

# L. M. GOTTSCHALK.

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## PART I.

THE American mind, young, fresh, and vigorous, having already in most cases equalled, in many surpassed, its competitors of the older world in all that appertains to politics—*η πολιτικη*—and physics, is now entering upon a generous rivalry in the exhibition of the higher and more delicate manifestations of intellect. As time is to be properly measured by the passage of thought, so a man's age, and a people's age, are to be measured by their acts, by what they do, and not by the return of revolving suns. Tested by such a chronology, the people of these States, the great Republic, has lived through many a century since the fourth day of July, seventeen hundred and seventy-six. In fifty years it has accomplished more than was given to ten hundred years to do in the earlier life of the world. It is, therefore, no cause for wonder that we should, thus early in the history of our nationality, show so marvelous an activity in what may be fitly termed the exhibition of pure intellect—of labor, to supply not necessary but artificial wants, secondary wants, the growth of wealth, of refinement and luxury. Rude indeed is the rhythm, whether of verse or prose, and barbarous indeed is the harmony of those who first attempt to speak to their fellow men in song, or plain tale, or music, while yet the listener has a labor to perform which binds him to the soil, and calls into daily action all his physical strength. Hard of muscle, thick-skinned with work, his perceptions are equally hard, coarse and incrustated, and can take no note of the finer and more evanescent relations of sound, in which consists the infinite melody of language, whether written or spoken; and through which mind makes known to mind all its most subtle operations. The teacher's excellence is gauged by the scholar's wants; and when with wealth comes refinement, and with refinement comes luxury, and rest, and a softening of the flesh, the nerves grow more delicate, more sensitive, are brought nearer to the outer surface, and are best fitted to become the exponents of the mystery which is our life. Then does the harsh period and rough verso, and rude music of a narrow gamut, grate upon the ear they pleased before; and mind, which grows active as the body is released from severe toil, finding fit instruments wherewith to work, labors in its turn, and gives to the world those wonderful creations of beauty and sublimity which men call Art—art in language, in marble, upon canvas, and in sound. To this stage have we leaped, the great Republic, without passing through the intermediate degrees of progress; or, passing through them so hurriedly, as to have been almost unconscious of their existence.

Already, in the very dawn and opening of our national story, do we show products which, heretofore, had ripened only with centuries; the fruit came quickly, and so must come the decline. In History, Bancroft, among the living, stands without an equal, ever excepting one, the teller of the Merovingian tales. Among novelists, modern novelists, Cooper is the greatest; and he is the greatest because he is the most poetical, the most original, the truest to an unchanged nature. All that we find in others may be found elsewhere; but Cooper's pages will remain the only record of the soul of a noble race of men, and of many a glory beside, when the deep forests which now cover our continent shall have mouldered away. In verse, we have as yet not done a great deal; still, Poe's "Raven" is one of the most terrible confessions of the torture of an all absorbing passion that man has made to man since Prometheus was chained to his rock. In sculpture, Powers is among the foremost, and leads the name which, late, was so frequent upon every tongue — the Canova, who represented a decaying taste, soft, effeminate, more allied to a physical than to a spiritual beauty. The sister art, Painting, has yet, with us, its triumphs to win; its victories, which

are to live, and be part and parcel of the knowledge of men, when the canvas, and the oil, and the mineral, its gross instruments, shall have been, by the touch of time, turned to very dust. As an essayist, Whipple is superior to Macauley; and in that department of fiction, which is wholly of modern birth, which came in which Voltaire, and which may be strictly classed as the Psychological, Miss Cheesboro' is one of the most distinguished writers. And now comes young Gottschalk, to give a new renown to the American mind; to add a new and a brilliant chapter to the story of its labors. He already, at the age of twenty-three years, has won a European reputation; has proved himself to be a master in an art which, if it is the most universal, and the most readily appreciated, is at the same time, in its highest capabilities, the most difficult of exertion. Music, the first-born, was the last to be perfected ; and it is, in its infinite variety, its power, its breadth and delicacy of grasp, in the nice and almost imperceptible relations of its parts, in its fitness to express all the emotions, all the states of being of the soul—the highest, the most joyful, the darkest, and the most terrible—the truest representative of the many-sided mind which is its creator. We propose to give a short biographical sketch of the young American whose name heads this article; a name of which his country should be proud, as adding a new excellence to its intellectual glory.

Louis Moreau Gottschalk, was born in New Orleans, in the year 1829. His father, Edward Gottschalk, is an Englishman by birth; his mother, from whom young Gottschalk undoubtedly inherited his genius, is a Creole, of Louisiana, and a lady much distinguished in early life for the beauty of her person and rare musical attainments. When three years old, young Gottschalk would sit upon the floor, and, while his mother played the piano, keep time with his hands, and follow the movements of the music with corresponding movements of his body; exhibiting thus early a physical and intellectual make susceptible of the most delicate impressions of sound.

