

The Project Gutenberg eBook of A Day with Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, by George Sampson

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: A Day with Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy

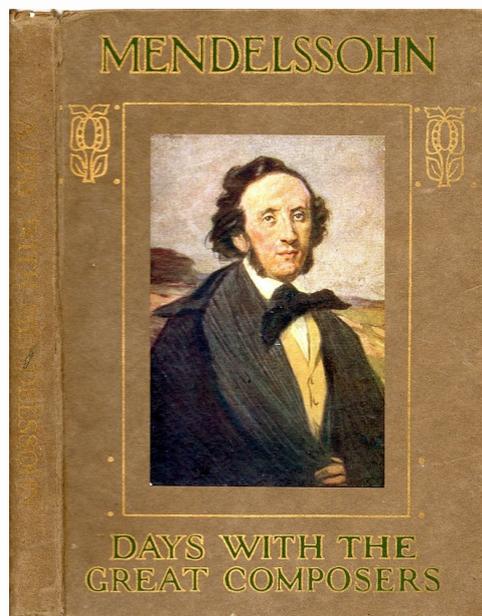
Author: George Sampson

Release Date: July 9, 2009 [EBook #29361]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Delphine Lettau and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <https://www.pgdp.net>

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A DAY WITH FELIX
MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY ***



Click to [ENLARGE](#)



Click to [ENLARGE](#)

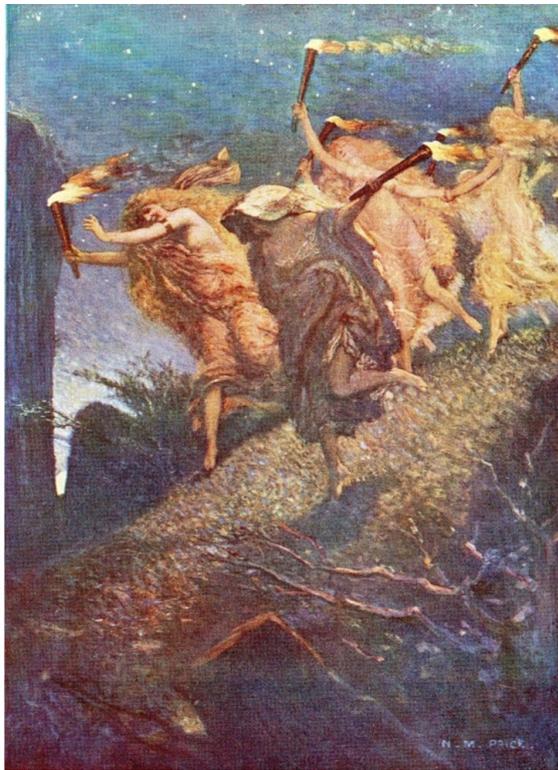
**A DAY WITH FELIX
MENDELSSOHN
BARTHOLDY**

BY GEORGE SAMPSON



HODDER & STOUGHTON

*In the same Series.
Beethoven.
Schubert.*



Painting by N. M. Price. **FIRST WALPURGIS NIGHT.**

Click to [ENLARGE](#)

"Through the night-gloom lead and follow
In and out each rocky hollow."

A DAY WITH MENDELSSOHN.

During the year 1840 I visited Leipzig with letters of introduction from Herr Klingemann of the Hanoverian Legation in London. I was a singer, young, enthusiastic, and eager—as some singers unfortunately are not—to be a musician as well. Klingemann had many friends among the famous German composers, because of his personal charm, and because his simple verses had provided them with excellent material for the sweet little songs the Germans love so well. I need scarcely say that the man I most desired to meet in Leipzig was Mendelssohn; and so, armed with Klingemann's letter, I eagerly went to his residence—a quiet, well-appointed house near the Promenade. I was admitted without delay, and shown into the composer's room. It was plainly a musician's work-room, yet it had a note of elegance that surprised me. Musicians are not a tidy race; but here there was none of the admired disorder that one instinctively associates with an artist's sanctum. There was no litter. The well-used pianoforte could be approached without circuitous negotiation of a rampart of books and papers, and the chairs were free from encumbrances. On a table stood some large sketch-books, one open at a page containing an excellent landscape drawing; and other spirited sketches hung framed upon the walls. The abundant music paper was perhaps the most strangely tidy feature of the room, for the exquisitely neat notation that covered it suggested the work of a careful copyist rather than the original hand of a composer. I could not refrain from looking at one piece. It was a very short and very simple Adagio cantabile in the Key of F for a solo pianoforte. It appealed at once to me as a singer, for its quiet, unaffected melody seemed made to be sung rather than to be played. The "cantabile" of its heading was superfluous—it was a Song without Words, evidently one of a new set, for I knew it was none of the old. But the sound of a footstep startled me and I guiltily replaced the sheet. The door opened, and I was warmly greeted in excellent English by the man who entered. I had no need to be told that it was Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy

