persons are sometimes slightly treacherous, and the *prima donna*, in her dislike of rivalry, resembles other artists. The great instrumental *virtuoso* can no more brook successful competition than can the eminent vocalist." This statement we shall examine later on. Meantime we may recall the anecdote quoted in the same work of a pianist who once went to the concert of a rival, and taking his seat in the front row applauded with enthusiasm all the most surprising passages in his rival's most difficult pieces. He did not, however, as he afterwards explained, applaud the best executed passages, but only those in which he detected false notes! Both of these pianists are dead; but whereas the critical one, Leopold de Meyer, is forgotten, the inaccurate performer, Rubinstein, is not likely soon to pass into oblivion. And Rubinstein, we may add, certainly showed no jealousy where his rival executants were concerned. He is reported to have said of Liszt that in comparison with him he (Rubinstein) and all other pianists were mere wood-choppers; and in his interesting dialogue on "Music and Musicians" describes him as "unsurpassed and unsurpassable." But then it must be added that Rubinstein had the poorest possible opinion of Liszt as a composer.

On the whole, we are inclined to think that instrumentalists are capable of greater generosity in their appreciation of the talents of a rival than vocalists. The writer has constantly observed Señor Sarasate applauding vigorously at concerts given by other violinists. He has dedicated one of his most ambitious compositions to Joachim, who, in his turn, is known to cherish the liveliest admiration for the "fascinating Spanish fiddler" as he has called him. This is as it should be, and contrasts very agreeably with the gratuitous and ill-mannerly disparagement of the great German violinist recently indulged in by a former pupil of his, who has of late years achieved considerable success as a transcendental technician. But to the best of our belief no instance is on record of an operatic tenor who was on intimate or even cordial terms with another tenor. It is possible for a tenor to be enthusiastic about a bass, or for a soprano to admire a contralto. Indeed, we believe that instances might be possibly found of a dramatic soprano sincerely appreciating the talent of a light *bravura* singer. But to expect a tenor to love a tenor is to expect too much of frail human nature. Indeed, it has often seemed to us a merciful dispensation of Providence that there never have been a brace of celebrated tenors who were brothers. Had such a pair existed, we feel certain that the inevitable rivalry would have led to some terrible domestic tragedy, say a duel, in which the only weapon allowed was the *ut de poitrine*. Happily, this situation has never yet arisen. As for the *prime donne*, there is the remarkable case of Malibran and Pauline Viardot-Garcia, though the latter was only fifteen at her sister's death. Still Malibran, as M. Legouvé tells us, had already foretold her younger sister's brilliant success. But then there was only one Malibran and only one Viardot-Garcia, both of them women of genius, and both void of the pettinesses of prima-donna-dom.

SLAVONIC MUSIC.

The prominent position which of late years Slavonic music has attained in all parts of Europe is one of the most striking features of modern musical progress. Its popularity is still increasing, and the influence its form and idioms are exerting over Western composers is daily becoming more obvious. This in itself is remarkable, for it is rare that the spirit of the East dictates to the spirit of the West. Although the term Slavonic is generally applied to Polish, Bohemian, Russian, and Hungarian composers, of which the most representative to the majority of English musical people are severally Chopin, Dvorák, Tschaïkowsky, and Liszt, it should not be forgotten that the national style of each possesses clearly defined individuality. Particularly is this the case with the Hungarian, owing to that tongue having nothing in common with the Indo-Germanic languages. The above-mentioned composers may be said to have been the chief channels by which the stream of the music of Eastern Europe has flowed to us. Other composers whose writings promise to cultivate popular taste for this music are Smetana, César Cui, Borodin, Glazounoff. Now no school of art work obtains wide acceptance unless it expresses the common mode of thought of its period or comes forth with the fascination peculiar to a new development arising from exhaustion of previous methods. Slavonic music may be said to possess both these attractive attributes. Liszt broke down the strict confines of accepted forms, which by long use, and it may be added abuse, had produced conventionality; and the new Russian School expresses in a remarkable manner the intensity and peculiar individuality of modern thought. Few people, however, are aware of the struggle that this has cost many earnest and enthusiastic Slavonic composers. It is but recently that the symphonic poem has been widely accepted, and the new Russian school of music met for many years with the liveliest opposition from all "the powers that were." We are apt to look upon this latter music as a new spirit coming to us from a strange land where it had for ages past been known and honoured. But it is not so. In 1856 two enthusiastic young musicians met accidentally in St. Petersburg. They were César Cui and Balakireff. "Let us found a new and more rational school of Russian music,"

