

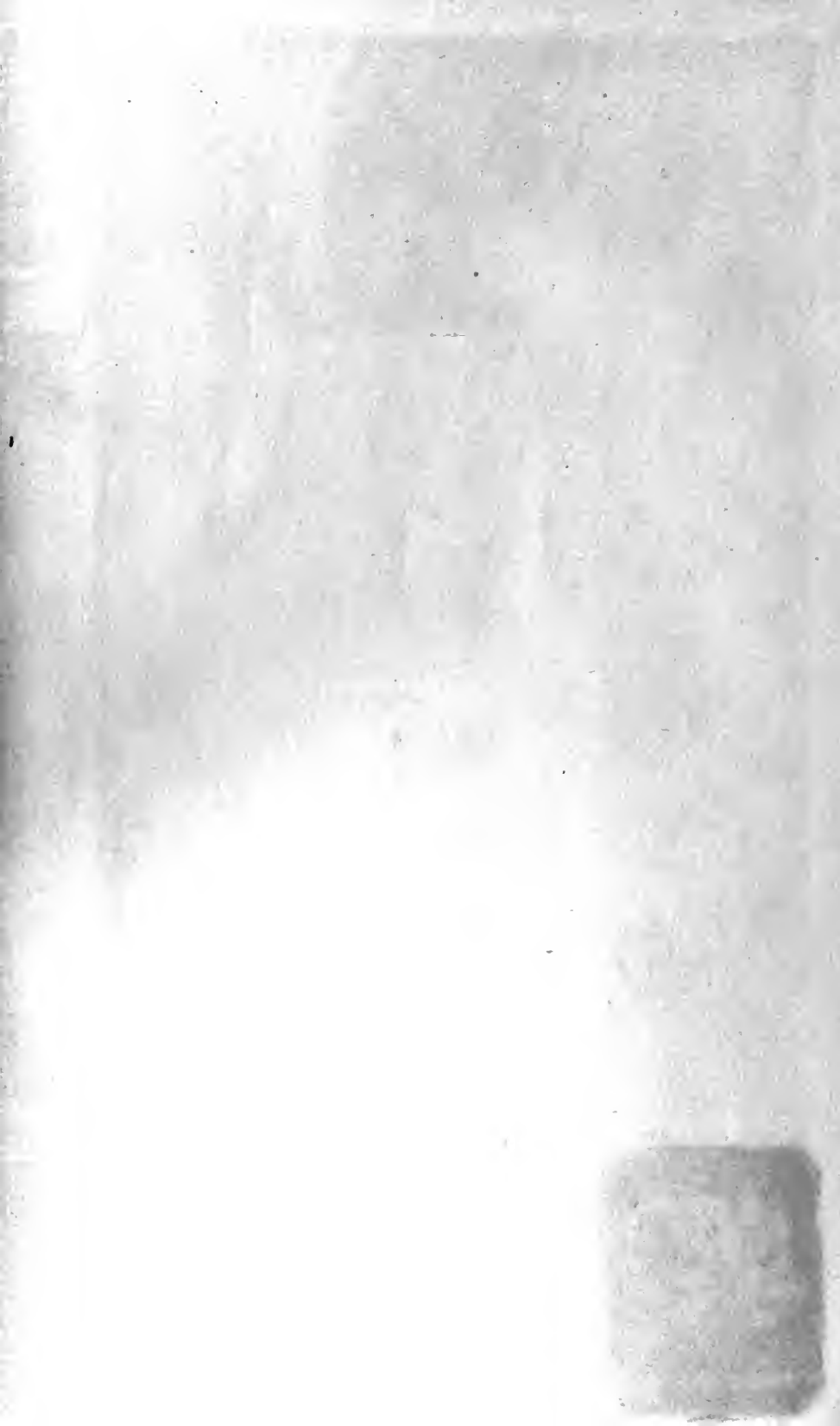
RICHARD WAGNER





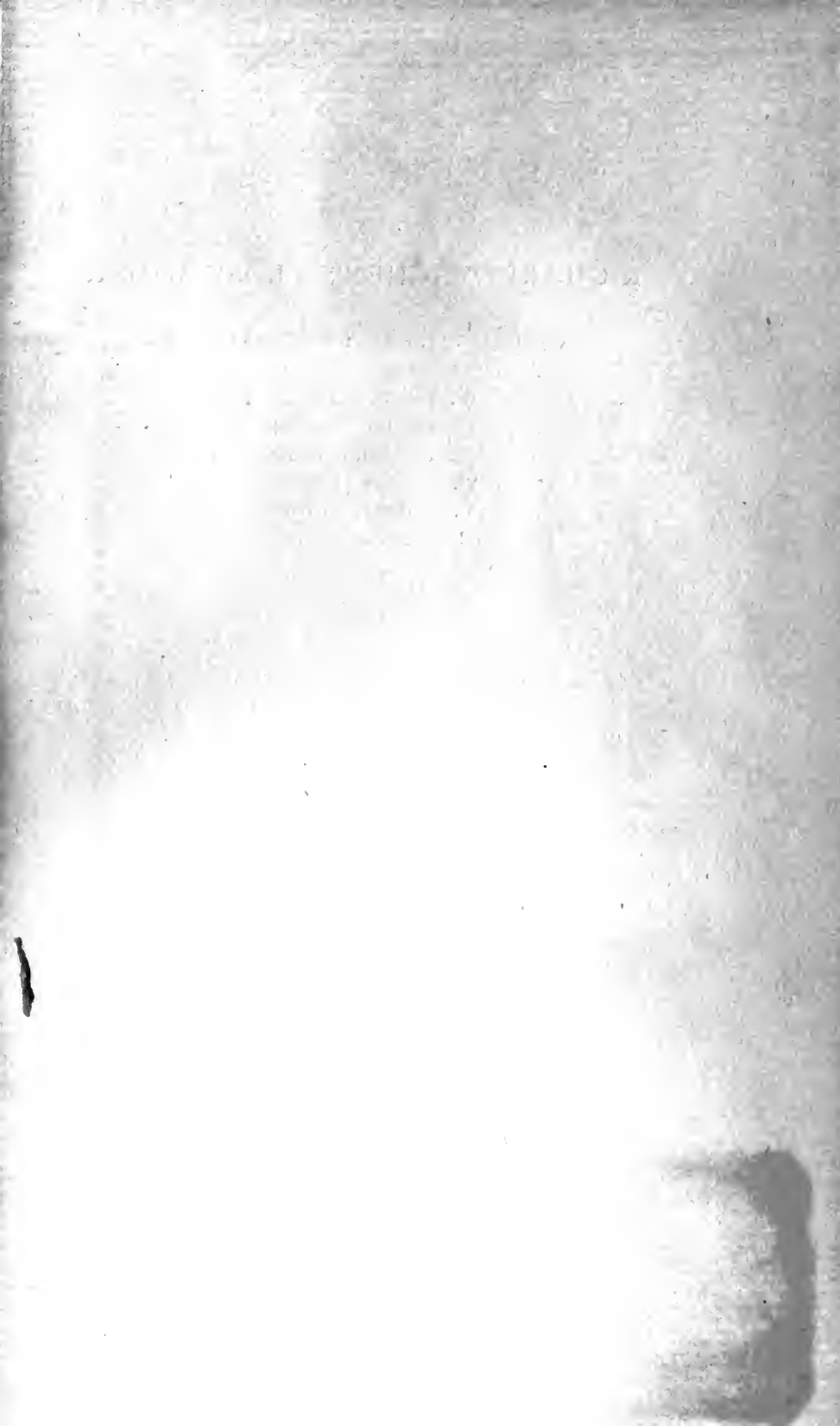
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LIFE OF RICHARD WAGNER.



LIFE OF RICHARD WAGNER:

BY

WM. ASHTON ELLIS

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TO THE READER.

DEAR READER,

I feel I owe you some apology for the length of the interval separating the appearance of the present volume from that of its predecessor. When you have gained an inkling of its cause, however, I just as strongly feel, you not only will forgive, but pity me; and should that pity merge into benignant sympathy, you will have pledged me to sincerest thanks. So bear with me a moment, while I unfold a private tale.

As the address beneath the preface to each volume of this *Life* will shew, the whole work hitherto has passed into the printer's hands from the same secluded little nook of hill-bound Sussex; and in this rural nest I hoped some day to finish it. That hope has now been shattered by one of the most ruthlessly desecrating deeds that can ever have entered the mind of man, or woman. Once more, please listen:—

Overleaf you will find the reproduction of a photograph taken * from my study window during our belated summer of last September, just as the final sheets of this volume's proofs, apart from its Index, were reaching my hands. I offer no apology for admitting unknown readers to a share in what has been the delight of my friends, but to them I must explain that the whole foreground, including that salient group of three acacias, had been slowly built up by my personal toil to throw into due relief the native beauty

* By Mr F. Douglas Miller, Boltro Road, Hayward's Heath.

1098370

of the middle distance—my tiny pleasaunce having been nothing save a wilderness when first I rented it. It had just attained, in fact, that fatal point of perfection which presages impending ill. Swift and relentless as Fate, came that ill.

Not a week had I received proofs of this exquisite picture and allowed one of them to be displayed in our village shop, before workmen in the grounds adjoining me (to the left of the picture) began erecting, under the very boughs of my acacias, an atrocity the name whereof I dare not even mention here. To the philistines who recently had thrust on our unwelcoming souls a garish tabernacle for advancement of their own peculiar brand of politics-cum-piety nearly an acre of land lay still available; yet nothing could content them save defacement of the whole hillside through the site selected for this utterly unneeded thing. Behind the backs both of myself and those who own my residence, these professors of Brotherly Love had obtained from the District authorities a sanction too heedlessly given, and our expostulations, albeit lodged the moment we got wind of it, proved all too late. Such is the helpless condition to which the Individual is already reduced by our beautiful progress toward Socialism!

So there in full sight of my windows, and dominating every corner of my garden—owing to the equally remorseless previous mutilation of our common hedge—this horror with its added infamy, a thatch atop, has stood for full three months; and now the leaves have fallen, it mocks one all the more. How *could* a man sit tamely down and index, with such a canker grinning at him from the very heart of what had been a daily feast for his eyes? If others could, I could not, and a wickedly large part of my time since mid-autumn has been spent on unavailing

efforts to shame the chief culprit into removal of what even our scavengers view with disgust. No, that culprit is "advanced" alike in views and years, and nothing can convince her that no amount of rustic thatching will redeem a pest; just as there are those who tie up sewage-pipes with bows of satin and expect you to admire them in their boudoirs.

With heavy heart, accordingly, I shall have to bid farewell to my retreat next midsummer. Where I shall find another so entirely propitious to my work as this had erewhile been, Heaven knows, since ways and means must be consulted and nothing but the kindness of a few supporters has enabled me to pull along at all of late,—said work being unremunerative of its very nature, whatever my reviewers may suppose.

But, that being scarcely what I set about to say, I return to my apology, dear Reader, and, should the tale have interested you, will gladly forward a reprint of my open letter to a Sussex weekly thereanent, also a view since taken by myself at close quarters of that centennial oak whose strengthening presence I soon must leave,—provided only you enclose an addressed stamped envelope of about the length of this page.

And now, my future plans being so uncertain, I will simply add *Auf Wiedersehen!*

Yours very truly

WM. ASHTON ELLIS.

Horsted Keynes,
January, 1908.

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THE PESSIMIST.

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The words of the wise are as goads.

ECCLESIASTES.

"I FEAR my good old faithful friend—my Peps—will pass away to-day. It is impossible for me to leave the poor thing's side in its last hours. You won't be cross if we beg you not to expect us?"—thus Richard Wagner, eight days from his return to Zurich, and Frau Wesendonck herself is asked, "You surely will not laugh if I am weeping?"

It was the 30th of June he arrived home, after that entirely futile London expedition, and his first feeling had been of intense relief, as he writes F. Praeger, July 7: "I'm glad that my penance is over. I forgive all Englishmen, with all my heart, for being—what they are; but even in my memory I mean to have no more to do with them.* Of you alone, dear

* Similarly to L. Schindelmeisser, the 30th: "At present I'm recuperating from my London expedition, which, with my experience and views, I ought never to have undertaken. For there's nothing to be done there, except for those who put every proper goal behind them and make for just nothing but money. Fine, that is to say, finished performances of Beethoven's symphonies—such as would alone have repaid me—I could not bring about for sheer want of rehearsals; we had only one for each concert, and that with an incredible amount of music. As soon as I saw the impossibility of making any change in that, I gave up the attempt, and really stayed on for no other reason than to obviate a scandal."

friends,* do I cherish remembrance; and if all pleasant things are but negations of the painful, in this instance the London agony is negated and cancelled for me by the recollection of your friendship and affection. A thousand cordial thanks for that!" Toward the letter's beginning: "On Monday I'm off to Seelisberg with wife, dog and bird [Papo's successor], where I hope to recover my bearings at last."

That Monday night, some sixty hours later, the dumb friend died. "Peps had been rather unwell just before my return"—writes Wagner to Praeger the following Sunday—"but after welcoming me with the greatest effusion he picked up again somewhat, and the day of our departure for Seelisberg was already fixed—whither, as I wrote you, dog and bird were to accompany us. Then serious symptoms suddenly set in and we postponed our journey for two days to nurse the poor dear dying beast, who shewed me a truly heart-rending love to the last, and even on the verge of death kept turning his head—or finally his pleading eyes—towards me, if I moved a few paces away. Then without a cry, without a struggle, he peacefully expired beneath our hands in the night from the 9th to 10th inst.—The following noon the pair of us buried him in a garden by the house. I have wept without cease—I could not help it—and felt a grief and sorrow for the dear 13-year friend, who had always worked and walked with me, which have taught me plainly that the world exists in our heart and our intuition alone . . . Ah, how often I'm thoroughly sick of life! And yet it keeps returning to us in some fresh form, to lure us to suffering and sorrow once more." †

Another touching account of Peps' death is supplied to Frau Ritter next December, when—relating what a wretched year it has been for him—Wagner thus concludes a reference to his London troubles: "On my return my old dog received me with

* As "Euch"—not "Dich"—is used here, the remark is palpably intended for the whole London group, each member whereof had just been mentioned seriatim: *Wie's* retro-translation usurps it all for self, "Aber Du, mein lieber Freund, Dich werde ich nie vergessen," and so on.

† This is the letter in which Wagner congratulates P. on the birth of a son, and accepts the position of godfather—as he had done some four years previously in the case of poor Uhlig's son Siegfried. Neither of these godsons attained to manhood; it was almost tempting Providence, to give a child the name of "Richard Wagner" Praeger.

just a week of life left, to shew me he had been expecting me; but he died directly after. Two whole days did we sit beside the poor faithful creature's basket, from which he kept rising to creep to my desk—unable to distinguish me, though I stood close beside him. Then I placed him in a box, and took him down and buried him. Another heavy blow for me."

This little Peps, "a kind of spaniel," had been his companion throughout the Dresden period. A month before the production of *Rienzi*, Wagner writes his sister Cäcilie Avenarius (Sept. 11, 42): "As we still have no prospect whatever of *human* young, we have to make up with *dogs* still. We have another now, just 6 weeks old, a droll little beast; his name is *Peps*, or *Striezel* (because he looks as if he had come from the gingerbread-market). He's better than the last one, Robber [stolen in Paris]; but it is hard on us, to have to go on eking out with such unthinking creatures—I'd rather have a Maxel" (his tiny nephew). To his wife, the year after, June '43: "Peps is not to bite Türk's legs"—Türk being another dog, first mentioned two months before Peps, but henceforth lost to fame—and July, "Make Peps quite spruce to welcome me"; also the next Spring, from Hamburg: "As soon as I wake up of a morning I begin the usual chat with you and Peps, just as if I were at home." To Cäcilie, shortly before the Dresden catastrophe, "Vivat hoch!—say we—Peps barks and Papo pipes to it!" Then with his wife the dog and parrot follow him to exile, and soon after that reunion Wagner cuts short a letter to Uhlig with "I can't write any more, but must get into the air; also, Peps will not give me a moment more peace." A letter of August '50 has the same refrain, "Peps keeps on barking," which is repeated Aug. '52 with the sly addition, "Auerbach has been here, but did not bark"—i.e. was loth to stir. As variants we have "Peps is just playing the bassoon," or a parenthesis, "Peps ratifies this with a sneeze." For the dog was in constant attendance at its master's desk, as he writes his niece Francisca, March '52: "Peps is still alive and flourishing, and squats on the back of my chair as of old. Papo—died a year ago; it was terrible, and never have I wept so much, as for that dear little—beast" (cf. iii, 145-6). In summer 1853 Liszt himself adopts the spaniel's name (iv, 147), and that winter her brother tells Cäcilie, "I'm thinking of training Peps for Lohengrin; better than Widemann [Leipzig?],

of whom I hear shocking accounts." And now poor Peps has followed Papo to the grave.

Six weeks from this last loss, after ironically informing old Fischer, "I've nothing much to tell you in the way of news, excepting that the King is sure to amnesty me soon," adds Wagner: "I must drop the jester's tone, to tell you my Peps died the 10th day after my return from London; for this is a blow that has afflicted me and Minna sorely. I weep even yet, when I think of the good creature's dying hours." There is almost an apology even in that 'I cannot jest'; but the underlying thought comes out more plainly in the said letter to Praeger, a fellow-sufferer (cf. v, 135), "There's something terrible about it, is there not? And how we should be laughed at!!!"

Nowadays, with our Societies for Protection of all the Lower Animals at Expense of the Higher, it may seem incomprehensible that Wagner should have had to appeal to one friend after another, to Mathilde herself, "not to laugh." But six years hence, after the tragic end of Fips in Paris, we find Otto told, "I know you don't hold with attachment to animals"; whilst Sulzer was written from London last May: "Perhaps you were right to make fun of my previous remarks [see v, 254]. For my part, to be able to compose, I need first to have heard: but *you* can think without having received impressions; consequently you are the possessor of an Absolute Reason, and that might easily get smirched by sympathy with animals. However, I'll argue it no more with you, since the only use of argument among friends is to bring them to agreement, not to prove one of them right, and in any further controversy I fear I should only be able to keep the latter aim in view now."

In so many words, there stands the adamant barrier between Wagner and most of his associates. There were exceptions, of course, but the generality of his countrymen and their congeners were still in the swaddling-clothes of a creed imposed upon us by our very nursery-books. Schopenhauer, as we shall presently see, upheld the English as a bright example of enlightenment in this regard; but it would be interesting to hear his opinion, or that of Wagner either, on the following choice extracts from a little manual which has enjoyed unrivalled circulation for the last three generations under the insinuating title *The Peep of Day: A Series of the Earliest Religious Instruction [sic] the Infant Mind is Capable of Receiving*:—"Your soul, or spirit, is made of the breath

of God. That little dog will die some day. Its body will be thrown away [Cannot one hear the poor child's sobs!]. The dog will be quite gone when its body is dead. But when your body dies, your soul will be alive, and you will not be quite gone." This is the corollary of a peculiar chain of argument whereby the Infant Mind is first taught to seek in the rankest *externals* the distinction between its receptacle and that of the lower animals—"Your skin is smooth, but the dog is covered with hair" and so on,—then asked, "Who gave bodies to dogs, horses, chickens, and flies? Who keeps them alive? God thinks of all these creatures every moment [till the time comes round for 'throwing them away'?]. Can a dog thank God?—No; dogs and horses, sheep and cows, cannot thank God. Why cannot they thank God? Is it because they cannot talk? That is not the reason. The reason is, they cannot think of God . . . Why not?—Because they have no *souls*, or spirits, like yours. Have you got a soul?—Yes, in your body there is a soul which will never die. Your soul can think of God. When God made your body, he put your soul inside. Are you glad of that? When God made the dogs, he put no soul like yours inside their bodies, and they cannot think of God."—One wonders how the omniscient author of the dictum that "dogs and horses, sheep and cows, cannot thank God," and how the thousands upon thousands of parents who have followed her or him in *thus* religiously instructing the Infant Mind, must have felt when joining at church or meeting-house in that sublime *Te Deum*, the 148th Psalm: "Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: fire and hail; snow and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word; mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars: beasts and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl: kings of the earth, and all people," etc., etc.!

Now consider the millions of British Infant Minds which have been brought up in the past seventy years * with the idea that it

* The little book was first published in 1836, and I have a vivid recollection of it as one of the earliest Instructors of my own childhood an odd score of years later. The edition I quote from is dated 1901, and may have been a little modernised, though the main drift of the casuistry quite chimes with my juvenile memories. In many respects, no doubt, it is a good little book for "the Infant Mind," but let me give one further illustration of its standpoint as regards the lower animals: "God makes the corn. Of what does he make it?—Of nothing [!]. God makes things of nothing . . . If he did not make

is right and proper to "throw away" the carcase of a poor animal pet because "it will be quite gone when its body is dead"; consider the many more millions of American and Continental Infant Minds which have been vaccinated with a similar prophylactic,—and surely you will agree with old Schopenhauer that, if this be Christian teaching, "heathen" India should shame us. But *is* it the teaching of Christ? Scarcely of him who spake the parable of the lost sheep, whose owner "when he hath found it, *layeth it on his shoulders*, rejoicing," or of him who told us of the "good shepherd whom the sheep follow, for *they know his voice*, and he *giveth his life* for the sheep." No, this contempt for dumb animals, so engrained in our Protestant tenets, may be traced to that Apostle who never came under the personal influence of the founder of Christianity himself, but impressed on it his own strong individuality (see I. Cor. ix, 9). Among the worthies of the Roman church in olden times were those who took a different view, such as S. Francis of Assisi; but it is Protestantism and Jesuitism that have cradled the generality of 'modern' philosophers, at least till Schopenhauer's day, and thus we find the great body of European 'thought' directed against any attachment to animals. The bare idea of burying a dog was deemed profanity by the pious, imbecility by the 'enlightened.'

Luckily for Wagner, his inborn sympathy with the animal world—"my pet theme," as he describes it to Frau Wesendonck in '61—had never been crushed out of him by the philistism of moral doctrinaires. Probably this is due to the child's having been left fatherless so early, and to the *feminine* composition of the

corn grow in the field, we should die. But he will not forget us. He even [subtle poison in that "even"] remembers the little birds. They are too silly [!] to plough or to sow corn, or to reap, or to put corn into barns [or over-eat themselves]; yet God does not let them starve [never?]. He hears their cry, and gives them food. Now God loves us much better than he loves the little birds, because we have souls; so he will certainly hear us when we pray to him." We are not informed *why* no "souls" were given to the birds—had the supply of "nothing" run short?—but, to tranquillise the Infant Mind, the booklet ends up with a picture of the seamy side of the world to come and a grim warning that "Many people in Hell will say, 'How I wish I had listened to the words of my teachers!'" It does not add that some of those teachers may *there* have an opportunity of revising their doctrine as to the "throwing away" of dead puppies like orange-peel.

household in which his most impressionable years were passed ; for women, as even their reverse of flatterer Schopenhauer admits, are much more tender-hearted, as a rule, than men. However that be, we have evidence in plenty of Wagner's early love of animals—cf. vol. i, 81, 142, 164—and most of the pathos of that tale he wrote in 1841, *An End in Paris*, is woven round the poor musician's dog, whom the story leaves beside his grave. Toward the opposite end of life we have his notorious indictment of the Vivisectionists (*P. VI.*), and at its turning-point that title-page for *Art and Revolution* bearing a comment on our "lovelessness towards the beasts, whom we regard as mere chattels" (*P. VIII. 362*), with which may be linked the 1851 footnote to *Oper und Drama* (*P. II. 220*): "What are a thousand of the finest Arab stallions to their purchasers . . . compared with what his horse Xanthus was to Achilles when it forewarned him of his death?" It is the selfsame note of kinship with the 'dumb creation' that rings from the *Walküre*, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*, till it bursts into a shout of triumph in Brünnhilde's "Heiaho! Grane! grüsse den Freund" as she takes her fiery leap into that other world whence Pietism taught our Infant Minds to banish such inferior things "because they have no *souls*."

The latest brand of Modern Thought is more consistent: having denied a "soul" to animals, it goes a step farther, and denies any such possession to ourselves as well. Yet the ordinary man is conscious of harbouring something in his 'breast,' no matter how he terms it, something that is not quite the same thing as the reasoning faculty, whether the latter can "think of God" or not; and that something was particularly alive in Wagner, who might have echoed those lines of our Coleridge:

He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.—
He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things, both great and small.

Turn back to the second volume of the present *Life*, and you will find this feeling of oneness with "all that lives" (so beautifully expressed in the *Parsifal* "Charfreitagszauber") already clearly voiced in Wagner's letter of 1846 to his mother: "If we strive too high, then Nature lovingly reminds us we are but parts of her, sprung from her like these trees, these plants. . . And if I feel myself so intimate a part of Nature, how quickly

vanishes all personal egoism. . . To steal from the city's fumes and pass into a leafy dell, stretch one's full length on the moss, gaze up at the shapely growth of trees, and listen to some dear woodbird's song till a tear rolls down one's cheek unchecked for happiness." But the heart that can seek refreshment in Dame Nature's smiles is also that most open to her signals of distress; so we have found Wagner penning his "previous remarks" to Sulzer (vol. v, 254): "No tongue can tell what I experience when I see a dumb animal maltreated, nor how, as if by instantaneous magic, there opens up a glimpse into the essence of all life in its uncleft cohesion—a glimpse I recognise no more as maudlinness, but as the truest and deepest of all possible perception. Which also is the reason I've become so fond of Schopenhauer, since it was he who taught me all about it, and to my complete satisfaction."

It was its ethical side, then, that most attracted Wagner in this new system of philosophy; and there he found a reasoned explanation of that inborn sentiment which many of his friends had scoffed at. Over one question at least, here was a philosopher he at once could shake hands with; a man whose personal sympathy with 'the beasts' shews boldly forth from every work he wrote, but nowhere so emphatically as in one of his minor publications, *Die Grundlage der Moral* or "Fundament of Morality" (no. 2 of *Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik*). When I call it a "minor" work, though, I simply mean in outer compass. *Qua* inner contents, this *Grundlage* is perhaps the weightiest of its author's products; notwithstanding that the Danish Royal Society in 1840 refused to 'crown' it, even in the absence of any other competitor for a proffered prize. Were the whole of our philosopher's major system reduced to ruins through some hypothetic flaw of structure, this essay of 170 pages would stand as firmly based as ever, since the very conditions of that bootless candidature made it incumbent to leave his 'system' out of sight. For which reason it forms one of the best initiators (taking the word in its stricter sense) into the mysteries of the Schopenhauerian doctrine, and I make no manner of apology for quoting from it at considerable length, especially as we soon shall learn that Wagner had read the "minor" as well as the major works before he made the said "remarks."

Here, then, in this uncrowned but unrivalled *Grundlage*, after

devoting a hundred pages to the confounding of his philosophic predecessors (some of them respectfully, some not), says Schopenhauer: "Let one assume whatever final incentive one pleases, upon unravelling the motives of an action it will always transpire that *its doer's own welfare* is the mainspring, and the action *egoistic*, consequently *without moral worth*, except in one sole case. That case arises when the final incentive to an action or abstention lies exclusively in the welfare [lit. "weal and woe"] of *some other creature* passively involved; thus, when the active party has nothing else in view whatever than *another's* welfare, and his absolutely only object is that this other should either stay unharmed or positively reap assistance and relief. *This aim alone* impresses on an action or abstention the stamp of *moral worth*; which therefore resides exclusively in the act's being performed or left undone for nothing but the benefit of *another*. . . Now, if my action is to take place solely for another's sake, *his weal must be my immediate motive*, just as *my own* is with all my other actions. . . Necessarily this presupposes that I literally suffer with him (*geradezu mitleide*) in *his* woe as such, that I feel *his* pain as at other times my own alone, and therefore as immediately desire his weal as at all other times my own alone. That, however, demands *my identification with him* in some mode or other, i.e. that the hard-and-fast distinction between myself and every other, on which my egoism itself reposes, be removed in some degree at least. Certainly, as I am not inside the other's skin, it is only by means of my *knowledge* of him, i.e. of the idea of him within my head, that I can identify myself so far with him that my deed shall proclaim that distinction removed; yet the event is no imaginary one, but an actual fact of by no means rare occurrence. It is the everyday phenomenon of *sympathy*, i.e. direct *participation*, independent of all other considerations, firstly in the *sufferings* of another, and secondly in their prevention or cure—the root of all possible happiness. This sympathy, and it alone, is the actual base of all *free* rectitude and *genuine* philanthropy (*Menschenliebe*). Only inasmuch as an act has sprung therefrom, has it moral worth; and every act proceeding from another motive, no matter what, possesses none. Once this sympathy is roused in me, the welfare of another lies directly at my heart, precisely in the same manner, if not always in the same degree, as at other times my solitary own; for the time being

the distinction between him and myself has ceased to be absolute.—This occurrence is, undoubtedly, amazing; nay, mysterious. In truth it is the supreme mystery of ethics, its ur-phenomenon.”