himself.

Nature is strangely freakish in her choice of instruments for noble purposes. Sometimes the delicate spirit of creative genius is housed in a veritable tenement of clay, so that what is within seems ever at war with what is without. At times the antagonism is more dreadful still, and the artist-soul is sent to dwell in the body of a beast, coarse in speech and habit, ignorant and dull in mind, vile and unclean in thought. But sometimes Nature is generous, and makes the body itself an expression of the informing spirit. Mendelssohn was one of these almost rare instances. In him, artist and man were like a beautiful picture appropriately framed. He was then thirty-one. In figure he was slim and rather below the middle height, and he moved with the easy grace of an accomplished dancer. Masses of long dark hair crowned his finely chiselled face; but what I noticed first and last was the pair of lustrous, dark brown eyes that glowed and dilated with every deep emotion. He had the quiet, assured manner of a master; yet I was not so instantly conscious of that, as of an air of reverence and benignity, which, combined with the somewhat Oriental tendency of feature and colour, made his whole personality suggest that of a young poet-prophet of Israel.

"So," he said, his English gaining piquancy from his slight lisp, "you come from England—from dear England. I love your country greatly. It has fog, and it is dark, too, for the sun forgets to shine at times; but it is beautiful—like a picture, and when it smiles, what land is sweeter?"

"You have many admirers in England, sir," I replied; "perhaps I may rather say you have many friends there."

"Yes," he said, with a bright smile, "call them friends, for I am a friend to all England. Even in the glowing sun of Italy I have thought with pleasure of your dear, smoky London, which seems to wrap itself round one like a friendly cloak. It was England that gave me my first recognition as a serious musician, when Berlin was merely inclined to think that I was an interesting young prodigy with musical gifts that were very amusing in a young person of means."

"You have seen much of England, have you not, sir?" I asked.

"A great deal," he replied, "and of Scotland and Wales, too. I have heard the Highland pipers in Edinburgh, and I have stood in Queen Mary's tragic palace of Holyrood. Yes, and I have been among the beautiful hills that the great Sir Walter has described so wonderfully."

"And," I added, "music-lovers do not need to be told that you have also penetrated

'The silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.'"

"Ah!" he said, smiling, "you like my Overture, then?"

I hastened to assure him that I admired it greatly; and he continued, with glowing eyes: "What a wonder is the Fingal's Cave—that vast cathedral of the seas, with its dark, lapping waters within, and the brightness of the gleaming waves outside!"

Almost instinctively he sat down at the piano, and began to play, as if his feelings must express themselves in tones rather than words. His playing was most remarkable for its orchestral quality. Unsuspected power lay in those delicate hands, for at will they seemed able to draw from the piano a full orchestral volume, and to suggest, if desired, the peculiar tones of solo instruments.

This Overture of his is made of the sounds of the sea. There is first a theme that suggests the monotonous wash of the waters and the crying of sea-birds within the vast spaces of the cavern. Then follows a noble rising

passage, as if the spirit of the place were ascending from the depths of the sea and pervading with his presence the immensity of his ocean fane. This, in its turn, is succeeded by a movement that seems to carry us into the brightness outside, though still the plaint of crying birds pursues us in haunting monotony. It is a wonderful piece, this Hebrides Overture, with all the magic and the mystery of the Islands about it.

"That is but one of my Scottish impressions," said Mendelssohn; "I have many more, and I am trying to weave them into a Scottish Symphony to match the Italian."

"You believe in a programme then?" I asked.



