Italian and other Latin nationalities with the enslaved African intimated, and quite a lingering remnant of the Indian races in the rural districts where the elder Gottschalk had his country place. Then at the early age of twelve, the talented youngster was sent to Paris, where his native tongue, French, placed him upon the intimate footing of a compatriot, and where his early training in manners and social ease stood him in good stead as a ready passport to favor.

He pursued his musical studies under private teachers, admission to the Conservatoire having been denied him. Less than ten years later he himself occupied the post of honor as chief judge at the annual competition of prizes in the pianoforte classes of this same school which had refused to admit him as a pupil. His teacher in piano playing was Stamaty, and of composition. Madelen. It was in 1842 that the young pianist bade farewell to his loved native city, with a grand benefit concert (for his musical talent had already afforded him a local celebrity), and after a voyage of some weeks he arrived in France, where presently he began his studies.

It was not until 1845 that he made a public appearance, although he had for a year or more attracted attention in the salons. His first concert was in the Salon Pleyel; it was a non-paying concert. Among those present was Chopin, who after the concert went into the artists' room, and in the presence of his friends, putting his hands on his head, said: "*Donnez moi la*

main, mon enfant; je vous predis que vous serez le roi des pianistes. ” (“Give me your hand, my child; I predict that you will become the king of pianists.”)

A year later he had begun to compose, and in his earliest compositions he struck the note of originality which he never afterward lacked. Nothing could have exceeded the favor with which his pieces were received. Among the first of these works was the “Bamboula,” a piece now forgotten, but which was thus described in *La France. Musicale* in 1848—the writer evidently one of those interesting *feuilletoniste* of which France possesses the sole inspiration:

“Who does not know the ‘Bamboula’? Who is there who has not read the description of that picturesque, exciting dance, which gives expression to the feeling of the negroes? Joyful or sad. plaintive, amorous, jealous, forsaken, solitary, fatigued, ennuied. or the-heart filled with grief, the negro forgets all in dancing the ‘Bamboula.’ Look down there at those two black-tinted women, with short petticoats, their necks and ears ornamented with coral, *le regard brulant*, dancing under the banana tree; the whole of their bodies is in movement; further on are groups who excite and stimulate them to every excess of fancy ; two negroes roll their active fingers over a noisy tambourine, accompanying it with a languishing chant, lively or impassioned, according to the pose of the dancers. Little negroes, like those on the canvas of Decamps, are jumping around the fiddlers ; it is full of folly and delusion. The ‘Bamboula’ is at its height.

“This attractive dance has frequently furnished a theme for instrumental compositions, which, however, have not obtained all the success that we expected from them. The Creole wild, languishing, indescribable, which has no resemblance to any other European music; some have thought that it was sufficient to have the chants written down, and to reproduce them with variations, in order to obtain new effects. Not so: the effects have failed. One must have lived under the burning sky from whence the Creole draws his melodies ; one must be impregnated with those eccentric chants, which are little dramas in action; in one word, one must be Creole, as composer and executant, in order to feel and make others understand the whole originality of ‘Bamboula.’

“We have discovered this Creole composer: an American composer, *bon Dieu!* Yes, indeed, and a pianist, composer and player of the highest order, who as yet is only known in the aristocratic salons of Paris and whose name will soon make a great noise. We have German pianists, Hungarian, Russian, Italian pianists. We have ended by discovering French pianists ; and now we have an American pianist. His name is Gottschalk. Close the lips, advance the tongue, appear a little like whistling, and you will have the key to the pronunciation. Gottschalk is already a marvelous pianist: his school is that of Chopin,

Thalberg, and Prudent united together. He has taken from one his lightness, grace and purity; from the others their unrestrained passion and their attractive brilliancy; and I can assure you that for a long time a pianist so original, so sympathetic, has not been seen.”

Surely the young American composer of the present day, who has had the indiscretion to perpetrate something original, has reason to bemoan his unlucky stars that his lines have fallen in places so much less appreciative.

