

are filled by grand sweeping curves of acanthus and other leaves, drawn with wonderful boldness and freedom of hand, and varied with great wealth of invention. Without the use of very small tesserae, much richness of effect is given by gradations of tints, suggesting light and shade, without a painful attempt to represent actual relief. The colours of the marbles used here and elsewhere by the Romans are so quiet and harmonious that it would have been almost impossible to produce with them a harsh or glaring design, and when used with the skill and strong artistic feeling of the mosaic-workers at Carthage the result is a real masterpiece of decorative design. In Rome, and in the Roman colonies of Europe, this kind of marble tessellated mosaic was largely produced, with but little alteration in style or method of treatment, till the 4th century. In Syria and Asia Minor the art survived some centuries later.

Perhaps the latest existing example in Rome is that which decorates the vault of the ambulatory of the circular church of S. Costanza, built by Constantine the Great (320), outside the walls of Rome. This very interesting mosaic might from its style and materials have been executed in the 1st century, and is equal in beauty to any work of the kind in Italy. It shows no trace whatever of the Byzantine influence which, in the next century, introduced into Italy a novel style of mosaic, in materials of the most glittering splendour. These S. Costanza mosaics are almost unique in Italy as an application of the old classical marble mosaic to the decoration of a Christian church. On the main compartment of the vault the surface is covered by vine branches, laden with grapes, twining in graceful curves over the space. In the centre is a large medallion with life-sized male bust, and at the lower part are vintage scenes—oxen carts bringing the grapes, and boys treading them in a vat. Other more geometrical designs, of circles framing busts and full-length figures, with graceful borders, cover other parts of the vault. Farther east this classical style of mosaic appears to have lasted till the 6th century. At Kabr-Hiram, near Tyre, M. Renan discovered among the ruins of a small three-apsed Christian church a fine mosaic pavement, covering the nave and aisles, thoroughly classical in style. The design, consisting of circles enclosing figures emblematic of the seasons, the months, and the winds, is almost the same as that of some mosaics discovered on the site of the Roman Italic near Seville, and others at Ephesus and Halicarnassus in Asia Minor. No trace of other than classical influence is visible, and yet it is pretty clear, from the evidence of an inscription, inslaid among the marble tesserae, that the date of this pavement is not earlier than the latter part of the 6th century. A very similar mosaic, of about the same date, was discovered at Neby Yûnas, near Sidon.

**Medieval Mosaics.**—These may be divided into four principal classes:—(1) those used to decorate walls and vaults, made of glass cubes; (2) those for pavements, made of marble, partly in large shaped pieces, and partly in small tesserae; (3) glass in small pieces, either rectangular or triangular, used to enrich marble pulpits, columns, and other architectural features; (4) wood mosaics.

1. The wall mosaics were, in their origin, purely Byzantine, and appear to date from the beginning of the 5th century. They are made of coloured glass, rendered opaque by the addition of oxide of tin. The melted glass was cast into flat slabs, generally about half an inch thick, and then broken into small cubes. Every possible colour and gradation of tint was produced by the mediæval glassmakers. Tesserae of gold (which were very largely used) and of silver were made thus:—the metal leaf was spread over one of the glass slabs, the colour of which did not matter, as it was hidden by the gold or silver; over this metal-coated slab a skin of colourless glass was fused, so as to protect the metal leaf from injury or tarnish; and then the slab was broken up into cubes, the ψήφοι χρύσειοι of Byzantine writers.

The method of putting together the mosaic was much the same as that employed by the Romans in their tessellated pavements. A thick coat of cement was applied to the wall or vault, the outline indicated with a metal point, and the cubes stuck one by one into the cement while it

was yet soft,—the main difference being that no rubbing down and polishing were required, the faces of the glass tesserae showing the natural surface of the fracture, which was not quite level, and by this slight inequality of surface great additional lustre and brilliance of effect were given to the whole picture.