*Painting by N. M. Price. **SPRING SONG (Lied Ohne Worte).***
[Click to ENLARGE](#)

"To think of it is to be happy with the innocence of pure joy."

"Oh, yes!" he answered; "moreover I believe that most composers have a programme implicit in their minds, even though they may not recognise it. But always one must keep within the limits of the principle inscribed by Beethoven at the head of his Pastoral Symphony, 'More an expression of the feelings than a painting.' Music cannot paint. It is on a different plane of time. A painting must leap to the eye, but a musical piece unfolds itself slowly. If music tries to paint it loses its greatest glory—the power of infinite, immeasurable suggestion. Beethoven, quite allowably, and in a purely humorous fashion, used a few touches of realism; but his Pastoral Symphony is not a painting, it is not even descriptive; it is a musical outpouring of emotion, and enshrines within its notes all the sweet peaceful brightness of an early summer day. To think of it," he added, rising in his enthusiasm, "is to be happy with the innocence of pure joy."

I was relieved of the necessity of replying by a diversion without the door. Two male voices were heard declaiming in a sort of mock-melodramatic duet, "Are you at home, are you at home? May we enter, may we enter?"

"Come in, you noisy fellows," exclaimed Mendelssohn gaily; and two men entered. The elder, who was of Mendelssohn's age, carried a violin case, and saluted the composer with a flourish of the music held in his other hand. "Hail you second Beethoven!" he exclaimed. Suddenly he observed my presence and hushed his demonstrations, giving me a courteous, and humorously penitent salutation. Mendelssohn introduced us.

"This," he said to me "is Mr. Ferdinand David, the great violinist and leader of our orchestra; and this," indicating the younger visitor, "is a countryman of yours, Mr. Sterndale Bennett. We think a great deal of Mr. Bennett in Leipzig."

"Ah, ha!" said David to me; "you've come to the right house in Leipzig if you're an Englishman. Mendelssohn dotes on you all, doesn't he, Bennett?"

"Yes," said Bennett, "and we dote on him. I left all the young ladies in England singing 'Ist es wahr.'"

"Ist es wahr? ist es wahr?" carolled David, in lady-like falsetto, with comic exaggeration of anguish sentiment.

Bennett put his hands to his ears with an expression of anguish, saying, "Spare us, David; you play like an angel, but you sing like—well, I leave it to you?"

"And I forgot to mention," said Mendelssohn with a gay laugh, "that our young English visitor is a singer bringing ecstatic recommendations from Klingemann."

"Ah! a rival!" said David, with a dramatic gesture; "but since we're all of a trade, perhaps our friend will show he doesn't mind my nonsense by singing this song to us."

"Yes," said Mendelssohn, with a graceful gesture, "I shall be greatly pleased if you will."

I could not refuse. Mendelssohn sat down at the piano and I began the simple song that has helped so many English people to appreciate the beauties of the German *lied*.

"Can it be? Can it be?
Dost thou wander through the bower,
Wishing I was there with thee?
Lonely, midst the moonlight's splendour,
Dost thou seek for me?
Can it be? Say!
But the secret rapturous feeling
Ne'er in words must be betrayed;
True eyes will tell what love conceals!"

"Thank you very much," said Mendelssohn with a smile.

"Bravo!" exclaimed David; "but our Mendelssohn can do more than make pretty songs. This," he continued, indicating the music he had brought, "is going to be something great!"

"Do you think so?" asked Mendelssohn quietly, yet with eyes that gleamed intensely.

"I'm sure of it," said David emphatically. "There is plenty of music for violin and orchestra—oceans of it; but there has been hitherto only one real great big Concerto,"—he spread his arms wide as he spoke. "Now there will be two."

"No, no!" exclaimed Mendelssohn quickly; "if I finish this Concerto it will be with no impious intention of competing with Beethoven. You see, for one

thing, I have begun it quite differently."

"Yes," nodded David, and he began to drum on the table in the rhythm of Beethoven's fateful knocking at the door; "yes, Beethoven was before all a symphonist—his Concerto is a Symphony in D major with violin obbligato."

"Observe," murmured Bennett, "the blessing of a musical temperament. A drunken man thumps monotonously at his door in the depths of night. To an Englishman it suggests calling the police; to Beethoven it suggests a symphony."

