

A Day with Robert Schumann

May Byron

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It is an April morning in 1844, in the town of Leipzig,—calm, cool, and fraught with exquisite promise of a prolific spring,—when the Herr Professor Doctor Robert Schumann, rising before six o'clock as is his wont, very quietly and noiselessly in his soft felt slippers, dresses and goes downstairs. For he does not wish to disturb or incommode his sleeping wife, whose dark eyes are still closed, or to awaken any of his three little children

The tall, dignified, well-built man, with his pleasant, kindly expression, and his air of mingled intellect and reverie, bears his whole character written large upon him,—his transparent honesty, unflagging industry, and generous, enthusiastic altruism. No touch of self-seeking about him, no hint of ostentation or conceit: he is still that same reticent and silent person, of whom it was said some years ago by his friends,

"Herr Schumann is a right good man, He smokes tobacco as no one can: A man of thirty, I suppose, And short his hair, and short his nose."

That, indeed, is the sum total of his outward appearance: as for the inward man, it is not to be known save through his writings. Literature and music are the only means of expression, of communication with others, which are possessed by this modest, pensive, reserved maestro, upon whom the sounding titles of Doctor and Professor sit so strangely.



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