Owing to the intense conservatism of Byzantine art, no regular stages of progression can be traced in this class of mosaic. Some of the 5th century mosaics at Ravenna are, in every way, as fine as those of the 12th, and it was not till the end of the 13th century that any important change in style took place, when Cimabue, and more especially his pupils Jacopo da Turriza and Taddeo Gaddi, applied their increased knowledge of the human form and of the harmonies of colour to the production of the most beautiful of all mosaics, such as those in the apse of S. Maria Maggiore in Rome. It must not, however, be supposed that during all this time (from the 5th to the 14th century) one steady level of excellence was kept up. The mosaics of the 9th century are inferior in drawing and general treatment to those both of the earlier and later time, while in Italy at least this art was almost entirely extinct during the 10th and 11th centuries. Extreme splendour of colour and jewel-like brilliance combined with the most stately grandeur of form are the main characteristic of this sort of decoration. Its most frequent application is to the sanctuary arch and apse of the early basilicas.

A "majesty," or colossal central figure of Christ with saints standing on each side, is the most frequent motive. In many cases, especially in the 5th and 6th centuries, Christ was represented as a lamb, to whom the twelve apostles, in the form of sheep, are paying adoration. Christ, the Good Shepherd, is sometimes depicted as a beardless youth, seated among a circle of sheep—the treatment of the motive being obviously taken from pagan representations of Orpheus playing to the beasts. The tomb of Galla Placidia has a good example of this subject, with much of the old Roman grace in the drawing and composition. Frequently the Virgin Mary, or the patron saint of the church, occupies the central space in the apse, with ranges of other saints on each side.

The "Doom," or Last Judgment, is a favourite subject for domes and sanctuary arches; the Florence baptistery has one of the grandest mosaic pictures of this subject, executed in the 13th century. The earlier baptisteries usually have the scene of Christ's baptism,—the river Jordan being sometimes personified in a very classical manner, as an old man with flowing beard, holding an urn from which a stream pours forth. S. Vitale at Ravenna has in the sanctuary a very interesting representation of Justinian and his empress Theodora (see fig. 3), attended by a numerous suite of courtiers and ladies; these mosaics are certainly of the 6th century, and may be contemporary with Justinian, though the fact that he and Theodora are each represented with a circular nimbus appears to indicate that they were not then alive. Scenes from both Old and New Testaments or the lives of the saints are also represented in almost endless variety,—generally on the walls of the body of the church, in square-shaped pictures, arranged in one or more tiers over the nave columns or arcade.

In mosaics of the best periods the treatment of the forms and draperies is broad and simple, a just amount of relief being expressed by delicate gradations of tints. In mosaics of the 9th century the drawing is very awkward, and the folds of the robes are rudely expressed in outline, with no suggestion of light and shade.

A further application of this work was to the decoration of broad bands over the columns of the nave, as at S. Maria Maggiore in Rome, 5th century, and in the two churches of S. Apollinare at Ravenna, 6th century. In some cases almost the whole interior of the church was encrusted in this magnificent way, as at Monreale Cathedral, the Capella Palatina of Palermo, and S. Mark's at Venice, the magnificence of which no words can describe; it is quite unrivalled by that of any other buildings in the world. See **MONREALE**.

In these churches the mosaics cover soffits and angles entirely, and give the effect of a mass of solid gold and colour producing the utmost conceivable splendour of

decoration.<sup>1</sup> In many cases vaulted ceilings were covered with these mosaics, as the tomb of Galla Placidia, 450 A.D., and the two baptisteries at Ravenna, 5th and 6th centuries. For exteriors, the large use of mosaic was usually confined to the west façade, as at S. Miniato, Florence, S. Maria Maggiore, Rome, and S. Mark's, Venice. In almost all cases the figures are represented on a gold ground, and gold is freely used in the dresses and ornaments—rich jewels and embroidery being represented in gold, silver, sparkling reds, blues, and other colours, so as to give the utmost splendour of effect to the figures and their drapery.