"Well, David," said Mendelssohn, "it's to be your Concerto, so I want you to discuss it with me in all details. I am the most devoted admirer of your playing, but I have, as well, the sincerest respect for your musicianship."

"Thank you," said David with a smile of deep pleasure; and turning to me he added, "I really called to play this over with the master. Shall you mind if I scratch it through?"

I tried to assure him of the abiding pleasure that I, a young stranger, would receive from being honoured by permission to remain.

"Oh, that's all right," he said unaffectedly; "we are all in the trade, you know; you sing, I play."

Mendelssohn sat at the piano and David tuned his instrument. Mendelssohn used no copy. His memory was prodigious. The violin gave out a beautiful melody that soared passionately, yet gracefully, above an accompaniment, simple at first, but growing gradually more intense and insistent till a great climax was reached, after which the solo voice sank slowly to a low, whispering murmur, while the piano played above it a succession of sweetly delicate and graceful phrases. The movement was worked out with the utmost complexity and brilliance, but came suddenly to an end. The playing of the two masters was beyond description.

"The cadenza is subject to infinite alteration," remarked Mendelssohn; and turning to me, he continued, "the movement is unfinished, you see; and even what is written may be greatly changed. I fear I am a fastidious corrector. I am rarely satisfied with my first thoughts."

"Well, I don't think much change is wanted here," said David. "I'm longing to have the rest of it. When will it be ready?"

Mendelssohn shook his head with a smile. "Ask me for it in five years, David."

"What do you think of it, Bennett?" asked the violinist.

"I was thinking that we are in the garden of Eden," said Bennett, oracularly.

"What do you mean?" asked Mendelssohn.

"This," explained Bennett: "there seems to me something essentially and exquisitely feminine about this movement, just as in Beethoven's Concerto there is something essentially and heroically masculine. In other words, he has made the Adam of Concertos, and you have mated it with the Eve. Henceforth," he continued, waving his hands in benediction, "the tribe of Violin Concertos shall increase and multiply and become as the stars of heaven in multitude."

"The more the merrier," cried David, "at least for fiddlers—I don't know what the audiences will think."

"Audiences don't think—at least, not in England," said Bennett.

"Come, come!" interposed Mendelssohn; and turning to me with a smile

he said, "Will you allow Mr. Bennett to slander your countrymen like this?"

"But Mr. Bennett doesn't mean it," I replied; "he knows that English audiences love, and are always faithful to, what stirs them deeply."

"Yes; but what does stir them deeply?" he asked; "look at the enormous popularity of senseless sentimental songs."

"On the other hand," I retorted, "look at our old affection for Handel and our new affection for Mr. Mendelssohn himself."

"Thank you," said Mendelssohn, with a smile; "Handel is certainly yours by adoption. You English love the Bible, and Handel knew well how to wed its beautiful words to noble music. He was happy in having at his command the magnificent prose of the Bible and the magnificent verses of Milton. I, too, am fascinated by the noble language of the Scriptures, and I have used it both in the vernacular and in the sounding Latin of the Vulgate. And I am haunted even now by the words of one of the Psalms which seem to call for an appropriate setting. You recall the verses?"

"Hear my prayer; O God;
and hide not thyself from my petition.

Take heed unto me, and hear me,
how I mourn in my prayer and am vexed.

The enemy crieth so, and the ungodly cometh on so fast;
for they are minded to do me some mischief,
so maliciously are they set against me.

My heart is disquieted within me;
and the fear of death is fallen upon me.

Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me;
and a horrible dread hath overwhelmed me.

And I said, O that I had wings like a dove;
for then would I flee away, and be at rest.

Lo, then would I get me away far off;
and remain in the wilderness.
I would make haste to escape;
because of the stormy wind and tempest."

"Yes," said David, nodding emphatically; "they are wonderful words; you must certainly set them."

"The Bible is an inexhaustible mine of song and story for musical setting," continued Mendelssohn; "I have one of its stories in my mind now; but only one man, a greater even than Handel, was worthy to touch the supreme tragedy of all."

The last words were murmured as if to himself rather than to us, and he accompanied them abstractedly with tentative, prelusive chords, which gradually grew into the most strangely moving music I have ever heard.