In 1850 the piano workshops of Pleyel burned down, and many workmen were thrown out of employment. Gottschalk undertook a benefit concert for them. The tickets were liberally subscribed for, and M. Leon Escudier, in *La France Musicale* made a brilliant account of it. After several numbers, each received with greater favor, if possible, than the one before it, M. Escudier continues: “The hall, as you may well suppose, was carried away; then Gottschalk executed the andante of ‘Lucia’ by Liszt. He is at least an artist, a great artist, who can interpret in the author’s manner this original and difficult composition. I wish that Liszt had been there ; he would, like all the rest of us, have frantically clapped his hands.”

But even Paris was not wholly a bed of roses to a pianist who all of a sudden had the daring to step into popular favor. One of the critics who abused the new comer happened to be a blind man, but later he changed his opinion:

“One evening, at a concert, at the Hall Bonne Nouvelle, given by that wonderful little pianist Tito Mattei, Gottschalk, who had been to hear him, on coming out after the concert, was stopped by the crowd on the top of the stairs, and saw at his elbow his blind foe, who was vainly endeavoring to secure a footing to get down. Gottschalk, without being recognized, helped him to the door, where the critic met with his assistant. Turning around, he asked to whom he was indebted for the kindness. Gottschalk simply uttered his name and left. From that day he counted one more admirer, and, we may say, gained one more friend.”

The charming society of Geneva delighted Gottschalk, and in return it straightway placed him high in its pantheon of art. The *Nouvelliste Vaudois* of October 26, 1850, said: “The gift of universality, such as is manifested among some chosen artists, is a rare gift. The domain of art is so immense that to embrace it in its entirety, to be perfect in each of its branches, is a thing so phenomenal that one can understand why men of talent take up a specialty. Under this title we must consider the talent of Mr. Gottschalk, the young and celebrated American pianist, as a musical event. Go see him before his Erard piano, which is, parenthetically, the grandest and most formidable which has issued from these famous workshops, and which Erard has presented to him. He will play for you the nocturne with its mysterious ways, the caprice with its eccentric hounds, the melody, sadly insinuating, as

Chopin or our boy-friend Bovy-Lysberg might play it; ask him for the Concertstueck of Weber, the profound sonata in F minor of Beethoven, or a fugue of Bach, the metaphysician of art, and he will play them in such a manner that our learned and celebrated professor, Mr. Pierre Wolff, so competent a judge, shall salute him with the title of grand artist. Grand artist truly, who knows no difficulty on his instrument, and whose playing recalls that of Liszt or Thalberg; who will touch you to tears on relating to you on his piano some dreamy legend of his distant country, the 'Bananier,' the 'Savane,' or in making you behold the African splendors of the 'Bamboula,' that negro dance. To resume, marvelous composer and pianist, the meteor of last winter's season at Paris, fondled and feted everywhere, Mr. Gottschalk is twenty years of age."

At Lausanne the same charming impression was left by the young artist, for the *Courier Suisse*, December 20, 1850, said : "Mr. Gottschalk gave at Yverdon, on the 17th inst.. a second concert which was received with the same enthusiasm. As an artist he leaves as a unique and ineffable remembrance; as a man he has gained our hearts. No words are sufficiently powerful to express to him our profound sentiments of sympathy, gratitude and admiration."

All the reports of his early career speak highly of his benevolence. It was a case of *noblesse oblige*. M. Leon Escudier wrote: "Gottschalk has given five concerts at Geneva, three at Lausanne, one at Vevay, two at Yverdon, two at Neufchatel. He has played more than fifty times in concerts, and every time he has been, so to say, carried off in triumph. The poor have had their portion of the proceeds of these brilliant fêtes. Gottschalk unites a generous soul to an imagination rich in poesy. At Yverdon, the proceeds of his concert, which were considerable have served for the foundation of an asylum for the aged; one wing of this asylum bears to-day the name of Gottschalk. A banquet was presented to him at Lausanne. At Neufchatel a ball was organized in his honor. Besides, at Yverdon, the students of the college presented to him a collection of the works of the celebrated writers of Switzerland. At Lausanne they decreed to him in public session the medal of Honorary Corresponding Member. I should never finish if I were to enumerate all the ovations which have marked in Switzerland the appearance of this eminent artist. He has carried away enough crowns, flowers and wreaths to carpet a whole concert hall. You see that we had good reason for writing the first day we heard Gottschalk that he was advancing at a rapid pace toward glory and fortune.