It was at one of those happy moments that his father predicted that he would become an artist, and resolved to cultivate the talent of which his son gave so clear a promise. Twelve months did a great deal, for the boy was barely four years of age when he began himself to touch the keys, and at five, he could play any thing by the ear alone, and make a correct base. At six, a teacher of vocal music was given him, and with one half-year of instruction he sang the most difficult pieces at sight. At seven, he was, for the first time, taken to the opera; the following morning he crept from his bed with the first dawn of light, ran to the piano, and played correctly nearly the whole of the five act piece he had listened to the night before. When nine years old he performed, with great applause, a solo, a trio, and a quintette, at a concert given by Miolan, first violin of the Orleans theatre; and that event may be said to have fixed his destiny as an artist. The writer well remembers the little fellow at that time; his full appreciation of the praise awarded him, and his full knowledge, too, of his own power.

A slight and fragile boy, living in music, giving no promise of many days, he struck the keys with a certainty and a boldness which astonished the listener ; and one wondered when he found, in a frame so tender and so weak, the physical strength to execute the most difficult and longest compositions of the great masters. As was afterward said of him by a gentleman who heard him early in his European career, he seemed to give to each note a portion of his life, and each note seemed to bear a portion of his life away.

In 1841, when Gottschalk was twelve years of age, his father sent him to Paris, where he was placed with the best musical teachers, and where, as this biographical sketch will show, his literary education was by no means neglected. In Paris, the centre of modern civilization, young Gottschalk's genius was very early appreciated; and we find him, after a three years' residence in that city, received into the most refined circles of its society, and noticed, in the musical journals of the day, as the chief attraction at their grand *soirées*.

In April, 1845, Gottschalk gave his first concert, *non payant*, at the Salle Pleyel, in Paris. It was attended by many of the nobility, both French and foreign, by the leading artists then in the city, and by a large number of his own countrymen, all of whom flocked to hear what, at that time and in that locality, was considered to be somewhat of a wonder, "*Le jeune Américain, qui a un grand talent musical.*" The hall, which will hold a thousand persons, was found insufficient to receive the numerous applications for admission; the artist's excellence was thus prejudged, and this estimation, which had been wholly won by the exhibition of his power in private circles, was now confirmed by the public voice. At the close, while Gottschalk, as yet a boy of fourteen years, stood crowned with a wreath of oak, and trembling beneath the plaudits which rose thick and deafening from an excited audience, Chopin, whose premature death the musical world still mourns, advanced from a side-door, exclaiming— "*Bien mon enfant, bien, très bien; donnez moi encore la main*"—the triumph was complete.

In 1846 Gottschalk began to compose; and in that year published his first piece, the *Polka de Salon*. In 1847 he wrote the *Ossian Ballads*, *Le lai du dernier Menestrel*, *a grande valse de Concert*, a *Grande Etude de Concert*, and *Le Bamboula*. Of these compositions, and indeed of all that he has as yet published, *Le Bamboula* is the most original, the most national, and therefore the most characteristic. In order to appreciate the full merit of this popular composition, one should have seen something of the dance upon which it is founded. Let a stranger to New Orleans visit, on an afternoon of one of its holydays, the public squares in the lower portions of the city, and he will find them filled with its African population, tricked out with every variety of a showy costume, joyous, wild, and in the full exercise of a real saturnalia. As he approaches the scene of an infinite mirth, his ear first catches a quick, low, continuous, dead sound, which dominates over the laughter, hallo, and roar of a thousand voices, while the listener marvels at what it can be doing there. This is the music of the Bamboula, of the dance Bamboula; a dance which takes possession of the negro's whole life, transforms him into a savage of the banks of the Congo, and reinvests him with all the instincts, the sentiments, the feelings which nature gave to his race, to sleep for awhile, to be partially obliterated by the touch of civilization, but to remain forever its especial mark.

Upon entering the square, the visitor finds the multitude packed in groups of close, narrow circles, of a central area of only a few feet; and there, in the centre of each circle, sits the musician, astride a barrel, strong-headed, which he beats with two sticks, to a strange measure incessantly, like mad, for hours together, while the perspiration literally rolls in streams and wets the ground; and there, too, labor the dancers, male and female, under an inspiration or a possession, which takes from their limbs all sense of weariness, and gives to them a rapidity and a durability of motion that will hardly be found elsewhere outside of mere machinery. The head rests upon the breast, or is thrown back upon the shoulders, the eyes closed, or glaring, while the arms, amid cries, and shouts, and sharp ejaculations, float upon the air, or keep time, with the hands patting upon the thighs, to a music which is seemingly eternal. The feet scarce tread a wider space than their own length; but rise and fall, turn in and out, touch first the heel and then the toe, rapidly and more rapidly, till they twinkle to the eye, which finds its sight too slow a follower of their movements. Ah! the *abandon* of the Bamboula; the transformations of the Bamboula; no wilder scene, no more exciting exhibition of the dominancy of sheer passion, uncultivated, savage, is to be found in the tales of travelers. It is the *morale* of this; the poetry of this, with all its associations, that Gottschalk strove to embody in his composition; and the enthusiasm with which the work has been received, the admiration awarded it by the first artists of Europe, show that he has been successful.

In November, 1847, Gottschalk gave his first concert, *payant*, at Sedan—a city in which Litz and Thalberg made their *début* before the public; he met with a success equally brilliant.