We shall be afforded the clue to that mystery in due time, but meanwhile Schopenhauer maps out the line of operations of this *Mitleid*: “Immediate interest in another is confined to his sufferings, and not—at least, not directly—aroused by his prosperity; which latter leaves us in itself indifferent. J. J. Rousseau makes the same observation in his *Emile*: ‘*Première maxime: il n’est pas dans le cœur humain, de se mettre à la place des gens, qui sont plus heureux que nous, mais seulement de ceux, qui sont plus à plaindre,*’ etc.* The reason of it is, that pain and suffering form *the direct and positive side of feeling*,”—a statement we have heard before (p. 4 *sup.*), but are not bound to accept unless we have made up our minds to be out-and-out pessimists.

Presently (and here I weld two passages into one) we are told what distinguishes *Mitleid* from all the dictates of expediency: “Only when my aim has been nothing besides the purely *objective* one of seeing another helped, seeing him snatched from his trouble and want, have I really exerted that philanthropy, *caritas, αγαπη*, the preaching whereof, and its extension even to one’s enemies, is the great distinctive merit of Christianity, so far as Europe is concerned. . . . But even here the Vedas take a higher flight,† since they repeatedly declare that whoever hankers after any kind of reward for his works, is still on the path of darkness and unripe for redemption.—Were any bestower of alms to enquire of me what it profits him, my conscientious answer would be: ‘This,—that that poor man’s lot is lightened by so much; beyond this, strictly nothing. Should that not be sufficient for you, that not have been your whole intention, you have not given alms at all, but sought to strike a bargain—and are cheated of your money. If on the other hand it was your

* As we know from the Venice Diary (Oct. 1, 1858), Wagner himself did not fully agree with the first part of this “maxim,” but recognised the possibility of *Mit-Freude*, i.e. “communion of joy,” among *equals*, whom Rousseau and Schopenhauer seem to leave out of count.

† Evidently the contrast in Schopenhauer’s mind, though not expressed here, is with *Mat.* vi, 4, “That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.” He had just quoted the previous verse, in fact.

intention that the destitute should suffer less, you have attained your aim already ; you have *this* for profit, that he suffers less ; and you see exactly how far your gift rewards itself."

"But how is it possible"—continues Schopenhauer (with a certain amount of repetition which I omit)—"that a suffering which is not *mine*, does not touch *me*, should yet become a motive as immediately impelling me to action as at other times my own alone? As said, it is because, though set before me merely as an outer thing, and simply through eye-witness or narration, nevertheless I *fellow-feel* it (*mitempfinde*), *feel* it as mine, yet not within *myself*, but in *another* . . . consequently the pale between Myself and Not-myself has been removed for the moment. Only then does the other's business, his need, his want, his suffering, become immediately my own . . . This event, I repeat, is *mysterious* ; for it is something which Reason (*die Vernunft*) cannot directly account for, and the grounds whereof are not discoverable by Experience. And yet it is an everyday event. Everyone has felt it in his own person ; even the hardest-hearted and most self-seeking have not been strangers to it. Daily does it come beneath our eyes, wherever, acting on immediate impulse, a human being leaps to the assistance of another with small deliberation, ay, sometimes sets his body in the most transparent danger for sake of someone never seen before, without a thought for aught save the distress or peril he sees the other in."

Some pages earlier : "This pity is itself an undisputed fact of human consciousness, inherent in it. It rests on no presuppositions, dogmas, religions, myths, abstractions, no bringing-up or education, but is innate and immediate, residing in man's very nature, and just for that holds fast in all relations and shews itself in every age and country. Wherefore it is appealed to confidently everywhere, as to something necessarily present in each human being ; and nowhere is it ranked among 'strange gods.' On the contrary, one calls a man inhuman in whom it seems to lack ; just as the word 'humanity' is often used as synonym for Mitleid." And later—illustrating this antithesis by the report of a case where an Algerian, quarrelling with a Spaniard, had torn away the man's whole lower jaw and borne it off in triumph, leaving the Spaniard still alive, Schopenhauer remarks : "We ask ourselves in horror, 'How is it possible to do such a thing ?'—Now, what is that question's true meaning? Is

it perchance : How is it possible to fear the punishments of a future life so little?—Hardly.—Or: How is it possible to act according to a maxim so totally unsuited to become a universal law for rational beings? *—Surely not.—Or: How is it possible to be so very disregarding of one's own and one's neighbour's perfection?—Just as little.—That question's sense is simply this: How is it possible to be so entirely without *Mitleid*?—Thus it is its utter lack of pity, that stamps a deed with the profoundest moral depravity and abomination. Ergo, *Mitleid* is the genuine mainspring of morality.”

Since this *Mitleid*—in other words, Altruism—is thus proclaimed the central point in morals, and it makes no theoretic difference *which* radius one follows when working from a centre, I take the liberty of marshalling my next excerpts from the *Grundlage* without reference to original order:—“Viewed simply from the empiric standpoint and as a natural device, it will be obvious to everyone that Nature could have done nothing more effectual for alleviation of the multiform sufferings our life is exposed to and no man quite escapes—as also for a counterpoise to the consuming egoism that fills all creatures and often passes over into malice—than to implant in the human heart that wondrous property in power whereof the hurt of one is felt conjointly by another, that disposition whence proceeds the voice which cries aloud to this man ‘Spare!’ to that man ‘Help!’ according to occasion. Surely there was more to be hoped for the welfare of all from the mutual succour hence arising, than from any general and abstract Categorical Imperative (*Pflichtgebot*) deduced from complex operations of the Reason beyond the comprehension of the savage man. . . . For the arousing of this *only source of all unselfish actions, and therefore this true basis of morality*, there needs no abstract, but simply an intuitive perception, bare seizure of the concrete case, which calls up *Mitleid* on the instant, without further intervention of thought. . . . Unbounded compassion with all living creatures is the firmest, surest warrant of good conduct, and needs no casuistry. He who is filled therewith, for sure will injure no one. . . . Tastes differ, but for my part I know no

* Sardonicly as it is introduced, this is no caricature, but a *reductio ad absurdum* of Kant's “First principle of Morals,” the inadequacy whereof had been demonstrated by Schopenhauer in the earlier part of his essay.

finer prayer than that which winds up all old Hindu plays, 'May every living thing be spared from pain.'"

That brings us to the "animal" doctrine itself:—

In further proof of the genuineness of the moral spring propounded by me, it extends its shelter to *the beasts*, for whom the other European codes have cared so deplorably ill. The assumption that animals have no rights, the idea that our conduct towards them is without moral significance, or that there literally is no such thing as duty to animals, is an absolutely revolting barbarism of the West, whose source resides in Judaism.* In Philosophy it reposes on the purely assumed complete difference between man and beast—trumpeted the loudest by Descartes, as logical corollary of his mistakes . . . They even went the length of denying that the beasts are able to distinguish between themselves and the outer world, have any consciousness of self, a Me! In refutation of which absurdities one has only to point to the un-

* As we shall find again, A.S. was a much rabider Anti-Semite than Richard Wagner, and this accusation of his is extremely unjust. Take for instance *Exodus* xxiii, 12: "Six days shalt thou do thy work, and on the seventh thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed;" or *Deuteronomy* xxii, 4: "Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again;" or again, *Isaiah*, i, 3, "The ox knoweth his owner," etc.—unless its owner had been kindly to it, it would profit the ox little to "know" him. Is it possible that the Psalmist of a nation whose dumb animals were not humanely treated should have chosen *this* for simile in a song of thanksgiving, "For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand," or one of its prophets have pleaded thus, "How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate. O Lord, to thee do I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness. . . Yea, the beasts of the field pant unto thee; for the water brooks are dried up," and thus consoled his lowly fellow-creatures, "Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness do spring" (*Joel* i and ii)? If there be not something far higher than self-interest in that, all signs of *Mitleid* are dead letters. But what of the direct command in *Deuteronomy*, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn"? Alas! it is the *New Testament* that muzzled that, when the Apostle to the Gentiles argued thus, "Is it for the oxen that God careth, or saith he it altogether for our sake? Yea, for our sake it was written: because he that ploweth ought to plow in hope," etc. If S. Paul had but said "also," instead of that exclusive "altogether"!—The ancient Hebrews were a pastoral people, and naturally their chief idea of cattle was as valuable *possessions*—"into your hand are they delivered"—but that did not prevent their treating them humanely, as all pastoral nations do. It was reserved for bricks-and-mortar schoolmen, to despise the poor "beasts."

bounded egoism engrained in every animal, even the humblest and smallest ; sufficient proof how much the beasts are conscious of their Me, against the world or Not-me. If one of these Cartesians were to find himself beneath a tiger's claws, he would precious soon find out the sharpness of the distinction it draws between its Me and Not-me. . .

The old Egyptians, whose entire life was consecrated to religion, consigned mummies of men and ibises, crocodiles etc., to the selfsame tombs ; but in Europe it is a crime and abomination if a faithful hound is buried beside his master's resting-place, on which he may have waited for his own devoted death with loyalty unequalled in the human race.*—Nothing could conduce to a surer recognition of the identity of the essential form in beast and man, than a study of Comparative Anatomy. What, then, are we to say when a canting zootome has the impudence to stand up for absolute and radical distinction between man and beast at this time of day (1839), and goes the length of reviling honest zoologists who pursue their path at truth and Nature's hand without a side-glance at the priesthood or tartuffianism?

"Indeed one must be blind of all one's senses † . . . not to recognise

* Again consult the close of *An End in Paris* (p. 9 *sup.*). Wagner's own St Bernard "Russ," who died a few years *before* him, lies buried at the head of the grave his master had prepared for himself in his garden: "Hier ruht und wacht Wagner's Russ," runs the inscription. What clergyman would have allowed his churchyard to be 'desecrated' in this fashion? But is man to be deprived of his humbler companions in the "world to come," or are they to be created afresh out of "nothing"? As Sch. most truly says in *Welt II.*, cap. 41, "The assumption that the birth of a beast is an origination out of nothing and its death accordingly an absolute annihilation, whilst man is supposed to have equally sprung from nothing and nevertheless to enjoy an endless individual continuance, is an absurdity against which our common-sense revolts. . . One has only to plunge oneself in steadfast contemplation of any of the higher mammals, to convince oneself that this unfathomable being, when taken as a whole, can never possibly be turned to nothing."

† I omit the clause "oder vom *fætor Judaicus* total chloroformirt" (probably a later addition, as chloroform was not introduced into medicine till seven years after the first writing of this essay), as unworthy of Schopenhauer. He must have forgotten that passage in *Ecclesiastes* (iii, 18-21—*R. V.*): "I said in mine heart, because of the sons of men, that God may prove them, and that they may see that they themselves are beasts . . . As the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one spirit [or "breath"]; and man hath no preeminence above the beasts: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of the sons of men whether it goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast whether it goeth downward to the earth?" Yet one would have expected Sch. to be drawn towards that ancient Pessimist from whom he elsewhere quotes with approval "The day of death is better than the day of one's birth," and, unless I mistake, "The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning."

that the main essential is the same in beast and man, and what distinguishes the one from the other resides not in the primary, the inner essence, the core of both phenomena—which in each case is the individual's *will*—but solely in the secondary, the intellect and its degree; which latter is incomparably higher in man owing to his added capability of *abstract* knowledge (called *Vernunft*), yet demonstrably in power of nothing but a greater cerebral development, therefore of a somatic difference in one single part, and that chiefly of quantity—a difference not to be compared with the many points of similarity both psychic and somatic. One needs to remind these Western judaised beast-despisers and Reasonolaters that, just as they by *their* mother, was the dog also suckled by *his*.

That such a man as Kant himself fell into this fault of his contemporaries and compatriots, I have deplored already. [Here I interpolate the passage from § 8 of Sch.'s essay—W. A. E.] In his “*Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Tugendlehre*” it is expressly said: “Man can have no duty to any being whatsoever, except to Man”; and in the next section, “Cruelty to animals is against man's duty *to himself*; through its blunting man's fellow-feeling for their sufferings a natural disposition of great service to morality in his relations *with his fellow-men* becomes enfeebled.”—So one is to have sympathy with animals merely to keep one's hand in, and they are to act as a sort of pathologic dummy for the practising of sympathy with men! With all non-Islamised (i.e. non-Judaised) Asia, I deem such maxims shocking. But here again we see how entirely this Philosophic code of morals—being nothing but disguised theology, as shewn above—relies at bottom on the Biblical. For, Christian morality paying no regard to the beasts, forthwith they sink to outlaws in the Philosophic also, mere ‘things,’ mere *means* unto whatever end one pleases; among others, for vivisection, battues, bull-fights, steeplechases, or flogging to death in front of immovable cartloads of stone.—Fie on such a Pariah, Tschandala and Mlekha code, which blinks the eternal essence that resides in all that lives and shines with fathomless significance from every eye that sees the light! Such a code knows nothing save one's own dear race, and makes its stamp, *Vernunft*, the sole condition under which a being can be worthy of our moral heed. [Here we resume.]

That the Christian moral code takes no account of animals, is a deficiency it is better to confess than to perpetuate, and which the more surprises us, as otherwise this moral code displays the greatest harmony with that of Brahmanism and Buddhism, only less strongly expressed and not pushed to extremes,—for which reason one can scarcely doubt that, together with the idea of a god become man (Avatar), it had its origin in India, and may have travelled to Judæa by way of Egypt; so that Christianity would be a reflex of the

Indian ur-light from Egyptian ruins, unfortunately falling, though, on Jewish soil.

As a striking *symbol* of the lack just noticed in the Christian moral system, for all its general correspondence with the Indian, one might take the circumstance that John the Baptist makes his entry exactly in the fashion of an Indian Saniassi, but—clad in pelt! I need hardly say, that would be an abomination to every Hindu; for even the Royal Society at Calcutta obtained its copy of the Vedas only after promising not to get it bound in leather, European-wise: wherefore the copy now in that library is bound in silk. Similarly the Gospel account of Peter's miraculous draught of fishes—blessed by the Saviour so that the boat is filled to sinking (*Luke v*)—presents a characteristic contrast with the tale of Pythagoras (an initiate into the wisdom of Egypt) buying from fishermen a net still under water and promptly restoring their freedom to all the fishes taken (*Apul. de magia*).

Compassion toward the beasts is bound so fast with excellence of character, that one may safely assert of anybody cruel to them, he cannot be a good man. Moreover we may see that this compassion springs from the same source as virtue exercised toward man . . . Thus I once read of an Englishman who could never forget the look cast on him by a dying ape he had shot while hunting in India, and never would fire at another. This sensitive English nation is distinguished above all others [in Europe] by a pronounced sympathy with animals, manifesting itself on every kind of occasion, and strong enough, in defiance of their general "cold bigotry," to move them to fill by legislation the gap in morals left by revelation. For it is just this gap that is the cause of our needing Societies for the Protection of Animals in Europe and America; Societies which, in their turn, can only operate through aid of law-courts and police. In Asia the various religions afford the beasts protection enough, and the idea of such societies enters no one's head there. However, even in Europe a sense of animal rights is gradually awaking, in proportion as the extraordinary notion of an animal world created for nothing but man's use and entertainment fades slowly out . . .

For all his sympathy with dumb animals, however, Schopenhauer was no advocate of "pushing matters to extremes"—such as allowing the aggressive gnat or flea to take its meal in peace, à la Fakir—since he presently betrays a lively sense of the necessity of drawing the line somewhere: "All the above goes to prove that the moral chord we are speaking of has begun to vibrate also in the West. Nevertheless, since in Nature the capacity for feeling pain keeps step with the intelligence, it is

not necessary that our sympathy with animals should lead us, like the Brahmans, to abstain from all animal food. Man would suffer more through such an abstinence, particularly in Northern climes, than the animal by a swift and wholly unexpected death—which ought to be still further eased, however, by chloroform. On the same principle man may also get the beasts to work for him, and it is only the excess of toil that turns to cruelty.”*

Now that we have had a full account of the “moral” standpoint on which Wagner and Schopenhauer were instinctively at one, let us return to its “metaphysical ground” as set forth by the latter in the closing pages of his *Grundlage* :—

Here Egoism and Altruism are first made to speak each for itself: “‘Individuation is real; the *principium individuationis*, with consequent distinction between individuals, is the order of things *a se*. Each individual is fundamentally different from every other. In my solitary self alone have I true being; all others are Not-I and strangers to me.’—Such is the creed, its truth borne witness to by flesh and bone, that lies at bottom of all Egoism; and every loveless, unjust or spiteful action is its material expression.—

“‘Individuation is a mere semblance (*Erscheinung*) born of Space and Time, which themselves are nothing further than the forms conditioned by my brain and governing all its objects; wherefore the plurality and diversity of individuals is also a mere semblance, i.e. exists nowhere but in my conception (*Vorstellung*). My true inner being just as immediately exists in all things living, as it manifests itself to me in my self-consciousness.’—Such is the belief, expressed in Sanscrit by the standing formula *tat-tvam-asi* (i.e. ‘this, too, is thou’), which emanates as *Mitleid*; such the cognition whereon all genuine, i.e. unselfish virtue rests; and each good deed is its material expression. At bottom it is this cognition to which every appeal to lenience, philanthropy or

* Here again one may detect signs of revision, and it would seem that native common-sense had brought our philosopher round to the Old Testament view, on this point, though he omits to accord the *amende honorable*. Similarly a long footnote to § 66 of vol. I. of *Welt* (3rd edition) ends with the significant remark: “This right of man, in my opinion, does not extend to vivisection, especially of the higher animals. On the other hand, the insect does not suffer so much by its death as man by its sting,—the Hindus do not see this.”

mercy, is addressed ; for every such appeal is a reminder of the regard wherein we all are one and the same being . . . The thrill of joy we feel at hearing of, still more at witnessing, and most of all at our own fulfilling of a noble action, reposes at its deepest bottom on the certainty it gives us that, on the other side of all plurality and difference upheld to us by the *principium individuationis*, there lies a unity of essence ; a oneness present in strict truth,—yes, and accessible to us, since it has just shewn forth in fact.

“According as the one or other of these views is held to, between being and being there issues either the *φιλία* or the *νεῖκος* of Empedocles. Yet if a man inspired by *νεῖκος* were hostilely to pierce into the inmost depth of his most hated foe, to his amaze he would find *himself* there. For, just as in dreams our own self lurks at bottom of every person that appears to us, exactly so is it in waking—though not so easy to perceive. But *tat-tvam-asi*.

“The predominance of one or other of those views betrays itself not merely in our single acts, but in our whole cast of consciousness and temper ; which therefore differs so essentially in the *good* character from that in the *bad*. The latter always has the feeling of a thick partition-wall between himself and all outside him ; to him the world is an *absolute Not-I*, and his relation thereto is a rootedly hostile one ; whereby the keynote of his temperament becomes malignity, suspicion, envy, delight in others' hurt.—The good character, on the contrary, lives in a world quite homogeneous to his essence ; to him the others are by no means Not-I, but ‘I once more.’ Wherefore his primary relation to everyone is that of friendship, he feels inwardly akin to every being, takes immediate interest in their weal and woe, and confidently presumes in them a like participation . . . The magnanimous man who forgives his enemy, returning good for evil, is sublime because he has recognised his inmost essence even where it flatly denied itself.

“When probed to its bottom, each unalloyed good deed, all purely unselfish help, is strictly a mysterious action, a piece of practical mysticism. For, the giving of so much as alms, without even distantly aiming at anything else than the relief of a lack which oppresses another man, is only possible through the giver's intuition that it is he himself that now appears to him beneath.

that mournful garb, i.e. through recognition of his own true essence in the stranger form. It is for this reason I have called Mitleid the grand mysterium of ethics."

Need we wonder at Wagner's "growing so fond of Schopenhauer," when he himself had made the *Mitleid* suddenly aroused in Brynhild the pivot of the whole tragedy of his RING DES NIBELUNGEN? Yet, for reasons already advanced (10 *sup.*), the above merely hints at the real nature of the "mystery"; under the vagueness of that "inmost essence," or "*Wesen an sich*," we are left to guess at Schopenhauer's central thought—the oneness of the *Will* at back of all phenomena. So we will return to Wagner himself, whom we have kept waiting over-long, with a request to tell us something more of this philosopher.

"For the moment I know of nothing to send that might interest you; I have quite given up reading, myself. So soon as I find something, tho', I'll share it with you." That is what Wagner had written to August Roedel in January 1854, at end of a strongly Feuerbachian letter (see iv, 213). The autumn of that selfsame year he *did* "find something," and this is what he writes to Roedel in February 1855: "I'll not philosophise with you to-day, but let another do it for me. I'm just sending an order to Leipzig to forward you a copy of Arthur Schopenhauer's book, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*. I hope its reading will not be forbidden you, as there's nothing in it of the least offence to your position [as political prisoner]. Since you are going to make acquaintance with this book itself, I shall tell you nothing of it; merely a few facts about its author. Schopenhauer is 62 years old now,* has been living at Frankfort in complete retirement on a small private income for a long time past,† and

* Born at Dantzig, Feb. 22, 1788, therefore just seventeen days short of 67. His father was a well-to-do merchant (died 1805), his mother, Johanna, a novelist of some note in her day.

† Schopenhauer withdrew to Frankfort in 1831, after about six years in Berlin, where he had spent some little time on two previous occasions—the first as a student under Fichte (1811-13) who greatly disappointed him, the second as a lecturer at the university (1820) for one unsuccessful term. The winter of 1813-14 he passed at Weimar, in Goethe's intimate society, after a short period at the university of Jena; it was Göttingen, however, that had been his Alma mater (1809-11). Travels in France, England and Italy, and a four-year residence in Dresden (1814-18), account for the rest of his earlier life.

has had the following history. His principal work was published so far back as 1819,* and he brought out a second edition of it, enlarged by one volume, in 1844. He made his appearance as immediate [intellectual] heir of Kant, and at the same time as Hegel. His philosophy, which throws the Fichte-Schelling-Hegel bosh and charlatanism completely overboard, was entirely ignored by the Professors, with the most deliberate slyness, for 40 years; not a creature heard a word about it. It was left for an English critic to make a positive discovery of him, and introduce him to the world through a long article in the *Westminster Review*.† The said critic expresses his astonishment at its having been possible to leave a mind of such pre-eminence unheeded for all

* With a preface dated "Dresden, August 1818." Thus its author may even have been unwittingly seen in the flesh by his future devotee, then an infant resident (turned 5) in the same capital. A more notable coincidence is the fact of Schopenhauer's very first treatise, the *Vierfache Wurzel etc.*—which obtained him the Doctorate—having been written and published in the year of Richard Wagner's birth.

† The article, "Iconoclasm in German Philosophy," said to have been written by John Oxenford, appeared in the issue of the *W.R.* for April 1853. Here are a few sentences from it: "Arthur Schopenhauer is one of the most ingenious and readable authors in the world, skilful in the art of theory building, universal in attainments, inexhaustible in the power of illustration, terribly logical and unflinching in the pursuit of consequences, and—a most amusing qualification to everyone but the persons 'hit'—a formidable hitter of adversaries. . . . And the philosophical world of Germany said—nothing . . . All over Germany were professorlings dotted about, receiving their snug salaries, and, without a spark of genius in their composition, retailing the words of some great master of philosophic art, and complimenting each other, as each brought out his trifling modification of a system which had been slightly modified from some previous modification, and yet could not Schopenhauer get a word of notice—not so much as a little abuse . . . [Coming to a then recent change of attitude.] The history of German philosophy published by Professor Fortlage in 1852—a book highly respectable of its kind—devotes a not over short chapter to the examination of Schopenhauer, as one of the remarkable phenomena of the present day, and though the professor differs from the non-professor, the difference is courteous. Two articles in the last number of J. H. Fichte's philosophical 'Zeitschrift' still more clearly show that Schopenhauer, if he is not liked, is, at any rate, deemed formidable."—Judging by the last extract, it would seem probable that Schopenhauer had himself been first to break the spell, through publication of his *Parerga und Paralipomena* in 1851. There can be little doubt, however, that it was the *Westminster Review*, as Wagner says, which drew to Sch. the notice of the world at large, and even of the larger German world.

but half a century; in the character of this philosophy itself, however, he naturally espies the explanation why the Professors, if they wished to hold their own, could do no else than seal this Schopenhauer hermetically from the world. Well, that article was done into German and reprinted in a Berlin newspaper; since when it has been impossible to overlook Schopenhauer any longer, and in consequence the miserableness of *post-Kantian* German philosophy stands nailed to the counter.—

“The book is of immeasurable importance, though in a sense that is bound to strike many as highly inconvenient. For my own part, I must tell you, my life-experiences had brought me to the very point where nothing but Schopenhauer’s philosophy could have wholly satisfied and influenced me. Through the ability to adopt his very, very serious truths without reserve, I have done the fullest justice to my inmost craving; and albeit he has given my mind a somewhat different bias from before, still it was the only one to answer to my deeply-suffering feeling of the essence of the world. The book will make a great and decisive impression on you as well; ay, if you ever stand in need of such a thing, perhaps you will derive from it the very solace the strongest mind most needs.—I shall say no more about it now; but we thus have won a fresh and lofty medium for future exchange of our thoughts. You were constantly in my mind when reading, and it is with a true feeling of reverence I now send you this work; for it has braced me to endurance, and given me power of renunciation, at a highly determinant crisis of my inner life. Now read it, please; I can shew you no greater benefaction!”

Between two and three months later, Wagner replies from London (letter vi) to Roeckel’s criticisms—unspecified save in one minor instance—starting by calling him “a confirmed optimist, with Judaism and your friend Paul pervading all your bones,” and then proceeding to a memorable synopsis of Schopenhauer’s teachings; from which I will only quote the opening and concluding passages, however, as the same subject is treated with even greater lucidity, and at less than half the length, in a letter to Liszt of about a month thereafter:

I had long found it difficult to maintain an optimistic footing in face of the perpetual evidence of my own eyes, and friend Sch. has simply helped by his enormous power to drive away the last Judaic

heresy and leave me—with much grief indeed, but also with the consolation of having shed the last stubborn illusion—as free as man can hope to be. The profoundest truth in Sch.'s teaching, a truth entirely accessible to none but the most superior minds, reposes on Kant's great discovery of the ideality of all phenomena. This is what we first must have fully grasped, ere we can take one further step toward estimation of the Thing-in-itself—which Kant, as you know, considered quite beyond the bounds of apprehension, but Schopenhauer denotes with striking sureness as the *Will*. For myself, I don't pretend to be able to go through the process of solving that chief problem every instant, to say nothing of explaining it clearly to others; the becoming perfectly aware of the ideality of Time, Space and Causality,* of their being mere *forms* of our knowledge, is so sublime an event in our consciousness, that—as Sch. makes quite plain—it can only take place in a brain quite abnormally organised, and even then in none but a state of quite peculiar exaltation. Once it has happened, however, as at a wizard's wand there vanish all the illusions with which our discernment had theretofore been bound, and suddenly we lack the tongue itself to tell what we have seen; for our language has been shaped to serve an altogether different mode of knowledge. . . .