The revival of the art of painting in Italy and the

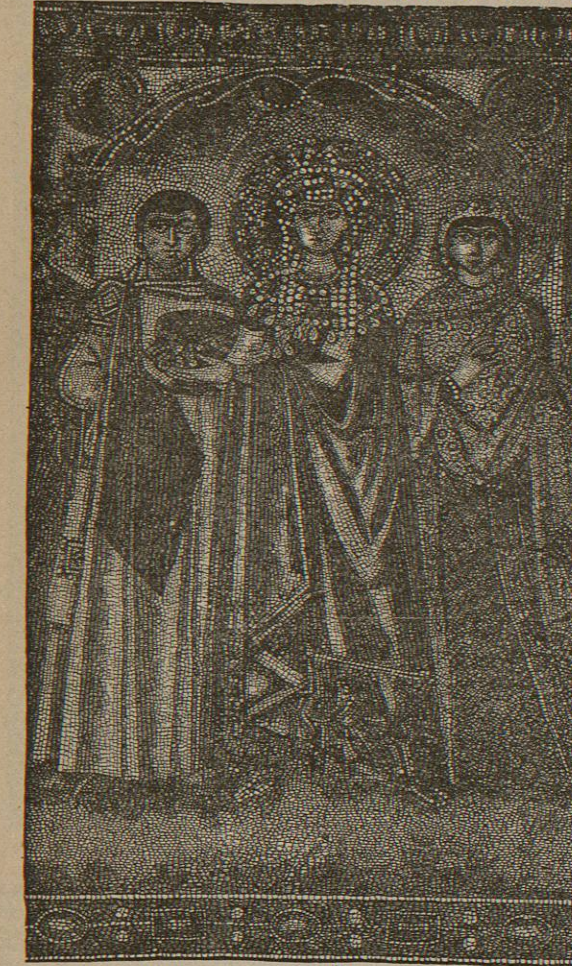


FIG. 3.—Mosaic of Theodora and attendants, from S. Vitale, Ravenna; over life-size.

introduction of fresco work in the 14th century gave the deathblow to the true art of wall-mosaics. Though at first the simple and archaic style of Cimabue and his

<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately the world-wide fame of S. Mark's and the other great churches of Italy has subjected these extraordinary works to the fatal process of "restoration," and wherever any sign of decay in the cement backing (the tesserae themselves are quite indestructible) has given the least excuse the "restorers" have destroyed whole masses of ancient work, and supplied its place with worthless modern copies. The mosaics of the S. Mark's baptistery, and of the apses at S. Miniato, at Pisa, and many other places have in this way been wantonly renewed within the last few years.

pupils Jacopo da Turriza, Giotto, and Taddeo Gaddi was equally applicable to painting or mosaic, yet soon the development of art into greater realism and complexity required a method of expression unfettered by the necessities and canons of mosaic-work. Pietro Cavallini, a Roman artist, was one of the last who worked according to the old traditions. His mosaic of the birth of the Virgin in S. Maria in Cosmedin, Rome, executed about the middle of the 14th century, is not without merit, though his superior knowledge of form has only caused his composition to be somewhat feeble and insipid compared with the works of the earlier artists. Even in the 15th century a few good mosaics were produced at Venice and elsewhere. Since then many large pictures have been copied in glass mosaic, generally attempts to imitate oil paintings, executed with great skill and wonderful patience, but all utterly worthless as works of art, merely costly monuments of human folly and misapplied labour. The mosaics from Titian's pictures on the west end of S. Mark's at Venice, Raphael's in the Chigi Chapel in S. Maria del Popolo, and many large pictures in S. Peter's in Rome, are the most striking examples of these.

The following list, in chronological order, comprises a selection from among the most important mediæval glass wall-mosaics during the period when mosaic-working was a real art:—