The same season he returned to Paris, and again performed in the *Salle Pleyel*. A critic of one of the Parisian Journals thus wrote of that exhibition —“A young pianist of a most promising future, M. Gottschalk, whom the Saloons so readily received into their protection, has just performed publicly in the *Hall Pleyel*. Born upon the banks of the Mississippi, he seems to have brought to the old world songs which he had gathered in the virgin forests of his country. Nothing can be more original, or more pleasing to the ear, than the compositions of this young Creole. Listen to the *Bamboula*, and you will comprehend the poetry of a tropical clime. Gottschalk's execution is marvelous! It possesses a force, a grace, an abandonment, which carries you away in spite of yourself, and compels you to applaud like a simple {*claqueur*}<sup>1</sup>. The piano is no longer the dry and monotonous instrument with which you were acquainted, and you find springing from beneath the creative fingers of the artist all the *timbres* of the orchestra, *tous les soupirs des instruments à vent*.

“There is a gamut like a string of pearls leading you back to the minor key: oh! listen to that gamut which flows so sweetly; it is not the hand of a man which touches the keys, it is the wing of a Sylph that caresses them, and causes them to resound with the purest harmony.”

It was in the autumn of this year, when Gottschalk was barely 18, that Marmontel, professor of the piano-class in the Conservatoire, placed the *Bamboula* under study by his pupils as the piece to be played for the prize; and shortly after Gottschalk himself was chosen one of the judges for the distribution of the prizes.

In 1848 and '49, Gottschalk composed the *Mazeppa*, the *Scintilla*, *La Moissonneuse*, *La Savane*, *La Danse des Ombres*, *Le Bananier*, and *La Chasse du Jeune Henri*. The appreciation of these compositions as works of art, and of his growing excellence as a performer, is best set forth in the following extract from a musical *critique* of the day.

“Among the virtuosi who have appeared within the last few years,” says the Paris Bulletin Musical of 1848, “Gottschalk, born in Louisiana, merits a place apart. Original in talent, *exceptionnel*, he has grown, since his first introduction to the Parisian world, to an immense popularity. No one knows better than this artist all the resources of the piano, all the secrets of its mechanism; and no one exhibits in his play more of precision, of surety, of ease, and of elegance. But Gottschalk is not merely a performer of a marvelous facility, he possesses also an organization which is eminently poetic. Under his hands the piano becomes an instrument of life, and gives expression to all of life's sentiments, to all of life's passions. But the talent of the pianist constitutes but a small part of the talent of Gottschalk; his productions, remarkable for their originality, place him among the best of modern composers. *Le Bamboula*, or the dance of the negroes, is a work replete with fascination, with fire, and an enthusiasm which would alone have made the reputation of its author. *La Savane* and *Le Bananier* are melodies of an enchanting sweetness and grace; the two ballads *Ossianique* breathe the delicious melancholy of the great poet; and the Mazurkas, having—since their appearance—made the tour of all the Saloons of Paris, require no word in proof of their success.”

In 1849, an amateur writes—“Was I not right, a year since, in proclaiming the superior talent of Gottschalk? I said of this pianist, a great artist has revealed himself: he brings with him novelty in composition and in execution: before many days he will be acknowledged as one of the most brilliant stars of the modern schools. And, in very truth, Gottschalk has advanced with the stride of a giant. In one year, his success in the saloons and in the concert room has secured him both the sympathy and the admiration of the public. To-day, his place is in the first rank; his

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<sup>1</sup> words in { } are hypothetic as some letters are not clear or lacking in the google source document.

name has become popular, and his works are looked for with impatience. A few evenings since, Gottschalk invited the lovers of his art to listen to him in the *Salle d'Erard*, and all the pianists, French and foreign, hastened to meet him there. Gottschalk first played *Le Bananier*, one of his most delicious fantasies, and you would have said that a shower of pearls fell in sweetest melody upon the ear. He then executed his two charming ballads, a *Mazurka*, *La Savane*, *Le Bamboula*, and *Le Concerto de Weber*, and those who were before unacquainted with the new artist, who had questioned the soundness of his reputation, applauded most enthusiastically. I have no words to express the ease, the elegance, and the energy of Gottschalk's execution, the grace and originality of his compositions. He resembles no one; he copies no other composer, no other performer. His simple and touching inspirations, of an exquisite individuality, *Le Bananier*, *Le Bamboula*, *La Savane* and *Ossian*, are *morceaux* of a school wholly new, and remarkable in the history of art, both for their form and for the principles upon which they are constructed."

In May, 1850, Gottschalk, writing from Paris to his father, says—"All the publishers declare that no piece ever met with such success as has greeted the *Bananier*. Already, more than two thousand copies have been sold in Paris alone. It has been pirated in Mayence, Leipzig, Berlin, London, Brussels, and Milan; and here, a second edition is about being struck off. I played it, the past winter, at nineteen public concerts, and at sixty grand *soirées*; Gorla played it eight or nine times, and Jaell plays it everywhere." Again—"I have lately concluded a contract with Benacci, a publisher of Lyons, who came to Paris expressly to induce me to sell him a manuscript. To-day, I dine with one of the first publishers of music in Paris, who wishes me to contract with him for all I may hereafter compose.

