purposed going more carefully through them on the completion of the work. The reviewer says that the part Süssmayer had in the latter portions will never be known till the last day; but that *then*, so soon as the bustle of the Resurrection is over, Süssmayer will be strictly cross-examined as to his part in the matter; and his great master will also be interrogated whether *this* is, indeed, the Requiem he intended to give to the world. *Then*, the reviewer adds, will Mozart and Weber meet and shake hands over some celestial *Liedertafel*, and the immortal composer will mark his disapprobation of the unworthy attacks his critical friend has suffered in his cause!

Stadler died in November, 1834, and bequeathed his portion of the precious manuscripts to the Imperial Library, at Vienna; and, some years afterwards, Eybler completed the gift by presenting his portions also to the same institution, thus putting the public in possession of the whole of the *Urschriften*, except that of the first movement, the *Requiem* and *Kyrie*, which Mozart was known (on the evidence of Stadler) to have entirely completed, but of which no trace could be found.

(To be continued).

RECOLLECTIONS OF MENDELSSOHN.*

IN the letters of Mendelssohn, especially those written to the members of his own family, we cannot but feel that, however he may be overflowing with boyish glee or artistic enthusiasm, a certain reservation in the expression of his feelings has been invariably exercised, from a consciousness, no doubt, that these welcome chapters from the book of his youthful life would be eagerly read by others than those to whom they were addressed. The lately published Reminiscences of Madame Polko, too, full as they are of many interesting details, are written with childlike adoration for the genius of a man with whom she was originally brought into contact in his artistic capacity, and of whose character she was, of course, only able to judge by the manner in which it was exhibited in his daily intercourse with the world. To Herr Eduard Devrient, therefore, was left the pleasurable task of showing us the free and unfettered nature of Mendelssohn, as it was gradually developed in the close companionship of one to whom he clung with that yearning for sympathy without which his life was a dreary blank. The two artists were indeed friends—boys and men together; and it is one of the chief recommendations of Herr Devrient's book that, with all his admiration for the genius and loving nature of Mendelssohn, he never hides, either from himself or his readers, those frequent instances of an irascible temperament which tended partially to cloud his otherwise sunny career, and eventually, no doubt, to hasten his death. Mendelssohn was only about thirteen years of age when Herr Devrient first noticed him "playing at marbles or touchwood, with other boys, before the door of his grandmother's house on the new Promenade." The extraordinary talents of the boy had already been talked of in musical circles; and at the Mendelssohns' house, where the youthful composer's operatic works were constantly tried, Theresa, Herr Devrient's betrothed, was introduced as soprano, and eventually Devrient himself as bass. At these meetings, our author writes, "the singers sat round the large dining-table; and, close to the grand piano, raised on a high cushion, sat Felix, grave and unembarrassed, leading and directing us with an ardour, as if it had been a game he was playing with his comrades." The general impression appeared to be that at this time his sister Fanny was somewhat superior to him as a pianist; and there can be no question that Mendelssohn himself had the highest opinion of her talent. As soon, however, as his artistic powers became ripened by close and well-directed study, scarcely any player could be found to compete with him; and it is related that at a musical Society, where he had been requested by the director, Schelble, to extemporize, he took his subjects from the motets of Bach, which had just been sung, and "fairly amazed all hearers by his wealth of invention, his complete command of counterpoint, as well as by his astounding execution and sustained energy." The character of Mendelssohn, sketched when he was in his twentieth year, is no doubt a thoroughly true one; and we cannot but agree with Herr Devrient that much of the excitability he then displayed was owing to his having been forced, when a child, into the habit of constantly exercising his mental powers to an extent which made him eventually look upon healthy relaxation almost as a crime. "His brain," we are told, "had from childhood been taxed excessively, by the university course, study of modern languages, drawing, and much else, and to these were added the study of music in its profoundest sense." His sensitiveness often led him to distrust his most intimate acquaintances; for where he placed his friendship it pained him to believe that his affection was not returned in an equal degree; and he was, therefore, morbidly observant of any action or remark which might indicate a desire to slight or affront him. His kindliness and benevolence, even to dumb animals, were known to all with whom he was constantly associated. "I recollect him," says Herr Devrient, "when a boy of thirteen, ardently pleading for the life and liberty of a small fish, which had been given to his brother Paul, who wished to have it fried for himself. Felix, in anger, said, 'If you were anything of a boy, you would put it back in the water directly.' Although the mother took the part of her nestling, the father decided the point with, 'Paul, put the fish back into the water. You are no fisher, and are not entitled to his life; for pleasure or for daintiness' sake, we are not to take the life of any creature.' Felix joyfully seized the little fellow's hand, ran with him to a pond, and threw in the struggling fish. I have often since thought of that fish when I have seen Felix take the part of those who were in trouble." An additional proof of his generous nature may be found in the following extract of a letter written to Devrient, in which he urges him to sing for the benefit of a struggling organist: "It is a question," he writes, "whether I have so much influence with you, but I think I have; and as the organist is an ugly fellow, who manages to get most fearfully trodden upon by reason of his being so ugly and so contented, one is bound to do the contrary, and help him along." This consideration for others was also invariably shown in his criticism both upon the works and the performances of his brother artists; and although his thoroughly trained mind revolted instinctively against any obvious defects, he always commenced by commending every point for which a good word could possibly be said. We dwell with pleasure on these characteristic proofs

* *My Recollections of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, and his letters to me.* By Eduard Devrient. Translated from the German by Natalia Macfarren. (Bentley).

of the gentle nature of one of the greatest poets of modern time; for it is a faith with us that the earnest pursuit of art enlarges the sympathy with artists, and that the most merciless critics are those who require no mercy for themselves.