"Gottschalk remains only a few days in Paris; he is expected in Spain."

Most pleasing of all the tributes, to our later ears, at least, is this from the great genius Berlioz, who in his *Feuilleton du Journal des Debats*, April 13, 1850, had the following:

“Twenty years ago they said, ‘Who is there who does not play a little on the piano?’ They now must say, ‘Who is there who does not play on it very well?’ It thus requires, in order that a true artist on the piano should attract to-day upon him the attention of a public like that of Paris, for him to please, charm, move and carry his audience along with him; and for him to have an audience it requires absolutely that he should join to exceptional musical qualities an elevated intelligence, an exquisite feeling for the subtleties of style and of expression, and a facility of mechanism carried to the highest extreme. If he possesses only this last merit, he astonishes for an instant, then they are tired of him. If, on the contrary, he possesses only the other merits, he is ranked in the category of commonplace artists, whom one seeks and loves in a small company, but who remain powerless to excite the great public who frequent concerts. Mr. Gottschalk is one of the very small number of those who possess all the different elements of the sovereign power of the pianist, all the attributes which environ him with an irresistible prestige. He is an accomplished musician. He knows how far one may carry fancy in expression, he knows the limit beyond which the liberties taken with rhythm lead only to disorder and confusion, and this limit he never transcends.”

One, the most pleasing of these tributes, on account of its coming from an artist whose position was above dispute, was that of M. Adolph Adam, of the Institute: “Immediately after the solemnities of Easter, the series of mundane concerts recommenced with more fury than ever. Mr. Gottschalk has given at Pleyel a soiree for the benefit of the workmen who had sustained losses owing to the fire. Never were the reputation and vogue of an artist so promptly and generally established as that which Mr. Gottschalk enjoys to-day. And, nevertheless, there have been neither pompous puffs nor any sort of charlatanism. Mr. Gottschalk was born at New Orleans and came to Paris to finish his studies. He received lessons on the piano from that excellent professor, Mr. Stamaty, and studied harmony and composition with an able theorist, Mr. Maleden. All these labors were, however, only those of an amateur: but, unknown to himself, the amateur was already an artist, a great artist. The memories of childhood recalled to him the negro airs to which he had been nursed; he translated them upon his keyboard, and we have the ‘Bananier’, the ‘Bamboula’ the ‘Manceniller,’ and those charming and simple melodies which art and science extract in the most distinguished way. Mr. Gottschalk has become a man *a la mode*, the indispensable pianist. But the public who idolize him are unmerciful to him. When Mr. Gottschalk has played a piece, they cry *bis*: through excess of courtesy the young pianist plays a new one, the audience, more and more enchanted, again demand *bis*; the performer plays again a new piece, which they again wish to hear repeated, and it would not be right, because their demand would not stop before the inexhaustible complaisance of the author. We have seen

this exchange take place four or five times in succession. Mr. Gottschalk has all the grace and charm of Chopin, with more decided character; less severe than Prudent, he has more grace and elegance. And then, all his pieces are very short, and a great way always to please is not to wish to play too long.”

A year later the distinguished critic, M. Theophile Gautier, paid his own tribute in graceful accents, which have in them something harmonious with the suggestion so pleasantly made last month to American composers, by Mr. Fred. W. Root. in the pages of *MUSIC*. He said: “It is, then, more difficult than one might think to depart from the beaten track, and to have his own tent placed alongside those of the masters. If Mr. Gottschalk has been able, although still young. to acquire this individuality which escapes so many others, it is, perhaps, owing to the fact that, after having formed his talent by solid studies, he has left it to wander carelessly in the frequent savannas of his country, from which he has brought back to us the colors and perfumes. What pleases us in music, as in all other things, is novelty; and we have also been as much charmed by the melodious strains of the American artist, as we already have been by the chants of the muezzin and the reveries under the palms which Felicien David and Ernest Reyer have noted with their souvenir of the east.”