"Benacci offered 10,000 francs for the copyright of the *Bamboula* and *Bananier*, notwithstanding more than 2,000 copies of the latter had been sold here: my publishers, the Escudier's, answered, 'If you were to offer us 60,000, we should refuse it.' "

Was it not time that he should cast off the student's garb, and call himself an artist? During the winter of '49 and 50, he had performed at twenty-five public concerts, and at more than a hundred grand *Soirées*; and he had triumphed. With the stamp of Paris upon him, with the plaudits of Paris still ringing in his ears, he had a right to expect success elsewhere—and he found it. In Art, the judgment of Paris is not the judgment of the French alone: Paris is Europe; and he who wins a glory there, wins it with the consent of the combined excellence of the Continent. Paris, with its language fitted to express, with a precision unequalled, all the shades of the lighter emotions of the mind—with its people, with a polished politeness which is innate, born to mirth and enjoyment—is the gathering-place of the wit, of the refinement, and of the artistic acumen of the old world; and from it proceeds, as from a centre, the opinion which makes and unmakes fashion; which gives or withholds reputation to those whose labor must be crowned in life, or not at all. Therefore it is that the Artists in sound and motion—Thalberg and Listz, considered as mere pianists, executionists, the Sontag, Alboni, and Rubini, the Essler, Taglioni, and Cerito, who possess no symbol wherewith to transmit, from generation to generation, works that expire in the very moment of their creation—seek in Paris the approval which is a law to Germany, to Italy, to Spain, and the far North; and therefore it is that we say that the young Creole of Louisiana, with the stamp of a Parisian approbation upon him, setting out upon his travels in search of a name which his country might cherish, had good cause to look for the success which thus far he has found.

Here ends Gottschalk's boyhood.

## PART II.

In the summer of 1850, Gottschalk visited Switzerland. It was to be his first trial abroad; his first trial outside of France, outside of the soil upon which he had received his musical education ; and he carried with him the echoes of his metropolitan reputation. While the artist was crossing the frontiers, Theophile Gautiers, one of the three best musical critics of Paris, of whom Fiorentino and Berlioz complete the list, thus wrote of him. "Originality, with good taste, and a little eccentricity, without charlatanism, have ever appeared to me to be delightful qualities in an artist of true talent; I therefore gave myself up entirely to a feeling of sympathy and admiration when I listened to Gottschalk at his last concert. Of our present great pianists, there are but few who have created for themselves an undoubted individuality. Listz, Prudent, and Thalberg are the standards which the public selects wherewith to measure the worth of each new aspirant to a similar excellence; it may therefore be imagined how difficult it must be for an artist to leave the beaten track of a mere follower, and place himself alongside, abreast, of the great masters. If Gottschalk, young as he is, has done this, has secured an individuality which has escaped so many, it is because, after having perfected his talent by severe study, he now lets it wander at random through the savannas of his native land, while he gives us the delicious perfumes and radiant colors of its flowers. In music, as in every thing else, the greatest charm is novelty; and we are as much delighted with the casket of gems presented us by the young American virtuoso, as we once were with the songs of the muezzin, and the reveries beneath the palms, which Ernest Reyers and Felicien David have made celebrated through their *Souvenirs of the East*. Whatever may be the brilliant traits and wonderful difficulties overcome, which mark Gottschalk's execution, to them the melody is never sacrificed—it is ever in the ascendant. If it gently lulls you in the *Savane* and the *Mancenillier*, it is still with you in the *Bamboula*, when dancing girls, with tambour and cymbal, excite emotions beyond our control. All these songs of the new world possess an originality which is full of melancholy, of softness, and of energy; and awaking, as they do, a dreamy and delightful sentiment in the soul, their success must be even greater in the intimacy of the saloons than in the glare of the foot-lights."

Fiorentino, of the *Constitutional*, said, "Opinion, called in Paris fashion, selects, every year, an artist whom she overwhelms with favors. This year the favorite of the saloons, of public and of private concerts, has been young Gottschalk. Yet, to obtain a success so universal, so incontestible, and so spontaneous, the artist must possess as much of talent as good fortune." "Gottschalk is very young, modest, reserved, and dignified. He bears a strong resemblance to Chopin, not only in his genius, but in his melancholy gracefulness. His compositions possess great originality. The *Bananier*, the *Mancenillier*, the variations on *God Save the Queen*, the *Moissonneuse*, and the *Chasse du Jeune Henri*, are *Chef-d'œuvres*, which soon became exceedingly popular. Gottschalk's execution has a finish about it, a neatness, and a rapidity, which are really astonishing. At the very moment that he soothes you with an almost imperceptible melody, there escapes from his fingers a hurricane of notes of remarkable power and sonorousness. But it is not by such contrasts, so skillfully managed, not by such oppositions of color and effect, that he has succeeded in electrifying the public. Gottschalk's talent is of a higher order. It is an inspiration, frank and true. It is the result of a poetry deeply felt, and therefore it is that it commands our admiration and applause. We can exclaim to this young artist as Grétry did to Nicolo: '*Vous êtes dans la bonne voie, ne vous en écarterez jamais.*' " These are words of a high praise; Fiorentino had before said — "I will not endeavor to analyze a talent so original, so poetical, and so marvelous — after Gottschalk, *il faut tirer l'échelle;*" but perhaps the strongest evidence of the young artist's excellence, one which would be the soonest and the most universally acknowledged, is to be found in the incidents of his passage over the borders on his way to the Canton of Vaud. At Dijon he was arrested by the gens d'arme, and imprisoned as a traveler without a passport; and was released only after exhibiting to Monsieur the Mayor a