I will take the first opportunity to send you Sch.'s minor essays also; among which is a very exhaustive paper on Somnambulism etc., whence you will see how uniquely this philosopher has penetrated the problem involved in that phenomenon, and how from its evidence of a second perceptive faculty he derives the most convincing proofs for

* It may assist the reader, to be informed that "Causality" and "Matter" are virtually interchangeable terms in this philosophy. In the *Vierfache Wurzel* says Schopenhauer, "Matter itself is nothing but Causality objectively viewed," and in *Welt*, "The whole essence of Matter consists in operation (*Wirken*), i.e. in Causality," in which connection he quotes Kant's dictum that "Matter is the mobile in space (*das Bewegliche im Raum*)." In other words, Causality is that intercrossing of the ideas of Time and Space whereby we become conscious of, or conceive to ourselves, the persistence (endurance) of "substance" concurrently with changes (succession) in its "condition" or "quality." As for the "ideality," or "apriority," of these three fundamental "forms" of knowledge, its meaning is that our intellect cannot possibly divest itself of them when dealing with any "outer" experience, since they are the tools forced on it by its very nature, its peculiar attributes *prior* to all experience. Thus, before we even begin to think, our brain has furnished us with glasses, so to speak, which conceivably may distort everything presented to them, and certainly can never enable us to pierce into the heart of things. Is it possible to dispense with those glasses? Schopenhauer holds that it is—if we look *inward*, i.e. into our own self, where we are conscious of a Will at work.

the ideality of our ordinary mode of perception, for the oneness of the Will in all things living, and for the unreality—quite palpable here—of Individuality ; which will most materially help you to grasp the problem of Denial of the Will.

Enough said. My demonstration was much less meant to instruct *you* . . . than to make the thing quite clear to *myself* again. For I must tell you, I am applying this profound philosophy to my observations of every day, and regard the world now with an eye that shews me things whose operation irresistibly engrosses me ; things I had almost stubbornly tried to cheat myself, before, into an optimistic dream about. What particularly touches my heart, and more each day, is our relation to the dumb beasts we abuse and maltreat so disgracefully ; and I'm delighted to be able to indulge without shame in that very strong fellow-feeling I have always cherished for them, no longer to have to seek for sophisms to gloze men's wickedness in this regard.—

Thus the Schopenhauer "demonstration" to Roeckel ends with the selfsame cry as that which started us on our inquiry. We shall find it echoed in the letter to Liszt of June 7, 55, the 'Dante' part whereof I cited in vol. v :

You once told me that man was '*une intelligence, servie par des organes.*' Were that the case, how badly the overwhelming majority of men would come off, who have nothing but 'organs' and as good as no 'intelligence' (at least in your sense). To me the thing looks otherwise, and thus : Man (like every animal) is a will to life, for which he shapes him organs according to his need. Among those organs he also shapes himself an intellect, i.e. an organ for apprehending outer things, with the purpose of employing them to satisfy his life-need to the best of his strength and ability. The *normal* man is therefore the man in whom this outwardly-directed organ—whose function is cognition, just as that of the stomach is digestion—is equipped with just sufficient force to gain the satisfaction of his life-needs from without ; and these life-needs consist—with the *normal* man—in nothing else than with the lowest beast, namely in the craving for aliment and that for propagation. For this Will-to-life, the true metaphysical bed-rock of all existence, wills absolutely nothing but—to live, i.e. to feed and everlastingly reproduce itself ; and this its bent may be shewn to be one and the same in the dull stone, the daintier plant, right up to the human animal : merely there is a difference in the organs which, arrived at the higher grades of its objectivation, it must use to satisfy more complicated, and therefore more and more oppugned and less easily quieted needs. Once we have gained this insight (confirmed by the stupendous results of recent Natural Science*), of a sudden

* This was four years ere publication of *The Origin of Species*, though the

we also understand the characteristic of the life of by far the greatest portion of mankind in every age, and are no longer surprised at their appearing as nothing but beasts : for that is man's *normal* nature.

However, just as an immensely large number of men remain *below* this norm—the complex organ of perception not being developed in them even to the capability of entirely satisfying the normal needs—so *abnormalities* appear (of course, extremely seldom) in which the usual standard of the perceptive organ, i.e. the brain, is overpassed ; just as Nature often forms monsters, you know, in which *one* organ is developed out of all proportion to the rest. Such a monstrosity, when it appears on the highest grade, is *genius* ; which at root is based on nothing but an abnormally full and ample brain. Well, this perceptive organ, which originally and in normal cases looks outward only to procure contentment for the needs of the will-to-life—in the case of abnormally strong development this organ reaps such vivid and absorbing impressions from without, that it temporarily looses itself from service to the will (which formed it for precisely nothing but *its* purpose) and attains to a will-less, i.e. æsthetic contemplation of the outer world. The objects of the outer world beheld in this will-less fashion are its ideal types [in other words, 'Platonic Ideas'], and their fixation, as it were, is what—the *artist* tries for. The interest in the outer world which such a mode of viewing it arouses, in powerful natures this interest waxes to a prolonged oblivion of the original needs of one's personal will ; thus—to the point of *sympathy* with the things outside one, and that for their own sake, no longer for any personal interest.

Now, the question is, *what* do we behold in this abnormal state, and whether our sympathy can be a *Mitfreude* ["rejoicing with"] or a *Mitleiden* ["suffering with"]. Its answer is supplied us by the veritable *geniuses** and veritable *saints* of all the ages, who tell us they have seen but *pain* and felt but *pity*. For they recognised the *normal* constitution of all living things, and the appalling nature of their common *will-to-life* ; a will which for ever opposes, everlastingly rends itself, and blindly wills *itself* alone. Here the awful cruelty of this Will, whose chief object even in sexual love is nothing but its reproduction, for the first time stood mirrored in that perceptive organ subjected to it in the *normal* state ; and that organ recognised itself as normally subjected to this Will, created by it. And then, in its abnormal state of sympathy, that organ fell a-seeking to emancipate itself, at last for ever, from such a shameful service ;

results of the Darwinian "Struggle for Life" seem to be almost on the tip of Wagner's tongue ; just as they hover round some of the pages of his mentor Schopenhauer, for all the latter's strong dislike of countenancing "evolution."

* Surely Goethe, for one, is momentarily forgotten here.

which could be finally achieved no other way than by complete Denial of the Will-to-life.

This act of Denial of the Will is what the Saint intrinsically fulfils. That it can find fulfilment only in complete repeal of personal consciousness—there is no other consciousness, however, than the individual personal—might escape the naive Christian saints imbued with Jewish dogmas ; in their trammelled fancy they might picture the state they yearned for as an everlasting survival in a new life released from Nature. Yet that ought not to mislead our judgment of the moral import of their renunciation ; for they aspired in truth to nothing other than the sinking of their individual personality—i.e. of their existence.

This profoundest craving is expressed more purely and significantly, however, by the oldest religion of the human race, the ur-hallowed Brahman doctrine, more particularly in its crowning transfiguration by Buddhism. Certainly it, too, propounds its myth of an origination of the world by God ; only, it does not extol that act, but represents it as a sin of Brahma's, who *transformed himself into this world*, does penance for it precisely through the monstrous sufferings of this world, and redeems himself in person of those saints who through complete denial of the Will-to-life in their sole remaining feeling, of sympathy with all that suffer, pass over to "Nirvana," i.e. the land of Being-no-more. One such a saint was that Buddha. According to his doctrine of Metempsychosis (*Seelenwanderung*) every living entity (*jeder Lebende*) is reborn in the form of that creature upon whom, even in a life of flawless conduct otherwise, it had inflicted pain of any kind,—reborn to learn that pain in its own person ; and this pilgrimage of suffering will not end for it, i.e. it will never *cease* to be reborn, until after one of its rebirths it shall have put no hurt on any creature, but in its fellow-feeling with them shall have totally denied itself, its own will of life.

How sublime and solely-satisfying is this doctrine as against the Christian-Jewish dogma, according to which a human being—in its eyes the suffering *beast*, of course, exists for nothing but man's service!!—has only to be nice and obedient to the Church for a short lifetime, to be rewarded by eternities of utmost pleasantness, whilst the disobedient in this same short life are to be just as eternally tortured!—Nevertheless, the reason why Christianity has such a contradictory appearance to us, is simply that we know it only in its blend with and distortion by close-hearted Judaism ; whereas present-day research has conclusively shewn that pure and unadulterated Christianity is nothing more nor less than a branch of that venerable Buddhism which found its way to the shores of the Mediterranean after Alexander's Indian expedition. In the earliest Christianity we still can see plain traces of complete denial of the

Will-to-life and a longing for the foundering of the world, i.e. for the cessation of existence.

The worst of it is, though, that those profoundest glimpses into the essence of things are only to be gained by quite *abnormally* organised men—as defined above—therefore, also, can be completely understood by them alone. To convey such glimpses, the exalted founders of religions must consequently speak in parables, which alone are approachable by the common (normal) understanding. If that process in itself disfigures much (though the Buddha's doctrine of soul-migration almost exactly hits the truth), man's normal lowness and the wantonness of universal egoism necessarily warp the parable at last into a parody, and—I pity the poet who undertakes to retransform that parody into its archetype [—here we link up again with Dante's *Paradise*, cf. vol. v].

For all practical purposes, the above contains the pith of Schopenhauer's system, its quintessence, and none but a mind of at least equal power of intuition could have reproduced it in such a compass without distortion. Further, none but a temperament itself inclined to Pessimism—or let us say, physiologically driven thereto from time to time—could have so unreservedly endorsed the ultimate doctrine, or more correctly dogma, of Denial of the Will-to-life. How *both* men may have been physiologically disposed towards the pessimistic view, I shall presently endeavour to explain; meanwhile let me cite a few extracts from the philosopher's opus maximum, in proof that Wagner has by no means exaggerated what the poor "normal" mind must needs consider Schopenhauer's too gloomy outlook—for all the inspiration of his main idea.

In the last chapter of the second, i.e. later volume of *Welt*, the author himself observes:

People have decried the melancholy, cheerless nature of my philosophy. Nevertheless it simply consists in my having substituted for the fable of a future hell a proof that where the guilt lies, namely in the world, there is hell enough already: whoever chooses to deny it, has only to make the experiment for himself.—And to this world, this cockpit of scared and tortured beings that can only subsist by devouring their neighbours; where every beast of prey is accordingly the living tomb of a thousand others, and its self-preservation a long chain of martyr-deaths; where the capacity for feeling pain increases with that for perception, attaining its highest pitch in man, and the higher the finer his intellect,—to this world have people tried

to fit the scheme of *Optimism* and demonstrate it as the best of all possible! The absurdity is blatant! . . . Honestly and seriously, one might go the length of facing Leibnitz' palpably sophistic proofs that this world is the best among possible ones with the counter-proof that it is the *worst* of all possible. For "possible" does not connote a wild creation of one's fancy, but what might actually exist and hold together. Very good: this world is so constructed as to be able to hold out at a pinch; but were it just a trifle worse, it could not go on existing. Consequently a worse, as it could not hold out, is utterly impossible; wherefore this world itself is the worst among possible ones.

The begged premise in "it *could* not" is as typical of the pessimist as of the optimist, or any other -imist. But let us take the opening of the selfsame chapter, characteristically headed, "Life's nullity and suffering":

Awakened to life from the night of unconsciousness, the Will finds itself as an individual in an endless, boundless world, among innumerable individuals all straining, suffering, straying; and it hurries back to its old unconsciousness as if through a troubled dream. Till then its wishes are unbounded, its demands inexhaustible, and each wish gratified but bears a fresh one. No possible satisfaction in all the world could suffice to still its longing, to set a final goal to its desires, or fill up the bottomless gulf of its heart. Then see what are the satisfactions, as a rule, which fall to man! For the most part they amount to nothing beyond a meagre maintenance of this existence itself, amid unceasing toil and constant care, at daily war with want—with death for prospect . . . Old age and death, whereto each life is necessarily hastening, are the sentence on the Will-to-life passed by Nature herself; a sentence which tells us this Will is an effort foredoomed to frustrate itself. "What you have willed," it says, "ends thus. Will something better."

The voice of Fafner echoes to us from the "sentence's" first half*; but what of the second? There might be hope in it, were it not for the context; but a "——" resumes the pessimistic keynote.

Strangely enough, we *shall* find a ray of hope half-hidden in the riper pages almost smuggled into the set body of this work, and I cannot help feeling that if that ray had come to Schopen-

* It would be of interest to ascertain whether this particular passage existed prior to the third edition (Sept., 1859) or literally *was* an echo from the RING (presented by Wagner to Schopenhauer, as we know, Dec. '54).

hauer in earlier years, when his mind was more malleable, we might have had a much less pessimistic system. To that point I shall also return, but must first deal with the real obstacles he had raised against any *cheerful* acceptance of the supreme discovery he laid bare to the world when he pointed to the Will as its master-key. For, despite—or because of?—his enormous powers of grasp and concentration, he invariably takes the blackest or the whitest view of things, and principally the blackest; with Schopenhauer there are no greys.

Doubtless one might find more of the said obstacles, but it is to four main factors in his pessimist scheme I wish to draw attention:—

1*) His repeated assertion that Pain is positive, and Pleasure merely its negation, e.g.: “All satisfaction, or what one generally calls happiness, is essentially and exclusively *negative*, and absolutely never positive . . . Want, i.e. pain (*Schmerz*), is the only thing presented to us directly; satisfaction or enjoyment we can only know indirectly, through recollection of the suffering and deprivation that went before, and ceased at its entry” (*Welt* I. § 58). In an instant we shall learn the ulterior purpose of such sweeping statements; but nothing could be easier, than to shew that at least some forms of enjoyment are as “positive” as could be wished. Watch any young animals at play, human or otherwise, and you may convince yourself. Moreover, personally Schopenhauer was very fond of music, and daily played the flute for his private enjoyment: surely when he came to some passage that pleased him still more than its predecessor, he did not tell himself it gave his ear less pain? It might have pained him, indeed, to hear a false note; but the strict negation of that would have been dead silence. And this, in fact, is what he really is driving at. Almost naive is its confession in the passage directly following that “Will something better,” where we are first told that “We feel pain, but not painlessness” and so on (how *could* we feel a *non-excitant*? but some people like being tickled or stroked); then, that “our existence is the happiest when we have the least sensation of it—whence it follows that it were better not to have any at all”; and finally: “The fact of thousands having lived in happiness and joy, could never annul the anguish and death-torment of a single creature; and just as little does my present wellbeing make my past

sufferings a non-occurrence. Wherefore if there were a hundred times less evil (*Uebel*) in the world than is the case, its bare presence would suffice to prove that we ought much rather to deplore than rejoice at the world's existence,—that its non-existence would be preferable,—that it is something which fundamentally ought not to be." Thus the mere admixture of pain or "evil," no matter its proportion, is to condemn the whole world as a dismal failure, since happiness, or "good," is negative and therefore cannot count!

2°) His equally frequent insistence on the "immutability of the empiric character"—in less scientific language, of the character a man brings into, and carries through the world with him. Here is one of the passages, from *Welt* I. § 23: "*A priori* each man thinks himself quite free, even in his single actions, and imagines he could start another course of life at any moment; which would mean his becoming another man. *A posteriori*, through experience, he finds to his astonishment he is not free, but governed by necessity; he finds that his conduct does not alter, in spite of all his resolutions, and from beginning to end of his life he must carry out the same character, even though he disapprove of it, and play the rôle once undertaken by him, as it were, to its finish." Similarly in cap. 41 of vol. II.: "Even the stark immutability and intrinsic limitation of every individuality, as such, would engender such disgust at last by its monotony, if endlessly prolonged, that for mere sake of being rid of it one would prefer to turn to nothing. To demand immortality for the individuality, is tantamount to wishing to perpetuate an error without end. For, at bottom, every individuality is nothing but a special error, a mistake, something which had better not be; ay, to bring us back wherefrom is the strict purpose of life."—It would take far too long to go into the eternal problem of Freedom and Necessity with Schopenhauer's specific treatment of it, but the bare assertion of a "stark immutability" (*starre Unveränderlichkeit*) of every human being's character from cradle to grave is an even more pessimistic axiom than number 1. The bareness of the assertion, moreover, is unconsciously betrayed in cap. 18 of the same volume, where we hear that "no one knows his character *a priori*, but has to learn it from experience, and *always incompletely*." If the last two words (italicised by me) be true, and also the next sentence, "Nevertheless our knowledge of the

promptings and acts of our own will is far more direct than any other"—if these two premises be rightly stated, it inevitably follows that one can have so little direct knowledge of the character of other individuals as to make it quite impossible to generalise on the "*immutability*" of Character. In the *Parerga* (II. cap. vi) in fact, Schopenhauer himself affirms that, as the individual's life proceeds, "our temperament, albeit not our character, undergoes certain well-known changes." Our "temperament"—but how is that distinguishable from our "character"? He makes no such attempt, but doggedly maintains his old pessimist position in face of what appears to be a notable concession. And why this "stark immutability"? Seemingly because admission of the smallest possibility of radical improvement in Character would yield a hope that Life had something positive to its credit in the long run; or in the words of Tennyson, "That men may rise on stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things." This, of course, is closely connected with

3°) His repudiation of any approach to "evolution" (præ-Darwinian of course), thus expressed in vol. I. § 53: "Remote as heaven from any philosophic knowledge of the world is everyone who fancies he can grasp its nature by any kind of *historic* procedure, however well disguised; which is the case as soon as one introduces into one's conception of the world's essential nature any manner of *becoming*, or having become, or being about to become, and lays the faintest stress on Sooner or Later . . . All such Historic philosophy [Hegel?] behaves as if Kant had never been, and applies *Time* to things-in-themselves; it holds fast to what Kant calls the Appearance (*Erscheinung*) in distinction from the Thing-in-itself, to what Plato calls Becoming as distinguished from Being, or the Indians call the Veil of Maya . . . The genuine philosophic method, teaching us to recognise the inner essence of the world and thus wafting us above Appearance, is precisely that which does not ask the Whither, Whence or Why, but always and exclusively the *What*; i.e., which does not regard things according to any sort of relation, neither views them as becoming nor as vanishing . . . but looks to the world's unchanging essence, its Ideas."—That is the extreme Idealist position, and, save for its last two words (paradoxical as this may sound), a strict deduction from the

theorem that Time, Space and Matter are mere figments of our brain. But it is scarcely a secure foundation for a volume, or even a brief chapter, of any but destructive philosophy; for, strip it of the (Platonic) "Ideas"—which haven't a logical foot to stand on if you cut off "*irgend eine Relation*"—its only possible expression is the Indian "Oum," which itself has two letters too many. When you disregard it *in part*, however, and attempt to discuss "Relations" without admitting even so much as the reality of Succession—the only philosophic pretext for ruling Evolution out of court—your thoughts are liable to trip you up at every turn. Thus we pass to § 58 of the same volume: "Human life, like every other phenomenon, is an objectivation of the Will; which itself is a straining without a goal, without an end . . . Every individual, every human face and every life-career, is but another brief dream of the eternal Nature-spirit, of the enduring Will-to-life; another fleeting picture which it draws for pastime on its endless scroll of Space and Time, lets remain an infinitesimal while, then sponges out to make place for another. Nevertheless—and here is the serious side of life—each of these fleeting pictures, these empty whims, must be paid for by the whole Will-to-life, in all its vehemence, with deep and countless sorrows, and long-dreaded bitter death at last."—Could anything be more horrible to contemplate in its purposeless torture? Yet, if Time, Space and Causality were utterly inapplicable to the Thing-in-itself, i.e. to the Will, one would have thought these "dreams" must be of still less consequence to it than nightmares to our waking selves! And in fact we find Schopenhauer compelled to admit to himself at length a species of evolution. Even in his first description of the various grades of "objectivation of the Will," from the "nature-forces" (gravity, crystallisation, &c.) right up to man, it is with difficulty one can shake off the thought that he is dealing with cumulatively *successive* stages; but when we come to his chapter on "Teleology," vol. II., the evolutionary idea stands out quite sharp. Here, speaking of the "homology" of the skeleton in all vertebrates, he remarks, "This all points to a fundament, what Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire calls the 'anatomic element,' on which the teleologic principle upbuilds . . the particular key, as it were, in which Nature here chooses to play her tune"; and a few pages later, "Nature does not begin again from the beginning, with each of her productions, and create

from nothing ; she links on to the existing, makes use of earlier moulds, develops them and raises them to a higher pitch, to carry her work still farther.”—If that be not “evolution” combined with the denounced “becoming,” what is? But again we must remember that we are in the *later* volume: Schopenhauer’s own cast of thought had ‘evolved’ meanwhile—a consideration apparently overlooked alike by his disciples and detractors.*

4°) His identification of “the Will” † with the “Will-to-life”—e.g., “it is merely a pleonasm, if we say ‘Wille zum Leben’ instead of plump ‘the Will’” (I. § 54)—and virtual restriction of that Will-to-life to its most elementary manifestations, the lowest forms of craving for self-maintenance and reproduction. Naturally, anyone of refinement would deem life not worth the living, if *those* were its sole or main factors. Yet it appears to be against their sovereignty alone, that the whole Denial maxim is directed ; and we ask in wonder, what has become of the “basis of morality, *Mitleid*,” which we had been told was a recognition of “our own essence in another”? That certainly is the rock on which his Will-denial splits, dropping the chief part of its pessimist cargo, if he would but confess it ; for the chapter on “Ethics,” toward the end of vol. II., tells us: “My philosophy is the only one which accords to morality its full and entire rights. For only if man’s essence is his *will*, consequently if he is own work in the strictest of senses, are his deeds really his and he accountable for them.”—

I said there lurked a ray of hope in that second volume. There are more rays than one, and here is another: “Death is man’s loss of one individuality and gain of another, consequently a change of individuality under the exclusive guidance of his own will. For, in the latter alone resides that eternal power which could bring forth his existence with his Me, yet is inherently unable to prolong it; death being the issue of a contradiction

* Why he did not entirely rewrite the first volume, instead of reprinting it with a few minor changes, Heaven only knows—perhaps from this delightfully human philosopher’s “immutable” obstinacy?

† As he proceeds, Sch. seems to draw a distinction between the universal Will, as an undivided whole, and its separate emanations, restricting the desire of life to *them*; but it is with the latter, i.e. with the Will as “objectified” that he really continues to deal—and necessarily so—saving when he soars into mysticism.

that lies in every individual existence" (*Welt* II. cap. 41). Whatever meaning one may choose for "individuality," here the man's deeper identity is distinctly said to be preserved in what has definitely become a *series* of existences. And now our philosopher honestly admits that Time, his former bugbear, is quite impossible to exclude from any mental speculation on man's being: "True, we can carry out no idea of the above entirely without employing terms of Time. Such terms should be excluded where the Thing-in-itself is concerned [according to his master, Kant], only it pertains to the unalterable confines of our intellect that it can never quite dispense with this first and most immediate form of all its operations. Wherefore we certainly have stumbled on a sort of Metempsychosis; albeit with the important distinction that it does not involve the whole $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$, i.e. not the *cognitive* part thereof, but solely the will—thus avoiding the many incongruities which accompany the doctrine of Metempsychosis—and moreover with the consciousness that the Time form here enters as nothing but an unavoidable accommodation to the limits of our intellect."

The most remarkable concession, however, is that which follows, explicitly admitting continuance of a modified individuality after death: "It would fit in well enough with our general view, if man's will, individual in itself [mark that], were parted from his intellect at death . . . and acquired a new intellect through a rebirth in harmony with his [or "its," i.e. his will's] now modified nature; thus becoming a new being with no remembrance of a previous existence, since the intellect (which alone has the faculty of remembrance) is the perishable portion, or form, but the will the everlasting substance. Such a process would be more correctly called Palingenesis, than Metempsychosis, and these repeated rebirths would constitute the successive life-dreams of an indestructible will (*eines an sich unzerstörbaren Willens*); repeated till, taught and bettered (*gebessert*) by so great and varied a succession of knowledge [experiences] in constantly fresh form, it finally repealed itself. This view, moreover, is in agreement with what may be termed the esoteric doctrine of Buddhism as disclosed to us by the latest researches, which expounds with great profundity a peculiar theory of palingenesis resting on a moral basis—as is to be seen in Spence Hardy's *Manual of Buddhism* . . . Köppen's compendium of Buddhism

also gives us the correct account of this point. For the great mass of Buddhists, however, this doctrine is too subtle; wherefore metempsychosis is preached to them as a simpler surrogate."

From the date of C. F. Köppen's volume, elsewhere given by Schopenhauer as 1857,* it is clear that the last passage is one of the very latest additions to our philosopher's great work and therefore marks an instructive advance in his view of the Will, particularly the *individual* will—though one still fails to see how an "indestructible" entity can ever "repeal itself" (*sich selbst aufhobe*). Even without appealing to more modern expositions of esoteric Buddhism, we may conclude from Schopenhauer's own words that he ended by believing in at least a possible "betterment" of the Will, and that through a varied series of individual experiences. Consequently, that "stark immutability of character" has implicitly vanished from the board; for, if one incarnation could never effect the smallest change or modification in the individual will, neither could a hundred nor a thousand times one, still less the periods of quiescence in between. So we wind up with a true "moral meaning" for objective existence, and a meaning strong enough to rout all pessimism in the end. Having come to curse the Will-to-life, the prophet has remained to bless it—in disguise.

All that it really needed, was to cast off the yoke imposed upon him by too strict observance of Kant's taboo. It is well to remind oneself now and again that Time, Space and Causality are implements of man's own intellect; but they are the only fundamental implements possessed by it, and to forbid the use of them for anything beyond Appearances, is to fetter thought forever to Appearances and deny it even a guess at what lies beyond. Where is the satisfaction of being told there is a Thing-in-itself (or haply, many) but you mustn't dare to form any conception of it, as you would be applying your only available forms of apprehension to something they cannot grasp? The net result, is to drive one either to rank materialism or a state of Berkeleyan blank. Clearly it was rebellion against a choice

* We find Wagner referring to it in his Venice Diary of October 1858 (*R. W. to M. Wesendonck*). Varnhagen von Ense had written Princess Carolyne in May '58—in reply to an enquiry of hers—that he had "been unable as yet to obtain any particulars either of Köppen's work or its author" but had ordered the book.

between such alternatives, that pointed Schopenhauer towards the *inner* path: It stands to reason, that what I 'know' I *can* only know through an organ of knowledge, i.e. through an organ which *interprets* my sensations for me; but what is the "I" which possesses that organ (among others) and receives those sensations?—that is the vital question he asked himself. His answer was, My "will," the mainspring inside me that *acts* on receipt of sensations, the hidden energy that keeps my body going, brain and all, said body being but my will's "appearance" or "objectivation." Unfortunately, those ruthless Kantian Apriorities still raised their threatening fingers in his intellectual conscience, and warned him he wasn't 'playing the game' but trying to take the Thing-in-itself at a mean advantage; so he had to enter this caution: "If we abide by the only phenomenon (*Erscheinung*) to whose essence we have direct access from within, we undoubtedly find the Will as last word there and core of all reality. In this Will we therefore recognise the Thing-in-itself so far as it no longer has Space, but merely Time, as form; but with the consequent reservation, that we know it only in its directest manifestation, and that this knowledge cannot be quite adequate or exhaustive. It is in this sense we shall continue to speak of the Will as the Thing-in-itself" (II. cap. 41). To common sense the scruple against use of our *most* elementary concept, that of Time, when dealing with its obvious begetter, seems highly pedantic; but that is how Schopenhauer long allowed his exceptionally concrete-sighted intellect to be half-bandaged by adoration of his abstraction-loving predecessor. And what had raised the scruple? Remorseless logic; which by its very nature is a *secondary* department of that selfsame organ of knowledge, and can by no possibility have an original idea of its own—therefore takes its revenge by eternally croaking "You must not"! Unless we are to remain in a state of complete darkness for ever, we *must* use the eyes provided us by Nature (or the Will itself), and take the chance of their deceiving us at times. Instead of apologising for speaking in terms of pure Time (as distinguished, of course, from its parcelling into seconds or centuries), ought we not rather to feel ashamed that we have been unable as yet to discover a second dimension thereof?

However, Schopenhauer struck an *inner* path, as said. Two pages later: "At death our consciousness is lost, but not

what brought forth consciousness and maintained it; our life is extinguished, but not together with it the principle of life which manifested itself therein. A sure feeling tells everyone there is something absolutely imperishable and indestructible within him . . . though he could not make plain to himself what that imperishable may be. It is as little the consciousness as it is the body on which that consciousness so manifestly reposes; rather is it that whereon the body, together with the consciousness, reposes. But this is the very thing that, when it falls into our consciousness, presents itself as *will*. Beyond this its most immediate *Erscheinung* we certainly cannot get, because we cannot get beyond our consciousness; wherefore the question what that thing may be insofar as it *does not* fall into our consciousness, i.e. what it absolutely is in itself, remains unanswerable." That is the only possible reply to sticklers for unadulterated Reason: to whatever perfection consciousness might ultimately attain, it must ever take something for granted; the Thing-in-itself can *be*, but never be quite 'known,' simply because knowledge or consciousness presupposes a medium or interpreter. Once *that* is realised, the coast is clear: let the Thing-in-itself go to Jericho with its absurd elusiveness; its "*most* immediate *Erscheinung*"—forgive the German term—is good enough for us.