Close after the French successes followed others equally pleasing in Spain, where Gottschalk was immediately received with the highest possible honors. Then a year later he came to New York, and a private journal of an enthusiastic amateur, since dead, gives a pleasing account of his appearance. It was March 1, 1853: "When we got to the hall, we found it was a jam, notwithstanding it was a rainy night. At eight o'clock the concert commenced. Gottschalk himself then made his appearance amid tremendous applause. He is very young looking, does not seem to be over twenty-two years of age, handsome, and to crown the whole, is so easy and unaffected in his manner that a person could not fail to be pleased with him as a man. As a player he surpasses even Jaell, and his execution is astounding. He plays, too, with so much taste and expression that any person who has any feeling could not help but be pleased."

In the same year, he made his first visit to Cuba. Here at first he had a serious illness. As soon as he was convalescent he set about the preparation of a great musical festival, of which his diary gives the following account :

“Two months after (on the offer made to me by the general-in-chief to place at my disposal all of the military bands), I had, I say, the idea of giving a grand festival, and I made an arrangement with the director of the Italian company, then in possession of the great theater of Tacon. He contracted with me to furnish his chief performers, all the choruses, and all his orchestra, on condition of having an interest in the result. I set to work and composed,

on some Spanish verses written for me by a Havanese poet, an opera in one act entitled, 'Fete Champetre Cubaine.' Then I composed a triumphal hymn and a grand march. My orchestra consisted of 650 performers, eighty-seven choristers, fifteen solo singers, fifty drums and eighty trumpets—that is to say, nearly 900 persons bellowing and blowing to see who could scream the loudest. The violins alone were seventy in number, counter-basses eleven; violoncellos eleven.

“You can judge of the effect; No one can have any idea of the labor it cost me. The copying alone of the orchestral parts amounted to 5,000 francs. There were 2,000 pages of the act of the opera; for the 'Fete Cubaine' more than 4,000 pages, and nearly 2,000 pages for the hymn, I was obliged to write the original score for all. Besides, I had to revise page by page the whole 8,000 or 10,000 pages. I had in the last week such an amount of labor that I remained seventy-two hours at work, sleeping only two hours in every twenty-four. I was to pay a heavy forfeit in case I was not ready at the time fixed by the contract made with the *impresario* of the theater. Notice to artists : To give a concert at the Tacon is equal to laying a plan for a campaign, to putting an opera of Meyerbeer's on the stage or to editing the *Pere Goriot* of Balzac ; finally, it is an immense effort, requiring a great deal of money, of time, of diplomacy, and muscles of steel in the service of an iron will.”

Ten years later he is back in New York. Under date of February, 1862, he says:

“Here I am again, after an absence of six years, once more in New York. Six years foolishly spent—thrown to the winds—as if life were infinite, and youth eternal : six years, during which I have roamed at random under the blue skies of the tropics, indolently permitting myself to be carried away by chance, giving a concert wherever I found a piano, sleeping wherever the night overtook me— on the grass of the savanna or under the palm leaf roof of a *vequero*, with whom I partook of the *tortilla* of maize, coffee and bananas, and which I paid for on leaving in the morning with “*Dios se lo pague*” (“God repay you”); to which he replied “*Vaya usted con Dios*” (“God go with you”)— these two formularies constituting, in this savage country, the operation so ingeniously perfected among civilized people, which is called ‘settling hotel bills.’”

At one time in a fit of disgust he betook himself to a retreat, and for some months lived on one of the Antilles on an extinct volcano.

