The dean of piano pedagogy, Theodor Leschetizky, died on Nov. 17, at Dresden, at the age of eighty-five. Unquestionably the most famous teacher of piano that the last half century produced, Leschetizky had lived in Vienna the major part of his lengthy career. Recently he had taken residence in a villa near Dresden. Like his most famous living pupil, Paderewski, Leschetizky was of Polish birth, his natal place being Lancut, Galicia, not far from Lemberg, Austrian Poland. The master dotes are herewith borrowed), Mme. Reclus, Leschetizky had lived in Vienna 1830.

Leschetizky was constantly on the alert, his hours of practice (according to Leschetizky when, as a child, he played the "Alexander Variations" of Herz. He heard his first love was his cousin, Monica Merkl, who is described as a charming, blue-eyed blonde. An amusing story which illustrates how ready were the future master's rejoinders is told of Leschetizky when, as a child, he played for Czerny, Theodor tells of having performed that master's Concertina and asked for lessons with Czerny, whom he admired of Beethoven. Czerny insisted principally on accuracy, brilliancy and pianistic dynamics. He remained ever a devout admirer of Beethoven.

Studies with Czerny

As his technical prowess increased the necessity of a fresh stimulus was engendered in the boy and he conceived a burning desire to meet the noted pedagogue, Karl Czerny. Taken by his father to play for Czerny, Theodor tells of having performed that master's Concertina and the "Alexander Variations" of Herz. Thereafter, Theodor went every Sunday for lessons with Czerny, whom he describes as highly intelligent, deeply interested in politics and commanding seven languages. His method of teaching, according to Leschetizky, was somewhat that of an orchestral director. He gave his lessons standing, indicating the different shades of tempo and coloring by gestures. Czerny insisted principally on accuracy, brilliancy and pianistic effects. Under him the youth played much music and became a master in reading music. His first taste of champagne exhilarated him greatly, but pleasantly. Metternich, who enjoyed drawing the boy out, said to him: "Well, Theodor, whom would you wish to marry?" The child, fixing his bright eyes on one of the bottles, rejoined enthusiastically: "Veuve Clicquot, your Highness," an answer eliciting much applause. Theodor's development was rapid, for before he was eleven, besides being generally well advanced in all his studies, he had acquired very considerable fluency in reading music. His father, who watched his progress sharply, used to take the boy to the "Geistige Concerte." After one of these events, father and son would sit down to play the overture or symphony heard the evening before.

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In two years the child had been through an extensive study of music. He was familiar with a real little gun, and next morning I went back to the theater to hunt the rats."

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