Ravenna.	5th Century. Orthodox Baptistery—vault. Tomb of Galla Placidia—vault, 450.
Rome.	Archbishop's Chapel—vault. S. Paolo fuori le mura—triumphal arch. S. Maria Maggiore—square pictures over nave columns, and triumphal arch.
Milan.	S. Ambrogio, Chapel of S. Satiro—vault.
Florence.	Cathedral—apse.
Notre.	Cathedral—apse.
Ravenna.	6th Century. Arian Baptistery—vault. S. Apollinare Nuovo—apse and nave, with 9th century additions. S. Vitale—apse and whole sanctuary, circa 547. S. Apollinare in Classe—apse and nave, 549.
Rome.	SS. Cosmas and Damian—apse. S. Lorenzo, Chapel of S. Aquilinus—vault.
Milan.	S. Sophia—walls and vault, circa 550.
Constantinople.	Church of St George—apse, &c.; and S. Sophia—dome and apse.
Thessalonica.	S. Sophia—apse.
Trebisond.	S. Sophia—apse.
Rome.	7th Century. S. Agnese fuori le mura—apse, 626. S. Teodoro.
Jerusalem.	"Dome of the Rock"—arches of ambulatory, 688.
Rome.	8th Century. Baptistery of S. Giovanni in Laterano. SS. Nereus and Achilles.
Jerusalem.	Mosque of Al-Aksa—on dome.
Mount Sinai.	Chapel of the Transfiguration.
Rome.	9th Century. S. Cecilia in Trastevere—apse. S. Marco—apse. S. Maria della Navicella—apse, and "Chapel of the Column." S. Prassede—triumphal arch. S. Pudenziana, 834. S. Ambrogio—apse, 832.
Milan.	10th Century. S. Ambrogio—apse, 832.
Cordova.	Mihrab (sanctuary) of Mosque.
Jerusalem.	11th Century. "Dome of the Rock"—base of cupola, 1027.
Constantinople.	Church of S. Saviour—walls and domes.
Venice.	12th Century. S. Mark's—narthex, apse, and walls of nave and aisles.
Capua.	Cathedral—apse.
Torcello.	Cathedral—apse.
Murano.	Cathedral—apse.
Salerno.	Cathedral—apse.
Palermo.	Capella Palatina, begun 1132—the whole walls. Church of La Martorana—vault.
Monreale.	Cathedral—the whole walls, 1170-90.
Bethlehem.	Church of the Nativity, 1169.
Cyprus.	Cathedral—apse, 1148.
Rome.	S. Clemente—apse. S. Francesca Romana—apse. S. Maria in Trastevere—apse.
Florence.	13th Century. Baptistery vault, begun c. 1225 by Fra Jacopo. S. Miniato—apse and west front.
Rome.	S. Paolo fuori le mura—apse. S. Clemente—triumphal arch, 1297. S. Giovanni in Laterano—apse by Jacopo da Turriza, 1290. S. Maria Maggiore—apse and west end by Jacopo da Turriza 1292-1299, and Taddeo Gaddi.



14th Century.	
Florence.	Baptistry, finished by Andrea Tafi.
Fisa.	Cathedral—east apse by Cimabue, 1302, north and south apses by his pupils.
Rome.	S. Peter's—navicella, in atrium by Giotto.
	S. Maria in Cosmedin—on walls by Pietro Cavallini, c. 1340.
Venice.	SS. Giovanni e Paolo—in arch over effigy of Doge Morosini.

This list is by no means exhaustive, and only gives some of the best and most typical examples of the mosaic-work of each century.

The Byzantine origin of these great wall-mosaics, wherever they are found, is amply proved both by internal and documentary evidence. The gorgeous mosaics of S. Sophia and S. Saviour's in Constantinople, 6th century, and the later ones in the monasteries of Mount Athos, at Salonica and at Daphne near Athens, are identical in style with those of Italy of the same date. Moreover, the even more beautiful mosaic-work in the "Dome of the Rock" at Jerusalem, 7th and 11th centuries, and that in the sanctuary of the great mosque of Cordova, of the 10th century, are known to be the work of Byzantine artists, in spite of their thoroughly Oriental design. The same is the case with the rarer mosaics of Germany, such as those in S. Gereon at Cologne and at Parenzo.

A very remarkable, almost unique, specimen of Byzantine mosaic is now preserved in the "Opera del Duomo," Florence. This is a diptych of the 11th century, of extremely minute, almost microscopic, work, in tesserae of glass and metal, perhaps the only example of tesserae made of solid metal. It has figures of saints and inscriptions, each tessera being scarcely larger than a pin's head. This beautiful diptych originally belonged to the imperial chapel in Constantinople, and was brought to Florence in the 14th century.

2. The second mediæval class, mosaic pavements, though of great beauty, are of less artistic importance.

This so-called "opus Alexandrinum" is very common throughout Italy and in the East, and came to greatest perfection in the 13th century. It is made partly of small marble tesserae forming the main lines of the pattern, and partly of large pieces used as a ground or matrix. It is generally designed in large flowing bands which interlace and enclose circles, often of one stone sliced from a column. The finest example is that at S. Mark's, Venice, of the 12th century. The materials are mainly white marble, with green and red porphyry, and sometimes glass.