Its complex, swelling phrases presently drew together and rose up in one great major chord. No one spoke. I felt as if some mighty spirit had been evoked and that its unseen presence overshadowed us.

"What was it?" I presently whispered to Bennett; but he shook his head and said, "Wait; he will tell you."

At length I turned to Mendelssohn and said, "Is that part of the new work of yours you mentioned just now?"

"Of mine!" he exclaimed; "of mine! I could never write such music. No,

no! That was Bach, John Sebastian Bach—part of his St. Matthew Passion. I was playing not so much the actual notes of any chorus, but rather the effect of certain passages as I could feel them in my mind."

"So that was by Bach!" I said in wonder.

"Yes," said Mendelssohn; "and people know so little of him. They either think of him as the composer of mathematical exercises in music, or else they confuse him with others of his family. He was Cantor of the St. Thomas School here in Leipzig, the perfect type of a true servant of our glorious art. He wrote incessantly, but the greatest of his works lay forgotten after his death; and it was I, I, who disinterred this marvellous music-drama of the Passion, and gave it in Berlin ten years ago—its first performance since Bach's death almost a century before. But there," he added, with an apologetic smile, "I talk too much! Let us speak of something else."

"Yes," said David, "you will talk of Bach for ever if no one stops you. Not that I mind. I am a disciple, too."

"And I, too," added Bennett. "I mean to emulate Mendelssohn. He was the first to give the 'Passion' in Germany, I will be the first to give it in England."

"Then I'll be recording angel," said David, "and register your vow. You'll show him up, if he breaks his word, won't you?" he added, turning to me.

"Now this will really change the subject," said Mendelssohn, producing a sheet of manuscript. "Here is a little song I wrote last year to some old verses. Perhaps our new friend will let us hear it."

In great trepidation I took the sheet. It was headed simply "Volkslied." I saw at once that there would be no difficulty in reading it, for the music was both graceful and simple.

"Shall we try?" asked Mendelssohn, with his quiet, reassuring smile.

"If you are willing to let me," I answered.

Parting.

"It is decreed by heaven's behest
That man from all he loves the best
Must sever.
That soon or late with breaking heart
With all his dear ones he must part
For ever.

How oft we cull a budding flower,
To see it bloom a transient hour;
'Tis gathered.
The bud becomes a lovely rose,
Its morning blush at evening goes;
'Tis withered.

And has it pleased our God to lend
His cheering smile in child or friend?
To-morrow—
To-morrow if reclaimed again
The parting hour will prove how vain
Is sorrow.

Oft hope beguiles the friends who part;
With happy smiles, and heart to heart,
'To meet,' they cry, 'we sever.'

It proves good-bye for ever
For ever!"



Painting by N. M. Price. PARTING.

Click to [ENLARGE](#)

"It is decreed by heaven's behest
That man from all he loves the best
Must sever."

"Bravo!" cried Bennett.

"Say rather, 'Bravi,'" said David, "for the song was as sweet as the singer."

"Yes," said Bennett; "the simple repetition of the closing words of each verse is like a sigh of regret."

"And the whole thing," added David, "has the genuine simplicity of the true folk-melody."

Further discussion was prevented by a characteristic knock at the door.

The visitor who entered in response to Mendelssohn's call was a sturdily built man of thirty, or thereabouts, with an air of mingled courage, resolution, and good humour. His long straight hair was brushed back from a broad, intellectual brow, and his thoughtful, far-looking eyes intensified the impression he gave of force and original power. He smiled humorously. "All the youth, beauty and intellect of Leipzig in one room. I leave you to apportion the qualities. Making much noise, too! And did I hear the strains of a vocal recital?"

"You did," replied Bennett; "that was my young countryman here, who

has just been singing a new song of Mendelssohn's."

"Pardon me," said the new-comer to me; "you see Mendelssohn so fills the stage everywhere, that even David gets over-looked sometimes, don't you, my inspired fiddler?" he added, slapping the violinist on the back.

"Yes I do," said David, "and so do the manners of all of you, for no one introduces our singer;" and turning to me he added, "this is Mr. Robert Schumann who divides the musical firmament of Leipzig with Mendelssohn."

"You forget to add," said Mendelssohn, "that Schumann conquers in literature as well as in music. No one has written better musical critiques."