“Perched upon the edge of the crater on the very top of the mountain, my cabin overlooked the whole country. The rock on which it was built hung over a precipice whose depths were concealed by cacti, convolvuli and bamboos. The one who had preceded me had surrounded this lower ground with a parapet and had made of it a terrace, which was level

with the bedroom. He had requested to be buried there, and from my bed at night I could see by the moonlight the white tombstone at a few steps from my window. Every evening I moved my piano up on the terrace, and there, in view of the most beautiful scenery in the world, which was bathed in the serene and limpid atmosphere of the tropics, I played—for myself- alone — everything that the scene which opened before me inspired—and what a scene ! Figure to yourself a gigantic amphitheater, such as an army have carved out in the mountains; to the right and left virgin forests filled with wild and distant harmonies, which are like the voice of silence; before me twenty leagues of country whose magic perspective is rendered more marvelous by the transparency of the atmosphere; over my head the azure of the sky; below, the clivities, surmounted by the mountain, descending gradually toward the plain : further on the green savannas ; then lower a gray point—it is the town -- and further on again the im-mensity of the ocean, whose line of deep blue forms the horizon. Behind me was a rock on which broke a torrent of melted snow, that turned from its course, leaped with a desperate bound, and engulfed itself in the depths of the precipice which gaped under my window.

“It was there that I composed ‘Reponds-moi,’ ‘La Marche des Gibarros,’ ‘Polonia.’ ‘Columbia,’ ‘Pastorella e Cavalliere,’ ‘Jeunesse’ and other unpublished works. I let my fingers run over the keyboard, wrapped up in the contemplation of these marvels, while my poor friend, to whom I did not listen, divulged to me, with childish loquacity, the high destiny to which he proposed to elevate humanity.”

Gottschalk had a most commendable habit of writing in his diary. On the cars, at the hotels, after concerts, everywhere he allayed his irritation and enjoyed his good sayings , by noting them in his diary, wherefrom they have been resurrected. His notes made during his concert journeys through the middle and western states in the years between 1862 and 1865 are full of incidents which throw light upon the crudity of the communities among which he was devoted to missionary work. Withal the pianist and composer was a good observer, and not a few of his savings are very much in point. At Worcester, in Massachusetts, he was playing the sonata in A flat, by Beethoven. He goes on:

“I had the satisfaction of seeing my amateur while I played, with his eyes fixed on the text, in the English style, to see if I made a mistake. Of all the absurdities practiced by the Anglo-Saxon race in matters of art, this is what makes me suffer the most. Their manner of playing music is wholly speculative; it is a play of the wits. They like to see such or such chords solved. They delight in the *episodes* of a second repetition. ‘They comprehend music in their own way,’ you will tell me; but I doubt if that is a right one. Music is a thing eminently sensuous.* * *

“The Anglo-Saxon race lack the pensive element, so indispensable in the arts. Patience, perseverance, laborious effort, excite their admiration. Then, again, they must find in music the stiff and starched gait which they like in themselves. This is the reason of their rage for oratorios. They discover an air of great respectability in this music, which they do not understand, but which they listen to with comic gravity saying, as for these bitter drops, of which they are amateurs, ‘They are excessively bitter to swallow, but assuredly they are excellent for the stomach.’

“Mr. B., a furrier, who has made more than \$200,000 by selling beaver skins from Canada, and bear skins from the Rocky mountains, has become almost a theatrical monomaniac. He is forty-five years old, with a small, sourish voice. He has a daughter sixteen years old, pretty, but singing false, and a wife forty years of age, who sings badly. With these elements he has formed an Italian opera company, in which he is tenor assoluto, his daughter prima donna, and his wife contralto. It must be admitted that his operas are got up regardless of expense; but figure to yourself ‘La Traviata’ by a merchant of otter skins and his interesting family. Their *debut* took place at the Academy of Music. The eccentricity of the thing had drawn an immense crowd; all the rabbit-skin merchants strutted there. They applauded Mr. B., whose mimic was adorable, and all obtained a success in bursts of laughter. They were recalled.