letter of Erard's, of which he was the bearer, and in which the celebrated manufacturer, writing to a correspondent, spoke of the artist in terms which left no doubt as to his identity. At Rousses, the last town upon the frontier, he was arrested a second time, and owed his deliverance to a number of the *Magasin des Familles*, in which its editor, Léo Lespis, had spoken of Gottschalk in terms calculated to disarm the most brutal of police. A hundred *cartes de vérîtes* found in his valise, served to dispel all shadow of doubt, and he was permitted to proceed after paying the usual penalty of reputation; a penalty which, in his case, was rather a severe one; for the *brigadier de gens d'arme* finding that he had in his possession a musical celebrity, was not only prodigal of apologies, but also compelled the young searcher after a wider fame to swallow glass upon glass of an execrable drug which, in the honest host's nomenclature, passed under the title of an excellent *petit vin rouge des environs de Genève*. Thus did he learn, as the great Italian poet had learned from the brigands of Italy, the universality of the appreciation of genius. On entering Switzerland, Gottschalk gave his first concert at Lausanne. He had fallen sick of a fever at {Gentien} ; a misfortune which covered with sorrow his many admirers in the gay capital he had left, until they learned both his recovery and his success through the following critique, or pean it may be better called, published in the Bulletin Musical of the Swiss city in which he had chosen first to present his notes to a Swiss public.

“There are a thousand persons,” says the writer, “who are ever anxious to speak, who yet would do a thousand times better to remain silent; this is one of the truths which even M. de la Palisse will not dispute; still, we have something to say. We must speak of the concert which Gottschalk gave on Monday last. Ask if we have not cause of the six hundred amateurs who crowded the hall, of the orchestra, which applauded like men beside themselves; of the avalanche of bouquets, which a cloud of white hands poured upon the artist, while no one cried *gare !* Ask of the dilettanti who came from long distances to pass their judgment upon the new prodigy; ask, and they will say that language is not capable of expressing all that they would wish to paint in words. Gottschalk is a young man of twenty-one years, whose carriage is as graceful as his genius is great; and while we admire the charming freshness, the poetical organization of his mind, we love the goodness of character, the generous largeness of heart, which is ever the accompaniment of a true intellect. With his few years, where has he found time to conquer all the mechanical difficulties of his art; to become a man of the world, used to the usages of society; to become a poet, and to prove it? Go, listen to the noble pianist, and you will say that language is not capable of expressing all that you would wish to paint in words.”

His second concert given at Lausanne, was marked with a still more brilliant triumph. “The hall,” says a journal of that city, “was crowded to excess long before the hour fixed for the artist's appearance. The amateurs from the neighboring towns pressed forward in troops; and when M. Gottschalk presented himself the enthusiasm of the audience burst forth in frenzied applause. It is impossible to describe what one felt while listening to the compositions of this young American; to the *Ossianic Ballads*, to *La Savane*. The soul was transported to times and to lands to us unknown, and surrendered itself to the witchery of an indefinable power. Sylphs and shades passed before you, like unquiet spirits, in mysterious dance, lamenting, complaining, still moving, and bathed in the wild melancholy of Shakespeare and the poetry of the north. M. Gottschalk has taken his place among the masters of his art, and opened for it a new way as pure as it is elevated. He possesses the first requisite and the surest proof of genius—*une naïveté mêlée de grandeur qui ne saurait point se comparer*.

From Lausanne Gottschalk passed on to Geneva, whither Erard had forwarded one of his finest instruments for the use of the artist. The city of Calvin! How would the great Reformer have received one who came with music, trooped by the shadowy creations of a poet's fancy, to charm the senses and steal away the hearts of the true believers in his stern doctrines—a materialized heaven, which shut out all of earth's beauty, all of earth's greatness, all of the infinite