Besides the countless churches in Italy possessing these beautiful pavements, such as S. Lorenzo, S. Marco, S. Maria Maggiore, and S. Maria in Trastevere, in Rome, we have, in the Chapel of the Confessor, and in front of the high altar at Westminster, very fine specimens of this work, executed about 1268 by a Roman artist called Odericus, who was brought to England by Abbot Ware, on the occasion of a visit made by the latter to Rome. Another English example is the mosaic pavement in front of the shrine of Becket at Canterbury; this is probably the work of an Englishman, though the materials are foreign, as it is partly inlaid with bronze, a peculiarity never found in Italy. There are also many fine examples of these pavements in the churches of the East, such as that in S. Sophia at Trebizond, of the most elaborate design and splendid materials, very like the S. Mark's pavement at Venice. Palermo and Monreale are especially rich in examples of sectile mosaic, used both for pavements and walls,—in the latter case generally for the lower part of the walls, the upper part being covered with the glass mosaics. The designs of these Sicilian works, mostly executed under the Norman kings in the 12th century, are very Oriental in character, and in many cases were actually executed by Moslem workmen. Fig. 4 gives a specimen of this

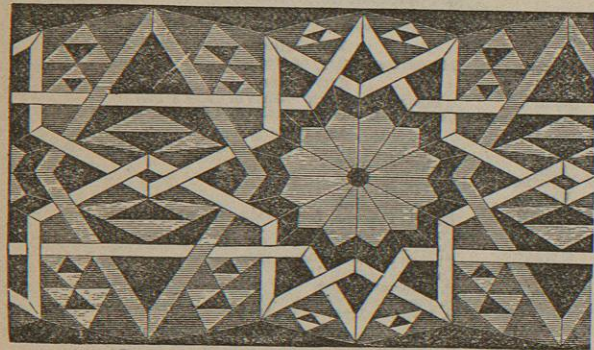


FIG. 4.—Marble Mosaic at Monreale Cathedral.

mosaic from Monreale cathedral. Its chief characteristic is the absence of curved lines, so largely used in the splendid opus Alexandrinum of Italy, arising from the fact that this class of Oriental design was mainly used for the delicate panelling in wood on their

pulpits, doors, &c.,—wood being a material quite unsuited for the production of large curves.

3. Glass mosaic, used to ornament ambones, pulpits, tombs, bishops' thrones, baldacchini columns, architraves, and other marble objects, is chiefly Italian. The designs, when it is used to enrich flat surfaces, such as panels or architraves, are very similar to those of the pavements last described. The white marble is used as a matrix, in which sinkings are made to hold the glass tesserae; twisted columns are frequently ornamented with a spiral band of this glass mosaic, or flutings are suggested by parallel bands on straight columns. The cloisters of S. Giovanni in Laterano and S. Paolo fuori le mura have splendid examples of these enriched shafts and architraves.

This style of work was largely employed from the 6th to the 14th centuries. One family in Italy, the Cosmati, during the whole of the 13th century, was especially skilled in this craft, and the various members of it produced an extraordinary amount of rich and beautiful work. The pulpit in S. Maria in Ara Cœli, Rome, is one of the finest specimens (see fig. 5), as are also the ambones in S. Cle-

mente and S. Lorenzo, and that in Salerno cathedral. The tomb of Henry III., 1291, and the shrine of the Confessor, 1269, at Westminster are the only examples of this work in England. They were executed by "Petrus civis Romanus," probably a pupil of the Cosmati.

In India, especially during the 17th century, many Mohammedan buildings were decorated with fine marble inlay of the class now called "Florentine." This is sectile mosaic, formed by shaped pieces of various-coloured marbles set into a marble matrix. A great deal of the Indian mosaic of this sort was executed by Italian workmen; the finest examples are at Agra, such as the Taj Mehal.

The modern so-called "Roman mosaic" is formed of short and slender sticks of coloured glass fixed in cement, the ends, which form the pattern, being finally rubbed down and polished.

Many not unsuccessful attempts have been made lately to reproduce the Roman-tesselated work for pavements; and at Murano, near Venice, glass wall-mosaics are still produced in imitation of the magnificent works of mediæval times.