And here the boon conferred by Schopenhauer is revolutionary, so revolutionary that it seems likely to need several generations of thinkers, to reap its full benefit. At one bound he has leapt to the centre of all things—always excepting that coy In-itself—and given us a master-key to all the forces in the world yet dimly known to us, possibly to the whole universe. Never mind his sometimes running down the Will as evil (against his will, he could not keep the slander up); the huge importance of his inspiration ("wrought from an inward call," he truly says of it), is that it brings all the so-called 'nature-forces'—energies before which the greatest adept in physics bows his head with a confession of blank ignorance of their true nature—into line with that we feel in every movement of our body, every prompting of our heart. He repudiates the term "soul," because of its habitual restriction to the thinking faculty (see our old friend, that *Peep of Day*); but here we have a soul of much higher potency, a Will-soul eventually creating for itself a body and brain by one of its mere desires to enter into "matter"; which, again, is but its own

materialisation, *alias* "objectivation." Once you admit the legitimacy of conceiving this Will in terms of Time, the whole implicit scheme of evolution acquires a vastly wider scope. Each step yet taken by the Will, from its first cleavage into forces of attraction and repulsion, to its infinite varieties of human individualisation, and those nascent manifestations of inter-individual 'will power'—which Schopenhauer was naturally the first big thinker to treat with seriousness—in this light may be regarded as the mere prologue to a never-ending play. When our sage condemned the Will as evil, because of its present clashings right and left, may he not have been far too impatient? The first swings of the pendulum are always over-violent, and with billions of years to look forward to, who shall say that all the cruelties of animal inter-opposition may not tame down by natural 'laws,' as the telluric energies appear to have done save for an occasional outburst of temper? And what does it matter how long this little globe of ours may last, with myriads of others for our descendants, including our re-embodied selves, to migrate to? With a Will that already has worked such wonders in its blindfold stage, to what may we not look forward in the distant future of its enlightenment? May not the coarser energies be working themselves out even now, just as the wolf has been suppressed in England by the hunter; may they not be transforming themselves into finer, just as the elementary forces in his food are converted into the infinitely higher energy of such a brain as Schopenhauer's? If the will of each of us has made his present body—i.e. gathered unto itself an assemblage of 'forces' which represent themselves to the eye and touch as the thing we call a human body—why should it stop short at that in its next 'embodiment'; having learnt the disadvantages of so gross a covering, why should it not invest in a far more ethereal envelope on its next or some future 'appearance'? It is merely a matter of time, and the time-possibilities ahead of a disembodied will must be infinite.

Then our moral qualities. Sch. himself confessed that a more humanitarian spirit had come over Europe even in his lifetime; is that a sign of ineradicable turpitude in this "all-devouring" will, even though it still has its shameful accesses of slaughterous Jew-baiting and the like? Patience, patience! "Durch Mitleid wissend," were it not better to subdue the baser passions in

oneself, and help the wills of weaker vessels to struggle upward, than to fold one's hands and "deny" the whole because a part, however large as yet, is bad? Hovering in the background, that seems to be the true purport of Schopenhauer's latest writings :

Arise and fly
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast ;
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

Surely that is nobler than a life of Quietism. And should one now and then feel faint and heartsick, even in the thick of the fight there always is that *temporary* refuge, the central peace a man may find at bottom of his deepest heart (as Sachs did), all consciousness forgotten for a spell. Let him not abide there too long—that is all—for work will still be waiting for his hand and brain, and ever must his Will be wrought to finer faculty of use and service. What of the opposition of contending energies ! If the thumb did not oppose the fingers, and its own flexor and extensor muscles oppose each other, you never could pick up so much as a pin. Schopenhauer himself admits that we were not, and cannot, be bidden to love our neighbours *more* than ourselves ; so let us not be too afraid of Egoism, if only it be held in check by Altruism. At the very end of a life spent in honestest labours for the enlightenment of himself and posterity, he confessed he had no prospect of Nirvana yet ; he must have felt that work still lay for him to do beyond the grave, and

That each, who seems a separate whole,
Should move his rounds, and fusing all
The skirts of self again, should fall
Remerging in the general Soul,
Is faith as vague as all unsweet :
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside."

And if, at last we do "remerge," depend on it "the general Soul" will waken from its lethargy once more, will individualise again in forms still higher. If end of all things there ever is to be, we can conceive it still less possibly than a beginning ; we ought to vex our souls no more with problematic happenings so infinitely remote. Sufficient for us to feel something within us, that mighty power the Will, which tells us plainer than all words,

This cannot be our first "objectivation" and will not be our last—not even if we chose so.

Somewhat thus did Wagner ultimately interpret to himself "friend Schopenhauer's" grand inspiration; as may be seen in *Parsifal* and the Bayreuth essays. But since it was Sch.'s Pessimism and specific antidote therefor, that first attracted him, the time has come to seek a physiologic reason for the pessimistic trend in both these geniuses.

In the third volume of Dr Geo. M. Gould's *Biographic Clinics* (1905) one reads: "Without a thought of the class to which they may belong, make a list of the literary pessimists of the last century, and another list of the optimists. The pessimistic or gloomy writers and artists were almost entirely great sufferers from eyestrain and from its result, migraine. They were, for instance, Nietzsche, the two Carlyles, de Maupassant, George Eliot, Wagner, Tchaikowsky, Chopin, Symonds, Tolstoi, Heine, Leopardi, Schopenhauer, Turner, Poe, and many others." To some of these, including Wagner, Dr Gould has devoted special studies, but not as yet to Schopenhauer; so that in the latter case I shall have to grope my way alone.

The reader will first want to know, however, precisely what is meant by "eyestrain." Excluding those less frequent cases in which coarser muscles are at fault—the muscles that roll the eyeball up or down, to right or left, whose imperfect balance is evidenced by squint, 'cast,' etc.—the "strain," as now generally understood, is experienced by a delicate little ring-shaped muscle situate just behind the iris (that coloured portion of the eye whose opening constitutes the 'pupil'). Now, this little annular device, called the "ciliary muscle," is attached to what may be termed the 'setting' of the "crystalline lens," and attached in such a manner that it can adapt, or "accommodate," the lens's shape to certain requirements of vision. Here you see at once a possibility of much exertion being thrown on this tiny muscle; but you will want to know the closer nature of those "requirements."

For this you must realise that the *distance* of the lens from the retina (the special receiver of the optical image for transmission to the brain) is a fixed quantity in every individual eye—the eye having unfortunately been supplied with no mechanism, similar to that of our field-glasses, for shortening or lengthening that

distance.* Consequently an eye that is longer than the average, from front to back, will possess clear vision for *near* objects, but be unable to see those beyond a certain distance quite distinctly; should it be handicapped *in no other way*, it has no natural choice but to rest content with a limitation it has no means within itself of overcoming. On the other hand, the ciliary muscle affords the normal eye a means of evading the disadvantage of that said fixed quantity; it enables the eye to bulge its lens into a more highly convex form, at will, and thus to obtain a more accurate focus for near objects, in addition to its normal sharpness of vision for those at a distance. If too long continued, that simple operation of itself may tire the eye; for, as Gould well says, "civilization puts the eye to a function for which it was not created or habited. The success of the animal or savage depended on sharp distant vision; that of the city-dweller usually on sharp near vision." But now comes the graver trouble: "It is impossible for nature, who never made anything perfect or symmetric, to make the eye an optically perfect instrument, either organic or functional. Helmholtz said of the eye that if his optician were to send him such an instrument he would return it for alterations. The least optical imperfection may endanger the organism and prevent success, and the efforts of compensation, especially in civilization, become as painful as are all excessive and continuous efforts, and even more so, because of the delicacy of the mechanism and the infinitesimal nature of the stimulus."

The ante-chamber of the eye, to wit, is closed in with a kind of watch-glass to protect its inner works from the slightest speck of dust or other intrusive foreign matter; this watch-glass, let into the 'white' of the eye, is scientifically called the "cornea." Now, if the cornea were mathematically perfect in its curvature, the operation of that tiny ciliary muscle would be simple enough; but supposing the cornea even a little 'out of truth'—or

* At least, that is the opinion at present held by ophthalmologists. It may ultimately transpire, however, that our friend the ciliary muscle has a *limited* power of drawing the lens backward and forward, in addition to its power of compressing it—which latter power, again, may possibly be exercised rather in the direction of *allowing* it to revert to a more spheroidal shape by reducing the state of tension of its suspensory ligament. So far as concerns the intermediate causal links the rationale of the process is still *sub judice*; but the broader correlation of cause and effect is established by thousands of proofs.

“ametropic”—the ciliary muscle has to perform a highly complex act: in the subconscious endeavour to secure perfect definition of near objects, it has more or less successfully to squeeze the lens into an anomalous shape that shall exactly neutralise the error of corneal refraction. Thus the labours of our tiny ciliary muscle are infinitely increased by its conscientious efforts to meet a continual exaction of visual perfection from a physically imperfect instrument; we (i.e. the imperfectly equipped) have asked it to fulfil more than its bond, and if our demands are enforced beyond a certain duration (individually variable) it revenges itself on our general nervous system: “It is when the neutralization of the ametropia is possible and is attained with intense though perhaps unconscious exertion, when the eye does not suffer or lose clearness of vision—it is precisely then and then alone that appear the reflexes of dyspepsia, biliousness, headache, etc.”* Such is the gospel of Ocular Reflex, now gaining European converts every hour, but first preached by an American, Dr S. Weir Mitchell, in the early 'seventies, and thus summed up by him in 1876:

What I desire to make clear to the profession at large is:

1. That there are many headaches which are due indirectly to disorders of the refractive or accommodative apparatus of the eye.
2. That in these instances the brain symptom is often the most prominent and sometimes the sole prominent symptom of the eye troubles, so that, while there may be no pain or sense of fatigue in the eye, the strain with which it is used may be interpreted solely by occipital or frontal headache.
3. That the long continuance of eye troubles may be the unsuspected source of insomnia, vertigo, nausea, and general failure of health.
4. That in many cases the eye trouble becomes suddenly mischievous owing to some failure of the general health, or to increased sensitiveness of brain from moral or mental causes.

Now let me apply these principles to Schopenhauer, so far as that is possible with a man so extremely reticent, save indirectly, about his bodily condition.

In vol. II. of *Parerga* our philosopher devotes a special chapter to denunciation of street-noises (whip-cracking in particular), the personal application whereof is unmistakable in

* The quotations in this and the preceding paragraph are all from Dr Gould's first volume of *Biographic Clinics* (1903).

this sentence: "Eminent minds have always rebelled against any kind of interruption or disturbance, above all by noise." From a letter of his, to be presently cited, we happen to know that Schopenhauer had been all but stone-deaf of one ear, "as result of an illness," for nearly thirty years ere that remark was published, and about the latter period was "gradually and gently losing use of the other"; consequently it can scarcely have been over-alertness of the auditory organ itself, that inspired him with his abhorrence. On the other hand, Dr Gould has observed an "extreme sensitiveness to noise" in many of his eyestrain patients, and remarks on its presence in Carlyle, who was by no means musically inclined.

Turn back to *Welt* I. § 18, and you find a passage which may possibly date from the other extremity of Schopenhauer's literary life, though it is more probably of composite origin: "Every stronger affection of those organs of sense [sight, hearing and touch] is painful, i.e. goes against the will, to whose objectivity they also belong.—Neurasthenia (*Nervenschwäche*) is shewn when impressions which ought to be merely strong enough to make them data for the understanding, attain a degree of strength sufficient to move the will, i.e. rouse pain or pleasure—much oftener pain, though partly of a dull, vague nature; not only are single sounds and strong light felt painfully, in this condition, but even a general indefinite feeling of hypochondriacal malaise is occasioned." The construction of this last sentence is none of Schopenhauer's clearest, but that "im Allgemeinen krankhafte hypochondrische Stimmung, ohne deutlich erkannt zu werden" is really a notable anticipation, so far as it goes, of the latest etiology of obscure nerve-troubles. Moreover, after the "negative" character we have already seen assigned by him to pleasure, it hardly needs the testimony of his biographers,* to convince us that he was peculiarly sensitive to pain himself, like all our sufferers from astigmatism.

Passing to the record of his habits, we learn that he took brisk walking exercise for two hours every afternoon, "no matter what the weather"—another astigmatic sign. "That

* The English reader unacquainted with German could not do better than consult Helen Zimmern's *Arthur Schopenhauer*, for particulars of his life, though it was published (Longmans, Green) just thirty years ago.

these men lived to ripe old age," says Gould, "that their health improved as they grew older, that when very old most of them could outwalk all the young men [Sch. certainly did]—all this shows that their hearts were not organically diseased, that they were essentially physically sound, and that their ailment was truly functional. The demand and ability to carry out life-long physical exercise also points to an overplus of nerve force and an undeniable necessity of draining the surplus innervation to the large muscles of the body. But it also points more surely and clearly to the fact that only by this means could the eyes be rested and the source of reflex irritation shut off. That, or something like it, appears the plain philosophy of the 'nervousness' of eyestrain sufferers, and their absorbing need of physical activity. The greater number of literary men and intellectual workers show no such uncontrolled necessity, because they have no eyestrain. Whenever one has such patients, or reads of such men being great walkers, look out for eyestrain" (a hint to golfers, by the way). Connected with this is the limitation of Sch.'s working hours, for the best part of his life, to a mere three hours each morning; a most salutary restriction, on our hypothesis, but otherwise quite inconceivable with a brain of his calibre and power. Consider his literary output, remember that it covered close on half a century, and you will realise what the world thus lost.

The extent of his positive sufferings the world will never know, but we have a very serious indication of them, casting a lurid light on his pessimist world-view, in two letters from his mother and sister. The one, written in 1807 to a lad of nineteen, declines to have him live with her, for reason of "your ill-humour, your complaints of things inevitable, your sullen looks . . . Your laments over the stupid world and human misery give me bad nights and unpleasant dreams"—allowance must of course be made for the mother's selfishness and superficiality, but any such moroseness in a youth of talent is incompatible with nerves at ease. In the other letter his sister cannot understand his flying from the cholera in 1831 (Berlin), "considering how unhappy you also feel, and how often you have wished to flee from life by laying violent hands upon yourself." However, speaking of his typical "astigmatic" geniuses, Gould tells us: "One heartrending result of their exhaustion was the desire

or fear of death, or of worse than death, insanity . . . The peculiar nature of eyestrain, the rapidity with which it produces morbid reflexes, and is relieved, easily explains the facts of the coexistence and alternation of exhaustion and irritation. They are mere aspects of one neural and psychic fact."

We read that Schopenhauer thought glasses "noxious to the eyes, and avoided wearing them as much as possible" (Zimmern). That is quite *de règle*: "All except one or two"—says Gould, of his detailed inductive cases—"inheriting the traditional and ridiculous prejudice, affected to scorn spectacles. For the rest, none except one could have obtained scientifically correct ones, and only in his old age." Our philosopher was consequently right in practice, if not in general theory, since he died about a decad and a half ere scientific spectacles began to be invented anywhere. Being so short-sighted as unintentionally to 'cut' acquaintances in the street, had his defect of vision been mere myopia he would have derived practical benefit from the simple ready-made bi-concave glasses then procurable: as he found that they actually *hurt* him, just as a ready-made shoe hurts an abnormally-shaped foot, the obvious inference is that his myopia was complicated with astigmatism. In support of this last contention I may adduce his letter written at the age of 55 to Brockhaus, in which he begs that the second edition of *Welt* shall not be published in one volume, since "the print would be so small as to earn the name of eye-duster, and frighten many people off, especially the elderly." That the latter remark is 'two for himself' we may judge on passing farther down, where he upholds a certain fount of type as model: "these letters are easier to read than the narrow tall ones now in vogue"—precisely the astigmatic teasers—whilst he also objects to the "now customary machine-made vellum paper," undoubtedly because of its irritating gloss. Had his eyes been ordinary "short-sighted" ones, he is unlikely to have raised so many apt objections, for they would not have found the slightest difficulty with the smallest or spikiest type.

But that was written at the very age when the normal 'presbyopic' change—the last flickering efforts of the ciliary muscle to overcome the resistance of a slowly rigidising lens—must have been causing him most trouble. Contrast it with a letter to Frauenstädt of 13 years later, when the full establishment

of presbyopia had placed the punctilious little Ciliary on the retired list: "I run like a greyhound still, am in excellent health, blow my flute almost daily, swim in the Main of a summer, have no ailments, and my eyes are as good as in my student days" (here comes the bit about his hearing, cf 44 *sup.*). With final release from the continual drag of attempted 'accommodation' his spirits have gained an elasticity unknown in earlier life, a cheerfulness reflected in his later writings; and as for his myopic eyes being "as good as in his student days," with a low degree of astigmatism—sufficient to produce the earlier symptoms—any slight loss of definition in the near visual image would scarcely be noticed, as it had come on so gradually, even if the lens may not have been left with a permanent compensative flexure. What Gould says of Herbert Spencer may be applied in every syllable to Schopenhauer; his "'rejuvenescence' in old age, and his belief that 'nervous troubles may be assuaged with advancing years,' are but the philosophy of the presbyope who has never heard of the relief that always comes to the eyestrain patient when accommodation effort has become impossible, or when presbyopia has been fully established."—

Lest the above should be accounted a mere 'American notion,' before passing to the now proven case of Wagner I may mention that the third volume of Gould's *Biographic Clinics* includes reprints of articles by two eminent English ophthalmic surgeons fully endorsing his general deductions as a result of their own independent professional experience. One of these Englishmen thus sums up his "conclusions" from hundreds of cases treated by himself: "1) That eye-strain is the cause of a large proportion of headaches, often of a very aggravated character. 2) That various other neuroses are met with in association with headache, and among these may be mentioned the following: Mental depression, nausea, indigestion, vomiting, insomnia, giddiness . . . 3) That relief is afforded to these conditions by correcting the error of refraction, which can be ascertained only after careful examination . . . 5) That frequently no complaint is made of defect of vision," etc., etc.—The fifth conclusion, taken in conjunction with the second, is of the very highest importance, more particularly when dealing with purely inferential cases such as those of Schopenhauer, Spencer etc., and originally with that of Wagner.

The second English ophthalmologist—pardon the mouthful, but the profession here rejects the simpler designation “oculist” —after premising that his article will confine itself to “those slight degrees [of refractive error] which I find are so constantly overlooked, and yet whose influence upon the nervous system may be so far-reaching and disastrous,” proceeds: “Slight errors of refraction, dating as many of them do from birth, seem to have a very gradual injurious influence upon the nervous system, similar to the dropping of water upon a stone, and those who are the subjects of them are usually of the highly-strung, sensitive temperament . . . Owing to this slow action, and to the fact that in many cases there is little or no impairment of vision, their injurious influence often goes on for years, and the cause of the troubles to which they give rise is quite unsuspected.” In further course of his paper—read before a medical society, remember—we arrive at the tragic suggestion :

Were I to assert that error of refraction is responsible for a large proportion of the suicides occurring daily, and that it is a potent factor as a cause of insanity, that assertion would probably be held up to ridicule and dismissed as absurd. Many things appear at first sight improbable, but on reflection much less so, and I will ask you to reflect for a few minutes on this subject. When you have seen, as I have done in a very large number of cases, the effect of uncorrected errors of refraction on the nervous system, you will be struck by the great frequency of the occurrence of such symptoms as insomnia, great irritability, extreme depression, impaired memory, difficulty of concentration of thought, lack of self-confidence, apprehension, weariness and exhaustion, and a general want of stability of the nervous system. I have tried to illustrate error of refraction as the cause, and the correction of it the cure for these troubles. How often the patients have told me they have been on the verge of suicide, and have used the expression that they were afraid they were going out of their minds. It is quite conceivable that suicide would be more likely to occur in those who had been for a long time enduring the mental torture which results from the conditions I have enumerated, and which has rendered life a burden.

As a link between this appalling thought—the truth whereof is certainly self-evident—and the main subject of the present chapter, let me quote from an essay on “The History and Etiology of ‘Migraine’” in the same volume, by Dr Gould himself :

But the profoundest evil is the dejection and disgust with life that follows persistent use of astigmatic eyes. It is noticed in all the best literature of migraine; ill-humour, petulance, morbid introspection, irritability, proceed to melancholy and pessimism in the extreme cases . . . Wagner resolved to commit suicide many times when driven to desperation by his awful suffering. The effect of this mental torture and gloom in great literary workers is the almost single cause of the 'literary pessimism' in an age of rugged vigor, luxury and national expansion.

Now to point the moral in our hero's case, which at last is a very complete one.

It may be remembered that in the third volume of this *Life* (issued Spring 1903) I came to the conclusion that Wagner's constantly-recurring "malady was nothing deeper-seated than Megrin, alias migraine or 'sick-headache'" (iii, 410-2). But what might be the actual etiology of "Migraine" itself, I could no more tell my readers than I could discover in medical treatises or ascertain from pumping the various 'practitioners' with whom I came in contact. Then, on my repeating my unsatisfied query to the editor of our leading medical weekly, he offered to lend me a book just sent him for review, as it would probably allay my curiosity. That book, first of an eventual series of volumes, was entitled "BIOGRAPHIC CLINICS: The origin of the Ill-health of De Quincey, Carlyle, Darwin, Huxley and Browning," its author being Dr George M. Gould, of vast ophthalmic experience in Philadelphia. After devouring this book, which threw an entirely new light on my query, I boldly wrote to Dr Gould for his opinion on the case of Wagner, which to me seemed to shew marked similarities to the five prominent cases he inductively had diagnosed as eyestrain. From the brief particulars supplied by me, and notwithstanding my caution that Wagner was generally supposed to have remarkably 'strong sight,' Dr Gould at once inferred that this case was on all fours with those five. He then proceeded to work it out in detail, at hand of the biographies and collected letters, finally embodying his research in a long article published simultaneously in the London *Lancet* August 1, 1903, and the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. The following year, having meanwhile garnered eight additional literary cases—George Eliot, G. H. Lewes, Parkman, Mrs Carlyle, Herbert Spencer, Whittier, Margaret Fuller Ossoli

and *Nietzsche**—Dr Gould brought out a second volume of *Biographic Clinics*, in which his Wagner article was reprinted, of course, and thus made more accessible. For the full material of inductive proof, covering a dozen pages of small type, I therefore refer my readers to that book itself, confining my excerpts to more salient points in the summing-up:—

It should be noted that Wagner was a “delicate boy,” “a pale slim little chap” . . . liking others to read to him, “preferred rambling,” “roaming about the country,” an excitable and fitful sleeper, shouting and talking in his sleep, etc. But the intellectual and keen mind soon realized the sense of responsibility, and the boy picks up his school work equal to the best from his ninth to his fourteenth year, but at 25 years of age his features have “the look of wanness and suffering.” All this is an excellent description of children who suffer from eyestrain, and can be duplicated from the case records of ophthalmologists many times.

At about 30 years of age an excess of writing work overtaxed his nerves so much that he “often sat down and wept for a quarter of an hour at a stretch,” and he was a constant victim of a feeble stomach. At this time an extreme amount of work with his pen [*Tannhäuser*] brought on the idea of sudden death which in the same circumstances reappeared many times during his life and threatened to drive him to suicide. The medical man warned him against work, fearing “the determination of blood to the head,” and ordered leaves of absence for three months, etc.†

With each increment of added accommodation-failure things go from bad to worse every year, until at the age of 35 years Wagner feels “too old” for undertaking his greatest art-work. Depression and suffering, “broken-downness,” always follow near-work with the eyes, and especially so in winter, his “mortal enemy,” when vitality was always lowered, because there was more confinement in the house and hence more reading and writing. A hundred statements grow ever clearer and clearer that writing and reading are becoming more and

* To these he has since added J. Addington Symonds and Taine, in vol. iii (1905), Balzac, Tchaikowsky, Flaubert, Lafcadio Hearn and Berlioz, in vol. iv (1906). Vol. v, just to hand (1907), deals with no celebrities, but is none the less instructive.—N.B. Publishers: Blakiston's, Philadelphia, and Rebman, London.

† “As I write this a patient comes in bright and happy and healthy who two months ago was the absolute reverse of these things, and whose life had been made as miserable as that of Wagner and from the same cause. In his melancholy and suffering his greatest danger had been suicide. Great nerve specialists had drugged him to stupor or had ‘rested’ him nearly to death . . .” (Dr Gould's footnote).

more impossible, produce greater and greater suffering, and that after each opera, poem, or literary work the ill-health is more tragical . . . Finally, "the nerves of his brain are so overwrought that the writing is reduced to two hours a day, instead of five or six as formerly, and the writing of a few lines of a letter sets him in violent commotion." As all ophthalmologists instruct their patients, so Wagner found by experience that he had frequently to interrupt even his two hours a day of eye-work. Every job of composition or writing "takes much out of him" and he has "to rest it off." Headache, sleeplessness, the "working by spurts," "with long interruptions," a hundred such expressions occur, and the fear of death, the longing for it, or the resolve to seek it, is constantly reappearing . . .

Wagner's clearest symptom was "sickheadache"; migraine, megrim, hemicrania, nervous headache or bilious headache,* are other names for this terrible affliction. It causes a large number of other symptoms and is itself of an infinitely varied type, according to the kind of near work required and the kind of organism of the patient. I have had thousands of patients with this disease, and 99 out of every 100 were cured by spectacles. That sickheadaches often disappear at the age of from 50 to 60 years is due solely to the fact that [completed] presbyopia makes eyestrain impossible. That the wrecked nervous system may sometimes go on exhibiting the symptoms after the exciting and direct cause has ceased, is a truism not only of medicine but of common sense.

Concerning the prevalent belief that Wagner did not "wear glasses," † despite his description in the old Dresden police-warrant (*Life* ii, 419), Dr Gould remarks: "It is of no con-

* Elsewhere Gould refers to "the relationship of Wagner's ocular and digestive symptoms," whilst the opening chapter of the book under notice—a chapter headed "Eyestrain and the Literary life"—remarks that "*The Digestional Reflex*, next to insomnia and headache, was the most pronounced and constant symptom of the fourteen patients [Carlyle, Wagner, etc.], and of nearly all it was the most crippling and dangerous." Another symptom, much heard of in Wagner's case, is accounted for by Gould in the same way: "He also suffered all [?—see cap. III. *inf.*] his life from an intercurrent affection, erysipelas, which is a disease dependent upon denutrition. There can be nothing in medicine more certain than that eyestrain causes denutrition, and nothing more certain than that Wagner had terrible eyestrain." See also Appendix.