“Portsmouth, N. H.. a charming little town; beautiful and clean. All the houses are of wood, painted of a virgin whiteness. The streets are lined with trees, whose foliage, meeting at the top, sifts the daylight, and makes them look like an alley in a park. Every house has a little garden in front, and a kitchen garden with large fruit trees in the rear. Our arrival was an event. A number of charming young girls passed before the hotel with the evident intention of seeing us and of being admired. They are very pretty, though a little provincial in their stiffness. At the station we met 300 or 400 persons; there were numberless embraces. We learn that it is a couple just married and gone off on the consecrated tour. This evening a concert at Portsmouth. Extraordinary enthusiasm. All the pieces encored. The hall is used on Sunday as a church. It is an amphitheater. The ‘baby’ show which Barnum has announced for many months takes place at the museum. The public crowd there.

“ ‘Madamina’ of ‘Don Juan’ is, at my concerts, almost always encored. Susini sings it with his beautiful voice. Is it the beauty of the music, which is so sparkling that it attracts even western audiences? ‘Yes, without doubt,’ the believers will answer me. How is it that every time he sings it without announcing it, there has been a complete failure? Is that not sufficiently convincing? How, then, do you explain the complete silence of the public every time that Susini sang the barcarolle of Ricci’s, ‘Sulla poppa?’ And one day that the

programme announced 'Madamina' Susini sang by mistake the work of Ricci. Wild applause from the amateurs, who were transported in thinking they heard the music of Mozart.

"Going to Providence, I found in the ear Mason, the pianist, who is about to give a concert at the Young Ladies' Academy.

"We are hardly ten hours in Canada, yet we have already met some specimens of that surly, conceited, egotistic type, of which the English only has (and it is fortunate) the secret."

While in Quebec he witnessed the interment of a sergeant of artillery.

"The music was singular. The drummers beat a roll which lasted one bar; then a rest for one bar, and a blow of the bass drum on the weak part of the bar; then a harmony of eight bars in the minor mode, played by flutes in minor thirds. It was melancholy and mournful, and filled you with profound emotion. I followed them for a quarter of an hour, not being able to tear myself away from the melancholy charm of this strange music.

"Going from Toledo to Erie (Pa.), on a seat near me in the smoking car some farmer, without doubt, played the fife. He studied conscientiously. His stock of music was limited to some Scotch and Irish airs. Only he played everything in F. I should have seen nothing amiss in it if he had not invariably taken it into his head to play B natural instead of B flat. At the beginning I was shocked, but at length I was singularly pleased with it. The obliterated note once introduced, there was a fight between the C and F, which, by turns, seeming to dispute the possession of the singular and melancholy harmony, plunged me into a sleepy reverie.

"Sandusky, Ohio. Small town and very strange audience. The applause here consists of whistling, which frightened Patti very much. In a car where I have gone to smoke, I find myself in the midst of a mountain of trunks. I end by squatting down among them, from whence I hear the conductor say to his companion: 'I have there two embalmed bodies. Imagine what I felt!

"Zanesville, Ohio. There were many soldiers in the audience. The hotel was passable, and the landlord did all he could to be agreeable to us. I forgot to mention a remarkable incident at Sandusky: During the concert a warrant of arrest for me because I had not paid the license to the town. 'Very well! Let us pay the six dollars, and I do not go to prison.' These things are amusing and break the monotony of our existence. I had just finished 'Murmures Eoliens,' which the public had encored. I returned into the artists' room and found myself in the presence of the constable. Oh! the instability of human things. On the one side glory, on the other the somber dungeons of Sandusky. The Capitol and the Tarpeian rock! Strakosch,

the new Decius, has offered himself up, and, thanks to six dollars, has saved me from the horror of captivity.