4. Mosaics in wood are largely used in Mohammedan buildings, especially from the 14th to the 17th centuries. The finest specimens of this work are at Cairo and Damascus, and are used chiefly to decorate the magnificent pulpits and other woodwork in the mosques. The patterns are very delicate and complicated, worked in inlay of small pieces of various-coloured woods, often further enriched by bits of mother-of-pearl and minutely carved ivory. The general effect is extremely splendid from the combined beauties of the materials and workmanship, as well as from the marvellous grace and fancy of the designs. This art was also practised largely by the Copts of Egypt, and much used by them to ornament the magnificent iconostases and other screens in their churches.

Another application of wood to mosaic-work, called "intarsiatura," was very common in Italy, especially in Tuscany and Lombardy, during the 15th and early 16th centuries. Its chief use was for the decoration of the stalls and lecterns in the church-choirs. Very small bits of various-coloured woods were used to produce geometrical patterns, while figure-subjects, views of buildings with strong perspective effects, and even landscapes, were very skillfully produced by an inlay of larger pieces. Ambrogio Borgognone, Raphael, and other great painters often drew the designs for this sort of work. The mosaic figures in the panels of the stalls at the

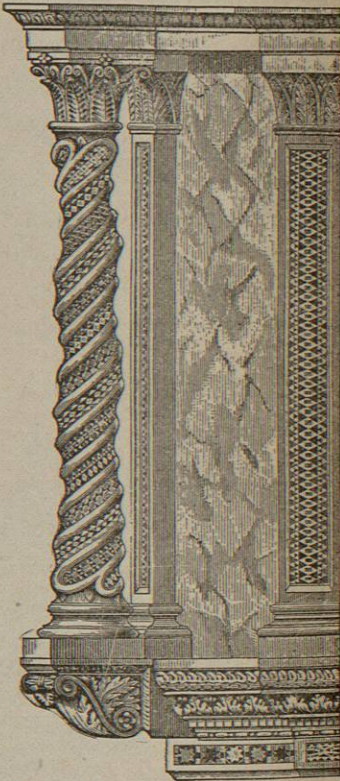


FIG. 5.—Part of Marble Pulpit with glass mosaic, church of Ara Cœli, Rome.

Cortona near Pavia were by Borgognone, and are extremely beautiful. The stalls in Siena cathedral and in S. Pietro de' Casinensi at Perugia, the latter from Raphael's designs, are among the finest works of this sort, which are very numerous in Italy. It has also been used on a smaller scale to ornament furniture, and especially the "Cassoni," or large trousseau coffers, on which the most costly and elaborate decorations were often lavished. Some traditional skill in this art still lingers in Italy, especially in the city of Siena.

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**Wood-Mosaic.**—Tarsia.—Ornati del Coro di S. Pietro Cassinese di Perugia, 1830; Caffi, various works on Basiglio da Brescia and other intarsiatori, 1851, &c.; Tarsie ed intagli di S. Lorenzo in Genova, 1878. (G. H. M.)

MOSCHELES, IGNAZ (1794-1870), one of the most refined and accomplished pianists of the present century, was born at Prague, 30th May 1794, and first studied music at the Conservatorium in that city under the direction of Dionys Weber. At the age of fourteen he made his first appearance before the public in a pianoforte concerto of his own composition with marked success. Soon after this he removed to Vienna, where he studied counterpoint under Albrechtsberger and composition under Salieri. In 1814 he prepared, with Beethoven's consent, the pianoforte arrangement of *Fidelio*, afterwards published by Messrs Artaria. In the following year he published his celebrated *Variationen über den Alexandermarsch*, a concert piece of great difficulty, which he played with so great effect that he was at once recognized as the most brilliant performer of the day. He then started on a tour, during the course of which he visited most of the great capitals of Europe, making his first appearance in London in 1822, and there securing the friendship of Muzio Clementi and John Cramer, the fathers of the English school of pianoforte playing. For a concert given by the latter he wrote his famous *Hommages à Händel*, a duet for two pianofortes, which afterwards became a lasting favourite with the public. His reception in England was sufficiently encouraging to justify his return in 1823, when he again met with a hearty welcome. During a visit to Berlin in 1824 he first became acquainted with Mendelssohn, then a boy of fifteen; and a friendship sprang up between them which was severed only by Mendelssohn's early death.