they said. They were quickly joined by Rymski-Korsakoff, the writer of descriptive songs, rich alike in colour and accompaniment; by Borodin, given to Oriental themes and restless changes of rhythm; and by Moussorgsky, whose style is declamatory and brusque. A goodly fighting company—and they had to fight. Said the pedants, "Who are these that preach to us? Soldiers, sailors, professors of chemistry—amateurs! Let us fall upon and utterly destroy them." But although they were assailed on all sides and suffered many defeats, they received such reinforcements that they were enabled to finally gain public esteem. Thus were spent the early years of the new Russian School of Music, a school that is not yet forty years old. For the causes of its acceptance by ourselves it is necessary to review social developments at home.

It has been said that the inventor of the wheel altered the face of the earth, and certainly the multiplication of wheels, combined with the subjugation of electricity, have, by the marvellously increased means of intercourse thus afforded, gone far to remove the cloak of dignified reserve with which we have been wont to envelop our individuality. Again, the majority of scientific discoveries having chiefly resulted from elaborate and subtle analysis, the wider application of this principle followed as a natural consequence until complete satisfaction in "anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth" would to-day seem impossible till it has been dissected and reduced to its component parts. Human motives and mental activity have been submitted to the same method of treatment as stones and gases. Having, as far as possible, pulled all things to pieces, the next step that naturally occurred to the ingenuity of man was to put them together again in an abnormal manner. In chemistry the results not infrequently departed into space with disconcerting celerity; in literature a flood of heroes and heroines were created, the like no sun has ever smiled upon—at least, we hope so. The chief result on the masses of all this hurrying to and fro, and the increased knowledge of good and evil, has been a keener appreciation and study of the enjoyments of life and an increasing regard for the claims of individuality. No little of the popularity now enjoyed by Bizet's "Carmen," and other modern operas too well-known to need mention, is largely traceable to this cause. Our novels, our plays, our poems are all based upon characterisation. The epic poem is neglected for the glorification of the particle and the greatest interest is aroused by the portrayal of the idiosyncrasies of the human mind—mad or otherwise. Now the chief feature of Slavonic music is the powerful manner in which it expresses the rapid fluctuations of mental excitement. This it does by the ardent expression and exaggerated accentuation of emotional phases. Its love is wild passion, its desire is unutterable yearning. Its exaltation is frenzy, its despondency is hopeless despair. The cry of the animal is heard in its speech, and barbaric splendour characterises the glow of its colouring. In short, it is, as a modern poet has written, "a music mounting in a shaft of fire," and exactly of the kind which arrests the attention of the lover of strong characterisation.

This intensity of what may be termed the musical expression of emotionalism is most marked in Hungarian music, which presents many distinct and unique features. The causes of this are as peculiar as they are complex. Racially the people of Eastern Europe present an extraordinary mixture. To quote Professor Huxley: "The blonde broad-heads of Poland and West Russia form part of a people who, when they made their first appearance in history, occupied the marshy plains imperfectly drained by the Vistula on the West, the Düna on the North, and the Dnieper and Bug on the South. They were known to their neighbours as Wends, and among themselves as Serbs and Slavs. . . From very early times they have been a mixed race, for their country lies between that of the tall blonde long-heads on the North, that of the short brunette broad-heads of the European type on the West, and that of the short brunette broad-heads of the Asiatic type on the East; and throughout their history they have either thrust themselves among their neighbours or have been over-run and trampled down by them. Gauls and Goths have traversed their country on their way to the East and South; Finno-Tartaric people, on their way to the West, have not only done the like, but have held them in subjection for centuries." In the ninth century, what was subsequently known as Hungary was dominated by the Magyars, a Turanian people, and it would appear that it is to these Magyars that the Hungarians of to-day owe the distinctiveness of their language, and, consequently, that of their folk-songs. These, rhythmically, are totally different from those of all other European nations. In this respect Hungarian music stands by itself. In the fifteenth century bands of gipsies, another Eastern people, probably of Semitic origin, settled in Hungary; but it is only within the last hundred years that they replaced the old Hungarian minstrels and became the people's musicians. When once, however, the gipsies had discovered this means of gaining the favour of their hosts they cultivated it with remarkable success, and at the same time decorated the ancient folk-tunes with elaborate arabesque kind of ornamentations of Eastern character. The rhythmic characteristics of a nation's music are almost wholly derived from the accentuation of its language. In Hungarian the accents are not only more numerous and varied than in any European tongue, but they are distinct

from those common to Indo-Germanic languages, and belong exclusively to the Ural-Altaric family. Hence the rhythm forms one of the most distinguishable features of Hungarian music. But there is another and still more remarkable peculiarity possessed by Hungarian music. Mr. Korbay in his recent lectures, noticed in these columns in May last, drew a graphic picture of the method pursued by the gipsy instrumentalists in Hungary. In other European countries executants are expected, and are at least supposed, to endeavour to express the sentiment of the composer; but in Hungary it would appear that the musician's success depends upon his ability to portray the emotions of his listener. Hence the applicability of their song—