sources of the happiness of man's world-life, from the enjoyment of his elect! Strong and rough was that age, and strong and rough were the men who moulded it. Mind, popular mind, the mind of the people, has passed over a space between the Then and the Now which is not to be measured by years; and, with every step, it has moved nearer to that point in time when God pronounced all things to be good. It is to be hoped that Gottschalk, with his American intellect, fed upon our nature, in all its vast proportions of mountain and plain, rivers and inland seas, bore away from the Genevese something more than the plaudits which echoed to his unmatched art; that a soil steeped in great memories has given him thought, which time and his own talent will work into a labor equal to the noble *Il Puritani* of Bellini. And here, with the glories of the French reformer rising up before us, let us say something of the form of music which, in the largeness and comprehensiveness of its parts, in its unity and in its aim, is to all other forms what the epic and what tragedy is to all other poetry. The Opera, combining as it does two arts proceeding from the loftiest qualities of the mind, is at once the most artificial and the most perfect of man's intellectual creations. Fashioned upon the Greek play, it is more complete than its model. If passion is short of speech, it is most true in its intonations, in the enunciation of itself in sound; and is expressed more through the infinite modulations of the tones of the voice, than through the articulations which man has invented, and called language. There is not a beating upon the air, from the hoarse thunder rolling along the heavens to the quivering of the most delicate leaf of earth's most delicate flora which is not expressive, which is not an expression of thought—of God's thought; of a state of being of the Great First Cause of all things. Music, then, is the common language of all nature — of the animate as of the inanimate; and the Opera speaks to us in words as readily to be understood as the glorious articulations of Homer and of Milton. Music, like poetry, is incapable of being defined. The difficulty consists partly in the barrenness of language, and partly in ourselves. Nor does the resemblance end there. Poetry is one and the same to all, as the sun is one and the same to all; seen with a clear or more obscure vision—Music walks hand in hand at her side. The foundation of music is harmony; of poetry, beauty. There can be no sublimity without beauty; or, rather, sublimity is beauty of the noblest kind. Harmony is beauty; true passion is, therefore, beauty; for we perceive its harmony with the cause which gave rise to it, and with the character in which it is exhibited. The intimate connection existing between music and poetry may be traced in all their various manifestations, showing that they are indeed so nearly allied in nature that we must wonder, not that they were in the beginning invariably joined together, but that the perfection of the compact was attained at so late a date. Poetry proceeds from all nature, and is a part of all her works. Every object, animate and inanimate, every condition of the mind, all the different states of created things are its subjects, and it dwells equally with life, decay, and death. We find it in the crowded assembly, mingling in the occupations of men — rejoicing in their success, and mourning over their misfortunes. The same may be said, with equal truth, of music. There is a poetry which is purely didactic — listen to the compositions of Henry Purcel. There is a poetry which is purely imaginative — it were easy to cite an example from a similar department in music. There is a poetry distinguished for grace, expressive taste, and sensibility—so, also, is the music of Tartini. There is the poetry of Ariosto's great poem—it stands alone, Protean in its character, of no school, yet embracing all — such, also is the music of Rossini. There is a poetry of manners, of men, and society, which correctly depicts the customs of the times, and satirizes with an even stroke its follies; which delights by its humor, and satisfies by apt illustration; the poetry of Chaucer, of Butler, of Pope, of Boileau, of Horace, and of Aristophanes—such, also, was the music of Damon, which Plato said could not be changed without changing the constitution of the State. Again—there is a poetry of Empires, which sings their rise and fall; the strifes of the ambitious, the triumphs of the successful, the utter ruin of the conquered—listen to the tramp of the Marseillaise Hymn, to the mournings of a fallen greatness in the lofty strains of Belisario. These parts of one whole, these forms, in themselves complete, are but the divisions of a unit

which the Opera embraces, and to which it adds that which the Epic has not, and Tragedy has not; and therein is to be found its claim to preeminence.

The Greek play adds to its action the chorus, the people, public opinion, to condemn the guilty, to applaud the good, and sit, like history, in judgment upon the events that pass before it. The Opera, springing from the Greek play, has its Chorus as well; and it has a great deal more. What is the Orchestra, which is in harmony with all, dominates over all, and, like fate, moves right onward, unaffected by the joys and griefs of our humanity?—It is the divine intelligence; and with it, the Opera embraces the world.

Gottschalk's reception at Geneva was all that Paris had promised him. It might be deemed to be out of place to recount here the evidences of his triumphs, with which the journals of that city were filled. The people of the country, of the valleys and the lakes, who had learned music of the echoes of their own mountain sides, came from distances of twenty leagues to listen to an echo, to them strange and new—to the echo of the poetry of America, young, and now advancing to high eminence in intellectual as in physical greatness. "We might exhaust all the forms of praise, and yet not be able to convey a true idea of the wonderful power exhibited by Gottschalk at his Concert on Monday last," says one. "As his notes sprung from the piano, each one asked of his neighbor if it was indeed real, or were they the dupes of a delicious dream, of an illusion, as subduing as it was deceitful. Gottschalk is but twenty-one; and starting from twenty-one years one may go a great way.

Is there a point where every genius must stop; or is not genius rather like the traveler, who, as he advances, finds ever new beauties to admire, and new conquests to make his own?" says another:

"Eh bien! madame, la musique est venue," writes a lady to her friend; même du fond de l'Amérique. M. Gottschalk, appelé à grandes cris au delà des Pyrénées par la reine d'Espagne, a bien voulu nous préférer, nous, les provinciaux de Genève à la cour splendide de Madrid. 'Venez donc,' écrivait la reine d'Espagne, 'venez donc, mon jeune ami; je vous ouvre la patrie du boléro, du fandango et des muletiers de Castille.' 'Votre majesté est une grande reine', répondait M. Gottschalk, 'mais j'ai à la libre Helvétie de lui jouer mon *Bamboula*, et je lui jouerai mon *Bamboula*.' 'Jeune homme, je vous somme de venir,' répliquait la reine; 'si vous ne venez pas, je vous fais mettre au ban de mon royaume'.— 'Les sommations ne me font rien', rétorquait M. Gottschalk en sifflant un air nègre; 'j'irai à Genève, et, s'il le faut, j'y resterai!' 'Venez, je vous en supplie', recommençait la reine, 'et de ma blanche main j'attacherai une décoration à votre boutonnière.'— 'J'y mettrai un camélia; c'est plus rare,' répondait M. Gottschalk. Si bien qu'il nous est resté, et il n'a pas eu tort." The foregoing passage should remain untranslated; it owes its grace to the language in which it is written.