† True, a Vienna caricaturist had represented him at the conductor's desk with the *Tristan* score before him, an open snuff box in his hands, a huge muffler embracing his chin, and his nose largely be-spectacled; but caricaturists are scarcely responsible people, and the skit is signed "1886," three years after Wagner's death.

sequence whatever. Any spectacles he could get would not have neutralized his eyestrain." As to the supposed impossibility, see lower; but that common belief is itself confuted by reliable evidence, since one reads in course of reminiscences of the later 'seventies contributed by Baron v. Seydlitz to *Die Musik* Nov. 1901: "His famous black-velvet cap, when not in use, always formed a mat for his spectacles. He could not abide pince-nez; as I wore a pair, he tried to mock me out of it . . . and advocated spectacles. 'But it is so easy to mislay one's spectacles,' said I; 'Why, I can always find mine at once: they rest on my cap.' 'Yes—but your cap?'—'Na, I can see that at any distance. No, no, Seydlitz, you have only one fault, and that is pince-nez.'" Besides establishing the fact of a *moderate* degree of short-sightedness, this simple little tale most convincingly proves that Wagner did wear spectacles in later life, indoors, and thus throws unexpected light on a brief passage in his *Public and Popularity* essay of 1878: "The reason why people in olden days had manifestly clearer heads, surely is that they saw more clearly with their eyes and had no need of spectacles." (*P.* VI, 71.) If for "saw more clearly with" one partly substituted "did not overtax"—which is the obvious intention of the context—the whole secret would be explained; but the insight itself, so plainly drawn from personal experience, was far in advance of the physiological tenets of that generation. Let us use it as bridge to a physical fact of high significance:

All through the latter part of Wagner's life he had one symptom, one of those which physicians call "objective," one that is alluded to, so far as I know, by no written word. In speaking to a great musician who knew Wagner, I mentioned this symptom, when he broke in with, "Of course! I had often observed the fact, but thought nothing of it!" This symptom, which all of his physicians also ignored, comes out in most of the later photographs and the portraits, especially in those of Lenbach, the realistic painter. The left eye is turned out and up. (Consult the portraits herewith reproduced.*) Some American oculists call this defect "hyperexophoria." In the effort to drag the eyelid away from, and above, the pupil of this eye, it will be noticed that the forehead is arched and wrinkled in concentric curves—an appearance noticed in many such patients. In the pictures in early

* From the frontispiece and p. 208 of H. S. Chamberlain's *Richard Wagner*, "by the courtesy of Messrs Dent & Co."

life this combination of heterophoria and strabismus is not shown, because it did not exist. It had been overcome by strain, if it existed, and the strain had produced its effect* . . . This turning of the left eye upward and outward is, as oculists know, a result of ametropia and especially of astigmatism and anisometropia. It was a relief of eyestrain, an effect rather than the cause of it . . . This evidence presented by the portrait painter and the photographer of Wagner would not be needed by the expert oculist to prove the fact of the cause of his lifetime of awful misery. It adds the demonstration needed to convince general physicians and intelligent laymen.

To the unprejudiced mind the case may be already upheld as complete. But there are those whom no inductive reasoning, no argument from the analogy of a thousand similar experiences, can *quite* convince; they smell a rat, and ask for positive proof of the particular instance. Quite unexpectedly, that positive proof in Wagner's case is now available:—

In April 1904, eight months after Dr Gould's *Lancet* article and just after the appearance of his second volume, I had occasion to write to Edward Dannreuther (since deceased), and in course of my letter made brief allusion to the new theory of Wagner's ill-health. Dannreuther answered me: "Wagner *was* astigmatic. I took him to the Critchett's when he was staying at Orme Square [with E. D., May 1877]. After a long examination by both father and son, they produced a set of glasses for special purposes which proved satisfactory." A couple of days later: "I cannot say at what part of the day or after how much work Wagner complained. He was making a clean copy of Parsifal for the King—other than this, I know of no work (besides the writing of a few letters to the Bayreuth people) that he did in London . . . Messrs Ross of Bond St. made the glasses.—He certainly was troubled with dyspepsia. As to retching, I have heard of such a thing, but *never* saw a trace of anything of the sort. I never heard him complain of headache" (*vid. inf.*).

Thereupon I wrote to Messrs Ross and Sir Anderson Critchett, begging for further details. From Messrs Ross no information was procurable at all, as "unfortunately our old registers do not

* "Even in the later photographs the ocular defect is not always shown, chiefly, probably, because he was able by intense effort to overcome it and to secure 'binocular fixation' . . . The vertical wrinkles between the eyes are also proof of eyestrain" (Gould's footnote).

go back anywhere near the date which you mention." Sir Anderson, on the contrary, most courteously supplied me with the following particulars (April 16. 04): "You have already heard the broad facts from Mr Dannreuther, so I think there cannot be any harm in my giving you a few details.—The great composer complained to my father that he was suffering from severe frontal headaches, insomnia and inability to work for more than short periods without distress. At my father's request I tested and examined Herr Wagner's eyes, and found that in each he had a dioptric of myopic astigmatism. He was both astonished and delighted when he saw music through the spherocylindrical glasses which corrected his error of refraction, for the notes, lines and spaces were seen with a cleanly cut definition which up to that time he had never known. After his return to Germany he sent us several kind and grateful messages, and the assurance that the unpleasant symptoms had been much relieved. In the ardour of composition the glasses not infrequently came to grief, and I was amused to receive a request that I would order *six* pairs of spectacles to be sent to Bayreuth."

That *absolutely* settles the larger question. However, as it leaves the said 'objective symptom' unaccounted for, I recently troubled Sir Anderson again, and he has kindly replied to me: "With reference to the other points you mention, I feel sure that the degree of astigmatism was the same in each eye, *but the vision of the two eyes was not identical,** though there was no very marked difference. I remember that after Herr Wagner had looked at some music for a few minutes through the glasses he remarked that they enabled him to focus his eyes with less effort.—Expert opinion will doubtless vary respecting the extent to which the error of refraction exerted a sinister influence in the life of the great composer, but none can deny that it may have been an important factor in the troubles to which you allude.—I am convinced that I have given all the data correctly, for I naturally took a special interest in so illustrious a patient, and the essential facts of the case are indelibly impressed on my memory."

Thus we know for certain now, that pronounced astigmatism existed at the age of 64 in Wagner's case, therefore must have

* I take the liberty of italicising this important clause.

existed for many years previously, and possibly since childhood ; whilst we may pride ourselves on the fact of a great English ophthalmologist having been able to remedy its optical disadvantages, and relieve at least some of its other long-standing symptoms, by scientific 'correction' even in the earliest days of that branch of the science.

Well—our nurses used to ask us how many "wells" make a river, but it's a very useful cue, so Well, again : "One shrinks from parading his own clinical experience"—says Gould—"but each day of sixteen years, and many thousands of patients, have convinced me that eyestrain is the almost sole cause of the awful disease sickheadache, that it causes a vast deal of so-called biliousness and of dyspepsias of many kinds, and that correction of eyestrain often relieves these troubles suddenly and as if by magic. I frankly confess that despite all pondering over the fact, and study of the physiologies, I am in doubt as to the mechanism. In a general way and usually the head is an inhibitory organ to the so-called vegetative or unconscious processes of the body, but eyestrain is such a peculiar disturbance of cerebral function that one doubts if it is essentially an exhaustion and depletion, or an excitant and irritation . . . But facts, accurately observed, precede philosophies, and sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

So we will not attempt to explain *how* this seemingly trivial deviation from symmetry of one organ of sense, albeit the most important of them all, can affect the whole body and through it the mind, but accept its malign influence as a proven fact, and by that influence explain the sombre view of things in general which frequently surprises us in so buoyant and energetic a nature as Wagner's. "Many times in Carlyle's life a similar shuddering seized him"—says Gould (for the last time)—"and Wagner contemplated suicide many times. The tortured mind saw no other escape from the misery which haunted it with over-use of the eyes. Yet naturally these men were lovers of life, and even cheerful-minded. Even Carlyle was not entirely a pessimist, and his natural faith and hopefulness were constantly breaking through the gloom which use of his eyes threw over his mind."

Of Wagner that is perfectly true. When in tolerable health and comparative freedom from worry, no one more enjoyed a hearty laugh ; but the works of Schopenhauer, a fellow-sufferer from eyestrain, fell into his hands at the very time when every-

thing conspired to make him gloomy, and when he was taxing his eyes to *their* utmost, first with his own music (*Walküre*) and then with that of others (London). Small wonder if he found their darkest pessimism congenial, just as it is small wonder if he recognised at once their author's overwhelming power. Later on he will find "some points for amendment in friend Schopenhauer's system" (Venice Diary, Dec. '58), still later that Pessimism, though an excellent corrective, is not the sole alternative to Optimism. To the end of his life, however, he will reap that comfort from these mines of wisdom which can be drawn by those alone who bring to them a sympathetic heart and a brain with something in it.

Friend Schopenhauer? In 1860, just two months before the philosopher's death, we hear the term again: "I have a friend of whom I grow fonder and fonder, my old surly-faced * and yet so deeply love-filled Schopenhauer. When I've been fumbling the farthest, what a quite unique refreshment all at once, to dip into the pages of that book . . . Thus calm is given; clear knowledge cools the brow of pain; the creases smooth, and sleep regains its soothing power." Yet, "the aged man knows naught of all he is to me, of what I'm through him to myself!" (*M.* p. 237).

They never met. December 1854, a couple of months after his first acquaintance with Schopenhauer's works, Wagner sent him the RING poem, but without a separate message. The letter in which Schopenhauer announces its receipt to Frauenstädt, however, shews that this was not the actual first advance from Zurich: "The Hungarian, † and a whole coterie of beaux esprits,

* August 1856 Wagner writes A. Roeckel: "I will procure you Sch.'s minor writings too. They are full of thoughts so new and notable that I promise you'll enjoy them, in spite of the undeniable asperities and one-sidednesses of a soured recluse (*schroff gewordenen Sonderling*) which may annoy you here and there." This is the letter in which he remarks that Schopenhauer has been "the first to help me really to understand my own artworks, i.e. to interpret them to my reason also."

† His identity does not transpire, and we know of no Hungarian in Wagner's Zurich set. Perhaps it is the same individual of whom Sch. writes next June 29: "Bxxx has been here for a day, under an assumed name, to pay me a stealthy visit in a close-shut carriage. A handsome, very tall young man; seems to possess real knowledge of Oriental languages; says he wants to teach my philosophy at Zurich:—perhaps it's all wind. Upon saying goodbye, he kissed my hand! which made me cry out in alarm."

now in banishment from Germany, seriously asked me to travel to *Zurich in December* to satisfy their curiosity! I briefly but civilly replied that I could not engage in epistolary controversy and had entirely given up travelling. Then follows a book by Richard Wagner . ." (see iv, 84). A. L. von Doss, another famous disciple, is told much the same, Jan. 10, 55: "I have to thank you for your kind invitation, but I'm a rooted fungus; I never travel, save for urgent need. In December I had a similar invitation to Zurich, where reside a whole coterie of beaux but banished spirits, people who may not tread German soil, therefore cannot journey hither, so beg me to go to them: Rich^d Wagner, Herweg, for spokesman a Hungarian in love with my philosophy, and others.—A nice thing for me!—to Zurich in December!" Feb. 2 he writes F. again, "The devil seems to have fairly broken loose with me at Zurich. *Fort bien!*"—so we may assume another message to have been despatched that winter by the "coterie" ere Wagner left for London.

As soon as Wagner gets back to Switzerland, fresh fuel is added to the fire. For Schopenhauer reports to Frauenstädt, Sept. 7, the visit of "v. Hornstein, a young composer, pupil [!] of R. Wagner; who also, so Hornstein says, is studying my works most zealously. Hornstein is still here and shews me exaggerated reverence, e.g. rises from table to go and fetch my favourite waiter for me.—All these people are very well read in my works." This Hornstein—with a touch of the tufthunter, methinks—had only just been made a proselyte at Seelisberg, as we shall see. But so it goes on; the whole group of Wagner's intimates or visitants is quickly sucked into the glow. Dec. 23, 55, writes Sch. to F.: "A Zurich letter has arrived, from a certain K. R[itter], saying 'my writings have been read with such enthusiasm in a circle to which he belongs' that these people much wish to have my likeness—in daguerreotype, crayon, oils, or what not—and asking that the artist may send it to him and accept payment per post. A pretty time they've chosen, the shortest, darkest days of winter, when cold and snow block everything. However, I will get it done as soon as the days are a little longer and brighter.—The growth of fame, you see, is following the laws of conflagration, i.e. increasing not by arithmetic, but by geometric, or even cubical progression,—and the

Nile has reached Cairo. Thereafter the Professors may stand on their heads if they choose, but in vain !”

It is consoling, not only to learn that the preacher of “all is vanity” was a wee bit vain himself, in his old age at least, but also that he duly appreciated the Zurich fanning of his fame ; for Wagner indeed, as acknowledged by Prof. Max Koch in his History of German Literature, privately had a very great deal to do with that public recognition which dawned just in time to set a halo on the last few years of the Frankfort sage’s life. As to the portrait, it probably was intended by Carl Ritter as a New Year’s gift for his Zurich friend and ‘master’ ; but that, so far, is guess-work. What we do know, is that Schopenhauer writes von Doss next February (1856), “In January I had to send my photograph to Zurich, to strangers who are paying for it.—Good, the devil will gradually be loose.”

To Frauenstädt again, March 28, 56 ; a communication of the deepest interest :—

Jam de re nova magnaue : arrigite aures ! Three days ago came R[itter] from Zurich, the same who had me photographed in January. A young man of prepossessing exterior and a budding dramatic poet, he came here from Dresden, where he had been conferring with Bähr. He also belongs to my Zurich congregation : all these apostles know each other.—Well, he made me the announcement that they were endeavouring to found a chair at the Zurich university for *my* philosophy, exclusively for *mine*, and believed it would best be filled by you ; a point on which he was commissioned to obtain my opinion. Of course I said, nobody would be so very suitable as yourself. The affair is being pushed by a Regierungs-Rath Sulzer [evidently Wagner had completed the conversion of him since last summer]. Don’t picture to yourself a kind of Prussian ‘councillor’ ; in those parts it rather means a man with a share in the government of the canton.

To be sure, it is a mere plan as yet, a project, a proposal, therefore may easily end in smoke. Nevertheless the largest oak was once an acorn any sow might have gulped ; moreover, the fanaticism which inspires all my true adherents is a strong lever to count upon. Zurich itself is a trysting-place for heterodox teachers, Moleschott and so on.

Well, you have plenty of time to think it over. Zurich has only 200 students, so the pay is unlikely to be very brilliant. On the other side, a fixed and honourable appointment, a beautiful situation, Switzerland, lake, Alps quite close, Swiss Athens, my congregation, many savants, artists, a different life from that in horrible lean Berlin and its infamy. The thing would be a great honour for me, but you

must judge what is best for yourself. We must wait and see. This R[itter], also, kissed my hand on departure,—a ceremony to which I cannot get accustomed ; I suppose it goes with my imperial rank.

This is followed, April 7, '56, by a reply to evident scruples of Frauenstädt's : "What you say about the Zurich plan, good friend, is true enough. Still it seems to me the Zurichers set some store by it, and are making it a business to open up a field to efforts hated or misprised in Germany—in *majorem Turici gloriam*. Ritter did not further specify the authority for his enquiry : of course [it would be] that of the whole party which has put the matter on its legs and is represented in the Rath by Sulzer. In short, 'For speculation there's no room ; if roses, we shall see them bloom.'" Then May 13 : "R[itter] of Zurich has sent me two architectural brochures of Semper's, along with a very few lines. They're about chromoplastics and architecture ;" and June 6 : "At the Zurich university my philosophy would be the very thing to form a useful idealistic counterpoise to so much materialism. Patience ! *toutes les affaires sont longues*, says Voltaire ;" but that's the last we hear of it. Whether the scheme fell through because of the Swiss authorities' lukewarmness, or because of Frauenstädt's reluctance, one cannot say ; Sch.'s letters to F. come to a sudden stop Oct. '56, and are not resumed till Dec. '59 (a solitary one). Still, the "Zurich congregation" maintains its devotion. Sept. 17, '56 : "von Hornstein has been here again. He was at Zurich two months back [in Wagner's absence, then], where Herwegh is studying Buddhism, led on by me." March 1, '59 (to v. Doss), "Please tell Dr Wille, I thank him for his interest and shall be delighted to see him here ;"* and the 9th (to Dr David Asher), "Dr Wille, of my Zurich congregation, was here the other day ; he knows De Sanctis, who is an exiled Neapolitan and prof. at the Zurich lyceum."

The allusion to De Sanctis has a twofold interest to students of Wagner's letters to Mathilde Wesendonck, where De S. is mentioned several times as a frequenter of the Green Hill mansion. For Schopenhauer had told von Doss that same

* As Schopenhauer does not say "again," and Dr Wille's name occurs in none of his previous letters, this throws additional doubt on the accuracy of Frau Wille's little anecdote (iv, 84), which, in the form she has given it, could only apply to 1855.

March 1: "The *Rivista Italiana* for December 1858, a *Torino* 1859, opens with a dialogue of 40 pages: *Schopenhauer e Leopardi*, by De Sanctis, which gives a very accurate account of my teachings. This Italian knows them thoroughly, has converted them into his life-blood, and acknowledges their truth with enthusiasm. He has not made bungling excerpts from my writings, like the German professors; no, he has the whole thing at his fingers' ends, and cites just what he needs to." A week previously the splendid old man had written Lindner: "It's a big step forward, and opens Italy to me.—I have read it twice, most carefully, and am astonished how much this Italian has taken my philosophy into his veins, and how well he has understood it . . . It is a very great joy to me."—Thus the Schopenhauerian creed makes its début in Italy at the very time Wagner has fled there, and virtually through his personal introduction.

For his own part, just before the actual appearance of that Italian article, Wagner was drafting a private letter to Schopenhauer as commentary on one of the chapters in *Welt* II., but, interrupted by illness, he never sent it (see *M.* pp. 76-7). That was the nearest these two kindred spirits ever got to personal communion.

II.

HOW "DIE WALKÜRE" GOT FINISHED.

Five weeks at Seelisberg; a little scoring of act ii.—Munich gives Tannhäuser.—“The demon of ill-health” interrupts work; a Mitleid theme shared with Tristan; act ii completed.—Eyestrain avenges itself; a nervous fever and its sequela, with intermittent scoring of act iii.—Berlin at length produces Tannhäuser: Liszt and Bülow thereon; Wagner and Hülsen.—Pecuniary appeal to Liszt; transcripts of the RING scores.—Fresh relapses in health; completion of Die Walküre.

Da verlor ich den leichten Muth.

DIE WALKÜRE, act ii.

“YOUR ex-servant Hermann has been here, and told me I should have a letter from you very shortly, also that you and the Fürstin would be coming to Switzerland *soon* (?)—with a thousand things besides; so I am feverishly awaiting direct news from you . . . When *are* you really coming? If I’m not to expect you till September, I shall go to Seelisberg till then, in fact next Monday [9th]; but if I meanwhile get a letter from you announcing an immediate visit, as Hermann has made me hope, of course I most gladly will stay in Zurich.” Thus Wagner to Liszt, July 5, 55; but Hermann had played him a conjuring-trick. Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein, “the Fürstin,” is on the eve of starting for Berlin with her daughter, whilst Liszt replies that he will be unable to journey to Zurich before the end of September. So Wagner is free to take his wife for another whey-cure, himself for a much-needed holiday, to one of the most beautiful sites on the not as yet cockneyfied Lake of Lucerne. After burying poor Peps, they start on the 11th—without a dog, but with Minna’s inseparable parrot—for the “Kurhaus Sonnenberg in Seelisberg, Canton Uri,” 2770 ft, on the opposite shore to Brunnen.

Four days after arrival, he writes Praeger (July 15): “I have

ascended to Paradise. I read your letter on the left-hand balcony of the house you see [lithographed] at top, while my eye kept rising from it to the glorious world of Alps a view of which you will observe above the building. I say my eye now and then strayed from that letter, because its contents often set me thinking,* and it was good to be able to comfort myself by plunging my gaze into this sublimely hallowed region [Selige Oede auf sonniger Höh'—*Siegfried* iii]. You have no idea how beautiful it is here, what air one breathes, and how beneficially this wonderful ensemble is acting on me. I expect you'd go mad with delight—then with grief at having to return to London; and yet you must venture it next year with your dear wife! . . . Often I'm heartily sick of life [p. 4 *sup.*] . . . but this splendid Nature is attuning me to life once more;† so I've taken up my work again!”

No superber setting could he have wished for the “hallowed” second half of act ii of *Die Walküre*, than that “paradise” of deep-blue lake and grassy slopes girt round by glimmering peaks and domes of distant snow. Clearly the third scene of this act was the point at which he had just resumed its instrumenting, and here we feel at once a bracing of his powers by the mountain air—so long as the initial fine weather kept its treacherous promise. Here, if a layman may venture an opinion, his orchestration already touches a high-water mark; the nervous energy and play of colour in this stretch of scoring he will seldom surpass. And how exquisitely it all dies down as Sieglinde sinks to sleep, merging in those five tubas *pianissimo* which announce the entry of the messenger of death.

From the date by which the act itself stood finished and fair-copied, after frequent interruptions, I should judge that the orchestration of at least the whole of this brief scene and a part of its successor was ‘sketched’ at Seelisberg. Anyhow I will seize this cue for noting just one instrumental detail in the latter, an anticipation of the *Götterdämmerung* dirge, namely that constantly-

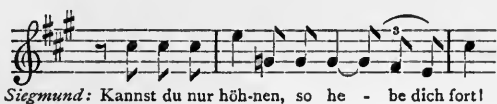
* Which looks as if P. had been treating him to a résumé of the London funeral orations.

† Why P. should have thought necessary to amend this into “which ever impels me to cling to life as a new love,” Heaven only knows. There is *no* suggestion of “a new love” in the autograph, “Bei mir ist's jetzt die herrliche Natur, die mich wieder für das Leben stimmt.”

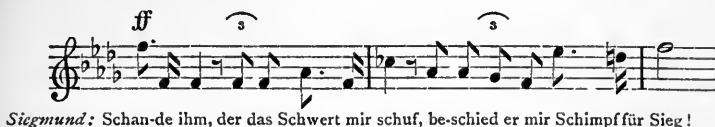
repeated figure for the strings which sets in directly after Siegmund's blunt refusal to follow his herald to Walhall:



There is another notable anticipation in the said death-herald scene, but this time in the vocal part and leading us out of the RING, where Siegmund bids Brünnhilde leave him to the sacredness of grief:



Here the resemblance to Tristan's "ich selbst, ich hab' ihn gebräut" (act iii) needs no underlining, but its source will be more evident if we turn back a couple of pages of the *Walküre* score and compare the following variant of the "Nibelung's curse" theme with Tristan's "verflucht sei, furchtbarer Trank!"—



That Wagner did a certain amount of work at Seelisberg, though not excessive, we know from more than one source. July 22 he tells Liszt: "I'm rather glad you did not come just now, since I should have been able to shew you very little of the *Walküre* quite finished. As it is, I should like plenty of time to devote to my score; but I ought to have got through at least the first two acts by November, even in the fair copy." He also writes Schindelmeisser, "I'm working again," in a letter the earlier part whereof is of sufficient interest in another direction to call for quotation:

Seelisberg. Cant. Uri.

30. July 1855.

Dearest Friend,

Hearty thanks for your kind and sympathetic letter, which came as a most pleasant surprise. What you tell me of Tichatschek has greatly interested me,* though it fills me with sadness to judge by the effect of T.'s exploits how miserably we must be off for tenor singers nowadays. Whoever hears and sees one of these people again at rare intervals—like myself—cannot understand how tasks like mine are even remotely to be solved by such eunuchs. The plight of my operas in Germany must be mournful enough in this respect; so that I often quail at the idea of being suddenly placed in a position—through amnesty—to share the sight and hearing of such horrors! Believe me, my Lohengrin—I mean the title rôle in particular—hasn't yet received a fraction of its due, and really it seems as if your Wiesbaden tenor [Peretti]—though he may have had his faults—had been the best in this part hitherto. However, *that's* a thing we cannot change so quickly!—

What you write me of Mannheim [*Tannh.* première, July 15] naturally has pleased me much. Lachner [Vincenz] visited me at Zurich last winter, and I found him an able, intelligent man, if thoroughly devoid of go. Your account of his doings has confirmed that impression. On every point where you differ from him in the direction of my opera—especially in the overture—just take it for granted *you* are right. As to Conducting in general I am getting more definite views every day, and am firmly convinced that *very few* are capable of rendering the good work of another man's brain so as to do it full justice. It is precisely the same as with everything else: not to do something quite common here, one must be a bit of a genius oneself.—If you find occasion, tho', please give Lachner my thanks for his successful exertions in the cause of my work.—

At present I'm recuperating in the mountains—alas, in wretched weather [goes on to "London expedition," see p. 3 *sup.*].

It is a little odd to hear of this "wretched weather" not only in the above,† but also in letters to Fischer of Aug. 17 and Klindworth of a fortnight later, when one reads von Hornstein's roseate reminiscences of his "few weeks" stay at Seelisberg in Wagner's company. I cited some of these (from the *Neue freie*

* Tichatschek had just been starring at Darmstadt in *Tannhäuser*, *Juive* and *Cortez*, rousing "great enthusiasm" (*N.Z.* June 22).

† Confirmed by Liszt's to P^{ss} Carolyne of Aug. 4: "Are you enjoying almost incessant rain at Berlin, as we at Weimar?"

Presse 1904) in my preface to the letters of *R. Wagner to M. Wesendonck*, but now will round the chatty story off:—

"I booked a good place on the imperial of the diligence at Berne"—says our raconteur, without stooping to a vulgar date—"From Lucerne I steamed down the lake to the landing-stage for Seelisberg. It was afternoon by the time I made my pilgrimage uphill; Richard Wagner was just starting for a walk, in which I joined him"—Hornstein having made his acquaintance two years previously and renewed it in '54. "Upon our arriving at a precipice dropping sheer to the lake, he asked me to let him go first, as he suffered from so-called sympathetic dizziness and always felt nervous for the man in front"—a *Mitleid* trait recurring in one of Wagner's letters to Frau Wesendonck of four years hence. "On our return it was exactly time to go to supper, and for the first time I met his wife, who gave me the impression of a very kind, good-natured woman. We soon became great friends," and so on. We next are told of Minna's sociability and her husband's love of solitude, his early rising and work till midday dinner "at a standing-desk near the balcony," *without* a piano. According to H., Wagner was "fair-copying" then, which must mean some portion of the score of act ii he had otherwise finished in London, and itself points to a dispiriting change in the weather: "His writing was excessively distinct, almost beautiful. When I asked if such copying did not bore him, he replied it was no mere transcribing, but a going over the work again and altering it in detail." Possibly; though H. may have mixed two separate operations, just as he light-heartedly denotes it the score of *Rheingold*. "Directly after dinner Wagner would withdraw to his room to read and rest . . . then toward evening I would fetch him for a walk. Thus our life repeated itself with great regularity; it was fine weather almost the whole time [!], so that this daily routine varied little. I learned to love and admire Wagner; at Seelisberg he did not turn one of his unpleasant sides outward, but was full of wit and often enchantingly amiable. Even with his wife he never had the least *rencontre*—which frequently occurred at Zurich later. These weeks passed in the most charming fashion, and left me with the most agreeable memories." A peaceful interlude in what Wagner himself calls a "miserable year."

Some of Hornstein's recollections of their talks are worth

preserving, with a pinch of salt, despite their impossible jerkiness : "He remarked that he had given Mendelssohn's overtures in London, and taken great delight in them . . . He often changed his dietary, always at the bidding of some maxim or other ; meat-eater he remained his whole life, however, even when theoretically championing vegetarianism [practically correct]. At this epoch he was decidedly a carnivore in theory as well. Once I told him, Mendelssohn had fetched himself so many jam-puffs from the buffet at Kintschy's restaurant in Leipzig that old Kintschy was quite puzzled how any man could eat them all ; the riddle solved itself on the discovery that Mendelssohn had simply scooped out the sweet insides, and left the pastry. 'I eat no sweetstuff, only meat,' retorted Wagner, 'as one may hear, I believe, in my music.'—Early in this familiar intercourse I led the conversation up to Ludwig Feuerbach, whose works I then knew better than at Vevey [with Wagner 1854]. His chilliness toward Feuerbach surprised me : 'Feuerbach is eclipsed by Arthur Schopenhauer,' he blurted out, and went on to speak in the glowingest terms of his [S.'s] system, refusing to hear another word about anyone else. Hegel, Fichte, Schelling, he treated altogether in the style of his new hero . . . whilst no expression was strong enough to characterise the grandeur of the Schopenhauerian world-view. At that time he read nothing but Schopenhauer and Byron's 'Don Juan,'* with which he was highly delighted." Not a moment's credence can we lend the last statement, the incongruity whereof is worthy of another pen.

R. von Hornstein must have been a sprightly young rattletrap in those days, and no doubt his entertaining bulls madé up to Wagner for the badness of the weather ; so we may be grateful to him. In return, he was set to read Schopenhauer on the balcony (let us hope with a mackintosh) while his senior was scoring indoors, and "in those few weeks at Seelisberg I got the groundwork of the Schopenhauerian philosophy by heart ; assisted"—he modestly admits—"by the several hours' walk and evening

* The scatter-brain has obviously confounded this with Carolysz's essay on Berlioz' *Harold* symphony, which appeared in the *N. Zeitschrift*, five weekly parts, at the exact time of Wagner's holiday ; to which may be added a few pessimistic quotations from Byron, including two from *Don Juan*, by Schopenhauer himself.

spent with Wagner every day, when Schopenhauer formed our chief topic of conversation." The hour having at last struck for the pupil's departure, "I descended the footpath to the steamboat station. Wagner accompanied me half the way, and at parting called out to me, 'If you go to Frankfort, give my greetings to Schopenhauer'"—which the undaunted youngster conveyed with compound interest within a month, as seen (p. 57 *sup.*).