In 1826 Moscheles relinquished his wandering habits, and settled permanently in London, surrounding himself with a *clientèle* fully capable of appreciating his talents as an artist and his social worth as a firm and loyal friend. His position was henceforth a more than ordinarily enviable one. He was recognized from end to end of Europe as a *virtuoso* of the highest rank; and his popularity both as a performer and as a teacher was based on grounds which effectually secured it from the caprice of changing fashion or ephemeral patronage. He was undoubtedly for some considerable time the greatest executant of his age; but, using his brilliant touch as a means and not as an end, he consistently devoted himself to the further development of the

true classical school, interpreting the works of the great masters with conscientious fidelity, and in his extempore performances, which were of quite exceptional excellence, exhibiting a fertility of invention which never failed to please the most fastidious taste.

In 1837 Moscheles conducted Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at the Philharmonic Society's concerts with extraordinary success; and on this and other occasions contributed not a little, by his skilful use of the baton, to the prosperity of the time-honoured association. During the course of his long residence in London he laboured incessantly in the cause of art, playing at innumerable concerts, both public and private, and instructing a long line of pupils, who flocked to him, in unbroken succession, until the year 1848, when, at Mendelssohn's earnest solicitation, he removed to Leipzig, to carry on a similar work at the Conservatorium then recently founded in that city. In this new sphere he worked with unabated zeal for more than twenty years, dying 10th March 1870.

Moscheles's most important compositions are his Pianoforte Concertos, Sonatas, and Studies; his *Hommage à Händel*; and his three celebrated *Allegri di Bravura*.

MOSCHUS, of Syracuse, is one of the Greek bucolic poets; he was a friend of the Alexandrian grammarian Aristarchus (about 200 B.C.). His chief work is the epitaph of Bion of Smyrna, another of the bucolic poets, who seems to have lived in Sicily. It is probable that the miscellaneous collection of poems which we possess by the three poets Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus was known to Artemidorus in 200 B.C. His poetry is the work of a well-educated man with a trained artistic eye; he models his works on those of Bion, writing epigrammatic, epic, and idyllic or elegiac verses, all except a few lines being in hexameter verse; but he treats all his subjects in a descriptive, not in a narrative or an epigrammatic style. Besides the epitaph of Bion, he wrote two little epic poems, "Europa" and "Megara," and a pretty little epigram, "Love the Runaway;" and a few short pieces of his are also preserved. They are written with much elegance, but the style is perhaps too refined and carefully wrought, and he has few of the higher qualities of a poet.

MOSCOW, a government of Central Russia, bounded by Tver on the N.W., Vladimir and Ryazan on the E., Tula and Kaluga on the S., and Smolensk on the W., and having an area of 12,858 square miles. The surface is undulating, with broad depressions occupied by the rivers, and varies in elevation from 500 to 850 feet. Moscow is situated in the centre of the so-called Moscow coal-basin, which extends into the neighbouring governments, and consists of limestones of the Upper and Lower Carboniferous, the latter containing beds of inferior coal, while the former contains several good quarries of marble. The Carboniferous formation is covered with Jurassic clays, sandstones, and sands, which yield a good china-clay at Gijeli, copperas, a sandstone much employed for building, and a white sand used for the manufacture of glass. The whole is thickly covered with boulder-clay and alluvial sands.

The government is watered by the Volga, which skirts it for a few miles on its northern boundary, by the navigable Sestra, which brings it in communication with the canals leading to St Petersburg, by the Oka, and by the Moskva. This last takes its origin in Smolensk, and, after a course of 280 miles right across Moscow, reaches the Oka at Kolonna; it is navigable from the town of Moscow. The Oka and Moskva from a remote period have been important channels of trade, and continue to be so notwithstanding the development of railways. The Oka brings the government into water communication with the Volga, whose tributaries cover nearly the whole of middle and eastern Russia, and are separated by short land distances from the Northern Dvina and the Don. Large quantities of grain, metals, glass ware, skins, and other commodities are shipped up and down the Moskva, whilst the Myachkovo stone quarries situated on its banks supply the capital with building stone. There are several marshes, mostly in the north,