"Yes, yes," grumbled David; "I wish he wouldn't do so much of it. If he scribbled less he'd compose more. The cobbler should stick to his last, and the musician shouldn't relinquish the music-pen for the goose quill."

"But what of Mendelssohn himself," urged Schumann; "he, in a special sense, is a man of letters; for if there's one thing as good as being with him, it is being away from him, and receiving his delightful epistles."

"Not the same thing," said David, shaking his head.

"And then," said Schumann, waving his hand comprehensively around the room, "observe his works of art."

I was about to express my astonishment at finding that Mendelssohn himself had produced these admirable pictures; but David suddenly addressed me: "By the way, don't let Mendelssohn decoy you into playing billiards with him; or if you do weakly yield, insist on fifty in the hundred—unless, of course, you have misspent your time, too, in gaining disreputable proficiency;" and he shook his head at the thought of many defeats.

"Certainly," exclaimed Schumann, "Mendelssohn does all things well."

"That's a handsome admission from a rival," said David.

"A rival!" answered Schumann with spirit. "There can be no talk of rivalry between us. I know my place. Mendelssohn and I differ about things, sometimes; but who could quarrel with him?"

"I could!" exclaimed David, jumping up, and striking an heroic attitude.

"You!" laughed Schumann; "You quarrel, you dear old scraper of unmentionable strings!"

"Ah, ha! my boy," chuckled David, "you can't write for them."

"You mean I don't write for them," said Schumann; "I admit that I don't provide much for you to do. I leave that to my betters."

"Never mind," said David, giving his shoulder a friendly pat; "at least you can write for the piano. I believe in you, and your queer music."

"That's nice of you, David," replied Schumann, "but as to Mendelssohn and me, who shall decide which of us is right? He believes in making music as pellucid to the hearers as clear water. Now I like to baffle them—to leave them something to struggle with. Music is never the worse for being obscure at first."

Mendelssohn shook his head and smiled. "You state your case eloquently, Schumann," he said, "but my feelings revolt against darkness and indefiniteness."

"Yes, yes," assented Schumann; "you are the Fairies' Laureate."

"Hear, hear!" cried David. "Now could anything be finer in its way than

the Midsummer Night's Dream music? And the wondrous brat wrote it at seventeen!"

Mendelssohn laughingly acknowledged the compliments.

"That is a beautiful fairy song of yours," I said, "the one to Heine's verses about the fairies riding their tiny steeds through the wood."

"Oh, yes," said Schumann; "will you sing it to us?"

"I am afraid it requires much lighter singing than I can give it," I replied; "but I will try, if you wish."

"We shall all be glad if you will," said Mendelssohn, as he turned once more to the key-board. The bright staccato rhythm flashed out from his fingers so gaily that I was swept into the song without time for hesitation:

The Fairy Love.

"Through the woods the moon was glancing;
There I saw the Fays advancing;
On they bounded, gaily singing,
Horns resounded, bells were ringing.

Tiny steeds with antlers growing
On their foreheads brightly glowing,
Bore them swift as falcons speeding
Fly to strike the game receding.

Passing, Queen Titania sweetly
Deigned with nods and smiles to greet me.
Means this, love will be requited?
Or, will hope by death be blighted?"

"You have greatly obliged us," said Schumann courteously.

"It reminds me, though I don't know why," said David, "of that fairy-like duet about Jack Frost and the dancing flowers."

"Come along and play it with me," said Mendelssohn to Bennett; "you've been hiding your talents all day."

Bennett joined him at the piano, and the two began to romp like schoolboys.

The simple duet was woven into a brilliant fantasia, but always in the gay spring-like spirit of the poem.



Painting by N. M. Price. THE FAIRY LOVE.

Click to [ENLARGE](#)

"Through the woods the moon was glancing
There I saw the fays advancing.

* * * * *

Tiny steeds with antlers growing
on their foreheads brightly glowing."

The Maybells and the Flowers.

"Young Maybells ring throughout the vale
And sound so sweet and clear,
The dance begins, ye flowers all,
Come with a merry cheer!
The flowers red and white and blue
Merrily flock around,

Forget-me-nots of heavenly hue,
And violets, too, abound.