Play on, gipsy, play on always,
Sad and sadder, ever more.
For thy music in mine eyes look,
My pale face shall be thy score.

The task of the gipsy is of course greatly facilitated by the melodies played being well known folk-songs, not only reminiscent of an underlying text, but probably also associated with historical and domestic events. Still the peculiarity of the procedure is very remarkable and, in fact, unique. Imagine one of our popular conductors—say, Sir Alexander Mackenzie—violin at chin, playing "Robin Adair" to the improvised accompaniment of the Philharmonic orchestra; subsequently trying the effect on his audience of other melodies until pocket-handkerchiefs ascended to glistening eyes, perchance at the strains of "Home, sweet home"; whereupon the music would become more impassioned, grow wilder than a student's first symphonic poem, more frenzied than a poet's dream, until players and listeners had acted and re-acted upon each other till both were in a like state of emotional delirium. This picture may surpass the imaginative power of some, but, practically, such is the method pursued in Hungary to-day; and, moreover, that in which is to be seen the origin of the swift changes of sentiment that characterise what is termed the Hungarian School of Music. It is important that this should be realised just now, because what may be called the Hungarian style has caught the public ear and in no small degree is influencing our composers. Such influence is to be welcomed in so far as it will result in the striving for, and power of, greater intensity of expression; but at the same time it should be remembered that the national instincts of the Hungarian predispose him to appeal to what are commonly known as emotional rather than intellectual factors, and that consequently any sacrifice is to him justifiable if it produces sensory excitement in his listeners. To define what is intellectual or sensuous in music is impossible, because even in the simplest music both elements are blended in inextricable embrace, and because each will acquire prominence according to the temperament and capacities of the listener. But the composer knows, or should know, the intellectual value of his work, and which element preponderates. The magician knows the ingredients of the incense he uses at his incantations, and the nature of the enchantment his spell will cast over the predisposed. The rapid alternations of sentiment and *tempo* of Hungarian music point clearly to its source. It is the nature of emotional states to generate and to be followed by their opposites, whereas intellectual progress is achieved by associative development. The two procedures are reflected in a Hungarian rhapsody and a Beethoven symphony. The cause of the rapid changes of phases of sensuous excitement is not far to seek. All pleasurable emotions caused merely by the action of the sensory nerves are evanescent, because these nerves quickly become exhausted and, in some cases, after a brief period, incapable of performing their functions. The musk plant seems to emit no scent after it has been once smelt; the eye quickly wearies of the most beautiful colour; the ear, more delicate than all, however charmed with a fine tone, soon loses all pleasure in it. Hence music, in which the sensory element dominates the intellectual, can only sustain the interest of the listener by rapid changes of sentiment or rhythm and vivid contrasts of tone. The habit of analysis, now so widespread, is conducive to the isolation and exaggeration of factors which are designed to act, and can only act perfectly in union with each other. We are too apt, like little Jack Horner, to sit in a corner and pull out a plum and say what a great boy am I. The plum may be very beautiful, and the capability to pull it out most meritorious; but for all that it was most satisfactory when in its proper environment. In short, the intellectual and sensory perceptions are so intimately and perfectly entwined in our nature that they cannot be appealed to singly or with individual predominance with satisfactory results. By all means let us absorb the emotional intensity of Slavonic, and its important and distinctive branch, Hungarian music; but let us submit it to rational control, lest in its wild frenzy it should turn and rend from us those intellectual enjoyments upon which is based the immortality of the works of our great tone poets.

G. W.

SOME MUSICAL EXPERIENCES IN ITALY.

On December 17, 1891, I found myself in the famous Duomo of Milan. High Mass was in progress, to which I listened for some time. The singing was good, and the composition reminded me of the style of Pergolesi. The plain-song portions were sung without accompaniment. Wishing to learn something of the Ambrosian Chant, I made enquiries in the Cathedral, and was taken to the vestry, and from there sent in charge of an old verger to