Wagner and his wife, whom the whey-cure seems to have little mended, left Seelisberg for home the 15th August. For himself, the temporary benefit of partly rested eyes is apparent from his letter of the 17th to Fischer: "Now I mean to work hard again; yet not so as to overtax myself. I shall rest content for this year with getting the Walküre off my hands at last." Combined with the stress of a huge correspondence—"this is the sixth letter I've written to day"—that excellent resolve will very soon frustrate itself by yielding one of his periodic attacks of 'migraine.' Meantime: "What do the Dresden gentry think, on hearing all this about my Tannhäuser at Munich? Aren't they delighted with the revenge of preventing my attending such performances? I should imagine so!"

Following the example of Hanover* and Carlsruhe last January, the German court next in rank to Berlin had fallen into line with a production of the outlaw's work Aug. 12. One of those "six letters" of the 17th, indeed, was addressed to Franz Lachner, who had sent personal tidings of the *Tannhäuser* triumph, and whom Wagner begs to thank the band and singers in his name: "Heartily do I wish for pursuance of this rapprochement," he writes the man who queered his overture two years before but would seem to have repented since. Liszt himself visits the Bavarian capital sixteen months hence, and

* Hanover, in fact, had already secured the right of representing *Lohengrin* (produced there Dec. 16, 55), though in a mode that gave Wagner much trouble, and chiefly on his holiday at Seelisberg. His Berlin agent Michaelson had unauthorisedly sold this work to the Hanover management for 35 Friedrichs d'or, 15 less than it had paid for *Tannhäuser*. A lively correspondence ensues, with Liszt—who cannot interfere, as he has ceased "relations with Hanover"—and with director Rottmayer, who ends by persuading the Intendant, Count Platen, to make the shortage good (see *W.-L.*, Oct. 3, also Dr G. Fischer's *Musik in Hannover*). A sample of the perpetual vigilance necessary for the creator of the *Ring des Nibelungen* to exert over the worldly fortunes of his earlier works.

bears testimony to Lachner's efforts: "Last Sunday there was a 'Tannhäuser' performance for the benefit of the Munich poor (abonnement suspended). The princess [Carolyne] had taken two boxes, which we shared with Kaulbach,* E. Förster, Liebig, Carrière and others. The scenery and mounting are brilliant, but probably would not exactly please you, and for my own part I find them too mannered and showy . . . [Comments on orchestra] . . . *Piano* and *crescendo* are insufficiently realised, consequently the fortes also miss their mark. Certainly Lachner has rehearsed your score with the greatest pains and accuracy, for which one must pay him all thanks and praise; nevertheless, as you have said yourself, in Drama 'we must become *knowers* through *feeling*'—'the Understanding tells us *So it is*, only after the Feeling has told us *So it must be*'—and Lachner's feeling tells him little of the Tannhäuseresque, so far as I can judge, though he was repeatedly called at the early performances . . . [Singers etc.] . . . The Munich public shews itself fairly neutral, rather listening and looking on, than sympathising. The court does not take the least interest in music; H.M. the King [Maximilian], however, spoke to me very *graciously* of Tannhäuser" (letter 229 *W.-L.*).

To have been selected for a charity, this opera must have become a *Cassenstück* at Munich long before Liszt heard it there. As a matter of fact, it had been presented ten times at raised prices even by the end of '55. I therefore add three contemporary printed accounts of that important step forward. The first is from our old friend the *Musical World*, Sept. 15, where in the tiniest of type it was thrust into the corner of an 'Original Correspondence' page: "MUNICH.—Herr Richard Wagner's *Tannhäuser* was produced, on the 12th ult., for the first time in this city. The house was crowded to suffocation. There was not a single vacant place, with the exception of the Royal box,

* W. v. Kaulbach had written her a year before: "Do come to Munich with your charming daughter and Liszt . . . then we would all go and hear *Tannhäuser*, which is very brilliantly and worthily equipped here and continues to reap loud plaudits from full houses." Another celebrated Munich painter, Moritz von Schwind, writes her about the same time (Dec. 2, '55): "I have attended a performance of *Tannhäuser*. The singers are—as good as we possess; the orchestra and conducting of exceptional refinement [he was a personal friend of Lachner's]. On the whole it made a brilliant impression on me, but also gave no little headache."

which was empty, as the Royal Family are at present absent from the capital. The management had done all in its power, in the way of dresses, scenery, and decorations, and the singers exerted themselves to the utmost. The opera was, of course, a 'great hit,' but, like many other 'great hits,' will, I strongly opine, soon be consigned to oblivion." The very underlings of the *M. World* had caught the spirit of bad prophecy, you see, even when recording a palpable "hit."

The second account was also printed in the *M. World*, Sept. 29, but apparently borrowed from the Parisian *L'Europe Artiste*. It is headed "A French opinion of Herr Richard Wagner's music":—

"M. Wagner," says M. Etienne Eggis—*apropos* of a performance of *Tannhäuser*, which took place on the twelfth of last month at the Grand Theatre, Munich—"has turned topsy-turvy all the received forms of opera. In the *Tannhäuser* there are neither airs, nor duos, nor has any part a fixed or determined form. M. Wagner wishes to subordinate melody to the text, or, at all events to fuse them in such a manner as to make them an incorporate whole, and that one should not predominate over the other. In accomplishing this, he has succeeded in producing neither more nor less than a long recitative. The whole of the opera is one prolonged recitative, and everybody knows that nothing in music can be more fatiguing than a recitative with indefinite chords. As soon as a fine situation occurs in the poem, the mind is prepared to bathe itself in a beautiful lake of perfected harmonies; the melody commences; we expect it to flow on; it follows its route and accomplishes nothing. It is a long period which has only commencements. Thus this surexcitation of the mind, this everlasting contempt of the ear, prevents the auditor from enjoying the beauties of the melodies, although unfinished, which shine resplendent in the work, and the real science of instrumentation of which the composer has given proof. The best parts of *Tannhäuser* are the overture and the introductions of the second and third acts, because these are complete *morceaux*. In these, the system of M. Wagner, which demonstrates itself in its [? his] desire to fuse, at all risks, the words and the melody, in seizing for the latter all determinate form, has not broken the flight of his inspirations, which displays itself powerful and complete. Art with rule, is light; art without rule, is but fire. There is certainly rule in the works of M. Wagner, but it is rule with its head downwards.* In fine, the music of M. Wagner has great

* "Like the spider in his web.—Ed. *M. W.*"—adds our jester, Davison. One rather admires him, notwithstanding, for admitting to his columns such praise of that specimen of "polycacophony," the *Tannhäuser* overture.

beauties, but it fatigues, inasmuch as nobody ever can tell whither it is bound; it kills, because it never gives a moment's repose, and because it gives to the mind that crick-in-the-neck (*torticolis*), which one experiences on looking at a bird in the air turning himself round and round without ever perching on a branch.

For all his objections, this Frenchman's appreciation of the "resplendent beauties in Wagner's melodies and the real science of his instrumentation" comes as a reproach to the perspicacity of our British critics of three months earlier. But let us pass to the unequivocally friendly *Neue Zeitschrift* (Aug. 31, 55):—

Believers in the musical guilds may now strew ashes on their heads! Tannhäuser has been received with the greatest enthusiasm and repeated thrice, to date, with full houses. Even at the dress-rehearsal on the 10th, to which a small number of connoisseurs had been invited by the Intendance, the salient points in the work evoked applause, and two parties already formed 'for and against'—always the surest token of the great and epoch-making value of a work. At the public production on the 12th interminable cheers burst forth on the conclusion of the overture, and its repetition was demanded; which naturally could not be granted . . . [Goes into causes of its failure two years back—'no time for sufficient rehearsals' then.]

In the first act the finale met with the greatest applause, and Lachner was called at the end of it. The diligence, perseverance, and extreme conscientiousness with which he had got up the opera, justly deserve the highest recognition. But it was in the second and third acts that *Wagner's music scored victory on victory!*—The casting of the individual rôles was as good as possible [accent on *possible*]. Frau Dietz' *Elisabeth* was truly not to be excelled . . . at the first repetition (on the 15th) flowers and wreaths were flung to this unassuming artist during and after the second act. Next to her came Hr Kindermann as *Wolfram*, capital alike in voice and gesture, who also merits special mention for his extremely intelligent incensation of the work. . . *

Turning from stage to orchestra, I have only to say that the band most brilliantly maintained its reputation. The string-quintet was represented by 12 first and 10 second violins, 8 violas, 6 violoncelli

* Arthur Kindermann, father of a more celebrated daughter (Hedwig Reicher-K.), remained on the Munich stage till nearly the end of the century, and was also the first singer of "Tituel," Bayreuth 1882.—The other artists of the Munich première seem to have been unsatisfactory, the *N.Z.* remarking: "We terribly miss Herr Härtinger, who alone could have made as unsurpassable a Tannhäuser as Frau Dietz' Elisabeth and Hr Kindermann's Wolfram;" see also iv, 224.

and 6 contrabassi.—The 2nd of September we are to have *Tannhäuser* with an improved cast. . . .

The experience of other places has confirmed itself here, namely that it is the class whom "musicians" call "laymen" that are soonest susceptible to the great truth and inner justice of Wagner's principles, and fortunate enough to understand the endless beauties of this music; whereas the orthodox sneak back into the caverns of their recollections and dig away for 'reminiscences'—in the year of Grace 1855—or, spellbound by an antediluvian system of æsthetics, describe its veritable *circulus vitiosus* quite thirty times in every quarter of an hour. How well I know it from my own experience! Was I not long enough dupe to the selfsame delusion myself? [One would like to know the name of this candid confessor.—? Friedrich Schmitt?]

Decidedly it was an Event, this capture of the chief capital of Southern Germany, a capital which had hitherto turned as deaf ears as our own to Wagner's charming. And it had its humorous side, recognised in his next letter to Praeger (Sept. 14): "Have you chanced to hear that *Tannhäuser* has made an unexampled furore at Munich? I couldn't help laughing at this swift revulsion in my favour: only two years back and Lachner had the face to make a failure of its overture." Yet the laugh is none too mirthful: "For all that," he continues, "I'm leading a life of almost total solitude; work, a walk and just a little reading, make up the whole of it"—and higher up, "I've resumed my work, with an effort."

The second half of the *Walküre* scoring had entered a chronic state of "resumption" by then; for "the demon of ill-health" kept wellnigh unrelaxing hold on its author throughout this autumn and winter. Neither does it matter much which way one reads the "its," as Wagner himself was author at once of orchestration and ill-health. True, in his letter to Sainton of mid-December (vol. v) he alludes to "the London sickness, long concealed, that came to a head at last," and to his having "brought nothing thence beyond a fine collection of latent rheums and catarrhs"; but one must absolve poor London from complicity in *that*, unless Gipsy had bitten him unawares in its "wild gyrations"—for nothing save hydrophobia could have remained "latent" for seven or eight weeks. He certainly was well enough when he left Seelisberg the middle of August, since we heard him tell Fischer, "I mean to work hard again now, yet not so as to overtax myself." But that was just it: with eyes in

their unconsciously rebellious condition, so soon as he began "tüchtig arbeiten" he could not *help* "overtaxing" himself, and had to pay for it with these otherwise unaccountable "rheums and catarrhs." To Klindworth he writes Aug. 31: "Even to-day I haven't got much farther with the Walküre than the fair copy of what was finished in London. I have begged Liszt to defer his visit till the end of this year, and only hope I may have quite done with the Walküre by then. Lord knows, in London I lost all recollection of my compositions; my stay among the mountains was spoilt by incessantly rainy weather; then on my return to Zurich I fell positively ill, and had to abandon all work. However, I hope I'm gradually coming to myself again now!"*

That looks very much like a first attack of 'migraine' in the latter half of August, followed by a few days' interval of freedom to take up his score again. Our only difficulty—and it applies to the whole remainder of this year—is to locate these *intervals* so as to find enough time for him to make the progress with his work he really did. For Liszt hears about a week later (undated letter 196—Sept. 6 or 7?): "I wished to be able to lay before you as much of the Walküre finished as possible, and that was my chief reason for welcoming postponement of a visit I otherwise long so much for. But as things now stand with me, I have no great hope of making headway with my work through gain of time. My inward dissonance is indescribable; often I stare at the ruled paper for days on end, without finding any recollection, any memory, any meaning for my [already drafted] work. Whence is the relish to spring for me? All the incentives I could derive for a time from my torturing solitude were bound to lose their power at last. When I began and soon ended the 'Rheingold' I was still full of the reunion with you and yours; but now everything has gone dumb around me for nearly two years, and my only brushes with the world outside have been depressing and upsetting.—Believe me, it cannot continue much longer: if my outer fortunes do not take another turn soon, if I cannot soon obtain the possibility of seeing you oftener and hearing one of my works performed here and there, or conducting them myself—the spring inside me must run dry, and there'll be an end of it. It is impossible to go on *this* way any longer! . . .

* For the rest of the letter, see vol. v, p. 153.

By dint of toil the Walküre is finished half-way now—even in the fair copy—and I should so like to be able to set two entire acts before you thus; but I'm still waiting for the proper zest for work. As it is, for a week I have been unable to work at all because of illness—if that goes on, I almost despair of ever completing this work from my sketches."

That week of interruption must have been followed by another spurt, since the next letter to Liszt, of Sept. 13, decidedly points to full-scoring again: "I'm setting to work with the arts of a confirmed voluptuary to extract every ounce out of our prospective Wiedersehen, and, seeing it has already been put off so long, I should almost like to square up the whole 'Walküre' first. The completion of this work (the most *tragic* I have ever conceived) will cost me much, and I must try to recoup myself for what I shall have put into it by the most elevating impressions thereafter; to which *only you* can assist me. The thought of going through this entire work as well [as *Rheingold*] with yourself, is my sole hope of profit from it. For my own part, I'm quite incapable of doing anything with it on the piano so as to form a real idea of it; you're the only man to give me that . . . I hope to have finished the *first two* acts, fair copy and all, by the end of October, the whole by Christmas. Now, you lately wrote me that it would be all the same to yourself whether you came in November or *at Christmas*; which has inspired me with the notion of curbing my impatience to have you with me, and forcing the pace so as to get everything completely ready to lay before you neatly written-out *then*, even the last act—of such moment to me. So might I *beg* (?!) you not to visit me till Christmas? It has a queer enough sound—but you will understand my pedantry."

Every one of these fixtures will be falsified by the event, and all through that "forcing the pace" on which his letter to Praeger of next day shews Wagner already engaged. Certain parts of this were given last volume, but we now will take its opening third, as it throws additional light on the mood in which the solemn scoring of the second "catastrophe" in act ii of *Die Walküre* was carried out:—

Zurich, 14 Sept. 55.

Best thanks for your letter, dear Friend, which was sad enough, however, to make one sad in turn. With situations like yours the

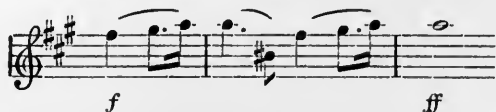
real misfortune is, that after taking every circumstance into account they are simply unalterable,* and even give a touch of the ridiculous to any rebellion against them ; a touch which he who suffers under them—as you under yours—must often himself feel the keenest. The only advice I can give you, is : Reflect, dearest friend, that no one is lucky except the man absurd enough to fancy so. We are not made for life, but to get wearied of it. Whoever becomes so earliest, attains its object soonest. All so-called turns of luck are merely palliatives, which simply make the evil worse.—I am aware this may be understood in two ways : either as a shallow platitude, or the very deepest thing a man can say. I must risk it, *how* you understand me.—

Nothing but sympathy can lighten this life of night with a passing gleam ; we are rid of our misery only when we feel for that of others. To be thoroughly freed from one's own distress, one would have to live for nothing save one's neighbours' need ; but the puzzle is, we can never do that for long at a stretch, as our own need keeps claiming the lion's share of our attention.—For my own part, I must admit that since London I haven't regained a free head. Moreover, the demon of illness has taken up its abode in my house : my wife, in particular, gives me great concern, since she always is more or less ailing and mostly makes me very glum.—I have resumed my work again, however, with an effort ; I'm forcing it, as it alone affords me liberation and oblivion. . . .

The day before this letter a son (Guido) had been born to the Wesendoncks, and we may imagine how that 'happy event' would fill the Wagner household with reflections on its childlessness. With Richard they would strike far deeper than with Minna, since he still was a prey to "great inner sufferings whereof no one knows anything, and least of all my good wife." Look six years ahead, and you find him writing in very similar circumstances, "I have cast myself into the arms of my old beloved—Work has me once again ; to her I cry, Gieb' Vergessen, dass ich lebe !" That cry of Tristan and Isolde is anticipated in the closing words of the above. But something else of great moment

* Praeger affords no clue to the personal allusion, but one may suppose him to have bemoaned the drudgery of lesson-giving while his soul was athirst for renown. Unfortunately he lends a quite erroneous flavour to the whole of this passage by reckless translation in *As*, whilst *Wie* interpolates into its retro-translation "dem könnte nichts anders helfen als gänzliches Herausreissen aus solcher Lage"—the direct contrary of Wagner's advice.

to *Tristan* is anticipated in the very portion of *Die Walküre* Wagner must now have been scoring :



Overlooked by all the systematic analysers, this eloquent theme is sounded by the higher wood-wind when Brynhild "im heftigsten Sturme des Mitgeföhls"—"in a hurricane of sympathy"—bids Siegmund stay his sword already raised to "take two lives at one stroke": "*Höre mein Wort! Sieglinde lebe!*" The flutes and oboes repeat it *fortissimo* as she storms off in preparation for a field whereon she means to turn emotion into deed. Then toward the end of the act, when her intervention has been foiled by Wotan and nothing is left her but to bear Sieglinde off to safety, we hear an echo of it from the selfsame instruments.

Obviously, all this is no mere coincidence; Wagner must have employed that five-note theme with set intent. So we look a little closer into the Death-herald scene itself, and behold! the first oboe had virtually enounced our theme at Siegmund's arraignment of Brynhild's "hard-heartedness"—"wie *kalt und hart* erkennt dich mein Herz"—and again, of her imagined feasting on his woe—"musst du dich weiden an *meinem Weh', mein Leiden*" etc. Still more significant is Brynhild's reply, that the hero's plight *has* touched her heart; where not only is our theme successively allotted to the first and third oboes as a separate entity, in addition to its elaboration by the other instruments, but the voice itself adopts it:



Finally it is given to the voice again in Brynhild's vindication, act iii, at the words I now italicise: "*ich vernahm des Helden heilige Noth; tönend erklang mir des Tapfersten Klage.*" Could anything more plainly interpret its emotional import?

Now turn to act i of *Tristan*. Here the crucial occurrence of our theme is in Isolde's long narration to Brangäne: between the words "Das rächende Schwert, statt es zu schwingen," and

their continuation, "machtlos liess ich's fallen!" it is sounded *molto ritenuto* and swelling from forte to fortissimo. A most significant use when we remember that it had been introduced *sehr ausdrucksvoll und zart* (with great expression, but tenderly) immediately before Isolde's words "*Seines Elendes jammerte mich*—das Schwert, ich liess' es fallen!" Of course those words are preceded by "er sah mir in die Augen," from which the commentators have derived their hideous appellation "Blickmotiv," or "Look motive"; but it is the *effect* of Tristan's mute appeal, not his glance itself, on which all stress of meaning should be laid. The same awakening of intuitive sympathy is expressed in Isolde's "*Seines Elendes jammerte mich*" ("With his wretched hap my heart was wrung"—A. Forman's transl.) and Brünnhilde's "ich fühle des Helden heiligen Harm," whilst the outward situations themselves are remarkably similar, even to arrest of the uplifted sword.

Here, then, not only do we gain a notable link between these two great dramas of emotion, but the use of this theme in the one removes all doubt concerning its employment in the other. It is that total transformation of the inner life effected by a moment of direct intuition; from eye to eye a soul has looked into a soul, and seen, as Schopenhauer would phrase it, that "this is I again." The sequel naturally differs, but the revolutionary expansion of the heart remains the same in both cases; neither Brünnhilde nor Isolde can ever return to her former self, after that overpowering psychic experience. Hence comes it that we hear this theme *before* Isolde's earliest utterance in act i, and hence that it repeatedly accompanies her handmaid's "Von der Heimat scheidend kalt und stumm" etc., before we either see Tristan himself or hear a word about his "look."* It is a

* Innumerable are the occasions when his "Blick" is referred to in the text *without* this theme being sounded by the music (e.g. "Diess deine Augen?" act ii, "Wie das Auge hold er öffnet," act iii); whilst Wagner's own account of the prelude—where this theme plays so prominent a part—has nothing to tell us of gazes or glances (see *Prose Works VIII.*, 386-7).—It is curious, on the other hand, to meet this theme in act ii of *Siegfried*, where it is put into the hero's own mouth, "Im Schlafe willst du mich morden?" after Mime has unwittingly divulged his pleasant little plan for "hacking off the child's head" with that "child's" own sword. Possibly it is a mere coincidence, but here again we have an averted sword and a revulsion of feeling, albeit of a very different nature.—For the theme's occurrence in the *Faust* overture see vol. v, pp. 31-2.

theme the scope of which is clear as noon when we witness a stage-presentation, but absolutely impossible to define in any handy formula of words.

To get back to strict biography—by the first or second of October, 1855, act ii of the RING's first 'evening' is finished, fair copy and all, for Wagner writes Liszt on the third: "I'm sending you to-day the first two acts of 'Walküre,' completed; it is a sincere satisfaction to me to have them reach your hands at once, because I know that no one sympathises with my works like you. I am anxious for [your opinion of] the weighty second act; it contains two such powerful catastrophes as to afford matter enough for two acts . . . [see vol. iv, 400-1] . . . Whether everything has turned out well, you must decide for yourself; for my part, I can't do any else with it. . . . Should nothing please you in my score itself, at anyrate you'll be delighted afresh with my tidy handwriting, whilst the precautionary red lines will strike you as ingenious.* This paper presentment will probably be the only one I shall arrive at with the entire work; for which reason I'm fondly spending all my pains upon the copy.—My hopes of completely finishing the last act, too, by Christmas are strengthening daily."

Liszt's opinion of act i at least, instantaneously enthusiastic this time, is first expressed to Bülow on the 10th: † "Wagner has just sent me the first 2 acts of his *Walküre*—which gives me the effect of a *miracle*. I have promised to pay him my Zurich visit at Christmas." To Wagner himself on the 12th: "Your *Walküre* has arrived—and in response I should like to sing your Lohengrin chorus: 'A wonder—a wonder!' a thousand times and with a thousand voices. Dearest Richard, you indeed are a godlike being, and it is a joy to me to follow your footsteps. More by mouth on your magnificent prodigy of a work, which I am reading through to [Hunding's] horn-rhythm (p. 40) in D, 'in great inner

* For the exact meaning of this "Vorsorge durch die rothen Striche" we must await a detailed report on the manuscript score now owned by the Bavarian Crown.

† Crossed by a letter from Bülow to him of Oct. 11: "Wagner wrote me a few days back, announcing, among other things, that the 'Walküre' was nearing its end. My curiosity about it is intense."—N.B. As yet we only possess an occasional fragment or two of the Wagner-Bülow correspondence.

agitation.' . . . Just go writing away at the Walküre, and let me take the proverb '*Quand on prend du galon, on n'en saurait trop prendre,*' and thus adapt it to your use, '*Quand on fait du sublime on n'en saurait trop faire*'—*surtout quand ce n'est qu'une question de nature et d'habitude!*—Thy F."

Alas! one could *trop faire*, in this case. Wagner had "forced the pace" with a vengeance. Barely three weeks ere despatching his scores he had not expected to finish that of act ii till the *end*, instead of the beginning, of October. That fabulously "tidy handwriting," too, he will promptly have to pay for. Look at the facsimile of the prelude to this act in Mr Chamberlain's *Richard Wagner*: to call on astigmatic eyes to watch over the getting of all those slants and uprights trim—the downward slants from left to right, by the way, he could not always manage—was to court the very illness that prevented his doing much more work this side of Christmas.

A serious nerve-explosion must have followed close on the heels of that fair-copying. Unfortunately letter 46 to Fischer bears no date, or one could time cause and effect to a nicety. However, this letter alludes to a refusal of the American invitation as a thing of the immediate past,* which makes it impossible to have been written *before* the 13th of September; a date, on the other hand, when Wagner was already full steam on a stretch of work that must have lasted without interruption at least till the end of the month (the non-interruption clue will appear when we reach letter 47 to F.). That brings us to October, when the letter to Liszt of the 3rd waives the American offer for a *second* time—Liszt having replied to Wagner's first refusal (Sept. 13) by a suggestion for definite terms (Sept. 23); so that we may reasonably place this letter to Fischer somewhere about Oct. 10, i.e. a week after despatch of acts i and ii of *Die Walküre* to Liszt, and when a few mornings had already been devoted to the instrumenting of act iii. Now see the fruits of such compulsion of protesting eyes:—"Best Friend, Nature has a remedy, you see, for everything! I haven't felt well for several days past: there's something

* See vol. v, 288-9. I seize this opportunity of correcting a surmise in the first edition of that vol. (p. 233), where I suggested "early September" as this letter's apparent date; the probabilities now seem to me all in favour of early to mid *October*.

up with me (*es steckt mir was in den Gliedern*): I'm out of the mood for work, and only with difficulty can I scrape through a portion of my daily task—which adds in turn to my ill-humour, since nothing but my work can cheer me. So this morning I was staring very glumly at my music-sheets, meaning to pump up something ne'ertheless—when a demand-note arrives from friend X of Dresden: * 395 thalers payable a fortnight after sight. This unforeseen event quite cured me; it reminded me I'm living in a world where people make other demands on me besides that for art-creations! I laid my music-sheets aside; was seized with a sudden fit of sneezing; and have—attended to my 'business.'

The nerve-explosion had begun. Doubters might be tempted to dub it Grippe, or Influenza; but we hear nothing of an epidemic at Zurich just then. "The intimate and causal connection of eyestrain and colds, influenza, and diseases of the respiratory tract is growing clearer to the profession nowadays. Patients long ago found it out"—says Gould in 1905 (*Bio. Clin.* iii)—and Wagner came very near finding it out in 1855, with his ironic allusion to "Nature." Not in the form of the bill-tender, but in that of his own nose, if not exactly "curing," Nature was loudly protesting against abuse of his eyes. She laid him low, as a fact, for the rest of the month. His next brief note to Fischer (no. 47, again undated, but at the least a week later) says: "Your despatch of yesterday found me still on the sickbed which I took to immediately I had sent off my last letter to you!!—I say no more!—To-day I have got out of bed for an hour to write to X, because these fresh tidings about him have left me no peace, and I prefer conveying him my letter through you. . . I cannot sit up any longer, but must get back into bed: I already feel bad."

Something like three weeks was the length of *this* mysterious uncaging of "latent rheums and catarrhs" supposed to have been brought back from London, but obviously brought on the same way as for years before and after. Not another line to anybody stands on record till the 2nd and 3rd of November, on the

* Clearly one of his old creditors in the opera-publication venture (see ii, 389), as a whole page is now devoted to the "scandalous" state of that business, ending with an explanation how impossible it is to meet any such bill.

latter of which dates he tells Mme Praeger : * " je suis resté au monde, par obstination seulement, comme vous allez voir." After a couple of pages of what Germans expressively denote as 'gallows-humour,' those words are seriously explained : " Quant à Richard Wagner l'aîné [p. 4*n sup.*], je ne puis vous donner que des nouvelles peu agréables : il se traîne à travers la vie comme un fardeau. Sa seule réjouissance est son travail ; son plus grand déplaisir est quand il perd l'envie de travailler . . . ces époques sont terribles, car alors il ne me reste rien, rien pour me soulager. Aux derniers mois j'ai regagné heureusement un peu mon ancien zèle, et je travaillais assez bien au second de mes [both *As* and *Wie* give "nos," but *As* translates it "my"] drames musicaux, que je voulais finir à Londres (sot que j'étais !) Malheureusement j'étais forcé de passer les dernières semaines au lit, en proie d'une maladie, longtemps cachée en moi, et enfin éclatée—j'espère à mon salut. Je viens de quitter le lit hier, et me voilà aujourd'hui à la table pour vous écrire. Soyez indulgente, et pardonnez-moi le tas de bêtises que je vous envoie avec cette lettre," etc., etc.