"The grand Hall of the Casino," continues the fair correspondent, describing one of Gottschalk's Concerts, "was full; and so was the antechamber, and the stairway, and the street. Gottschalk is truly an exception among artists. Imagine, if you can, compositions which bear the impress both of infancy and of mature age, which offer you, at one and the same time, the charming *naïveté* of childhood and the originality of the master—an execution which is that of an autocrat, to whom the piano is a slave, and you will possess a fair portrait of Gottschalk." "Gottschalk's visit to Switzerland," says a Parisian Journal of that date, "has been one series of triumphs. No Artist was ever received with an equal enthusiasm. In every town he has visited he has found troupes of admirers; but it is at Geneva that he has won his chiefest laurels. He there gave a concert for the benefit of the poor, and never was the cause of the poor advocated in strains more effective. At the conclusion of the performances, the chamberlain of the Grand Duchess de Weimar waited upon him with an invitation from her royal highness for the following

day. At the appointed hour the carriage of the grand-duchess conveyed the artist to her hotel, and he was introduced to her, surrounded by her maids of honor, and in the presence of the Princesses Wolkowsky and Sonkoyanet. The grand-duchess conversed a long time with Gottschalk upon the subject of his art, and — after partaking of a collation — led the way to the piano. Gottschalk played all his national pieces—his pieces redolent of the soil of America, and the grand-duchess acknowledged her appreciation of his genius by presenting him with a magnificent pin, formed of an enormous pearl, surrounded with diamonds selected from her own casket, saying—“This is not a testimony of my admiration, but a simple *souvenir* ; I desire that it may sometimes remind you of one in whom you have excited the liveliest interest in your welfare!” This compliment we have related, not because of the high source from which it came—for we are of democratic blood — but because the wealth and refinement of Europe, devoting itself to little else than the study of those arts which administer most immediately to our pleasures, may be supposed: to be the most competent judges of the master’s excellence. Ten thousand men, however rude and illiterate, brought together in mass, never err in judgment as to the merit of a painting, a piece of statuary, an opera, a play, or an oration; but the ten thousand taken separately, individually, know nothing about the matter.

From Geneva Gottschalk passed into Sardinia, and, at a small town among the hills on his way, founded a hospital for old men. The hospital bears his name; and many of its inmates remember with tears the sweet sounds which built for them a refuge from the sorrows which track want to the grave. His visit to Sardinia was made merely for the purpose of being introduced to the Queen, who had expressed a desire to hear him; and, after a brief stay in the capital, he returned to Paris, preparatory to his tour through Spain, where his last and most brilliant conquests have been made. He entered Spain as an American, at a time when our relations with that power were embittered by the results of the Lopez expedition against Cuba, and the prejudices of that proud people were against him; but genius claims affinity with all humanity, and the American builder of sound won the intellect, if not heart of the Spaniard.

During the years 1850 and 1851, Gottschalk composed the *Danse Ossianique*, several *Grandes Etudes*, *God Save the Queen*, *The Carnival of Venice*, *Jerusalem*, *Le Mancenillier*, *Le Caïd*, *Polka*, and *Le Songe d'une Nuit d'Eté*.

No people, not even the Italians, are greater lovers of music than the inhabitants of Spain. The sound of the guitar, like the click of the castanet is heard every where; in town and country, with the shepherd upon the broad plains of Castile, and with the mountaineer in the fastnesses of Asturias. And yet, Spain has produced no great composer. Her national airs, like the national airs of every land sprung from the people, from the national {mind} with, in most cases, no history of origin, no date of birth. They came because they must come, for God has made every soul to vibrate, in a greater or less degree, more or less readily, to the harmony of his works; but of that music which is built up not for one people but for all, which is universal, and needs no associations of prejudice or locality to stir the human heart, Spain has given us almost nothing. Its people are appreciative, not creative, of music and are thereby the better critics. In this {manner} appreciation depends, for the most part, upon the ear; creation is pure intellect; it is only when {l?th} meet in the same person that a Mozart is to be found. Gottschalk knew the people he was to meet, and on entering Spain, played in every large town through which he passed; thus, like a skillful general, taking the outposts before he attacked the capital. We shall not here quote from the numerous *critiques* upon the artist and his works which have appeared in the journals of Madrid. This notice has been already extended far beyond its proposed limits and it is best that the story of our countryman's success in the Peninsula should be in part told by his own pen. We select a letter of M. Gottschalk’s which has already appeared in print, although not written for the public eye. The original is remarkable for an ease and sprightliness of style

which, in a translation, are not to be looked for. The French is the most civilized of the modern languages; it is, therefore, the best fitted for conversation and letter-writing; and he who would attempt to rival its gossip with the sturdy English that falls from a Saxon tongue, mistakes the broadsword for the rapier. The people welcomed Gottschalk with open arms; for the people are quick to appreciate, and with the people genius is a spoiled child. It had already said—"Este pianista no reparece á nada, Formando para sí solo una escuela, bebiendo inspiracion donde se debe beber, en la naturaleza, el piano que toca obedeco a sus dedos cual si el instrumento desapareciesa y parara á su alma"—when the young American artist was invited to play before an audience consisting solely of the queen, the king, the queen dowager, and the duke. His reception was so flattering, so caressing, genius, even in that country of old formalities, was raised to so close an equality with the greatness of descent, that, in a feeling of gratitude, he composed the most elaborate of his works, *El Zitio de Zaragoza*. It is a composition of three hundred pages, and was composed and written in ten days; ten days of a labor of eighteen hours a day. Thus does genius toil; and thus must we all toil if we would do something in this life. National in its subject, embracing one of the chiefest glories of Spain, its execution created a furor with all classes of society; and for it he was crowned publicly, in the opera-house, with a crown of gold.