“Is it not singular that Americans, who seem to possess a clear and practical judgment and more than an ordinary power for understanding principles, as soon as they enter into the domain of the æsthetics of art, for the most part go astray, and repeat absurdities which their good sense should make them reject? I lately made these reflections on reading an article on Blind Tom in a magazine remarkable for the talent of its contributors and the general tone of its articles. I refer to the *Atlantic Monthly*. The author of this article, himself without doubt a talented writer, judging from his style, asserts so many errors and commits so many blunders that it is impossible for those competent in the art to permit the further continuance of the celebrity of Blind Tom whose title to posterity, as a musician, is, I fear, as authentic as that of the old negress of Barnum to have been Washington’s nurse. And first, what would you say of an audience who should declare exact a repetition, made by a child from memory, of five or six thousand words which it had heard but once? You certainly would say that an audience capable of verifying from memory such a long discourse would be altogether as phenomenal as the phenomenon itself. Nevertheless my hypothesis is based on a discourse that is in words familiar even to the ears of a child, on matters having relation to human passion, to its interest, its affections, that is to say, on things which all comprehend, know and feel. But with Tom we have to deal with music, that is to say, an art whose subtlety must necessarily escape the profane. ‘Tom,’ says the author, ‘repeats the piece from memory.’ This is supposing, what is not proved, that Tom had no knowledge of the piece. What was the piece? If it was simply one of those known melodies with its invariable dress of variations consecrated by long usage, I shall astonish no person by remarking that any child studying music and endowed with a good musical organism does as much every day. “If the piece is difficult and complicated, I absolutely challenge the competency of the public to judge the accuracy of its reproduction. The writer of the article will pardon me for telling him that he recalls to me an audience that I saw assembled, to be present at a most extraordinary thing—that a mathematical phenomenon was to resolve the most complicated problems. Mr. Amprere, of the Academy, proposed a most difficult problem to him. The infant prodigy gave him an answer, and the audience applauded with confidence to the skies. He might have answered whatever he wished, the honest people did not know a word of algebra, and ingenuously thought that what they heard was really marvelous. I will go further and affirm that ‘Yanke[^] Doodle’ can be played in five hundred, six hundred or one thousand different ways, provided the theme is generally preserved, without more than ten in the audience perceiving the least difference.”

A volume of interesting extracts might easily be made from these notes of a pianist, but it is time that we return again to the composer.

The original element in Gottschalk's composition was derived from the Spanish, Cuban and negro folk-songs and native dances, which he heard in his boyhood, and in early manhood. This material he worked up in his own way, and the result was a type of musical composition which needed not to be explained. Gottschalk was primarily a melodist. His melodies are simple, natural, charming, and always high-bred. Witness those of the "March of the Night," "Last Hope," "Oh, Loving Heart, Trust On," "Cradle Song," etc. He was also a master of the art of writing effectively and pleasingly for the piano. His school was French, German elaboration he never mastered. Had he sought to write a sonata it would have proven an impossible task. But he had too much good sense. It was his personal opinion that he was equally at home in classical music as in his popular and concert music of the brilliant writers. I remember hearing Mr. Geo. P. Upton say that one had never really heard Gottschalk play until one had him at home with a book of sonatas. There he brought out new beauties. It is impossible to understand this when his own compositions are the only clue one has to his personality. The chances are that in early life, like most French pianists, he mastered the art of the classic; later, after years of concertizing, his brief returns to the peaceful strains of his early life were in the nature of passing retrospects. Mme. Carreno, who was a pupil of his, said that Gottschalk used to say: "They speak of Gottschalk as a popular pianist merely, and as a writer and player of what they are pleased to call trash. Wait and see. When America has advanced and is able to appreciate something better you will see Gottschalk there also."

As to his final position in the Pantheon of art, it is too soon to properly estimate it. But that he was the first American composer and pianist to attain a cosmopolitan fame is quite certain. And that he did an immense pioneer work in establishing the taste for pianoforte concerts is equally certain. He was the first fruits of our coming American school of composers, who in due time, as Mr. Root says, will write original American music, which in turn will immediately appeal to American ears, and through them to the ears of all musical kin. For in art we all are brethren.