Young Maybells play a sprightly tune,
And all begin to dance,
While o'er them smiles the gentle moon,
With her soft silvery glance.
This Master Frost offended sore;
He in the vale appeared:
Young Maybells ring the dance no more—
Gone are the flowers seared!

But Frost has scarcely taken flight,
When well-known sounds we hear:
The Maybells with renewed delight,
Are ringing doubly clear!

Now I no more can stay at home,
The Maybells call me so:
The flowers to the dance all roam,
Then why should I not go?"

"Really," said David; "it's quite infectious"; and jumping up he began to pirouette, exclaiming, "Then why should I not go!"

"David, this is unseemly," exclaimed Schumann, with mock severity. "There's another pretty fairy-like piece of yours, Mendelssohn, the Capriccio in E minor."

"Yes," said Bennett, beginning to touch its opening fanfare of tiny trumpet-notes; "someone told me a pretty story of this piece, to the effect that a young lady gave you some flowers, and you undertook, gallantly, to write the music the Fairies played on the little trumpet-like blooms."

"Yes," said Mendelssohn, with a smile, "it was in Wales, and I wrote the piece for Miss Taylor."

"By-the-by," said Schumann, "David's antics remind me that Mendelssohn can make Witches and other queer creatures, dance, as well as Fairies."

"Villain," exclaimed David, and he began to recite dramatically the invocation from the "First Walpurgis Night," while Mendelssohn played the flashing accompaniment.

"Come with flappers,
Fire and clappers;
Hop with hopsticks,
Brooms and mopsticks;
Through the night-gloom lead and follow
In and out each rocky hollow.
Owls and ravens
Howl with us and scare the cravens."

"Ah," said Mendelssohn, "I don't think the old poet would really have cared for my setting, though he admired my playing, and was always most friendly to me."

"Yes," said Schumann, warmly; "Goethe liked you because you were successful, and prosperous. Now Beethoven was poor: therefore Beethoven must first be loftily patronised and then contemptuously snubbed. I can never forgive Goethe for that. And as for poor Schubert, well, Goethe ignored him, and actually thought he had misinterpreted the Erl-king! It would be comic if it were not painful."

"Poor Schubert!" said Mendelssohn with a sigh; "he met always Fortune's frown, never her smile."

"Don't you think," said Bennett, "that his genius was the better for his poverty—that he learned in suffering what he taught in song?"

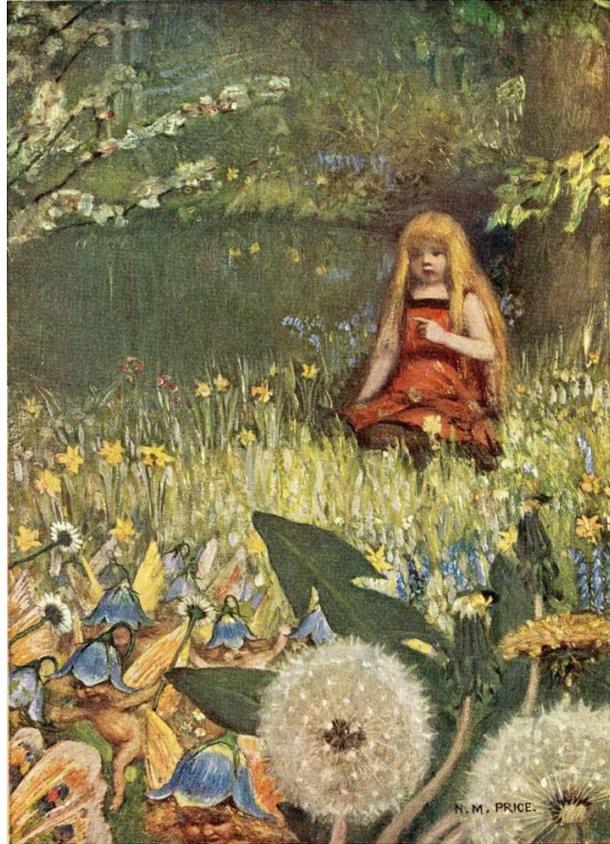
"No, I do not!" replied Mendelssohn warmly. "That is a vile doctrine invented by a callous world to excuse its cruelty."

"I believe there's something in it, though," said Bennett.