"Another triumph, my dear mother!" writes Gottschalk, in the letter referred to, recounting the incidents attendant upon the first performance of his new composition; "and I am still to-day half crazy about it. The house was filled to excess with people in full costume, while the queen's ministers occupied their box. The success of the concert was unprecedented. The '*Bananier*' the '*Souvenirs de Bellini*,' '*La Danse Ossianique*,' the '*Carnival de Venise*,' were all encored; and when at last the moment arrived for the performance of the piece I had composed for ten pianos, and I came upon the stage at the head of my ten young aids-de-camp, the applause burst upon us like the roar of water. You know that of the siege of Saragossa was born a story of national heroism most cherished in a Spaniard's heart.

"The first part of the piece was frequently interrupted; the second, was not finished when it was encored from all sides; and, in the third, where the pianos pour forth the drum and trumpet march of triumph, the whole crowded audience rose spontaneously to its feet — men and women — with an enthusiasm which it is impossible to describe. The Minister of Agriculture, unable to restrain his emotion, cried out '*Viva la Reina*,' and the shout that followed almost deafened us; then came '*Bis*' '*bis*,' from every quarter of the house, and we were compelled to play the concerto over again. We did so, but amid interruptions so frequent that my own excitement became oppressive; and when the last notes died upon the ear, a wreath of laurel, of oak, and of flowers, was thrown to me, bearing this inscription — 'To Gottschalk — the people of Madrid, at his concert of 13th of June, 1852.'

"On leaving the theatre, I found a procession of more than three hundred persons waiting to receive me. They accompanied me home, whither, to my great wonderment, many of the most aristocratic ladies of Madrid had preceded me, and where they were introduced to me, and paid me the prettiest and most flattering compliments. Then, suddenly, from beneath my windows, rose the first strains of my '*Danse Ossianique*;' I looked out; the windows and balconies of all the houses, as far as I could see, were filled with spectators — men, women and children. I was called for, and venturing to show myself upon my own balcony, was welcomed with one immense '*hourra*.' The street was illuminated, and the two military bands of the queen's and princess's regiments, drawn up in a circle before my dwelling, played the '*Danse Ossianique*.' I was crazy. Imagine two bands playing my own favorite composition; add to that the hour, a Spanish night and sky, the illumination, the enthusiastic crowd of spectators, the brilliantly dressed women who surrounded me, my friends who came forward every minute to congratulate me — I was crazy! It was a veritable ovation. Called for by the

crowd in the street, I finally took courage and made a little speech in Spanish, *à la America*. It was not so bad for a first effort, for the general enthusiasm, which was already at fever heat, thereupon boiled over, and I was taken up bodily and carried down into the midst of my warm-hearted audience, and embraced, and passed about from one to another, as if I had been a petted child!”

Shortly after the incident which Gottschalk properly calls an “Ovation,” he received from the Secretary of State, the Marquis of Minaflores, the following letter:

“My dear sir,— I have the high satisfaction to announce to you that her Majesty the Queen, our august sovereign, wishing to give you a mark of her esteem, has this day signed a decree by which you are named a chevalier of the royal order of Isabella. I shall have the honor to let you know the hour when you are to receive from me the diploma and insignia of the order.”

We here leave M. Gottschalk. He had crazed Madrid, and that is enough. We shall not accompany him in his tour through the other cities of the Peninsula, nor travel with him into Portugal, where he takes his final parting with European appreciation prior to his return to his native land.

Such is music. Lord Bacon draws a parallel between it and language; based upon the same principle, they must possess much which is common to both. But the great difference between them is, that one is universal while the other is particular; and out of this difference springs the superiority which music claims to sway the will of a multitude or the passions of an individual. When, after a long siege, Shâh Kuli took Bagdad, he condemned its whole population to massacre for the obstinate defense it had made. From among the miserable thousands collected in masses, awaiting the stroke of death, was brought to him a youth whom his own captains desired should be saved on account of his skill as a flutist. Kuli commanded the artist to play before him; and the young man, putting his instrument to his lips, played an epic, so expressive of his country's former glories, of its wars, of the siege long endured, of an unavailing courage, of suffering, of present misery and debasement, that the heart of the conqueror melted, and, bursting into tears, he gave the city, with its people, into the hands of the eloquent advocate of mercy.

What could the persuasion of language do more? Well has it been said, that “music is an art which unites corporeal with intellectual pleasure; that it is a species of enjoyment which gratifies without weakening the reason; and that the great may cultivate it without being debased, and the good enjoy it without depravation.”