Similarly, though in a different strain, to Princess Wittgenstein the day before : †

* The general authenticity of this letter has never been in dispute, though no opportunity has yet been afforded of comparing its printed text with the autograph known to exist in private hands. A verification somewhat desirable, since the versions in *As* and *Wie* differ on several trifling points : e.g. " je ne puis vous donner . . . trompé . . . paraît . . . réjouissance . . . musicaux," *As* ; " je ne vous donne . . . moqué . . . semble . . . jouissance . . . musicaux," *Wie*. Of course these are matters of no intrinsic moment, but it is exasperating to be uncertain whether one is quoting Wagner's, Ferdinand's, or Léonie Praeger's French—especially as this letter contains an unexpected announcement, " j'ai une multitude de projets de sujets d'opéras dans ma tête " (i.e. *more* than the only two we can guess at, viz. *Tristan* and perhaps *Die Sieger*). Moreover, one would like to know how a letter written from Zurich in November comes to be headed " Aussicht vom Kurhause Sonnenberg auf Seelisberg, Ct. Uri." Had Wagner hoarded up a sheet of hotel paper nearly three months, expressly as a souvenir for Mme Praeger, or has her husband simply borrowed the heading from Wagner's letter to himself of July 15 ?—With every document in these twin books one invariably meets some teasing problem.

† From the group of nine letters published in the *Bayreuther Blätter* VII.-IX. 1905, subsequently incorporated in *Glanzzeit der Weimarer Altenburg* (B. and H., 1906).

Zurich, 2. Nov. 55.

This moment I have risen from a lengthy illness ; may it excuse my poor and tardy answer to your friendly note !* Perhaps, too, you were unaware that Liszt had already advised me, with a hearty cheer, of his receipt of my score.

I knew you had been in Paris with the Child, but it struck me rather as a great diversion for you, than a deed of heroism ; you would have performed the latter if you had kept faith with a poor exile, and visited me in Switzerland. One remark in your letter gives me hope of seeing the pair of you here, as well as Liszt, should he postpone his journey till the spring. If you haven't the courage to visit me in winter, though, please don't stop Liszt from doing so ; for believe me—I am *pinning* for him, and did the utmost violence to myself in begging him to defer his visit until Christmas. As I have been hindered further in my work by illness for some weeks (*einige Wochen*), I don't know for certain whether I shall have quite finished the last act of the Walküre by Christmas now ; yet for nothing in the world would I delay Liszt's visit any longer, and I deeply regret having checked his intention for months through vain considerations of the kind, as I have far more need of receiving by it, than of giving. If you ladies could finally make up your minds to visit me next spring or summer, it would be a question of finding me still in the land of the living : if Liszt pays me a visit beforehand, it will contribute much to that.—

Ah, dearest lady, there are far too many words in this world, and far too few deeds ! I say this with no bitterness, only with sorrow. Hear me out. Were I *free*—I unconditionally assure you—I should pass at least the half of every year at Weimar, simply to be with Liszt. I know this so positively, that it almost seems natural for me to wish that Liszt—now *he* alone is free—would come *to me* and live with me. Quite soberly, I consider it a monstrous waste of existence to live so entirely by outer routine, not to regulate one's movements and one's residence by nothing save the most important bearings in one's life. How soon will our few remaining years run out ; and when their end comes, how much we may regret having spent our life midst hounds and apes so often, instead of with the only human beings near our souls ! For myself at least, I know that almost all my misery would vanish if I could live by side of Liszt ; perhaps, too, I might prove of service to him. Well, I *cannot* come to him ; but he—quite easily

* Evidently of mid-October, as the princess and daughter returned from Paris to Weimar Oct. 6 (see Liszt to Bülow, Oct. 10). Taken with the absence of any reply to Liszt's congratulations of Oct. 12, this helps to fix the duration of Wagner's recent illness.

might come to me; and you—would you remain behind? Or is Weimar such joy to you?—

What I have said is in thorough earnest, and I deplore aloud my *not being to Liszt* what I should like to be; otherwise he would have hit on some expedient to try and live with me henceforward. I—think of nothing else,* and thereby testify that Liszt is more to *me* than I to *him*—which after all may be quite natural.—

I'm expressing myself according to my mood, you see, and that is one of sheer despair,—for I feel people are letting me *perish, perish* in the word's full sense, and you will all become aware of it too late. Of course I've no right to object, especially if the 'world' lets me perish; but what makes the void all round me such a pain, is that you don't so much as feel it.—

But regard for one's position (*Aber die Lebens-Rücksichten*)—and then—one must really give a thought to it—and then! Yes, that's just the materialism which brings all noble things to ground. And noble and fine it would be, if in future we could live together! I'm not unbearable, as Liszt once said: he should come and convince himself. How often have I told him my consuming need to live beside him; he always fancied it could be attained through nothing but my amnestying, and as he had to account that impossible, he shrugged his shoulders at my need as well. Never has he given me a proper answer to this sort of question. Can existence itself have already become for him a mere routine? I refuse to believe it!—

I have replied more passionately than you will have expected: perhaps a little fever is hanging about me still. Fever—with delirium—brings all one's peccant matter to the skin: so you see what peccant matter I've been harbouring for long. No doubt I shall answer you more rationally another day; for to-day please put up with my paroxysms, like a good doctor who does not let them make him lose his head.

Are you cross with me? I'm not with you, although it might appear so! The fever will pass soon, and I shall find all in order again: shall I recover, though? Who knows!—Things seem going fairly well with you, as you were able to enjoy art in Paris; it isn't everybody who can do that when things are going badly!

Fare you well!

A thousand greetings!

!!!

Whatever may have been the immediate effect on the Fürstin of this morbid outburst, her daughter Marie seems to have sent

* In his letter of Sept. 13 he had suggested that Liszt and the two princesses should set up "a semi-joint household" with the Wesendoncks at the Hôtel Baur for *the whole winter*—a poet's dream.

a kind answer within the next few days; whence we may infer that the same allowance was made at the Altenburg for Wagner's surexcited nerves as I now expect my readers to. It is manifest, the illness from which he has scarcely recovered yet had been something far more serious than a feverish cold. Five years after, we find him laid up nearly three weeks in Paris with "symptoms of inflammation of the brain," and there can be no hesitation in pronouncing this Zurich illness as of precisely the same nature; "fever—with delirium," we have just heard from his own lips. His doubts of remaining long "in the land of the living" are eloquent enough in themselves, but throughout this whole letter we can trace plain signs of recent nervous breakdown. Its immediate cause has already been noted (I risk the punning sense): we possess and cherish it to-day; how many of us with the smallest thought how much it cost him?

But that is by no means the end: the orchestration of act iii of *Die Walküre* is doomed to be carried through in just as piecemeal fashion as act ii. The next letter to anybody is that of Nov. 16 to Liszt (acknowledging the one aforesaid from "the Child"): "I haven't been out of doors yet, but am getting used to my room and have little fancy for our autumn mists.—Then, I am working a bit—and you are coming, aren't you??—I should like to keep silence till then—nay, for ever; if I speak or write, I always put my foot in it,"—an apology for the late "peccant matter."

A little more instrumenting, then, but not for much over a fortnight, as the very next letter tells Liszt, Dec. 12: "I am making an attempt to arise from the sickbed in which I've spent exactly three more weeks. Karl Ritter has informed you of the state I'm in: the thorns of my existence have blossomed into 'roses' now; I am suffering from repeated attacks of facial erysipelas.* In the luckiest event I can go outside no more this year, whilst I shall have to pass the whole winter in constant

* This, or "S. Anthony's fire," is the usual translation of *Gesichtsrose*; but "eczema" or "herpes" (called "shingles" when appearing on the loins) would perhaps be more correct, as nowadays the word *erysipelas* conveys a much graver meaning. Such eruptions as these "roses" always follow the track of a nerve, and are therefore rather *symptoms* than the main complaint; were it otherwise, one could not account for prostration sufficient to confine the sufferer to "bed" for so long. Like the gastric trouble we meet at other times in Wagner's case, they undoubtedly were 'ocular reflexes'; see Appendix.

dread of fresh relapses; as the tiniest agitation, with the smallest chill, is sure to fling me on my bed again for two or three weeks.—Thus I indeed have reaped the fruits of my crass postponement of your visit; for I can't possibly ask you to come to me in the present uncertainty of my health . . . Nothing can worsen my humour now, as I'm getting more and more habituated to mishaps of every kind, and regard the disagreeable as quite a matter of course . . . As soon as I'm a little used to being up, I'll write you further." His connection of his *Gesichtsrose* not only with the "smallest chill," but also with the "tiniest agitation" (or "excitement"—*Aufregung*), is strictly scientific; but no one thought of finding out and suspending the cause. On the contrary: his instinctive means of relief, a daily walk, was tabooed, apparently by doctor's orders, and we may be tolerably certain that he spent most of his bedridden hours in aggravating his complaint by reading.

Even the "attempt to arise" on Dec. 12 must have proved a false start, for the letter of that day week to Sainton (vol. v, 145-6) commences, "Only to-day have I left the invalid's bed I had kept for two months, barring a few odd days." This is the letter which talks of "la maladie de Londres, longtemps cachée, qui est éclatée enfin, pour me rappeler ce que je dois à toi et à tes soins bien amicaux, sans lesquels j'aurais probablement trouvé ma mort*—là, d'ou je n'ai remporté maintenant qu'une certaine collection de rhumes et de catarrhs latents qui viennent de sortir enfin de leur cage"; so that we may take seven to eight, instead of merely "two," months as the effective duration to date of Wagner's present crippling—a period strewn with intermittent struggles to get his *Walküre* completed.

Probably another brief struggle succeeds that letter, as no. 207 of the *W.-L. Corr.* (undated, but about Dec. 28) starts with: "I again—or rather, still—am ill and incapable of anything. I was just going to inscribe myself in the album, for the Child to receive it in time for the new year,†—but it won't come off; my

* This is the only hint we have of an actual illness in London; Praeger tells us nothing about it. Perhaps it was thus that Wagner made the acquaintance of Dr Gerber (v, 122), and possibly it was this illness that prevented his trip to Bath (*ibid.* 237n).

† Receipt of Princess Marie's album, for contribution of an autograph, is mentioned in the letter to Liszt of Nov. 16; six weeks of fruitless waiting for

head is too heavy and dull.—I'm simply writing now to tell you so, being incapable of a proper letter." He goes on to ask for return of his *Walküre* acts i and ii, however, as "a good copyist" has been beaten up in Zurich: "I want to get this transcript finished soon, perhaps from the cause that bids insects place their eggs in safety ere they die themselves [Schopenhauer]. If I ever get through the last act, the whole work shall be sent you, notwithstanding you are much too great a child of this world. . . . Adieu, and attend to your business; but I don't think much of your Christianity. The world-overcomer ought not to want to be world-conqueror—it involves a hopeless contradiction; and you are stuck deep in that . . . Adieu!—I really can't go on."

Clearly another relapse; which must be held sufficient excuse not only for the tone of this New Year's greeting, but also for its silence concerning Liszt's recent share in the big event now looming at Berlin—though there may be something more to say on the latter head.

For many a year had the Berlin *Tannhäuser* affair been a thorn in Wagner's side, with its everlasting negotiations and disappointments, as the reader of vol. iv may remember. There its history was brought down to Wagner's definite "capitulation" in the London spring, with a slight forecast of developments this autumn. We will therefore recommence with Liszt's laconic messages of early September, "Johanna Wagner has been here since the day before yesterday . . . I spent several hours with her last evening. So *Tannhäuser* is to be produced in Berlin next

a happy inspiration, then! Dec. 23 her mother reminds the invalid, in an effusive epistle ending: "Have you been able to do any more to the *Walküre*? At the scene between Siegmund and Sieglinde I shed big tears!—It is beautiful as Love, as Infinity, as Earth and Heaven!" Christmas Eve it is Liszt's turn to write, *inter alia*: "The day after tomorrow is set down for *Tannhäuser*, which invariably proves a *dräu* here; a distinction shared with it at Weimar by Lohengrin and the Flying Dutchman. Lohengrin is to be got up afresh for next spring; hitherto [for the past twelvemonth] we have always lacked an Ortrud."—The letter above quoted is an answer, of course, to one or both of these; whilst Wagner's actual last of 1855, so far as known, are those of Dec. 29 to Frau Ritter (see cap. I.) and Dec. 30 to E. Gottwald, the latter referring to a polemic by Ambros, "a washy Austrian" (subsequently of *History of Music* fame), against the *Faust* overture (see Altmann).

December," and Oct. 12: "Your Flying Dutchman is billed here for Sunday week, the 21st,—and the beginning of November we are to have a performance of *Tannhäuser* in honour of several Berliners (Hülßen, Dorn, the operatic regisseur, Formes etc.) who have announced themselves for a visit here. I will send you an account of it." Unfortunately *no* account of this renewal of diplomatic relations between Weimar and Berlin can have been sent to Wagner—unless by one of the princesses—for his letter of Dec. 12 complains, "I'm longing much for news from you, of which you're more than chary."

Decidedly it would have been instructive to hear more from Liszt himself on that erst so ticklish point, but his information even to von Bülow is almost as meagre. Hans had written Sept. 30: "Mr. Formes (magnificent voice, plenty of talent, and, notwithstanding his talent, plenty of zeal*) would be the only Berlin tenor to do justice to that part in your Psalm. As he is to visit Weimar soon in company with Mr. Dorn—officially indeed, I fancy—to attend a representation of '*Tannhäuser*' under your direction (I beseech you, give the 2nd finale whole then), you might ask him yourself to undertake the soli in your Psalm." Oct. 10, Liszt to Hans: "The *Tannhäuser* representation in honour of the Berlin visitors, who have officially announced themselves through a letter from Mr. de Hülßen to Mr. de Beaulieu, will probably take place the 4th of November. I shall profit by it to follow your advice and beg Mr. Formes to be kind enough to undertake the tenor solo of my Psalm" at Berlin next December. Hans hears again, Oct. 12 and 24, that the performance "in honour of the Berlin visitors" first "seems," then "remains fixed for" the date aforesaid, but without a word of further comment. We therefore are left to our one tiny hint that the ice had been broken *above* Liszt's head, namely by that letter of self-invitation from the Berlin to the Weimar Intendant.

Broken it was, in any case, and we must assume the Weimar object-lesson to have been duly given, though we have no definite record of it as an accomplished fact. For Liszt soon proceeds to

* To another correspondent the previous June: "Our *ut de poitrine*, the famous tenor Formes is bringing you my sincere regards . . . His voice is mellower and richer than a plum . . . even if he is no Roger as singer, and of course not as actor. Added to which, he is a charming man and possesses a charming wife."

Berlin on his own account, where Dorn promptly pays him his respects, as we learn from a letter to Carolyne of Nov. 26. Next day Liszt makes his ceremonial call on Hülsen, "avec lequel mes rapports s'engagent sur un bon pied," and receives a personal invitation to the Intendant's own box, also permission for Formes to sing his Psalm, whilst Dorn sends him "six balcony tickets" for his "Nibelungen." * Johanna Wagner, "qui a été superbe de figure et de mimique dans le rôle de Brunhilde" (Dorn's), is called upon and dined with; a dinner given by ex-Intendant Redern is partaken in the company of Bülow, Dorn, Hülsen and others. Meyerbeer's mother also dines the Weimar celebrity, and he even receives a similar invitation from the King of Prussia (for 3 P.M.), which he has to decline, however, because of concert rehearsals at Stern's Union. A big reception and another "grand souper" are got up in his honour, and in fact he is generally fêted. But the main object of his visit fails. His personally-conducted concert of Dec. 6 unites all the critics against him, as he tells his princess on the 12th: "Whatever opinion one may hold on the future results of my stay in Berlin, it is bizarre enough that, after the really vivid impression my compositions † produced on the audience, and the personal honours paid me by the great majority of the musicians of this place—I should thus be made to run the gauntlet of the critics."

That by the way, or rather as a commentary on one passage in Liszt's letter of Dec. 5 to Carolyne: "Monday morning [3rd] I looked in on the Frommann, who the night before had written begging me to dispose Rellstab and Kossak in Wagner's favour, or at least to moderate their critical attacks on *Tannhäuser*. Naturally I told her it was not my habit to brew broth for cats, and that she was far too much of a *Jenenserin* and provincial in her anxieties about the fate of Wagner's works.‡ The subjects

* For use by Liszt's two daughters and their chaperon, Hans' mother, the young ladies having been transferred to Frau von Bülow's tutelage some ten weeks previously.—N.B. Four days after Liszt's arrival in Berlin, he makes the announcement to Pss Carolyne that he has had a talk with Hans the previous evening, "dont la conclusion est que je lui donnerai probablement ma fille en mariage, sans diplomatie aucune—car je suis persuadé qu'il se conduira mieux qu'en 'gentleman'!" (Nov. 29, 55).

† *Préludes, Ave Maria, Concerto in E flat* (Hans at pft), *Tasso, Psalm XIII.*

‡ Liszt returns to the subject in a letter of next July to Wagner: "Talking of newspaper notices reminds me of A[lwine], whom on my stay in Berlin I

we had to discuss not offering me any great present interest, I turned the conversation several times. After a good half hour of it, I began to long to see a pretty face," and went elsewhere. It was not indifference on Liszt's part; merely, he had *no* influence with the Berlin critics, whilst poor Alwine had ruffled him by her intervention in the *Tannhäuser* affair a year gone by (vol. iv).

What we should have liked to hear, and what these daily bulletins to Pss Carolyne preserve dead silence on, is the precise nature of Liszt's assistance in the big Event. Undoubtedly he attended a part rehearsal or two, but we learn it only after he has left Berlin, and even then a trifle vaguely. Carolyne herself is the first to mention it, in course of her cordial letter of Dec. 23 to Wagner: "You will have heard through the newspapers [only that way!] of Liszt's stay in Berlin; he will soon be going there again, to attend the production of your *Tannhäuser*, two rehearsals of which he as good as conducted. Stupid people will not be reduced to silence by that! But what care you for stupid people?" The cryptic allusion to "*alberne Leute*" is open to so many constructions that I will hazard none, but rather give Liszt's own brief tale, written the day after Carolyne's: "In Berlin, where I remained 3 weeks, at the invitation of Herr von Hülsen and Dorn I took part in (*machte . . . mit*) a couple of pianoforte rehearsals of *Tannhäuser*, and if the first representation is not put off beyond the 6th to 8th of January (as announced) I will send you my report on it as eye and ear witness. Johanna will sing and play your Elisabeth admirably, and Formes is studying his rôle with the greatest conscientiousness. Dorn has already held a mass of pft and quartet rehearsals, and is making it a special *point d'honneur* to bring out the work as correctly and brilliantly as possible."

Here we see how great a mistake Liszt made in summer 1854:

found in such touching uneasiness about the articles to be expected from the Berlin press on the representation of *Tannhäuser*. For all my estimation of her friendship for you (which maintains a kind of friendliness between ourselves as well), I couldn't help somewhat offending her by my indifference. Similarly on her last visit here, about three weeks since, she drove me to a bad joke or two on the *enthusiastic* interest with which she attended a performance of Auber's *Maçon* [not at all despised by W.] at our theatre—and it came nigh her being angry at my quizzing the *many-sidedness* of her taste, or rather, her lack of taste in admiring this rubbishy grisette-music. I shall try to make it up with her on the next occasion."

all this and a great deal more might have easily been accomplished *then*, had he but yielded on the letter to preserve the spirit. But we must let bygones be bygones now; his better side has conquered, as it generally did in the long run, and only the faintest touch of old "susceptibility" is displayed in the allusive next paragraph: "In Berlin too, beyond a doubt, Tannhäuser will prove a *paying opera*—which has become the main affair even for the composer. Indeed I hope the *critical* treatment I have myself had to endure at the hands of the critics will turn out to the good of your Tannhäuser [L.'s compositions as scapegoat?], and that the work's infallible effect upon the public will not be particularly spoiled by adverse reviews. For the rest, I will write you most fully thereon"—as he does, in fact, just three weeks hence.

And now for the Event itself, of January 7. How big an event it was considered on the spot, is proved by the *Neue Zeitschrift's* statement (Feb. 1, 56) that "10,172 applications for seats and boxes were received at the Berlin theatre for the first performance of Tannhäuser," i.e. enough to fill it five times over—an estimate confirmed by Bülow's article (*vid. inf.*). Let Liszt, however, be the first to tell us something of it:—

Jan. 8, 56, to Carolyne: "The telegraph has functioned twice to-day through my fault; what do you say to such extravagance?—only a matter of 6 écus, though. First to Wagner: *Excellent performance, wonderful inscenation, decided approval.* Best luck!*—and then to yourself. The latter despatch was prompted by a remark of Count Redern's, who has given me to understand that H.M. the King would see me tomorrow morning or invite me to the Court concert tomorrow evening [the latter came off, without Liszt's having to play]. It therefore is necessary for me to stay over tomorrow, however I may regret missing Dawson's *Hamlet* [at Weimar].—Apropos of *Tannhäuser*, the representation of which has really given me very great pleasure, this morning I gave Kroll the *mot de la situation*: 'The tail of opposition, which cannot fail to put in an appearance, will curl up little by little—till it rounds itself into the zero of the future cypher of

* "Entschiedener Beifall" — a carefully-picked expression, *Beifall* also meaning "applause"; whereas for "success" we should have expected *Erfolg*. This telegram is also given in the *W.-L. Corr.*

success!' [repeated below]. After each act there were a few *st!*—taken altogether, nothing much, for the current of success sets in *Tannhäuser's* favour and dominates discordant voices by its hum.* A good portion of the public was like Bridoisson [*l'Avare*]: 'ne sachant trop que dire, pour exprimer sa façon de penser.' La Wagner was superb, the mounting fabulous, and the ensemble very smooth on the whole. Of the Court, only Pss Charles and a few young princes were present."

The same day to Mme Agnes Street-Klindworth (*Briefe an eine Freundin*): "I have come here, by invitation of Mr de Hülsen, to attend the first representation of *Tannhäuser*, which took place last evening. The execution was satisfactory on the whole, and the mise en scène admirable. Gropius has really made artworks of his scenery for the grotto of Venus and the Wartburg landscape; whilst the hall of the Wartburg has been copied with complete exactitude, by order of the King, from the plans for the actual restoration, with all the historic banners of the various families and territories, in fine, precisely as we shall see it on the spot next year. A sum of 800 écus was spent on the stools for the barons and Minnesänger alone. I have never seen anything like this dignified splendour. La Wagner was superb as Elisabeth—a saint divinely vanquished by love!—The audience, without quite understanding what it all was about, seemed to have a dim idea it must be something grand and fine. There was much applause, and the tail of opposition" etc. (see above).

Next day, to the Princess again: "The *Kreuzzeitung* for the 9th, which came out last night, contains a fairly oppositional article on the representation of *Tannhäuser*, that has staggered Hans. I have already told you, neither the King nor Queen came to the first performance. It will be curious to see if the soi-disant Liberal papers will espouse Wagner's cause a little warmly now. I should almost doubt it—but there is not much need for you to feel alarmed.† The second performance of

* Here I take "fruit" to be a misprint for "bruit," since I can scarcely believe Liszt to have indulged in such a prize specimen of mixed metaphor as "car le courant du succès va du côté du *Tannhäuser*, et domine par son fruit les voix discordantes."

† A few weeks later Pss Carolyne herself writes Hans's mother, unreconciled as yet to her son's career and apparently depressed by the Berlin hissing of the *Faust* overture (Jan. 31—see v, 39): "Believe me, Madame, certain

Tannhäuser is announced for tomorrow evening. We will have a chat about it at Weymar, at our ease; I leave tomorrow morning," etc.

After that second performance Hans rushed into print in the Berlin *Feuerspritze* of Jan. 14.* Concerning this he tells Pohl on the 30th, "I lately had to write a *Tannhäuser* article, which—between ourselves—deserved spitting on." Certainly it is by no means up to his usual mark, as a whole, but a few sentences from its beginning and end are of sufficient historical interest to quote:—

It is impossible to speak of a success of the first representation of "*Tannhäuser*" as yet; that first representation is not yet at an end. It will be so, when the crowding cohorts of the curious—whose relays in this populous capital account for at least five performances at the opera-house—shall have made place for a less composite audience, attracted rather by a thirst to know than a wish to see. That will come in good time, but last Monday and Thursday [7th and 10th] the sightseers left the theatre more than unsatisfied—bored—by the poet and composer. The praises of these evenings were not bestowed on Richard Wagner, but upon the Intendant and management, and above all on Professor Gropius † . . . With the amusement-seeking

values are appreciated even when it is impossible to acknowledge them, and *là haut* [presumably "in high quarters," though it sounds like Heaven] good account is kept of those who *now*—when his cause seems difficult—support the man of genius whose name will be one of the brightest jewels in *Germania's* crown some day. Already it has become almost a *position sociale* [!] to be Wagnerian, and when the moment of definitive victory arrives you will find it will have its rewards" (see *H. v. Bülow's Briefe*). For another proof of her propagandism at this epoch, see Appendix.

* This article, not included in von Bülow's *Ausgewählte Schriften*, was rescued from oblivion by Margarete Toeppe, who discovered it in course of a more general research and procured its reprint in the *Bayreuther Blätter* 1901 (pp. 81-4).

† Similarly a Berlin correspondent writes the *Neue Zeitschrift* of Jan. 18: "The public has not quite found its feet, so far; the novelty of idea on the one hand, the splendour of mounting on the other, so distract the audience for the moment, that it hardly knows where it is;" whilst a certain Albert Hahn—at the commencement of a wearisome and almost unintelligible essay on the work and its Berlin production, rambling through four numbers—remarks in the issue for Feb. 1 that, after "eight performances to full houses," he is "unable to speak of the impression produced on those people we understand by the term Public." The same issue (Feb. 1), in a briefer and more readable notice signed "F. D.," deals with "fresh laurels" won by the *Vossische*,

class of the public, so strongly represented at the first two performances, "Tannhäuser" had not even a succès d'estime or d'ennui, but, to be candid, a downright fiasco. . . .

We abstain from signalling the beauties of this grand work, to-day, in reply to those who are only busied to decry its assumed defects. Wagner is his own best commentator; his appeal is simply to more frequent hearing. When "Tannhäuser" shall have found its proper audience, will be time enough to enter into details. Upon more than forty German stages it has proved itself an Artwork of the Present for the past five years.—Space must be found, however, for a brief encomium on its musical execution here . . . [Praise accorded to Dorn and the chief exponents] . . . In short, the first performances bore the best promise of future perfection. May this exemplary zeal not cool down! We reserve for a future article [it did not appear] a few demurs and hints for amendment in the composer's sense. To this class belongs, e.g. the superfluous doubling of the trombones in the overture, against which Wagner would protest. [Finis.]