"There is some truth in it, but not much," answered Mendelssohn, his eyes flashing as he spoke. "It is true that the artist learns by suffering, because the artist is more sensitive and feels more deeply than others. But enough of suffering comes to all of us, even the most fortunate, without the sordid, gratuitous misery engendered by poverty."

"I agree with Mendelssohn," said Schumann. "To say that poverty is the

proper stimulus of genius is to talk pernicious nonsense. Poverty slays, it does not nourish; poverty narrows the vision, it does not ennoble; poverty lowers the moral standard and makes a man sordid. You can't get good art out of that."



Painting by N. M. Price. THE MAYBELLS AND THE FLOWERS.

[Click to ENLARGE](#)

"Now I no more can stay at home.
The Maybells call me so.
The flowers to the dance all roam,
Then, why should I not go?"

"Perhaps I have been more fortunate than most artists," said Mendelssohn softly. "When I think of all that my dear father and mother did for us, I can scarcely restrain tears of gratitude. Almost more valuable than their careful encouragement was their noble, serious common-sense. My mother, whom Heaven long preserve to me, was not the woman to let me, or any of us, live in a fool's paradise, and my dear dead father was too good a man of business to set me walking in a blind alley. Ah!" he continued, with glistening eyes, "the great musical times we had in the dear old Berlin house!"

"Yes," said David; "Your house was on the Leipzig Road. You see, even then, the finger of fate pointed the way to this place."

"Indeed," said Schumann, with a sigh, "You certainly had extraordinary opportunities. Not that I've been badly used, though."

"Your father was genuinely proud of you," said David. "I remember his epigram: 'Once I was the son of my father; now I am the father of my son.'"

Mendelssohn nodded with a smile, and, turning to me, said in explanation, "You must know that my father's father was a famous philosopher."

"Well!" said Schumann, rising, "I must be going."

Bennett and David also prepared to leave, and I rose with them.

"Wait a moment," said Mendelssohn; and going to the door he called softly, "Cecile, are you there?"

He went out for a moment, and returned with a beautiful and charming girl, who greeted the three visitors warmly.

Mendelssohn then presented me, saying, gently and almost proudly, "This is my wife."

I bowed deeply.

"You are from England?" said the lady, with the sweetest of smiles; "I declare I am quite jealous of your country, my husband loves it so much."

"We are very proud of his affection," I replied.

She turned to Schumann and said softly, "And how is Clara?"

"Oh, she is well," he replied with a glad smile.

"And the father?" she added.

"We have been much worried," he said gravely; "but we shall marry this year in spite of all he may do."

"She is worth all your struggles," said Mendelssohn warmly; "she is a charming lady, and an excellent musician. You will be very happy."

"Thanks, thanks," replied Schumann, with evident pleasure.

Mendelssohn turned to me and shook my hand warmly. "I have been glad to meet you, and to hear you; for you sing like a musician. I shall not say good-bye. You will call again, I hope, before you leave Leipzig. Perhaps we may meet, too, in England. I am now writing something that I hope my English friends will like."

"What is it, sir?" I asked.

"It is an oratorio on the subject of Elijah," he replied.

"It is bound to be good," said Schumann enthusiastically. "Posterity will call you the man who never failed."

"Ah!" said Mendelssohn almost sadly, "you are all good and kind, but you praise me too much. Perhaps posterity will remember me for my little pieces rather than for my greater efforts. Perhaps it will remember me best, not as the master, but as the servant; for in my way I have tried very hard to glorify the great men who went before me—Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert—Bach most of all. Even if every note of my writing should perish, perhaps future generations will think kindly of me, remembering that it was I, the Jew by birth, who gave back to Christianity that imperishable setting of its tragedy and glory."

With these words in my ears I passed out into the pleasant streets of Mendelssohn's chosen city.

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE

Contemporary spellings have been retained even when inconsistent. In a small number of cases, missing punctuation has been silently added.

The following additional changes have been made; they can be identified in the body of the text by a grey dotted underline:

Lied ohne Wörter
grateful and simple

Lied ohne *Worte*
graceful and simple

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A DAY WITH FELIX
MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can

do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™

License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription

errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the "Right of Replacement or Refund" described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance

they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility:
www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.