When Mendelssohn first made a sensation in London, he was constantly invited to the parties of the upper classes, where, performing without remuneration, he of course belonged to the company. He was quite indignant, however, at the manner in which the paid artists were isolated from the guests; "nor could he forget having seen Malibran sit in a remote corner of the drawing-room, shut out and looking miserable." This fact having been so repeatedly denied—and only very lately by Mr. Ella in his volume of musical sketches—it is well to place this opinion upon record, especially when we know that it has been quite as emphatically expressed by Spohr and other eminent foreign artists who have visited this country.

During his visit to London, Mendelssohn was unfortunately thrown from a cab; and, having seriously hurt his knee, he was confined for some time to the house, where, with the assistance of his intimate friend, Klingeman, with whom he planned the *libretto* during their Scottish tour, he composed the Operetta known here as *Son and Stranger*, which he wished to have performed at the silver wedding of his parents. In a letter to his friend Devrient, for whom he had written the part of the roaming pedlar, after telling him of this composition, he winds up with a few observations not very complimentary to German musicians, but amusingly illustrative of his impression of artistic England. "Devrient," he writes, "when I think of the musicians of Berlin, I overflow with gall and wormwood; they are miserable shams, with their sentimentality and devotion to art. I have no intention to sing the praises of English musicians, but when they eat an apple-pie, at all events they do not talk about the abstract nature of a pie, and of the affinities of its constituent crust and apple, but they heartily eat it down." It may be an open question whether we now eat our apple-pie as quietly as we used to do—whether we are not somewhat too apt to discourse upon the history of pie-crust, and of the peculiar characteristics of the apple, as distinguished from other fruits used for baking—and Mendelssohn's photograph of 1829 may, therefore, some day be looked at with interest to remind us of what we were.

When we consider the trifling, and even absurd, subjects of many of the *libretti* which have been supplied to eminent composers, and upon which they have employed their most brilliant talents, it seems strange that, anxious as Mendelssohn was to compose an opera, no *libretto* could be furnished to him with which he was perfectly satisfied. But his sensitive nature in this, as in other matters, made him reject subjects which an equal genius might perhaps have accepted. "Ever since I began to compose," he writes, in a letter to Devrient, "I have remained true to my starting principle: not to write a page because no matter what public, or what pretty girl, wanted it to be thus or thus; but to write solely as I myself thought best, and as it gave me pleasure. I will not depart from this principle in writing an opera; and this makes it so very hard, since most people, as well as most poets, look upon an opera merely as a thing to be popular." *Lorely* was at length fixed upon; but the *libretto* was by no means what he desired; and it was only in his earnest desire to keep faith with Jenny Lind that he sketched out the fragments with which the public has now become familiar.

Much as we should like to quote from and comment upon the volume before us to a greater extent, our limited space warns us to refrain. We have little doubt that few of our readers will deny themselves the pleasure of lingering over Herr Devrient's charming reminiscences, as we have ourselves done; for it is by such books as these that we learn how truly and conscientiously a real artist works out the mission with which he has been entrusted. That men so specially gifted are, as a rule, too early snatched away from a world which they have done so much to refine and spiritualize may some day be accepted as a reason why they should be lovingly treated whilst amongst us, and carefully prevented from encountering those cares and struggles which are so thoroughly antagonistic to all intellectual progress.

In conclusion, we must offer a word of congratulation to the translator for the admirable manner in which she has performed her task. Not only has the original been rendered into English with remarkable fidelity, but it bears unmistakable proof that it has been translated by one deeply sympathetic with the work she has undertaken.

H. C. L.

ROYAL ITALIAN OPERA.

ALTHOUGH a brilliant season has now set in at this establishment, no novelty has been produced, or indeed has been required, so thoroughly satisfied are the subscribers and the public with their well-known singers in the well-known operas. Madlle. Christine Nilsson and Madame Patti have appeared in some of their most favourite parts, and been received with the warmest demonstrations of satisfaction; and Signor Graziani has also returned to us in a character well suited to his powers —*Guillaume Tell*, in Rossini's Opera of that name, a work which also enabled Signor Mongini to show that he is fully equal to grapple with the exacting music of *Arnold*. We are glad also to record that Madlle. Tietjens has made her first appearance since her severe accident, with her voice even strengthened by rest. Those who long for novelty still hope to hear Ambroise Thomas' *Hamlet* before the season is over.

CRYSTAL PALACE.

THE grand Festival in honour of Rossini proved, as it deserved to be, thoroughly successful. The *Stabat Mater* was excellently given throughout, the solos being undertaken by Madame Rudersdorff, Madame Sainton-Dolby, Mr. Vernon Rigby, and Mr. Santley. The choruses were unusually good; precision and variety of tone being attained with extraordinary success, considering the vast body of singers engaged. The Benediction of the Flags, from the opera, *Le Siége de Corinthe*, and the Prayer from *Mosé*, were also triumphant proofs of the excellent materials of which the united choirs were composed; and we need scarcely say that the effect of these two pieces upon the large audience assembled, was manifested by the most solid and genuine applause, the Prayer being enthusiastically re-demanded. The Overtures to *La Gazza Ladra*, *Guillaume Tell*, and *Semiramide*, proved Rossini's right to be ranked as a great orchestral, as well as vocal, writer; both were well played, and received with marked favour. If the interpolation of the March and chorus from Sir Michael Costa's *Naaman*, into the programme of this performance were intended as a mark of honour to the composer, we regret that it failed to effect its object.