In the middle of his article, Hans had eloquently defended the poem against "the materialistic atheism of the National-Zeitung"; this closing sentence of his sheds light upon the *National's* objection (Jan. 10) to "the string-quartet being pushed into the background, and the architecture (*kunstvoller Bau*) of the older orchestra reduced to ruins, by a reinforcement of the wind-choir." With so accurate an observer as Hans in matters orchestral, there can be no doubt that this "superfluous doubling" had been arbitrarily effected by Dorn, though Liszt's detailed report of Jan. 14 to Wagner rather lays stress on the non-reinforcement of the *strings* in so large a building. To that letter, written from Weimar, we will now proceed:—

"Johanna as Elisabeth was glorious to look at and enthralling to hear. In the duet with Tannhäuser her acting had wonderful moments, and her great scene in the finale was sung and realised beyond excel. Formes' intonation was firm, pure and true—without a vestige of fatigue in the Narration, where his bell-like voice told well. On the whole he not only does ably, but very satisfactorily, despite his shortness—which of course is rather

Kellstab, the *National-Ztg* ("—t"), and *Kladderadatsch*: "In conclusion, to students of this malicious style of writing we recommend perusal of the article 'der Tannhäuser in Berlin' in the last number of the *Grenzboten*; it is a model of its kind." Of laudatory notices in the general press, apart from Bülow's, we hear no more than if it had been our London of those days.

detrimental to the part, especially beside Johanna * . . . [Praise of the Wolfram and Venus] . . . Dorn and the band took the most scrupulous pains to fulfil your intentions; so that the orchestral part of the production was an entire success, apart from two errors of tempo—in the first chorus, where you have forgotten to mark *più moderato*, almost half the previous pace †—and the G major section before entry of the B major ensemble [act ii], which to my mind was also taken much too fast, thereby seriously impairing the rhythmic climax of this second part of the finale.—The chorus was well drilled, but numerically too weak for the great size of the Berlin opera-house, and scarce a whit more effective in proportion than our own, which has always had to boast of my supreme dissatisfaction. Similarly, the number of stringed instruments is *too small*; like the chorus, they ought to be increased by a good third. In such a building 8 to 10 double basses, 15 to 20 first violins, and so forth, would certainly be none too many for great occasions."

With the Berlin *mise-en-scène*, on the other hand, Liszt is thoroughly content, as heard already: "Nowhere have I seen anything so magnificent. Gropius and Herr von Hülsen have

* "A six-foot child with the golden locks," the *Musical World* soon afterwards described this offspring of the House of Hanover.

† That disastrous acceleration of the Sirens' tiny choruses was maintained at the Berlin opera-house for another two years at least in spite of Bülow's oral protest, for we find him writing Dorn Jan. 25, 58: "Permit me to send you a billet of Richard Wagner's to myself (of four years back) as excuse for my recent remark, in respect of which I further take the liberty of referring to a certain evening . . . [evidently in January 56] when you paid me the honour of questioning me about the Berlin Tannhäuser-production and I ventured to give you my frank opinion of that Siren-chorus tempo. It would never have occurred to me to express it again, had I not lately heard people near me in the audience hotly arguing about Wagner's unsingable and unintelligible treatment of the chorus at that very point." The said "billet of Wagner's" (June 18, 54) contained these words: "Of course that Siren tempo is a confusion; it ought to be exactly twice as slow as the rest."—Dorn's reply is instructive: "As regards the Siren tempo, it is precisely as I thought: Wagner made a mistake, without his in any way holding its results of importance [enough to correct it?]. Nevertheless, I will rectify the matter on the next opportunity—when we have another Tannhäuser rehearsal." If Dorn really guessed this obvious error of notation at the first, why not have enquired of Liszt, whom he heard conduct the opera two months before the Berlin première?—Nowadays such a blunder is impossible, as the Paris version sets the "Siren" gems in the heart of a *molto moderato* section.

really done the most extraordinary things and in the greatest taste. No doubt you have heard that H.M. the King ordered the scenery of the second act to be faithfully conformed to the Wartburg *restoration plans*, and sent Gropius to Eisenach for that purpose. The sight of this hall with all its historic banners, the costumes copied from old paintings, and the whole court-ceremonial during the Landgrave's reception, gave me an incredible *plaisir*. Equally so, the posting of the hunting-horns upon the hill, the gradual *swarming* of the valley with the hunting train, the rear brought up by the four horses and falconer, in the finale of the first act; and then the fifteen trumpets clamouring their proud fanfare from the gallery of the hall, in the march of the second act!—But, dearest Richard, I still hope you will see and hear it all yourself before too long, and if I visit you this summer we'll have another talk about it."

Liszt's succeeding kind message must be deferred awhile, not to interrupt the *Tannhäuser* affair, concerning which his friend replies Jan. 18: "So we are really to meet before long!—Best thanks for your report of to-day on Berlin. The Frommann of late has been writing me daily, and always in great anxiety about a final and assured success for *Tannhäuser*; everything seems to need rebirth first, in that faddy, unproductive Berlin! Kladderadatsch was perfectly right when it charged me with yielding *Tannhäuser* to Berlin for no other object than the *tantième*: that is so! It's my own fault, and I have to pay for it as vulgarly as possible!—I *am* paying, but alas! shan't get anything out of it.*—O if I could but transfer myself to the state of four years back!!—Enough: it is all my own fault, and serves me quite right!"—

Fräulein Frommann—a lady of no little influence, through her position as reader to the Princess of Prussia—had had her fears pooh-poohed by Liszt a month ere the production, as we have seen; it was only natural, then, that she should keep up an animated correspondence with the composer of *Tannhäuser* himself, especially as she had been behind the scenes of the negotiations for over a twelvemonth. Her letters and their

* The equivalent of the royalties for the first four nights had been advanced to him last May (see iv, 354-6); wherefore, so far as concerned his actual pocket, everything now depended on a decent run.

answers would be certain to disclose a good deal more of the true inwardness of the present situation, particularly as regards the recent Weimar visit of the Berlin officials, than we are ever like to hear from any other source. Unfortunately, all that has come down to us of that correspondence in this winter is the following reply of Wagner's, preserved by the accident of its having been passed on to Hülsen and from him to the court-theatre's archives, whence Dr W. Altmann unearthed and reproduced it some four years since (*Die Musik*, "3. Wagner-Heft," 1903):—

Dear Lady,

You ask me for a more definite statement regarding the wish I last expressed? I can tell you nothing further than that I am inwardly convinced the *reappearance of Elisabeth as corpse* is the more effective plan, i.e. the easier to understand. Unfortunately I had allowed the outcry raised from Germany against her being brought back from the Wartburg nicely confined, so soon after we had last seen her alive, to induce me to alter the ending a second time. I am inclined to think, though, that in the score intended for Berlin—which certainly contained the chorus of Younger Pilgrims announcing the miracle—this cancellation of the dead body had not been indicated yet; * if it really was, that is the Dresden copyist's fault. I was very pleased at friend Devrient's hitting on the happy thought you know already,†

* For clearness' sake I have had to simplify this sentence somewhat. It is not quite so easy to simplify the history of the *pro-Parisian* changes in the opera's ending (*cf* iii, 388*n*), but if we combine the present statement about an outcry "*aus Deutschland*"—i.e. after Wagner himself had left the country—with letter 36 to Uhlig (Oct. 51), those of Jan. 30 and May 29, 52, to Liszt, and the 'Tannhäuser Guide' written August '52 (*P. III.*), a fairly connected outline of that history may be obtained as follows: The second version of act iii (1847) not only gave Venus a singing part—a point on which the composer never faltered thenceforward—but also dropped the chorus of Younger Pilgrims owing to a Dresden difficulty in procuring suitable voices, and introduced Elisabeth's bier; a third version (1851) restored the said chorus, for such theatres as were equal to it, and dropped the makeshift "*er ist erlöst*" (substituted in version 2); then, in deference to managers brow-beaten by the clamour of critics (*circa* 1853) the bier-borne body was also dropped awhile—a fourth version, if one chooses so to call it. So that, after the original version of 1845 and before the Paris revision of 1860-61, it was a kind of see-saw between the Younger Pilgrims' chorus and Elisabeth's dead body, according to local circumstances, sometimes one or the other appearing, sometimes neither, sometimes both; but Wagner's own desire was *both*.

† The idea at Carlsruhe (première Jan. 28, 55), says Glasenapp, was that Elisabeth has been overtaken by death ere reaching the Wartburg; the older pilgrims improvise a bier from boughs of trees, and her body, covered

and particularly glad to be reminded of this latest version, through you, by Herr von Hülsen himself.—But even if, as you write me to-day, my last wish is opposed by the recent [Berlin] experience that that more or less impersonal ending [original version] pleases people, I have still to reply that I should be loth to miss the uncommonly solemn and impressive effect of the witchcraft's paling and fading away beneath the torchlight, the actual approach of the mourning cortège, and Tannhäuser's sinking to death on the body, from the chain of coefficients in my work's last act. And this change is the easier as it does not involve the smallest alteration in the music, but the scenic arrangement alone would need rectifying. For, here I differ with yourself: you would particularly like to have the "er ist erlöst" of the second version, in addition; but that is bound to drop out when the chorus of Younger Pilgrims is given entire—on which I must insist, not only for the rounding of the whole idea, but also for the grander, more imposing effect. I know this chorus can be rendered and stage-managed well at Berlin: moreover, the budding staff, actually borne in the midst of the homecomers, is a symbol of great weight.

Now do beg Herr von Hülsen, in my name, for the change aforesaid; only in case of urgent reasons against its prompt adoption, might one postpone it till the opera's reprise next season.

As to "Tannhäuser's" success in Berlin thus far, I hardly need repeat to you that I *foresaw* its dubiousness and indeterminateness. My "Flying Dutchman" and "Rienzi" were each received exactly thus, and I should believe "Tannhäuser" would share the Berlin fortune of those operas, were it not for two auxiliary supports in this case: the experience that my "Tannhäuser" has already made the greatest hit at all the other theatres of Germany, and the intelligent and favourable attitude of the present Intendant towards my work. Herr von Hülsen would have found his zealous efforts in the cause of "Tannhäuser" much lightened, had he had more fitting artists at command for the two principal masculine rôles. Had the Berlin stage possessed a tenor fully worthy of itself (I mean a singer and actor such as in his day the famous Wild), at one blow "Tannhäuser" would have produced an effect now only to be attained very gradually, and never quite completely—namely, through frequent and industrious representations affording opportunity not only for the singers to perfect themselves, but also for the audience to penetrate into motives which an eloquent portrayal would have disclosed forthwith.

Everything I again have heard from you confirms me in my great

with the Landgrave's cloak, is carried thus upon the stage.—Devrient consequently appears to have inspired Wagner with the scenic treatment of the slain swan in *Parsifal* a quarter of a century later.

reliance on Herr von Hülsen. Without that, I could hardly have dared entrust my work to the Berlin court-theatre, under the adverse conditions I know too well. So for to-day I beg you to give him my very best compliments, and assure him that my only hope for "Tannhäuser" at Berlin rests on *him alone*, on nothing else whatever. God preserve you, once more !

Yours very faithfully

Zurich, 16. January 1856.

RICHARD WAGNER.

After what we have already heard, that message to von Hülsen seems fully justified. It is followed, five days later, by a letter to him direct :—

Most honourable Herr General-Intendant,

The accounts I have lately received of the production of my "Tannhäuser" in Berlin prompt me to tender to yourself, above all, my warmest thanks for the insight and unflagging zeal with which you have sought to ensure the success of my work by the most comprehensive of measures ; as I am bound to perceive, its success thus far has also been materially assisted by the operation of that zeal alone, whereas sundry other difficulties have threatened to impede it. I further hear it is your firm resolve to promote the lasting welfare of my opera by every means at command of the Intendance, and consequently recognise that I should have to apologise to your Excellency for a great injustice if you viewed the earlier withholding of my work as a sign of distrust in yourself, instead of in those unpropitious circumstances with which you yourself are directly confronted. In case I did not sufficiently guard myself against such an interpretation in the past, permit me to assure you now that, all things well considered, it was only in implicit reliance on your kindness and true nobility that I ended by consenting to the production of "Tannhäuser" without further conditions [see vol. iv]. Wherefore it is in nowise with the feelings of a *convert* that I to-day express my heartfelt pleasure at the character of the protectorship you have exercised over my work, and assure you that, despite its exponents' achievements, for a permanent success of my "Tannhäuser" (so important to myself) it is to your personal care and continued favour I look in chief.

I will only further mention that a correction of the opera's ending—practically in none but a scenic regard—appears to me desirable, a mere forgetfulness of the Dresden copyist having been to blame for a mistake incurred [*vid. sup.*].—An accountable timidity in face of the initially-undecided success, I hear, had also moved the esteemed conductor to undertake cuts which I deeply deplore ; to my joy I

learn, the first of these (in the 2nd act) has already been made good,* and I only wish the same may be done with the other (in the 3rd act), since a very keen experience has taught me that cutting is the very worst of after-studies. As regards Frau Tuczek-Herrenburg, who shewed herself so very kind and sacrificing to me once before ["Irene," *Rienzi*, Berlin 1847], I cherish a positive confidence that, if your Excellency would be so good as to convey to her my special prayer, she will readily submit to the inconvenience of a fragmentarily-occupied evening [Venus' reappearance, act iii] in the interest of the whole.

In conclusion, will your Excellency permit me to express the hope that my work may have succeeded in persuading you that the sympathy you have bestowed thereon is justified in itself, also that it may some day be possible to thank you in person for the kindness shewn me, for which I now and ever shall remain profoundly in your debt.

With great and true esteem I have the honour to remain

Your Excellency's

most obedient servant

Zurich, 21. January 1856

RICHARD WAGNER.

Certainly Wagner was no mean adept in the art of placating high quarters without loss of self-respect, and this letter shews how large a part his inborn tact must have had in opening up the road so long obstructed by his Weimar friend's odd notions of diplomacy. A little encouragement was needed now, not only by himself, but by the "protector of his work," and it is more than probable that this graceful act of recognition helped to tide *Tannhäuser* over the critical period of its conquest of the Berlin public. For it had a tough battle at first there, despite its lavish mounting, as the following will prove:—

Hans to Liszt, Feb. 11, 56: "Wagner seems in a bad temper [really, ill again]—I have been expecting to hear from him for the past fortnight. He had complained of not receiving a detailed résumé of the execution of 'Tannhäuser.' I gave him one. —. [Omission in the printed copy]. A fairly long indisposition of Mr. Formes has interrupted the course of performances since the 1st of February." Then Frau von Bülow to her daughter, March 3: "We hardly left the house of an evening last week . . . Hans was

* Johanna Wagner—Dr Altmann informs us (*loc. cit.*)—had appealed on the 16th to Hülsen himself, who promptly ordered restoration of the "B-major segment" of the second finale.

put out by Tannhäuser's lack of a brilliant success, and unwell ;" also the 7th : "Hans is in the worst of tempers again to-day, because Tannhäuser (yesterday) is making no headway notwithstanding his paying the claque very high—which is beyond his means, and I fear is running him into debt. He rails at all the world, and much distresses me."

Whatever one may think of claque-tipping, in the abstract, such devotion as Bülow's—obviously another sufferer from eyestrain—is wellnigh unique. To him, after Alwine Frommann and Hülsen, is mainly due the fact that *Tannhäuser* survived its Berlin infancy, attaining its 20th performance about a year from the first, its 30th the following June (57), and its 40th in April 1858.*

It was just when *Tannhäuser's* Berlin fate was trembling in the balance, and with it every prospect of substantial 'royalties,' that Wagner made a bold request to Liszt, who had thus followed up his report on the recent production : "Your last letter [p. 85 *sup.*] was quite sad and bitter ! Your illness no doubt had increased your dejection—and unfortunately your friends can bring you very small comfort. But if knowledge of the sincerest and most heartfelt sympathy with your sufferings can afford you any consolation, you may imbibe it to the full. For I honestly do not believe there are many persons on this ball of earth who have inspired another with such deep and steadfast fellow-feeling as you have me.—As soon as you feel well again, set to and finish off your Walküre. I have sent you back the first two acts ; at Zurich you shall sing them to me. . . . On the 27th and 28th I shall conduct the two concerts for the Mozart Centenary [Vienna], and be back at Weymar by the 4th of February.—Best recovery and endurance, dearest Richard, is the heart's wish of your faithful F. Liszt. Weymar, 14 January 56."

There is something so fervent in this avowal of fondness, so unusually expansive for Liszt, that I confess it rather jars at first

* The fiftieth did not take place till Dec. 21, 59, doubtless owing to the concurrence of *Lohengrin* (Berlin première Jan. 59) and Johanna's anxiety about her failing voice ; even so it came two and half years before the *Dresden* jubilee. The Berlin 'century' occurred in 1871, the 200th performance Sept. 1882, five months before the composer's death (see Glasenapp's "Tannhäuser Chronicle" in the *Bayr. Taschen-Kalender* 1891).

to find it answered by a 'begging letter.' But what was unfortunate Wagner to do? Besides crippling his creative efforts and reducing his physical power of resistance, during the last six months "the demon of illness" must have cost him a pretty penny for doctor's bills and invalid's requirements—Frau Minna's as well as his own—and where was the additional money to come from? In a later letter (no. 213) he says, "I had taken a good look round, but it simply brought me back to you, since the feeling of having to accept too many benefits from greater strangers [the Ritters, Sulzer and Wesendonck] often becomes an unendurable pain to me." So his letter of the 18th January commences:—

You will have received at Vienna (through Glöggl*), dear Franz, a letter from me. I now return to my enquiry therein, and ask if you could improve on it by *giving* me the thousand francs in question, and if it would be possible for you to assign me an annual contribution of the same amount for the next two years?—Provided you *can*, I know you would be the first to join with those who keep me going by their subvention. As living costs so much here, with the provision already made me I can't make both ends meet, and am plagued with such a deficit each New Year's day that I am really no better off now than before. If I hadn't a wife, you should see something curious, for I should be quite proud to trudge the roads as beggar; but this eternal just-too-little of our means is preying worse and worse on my poor wife, whom I can only keep at ease of spirit by a certain œconomic ease.—About that, tho,' more by word of mouth!—Such an exposé may surprise you, coming from me now—when I literally am sick to death of life itself, and would rather see it end to-day than tomorrow; but you will probably not find it incomprehensible if you realise that all I can ever awake-to from the deepest inner misery is life's vulgar fret, and this is my sole alternation. Well, then: of your *will* I entertain no doubt—in fact, I even believe it might give you pleasure to enrol yourself among my standing pension-donors; consequently the only question is, Can you? Some time ago, I know, you could not; though even then you made occasional real sacrifices to assist me. Perhaps, however, things have somewhat altered since—and on that Perhaps I risk annoying you with this my question.

* A music-publisher in Vienna, where Liszt arrived on the 16th. The letter here referred to has not come down to us, but the context of the present one shews it to have been a request for a *loan*, apparently on the strength of Liszt's too roseate telegram from Berlin.

To the hasty reader this may appear an unconscionable demand on the purse of a brother-artist who then was earning little more than Wagner's own "subvention," but its true interpretation is to be found in the aforesaid letter of some ten weeks later (no. 213): "Of course I rather meant your advocacy and mediation, than a dole from your personal income; for I know well enough, through yourself, how much you've been compelled to limit your resources." Naturally it was an indirect appeal to Princess Carolyne, whose recent tour would certainly convey the idea of a more flourishing state of finances, and who in any case was far more richly blest with worldly goods than generous Frau Ritter. That it was in this sense Liszt himself interpreted it—though his apology of March 25 is silent hereanent—is obvious from the fact of his consulting Carolyne forthwith, Jan. 22: "Here is a letter from Wagner, which I shall answer from Weymar after talking it over with you." No answer ensuing for just over two months, by which time Wagner had sent Liszt a delicate reminder, it is reasonable to assume that Carolyne was the reluctant party, though she may have ultimately bestowed the single gift of 1000 f. next May herself. Her immediate advice may be inferred from the opening words of a letter of Dingelstedt's to Liszt, Feb. 1, "in reply to your enquiry, addressed to me through Löwy of Vienna, regarding *Wagner's* emoluments from our theatre-budget" (Munich*). Clearly the

* Here is Intendant Dingelstedt's "reply" itself: "After the first performance of *Tannhäuser*, Wagner received from us last August a fee of 50 Lsd'or (550 fl.). We have never paid more, only once so much—whilst other theatres such as Hanover [no—see 67*n sup.*], Darmstadt, Frankfort &c., paid much less for the same opera—but, as he did not think it sufficient, I promised him for New Year 1856 a supplement in accordance with the net profits on the opera, the amount of which was in no way fixed, but expressly made depend on a net profit. When he reminded me at the New Year, I was obliged to acquaint him with the truth, that there was no profit yet on *Tannhäuser*, since the expenses alike of performance and mounting are more than ordinarily high; consequently the supplementary fee has been deferred, with his express consent in writing, to June or December of this year. To my offer, should it be a case of temporary difficulties, to purchase *Lohengrin* from him for 50 Lsd'or down, albeit I could hold out no prospect of its production at present, Wagner has not replied by a syllable.—This the state of matters. You know me well enough, to know how I dislike and am ashamed of haggling, particularly with men of talent. But I am bound to inelastic Civil Lists and quotas, subjected to a strict audit by the Royal

Fürstin desired preliminary assurance as to the petitioner's true financial status, ere entertaining his plea.

The above interpretation is further borne out by the *auch* of a clause, "siehe doch einmal zu, wie Du auch das zu Stande brächtest"—"do see how you can bring this also about"—which rounds off a second request in the letter of Jan. 18; a request of more artistic interest and less one-sided nature. Here Wagner asks Liszt "also" to try and get together "a small circle of shareholders" to provide an annual total of 800 f. for three years' salary to a copyist, their advances to be eventually refunded from the capital to be collected for stage-presentation of the entire tetralogy. The scheme came to nothing, almost needless to say, but its details form matter for history, as they tell us that the copyist is already engaged and has finished transcribing the first act of Klindworth's pft score of *Die Walküre*: "I have calculated that if I really go on with my compositions"—Wagner proceeds, with an ominous *if*—"I shall have enough to occupy a copyist for three full years; namely, the transcribing of the full and pianoforte scores, and—of all the voice and band parts . . . The only objection [to getting this done by subscription] is that I should also have to pledge myself to supply the compositions within that time. However, so soon as I saw it impossible to continue, I could easily give notice on both sides; whereas there is already enough to keep my copyist at work for a year ahead, and what he had written out should be handed to the shareholders in that case as indemnity. That would be fair, would it not?—Now, dearest Franz, do see how you can bring this also about:—meanwhile I'm letting the transcript of the pft score be continued; but the moment you're obliged to answer in the negative I shall have it stopped, since I cannot possibly go on paying these copying charges out of my housekeeping purse.—"

How many would have jumped at such a bargain to-day,

Exchequer, and consequently no free agent in such details, whether as regards the sum or its reckoning." One can easily understand Wagner's standing out for more than 50 louis for *Lohengrin* from a place like Munich—to which, indeed, he had no present intention of granting that work without personal supervision (see no. 214 *W.-L.*)—whilst its New Year's failure to pay him the supplement for *Tannhäuser* will largely account for his application to Liszt.

and covered the whole paltry subscription by one stroke of the pen: to come into possession of a first copy of the entire RING music (of course not Wagner's autographs) for £100, more or less! But apart from the two Zurich friends who could afford it, and Liszt who personally could not, there was no one to be found with enterprise or zeal enough, for all the victories of *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* in Austria and Germany. No wonder the composer is so depressed that, in the last lap of his *Walküre* scoring, he begins to doubt his speeding farther.

There is more than outward discouragement at work, however. His mind, with that "inner misery" we know of, is still tormented by his body: "It was terribly hard luck," he goes on, "that we couldn't bring off our meeting last year. Do try to come soon, tho'; if possible, by the spring. Everything, everything—I feel it—depends on this meeting of ours.—I'm at constant warfare with my health, never a moment safe against relapses. But we'll drop that to-day—we shall meet before long! . . . Your letter did me ever so much good again. Yes, dear Franz, I trust in you, and know there's something higher meant with us: if I only could live with you—I might do many a fine thing yet!—Farewell and take my hearty thanks for your splendid friendship!"

A feeling of physical inability to pursue his work much longer is seizing him, and yet how doggedly he sticks to work, by intervals! The 'transcendent capacity of taking trouble' displayed in those phenomenal fair-copies of his is avenging itself, and it is not surprising that so few letters have descended to us from the first quarter of 1856; until completion of his *Walküre* score he could hardly have spared the strain to write them. At the end of March, in effect, he says as much to Praeger (*vid. inf.*), a few cordial lines to whom had ushered in the January batch just dealt with.

Occasion of the January note to Praeger had been receipt of the *Neue Zeitschrift* containing P.'s "beautiful report" on the late Philharmonic season (see vol. v), for which P. is duly, and more than duly thanked. But that note's main interest for us resides in the sentence, "Be content for to-day with these few lines, which I'm scribbling just after perusal and before going

out," etc.* As Wagner had told Liszt a month before, that he durst not go into the air again this winter, a temporary improvement in health must have coincided with the seven-day batch of letters (to P., Jan. 15—to Hülsen, the 21st). It was promptly followed by one of those relapses dreaded in the letter to Liszt of Jan. 18, since the next we know of is dated Feb. 5, apologising to a St Gallen conductor (Sczadrowsky—see cap. IV.) for not having answered a request earlier, "as I was ill when you wrote"; whilst a public declaration of Feb. 15 to the Zurichers (see next chapter) excuses a refusal on the score of ill-health. Thereafter, total silence till the tiny note of March 21 to Liszt. A silence of artistic detachment; for every ounce of a dwindling stock of energy is being spent on *Die Walküre*.

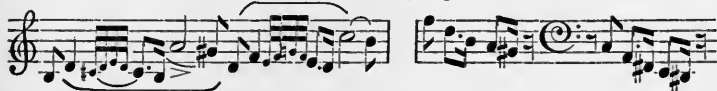
All attempt at comparative analysis of the orchestration of this masterpiece I must leave to professed musicians, who have yet to explain to us in what respect it falls short of the succeeding works. To my own mind, though the rich polyphony of the latter half of *Siegfried* and the whole of *Götterdämmerung* is scarcely yet in evidence, it does not seem required by the classic outlines of this subject, but the exquisite tone-blending of the tenderer passages in *Die Walküre* has surely never been surpassed. That, however, is a mere amateur's opinion; the reader will prefer a master's. In his recent expansion of Berlioz' famous treatise on *Instrumentation*, Richard Strauss observes that "Wagner's scores constitute the only notable advance in instrumenting, since Berlioz," and by way of illustration he quotes as many as 5, 9 and 14 consecutive pages of the *Walküre* partitur (see *Die Musik* V, no. 16)—a work completed ere Wagner had ever set eyes on a single score of Berlioz's, as we shall learn next chapter.

Ere bidding final farewell to its creation, though, there are three

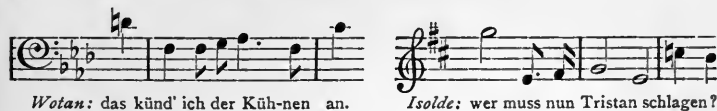
* "Nimm heute mit diesen wenigen Worten, die ich eben nach der Lectüre vor dem Ausgehen noch hinwerfe, vorlieb," etc. Of course *As* robs the sentence of all clinical value by translating it thus, "Be content with these few words, written immediately after reading your notice, and just before taking my accustomed stroll," etc.; whilst *Wie's* retro-translation, for no conceivable reason save general muddle, converts *before* into *after*: "Be content for this time with these few lines; I have only just come in from my daily walk and found your article," etc.—This hasty missive is undated in the autograph (dated in *As*), but was evidently written in the afternoon of Jan. 15, since its envelope bears the postmark, "Zurich, 16. Jan. 56, 7 A."

small details in act iii to which I may direct attention. The first is a singular self-reminiscence (originally pointed out by R. M. Breithaupt), since Brünnhilde's "War es so schmäählich, was ich verbrach?" and "War es so niedrig, was ich dir that?" had both been anticipated in course of a long 'recitative' in the beautiful *Pfte Fantasia* dated "Leipzig, den 27 November 1831" on the MS. now at Wahnfried, but not published till 1905. Remove the grace-notes from the first subjoined quotation, and the identity strikes you at once :

PFTE FANTASIA, 1831.



The next two details, on the contrary, are themselves anticipations, and once again of *Tristan*. First we have Wotan's threat to the Valkyries, near the close of their scene, by side of which I place Isolde's well-known phrase, itself a menace :



Finally we have a figure of accompaniment, unceasingly employed for the opening of Brünnhilde's vindication, "Weil für dich im Auge das Eine ich hielt," down to "Siegmond musst' ich sehen," and again for its peroration, "Scheu und staunend . . . zu kiesen als Loos!" In act i of *Tristan* virtually the same figure accompanies Isolde's "Siech und matt in meiner Macht, warum ich dich da nicht schlug?"—follows *fortissimo* the phrase last cited—and is developed at some length around her taunting "Geleitest du mich" etc. :

DIE WALKÜRE.



TRISTAN U. ISOLDE.



Here is a problem, hitherto neglected, and not so easy to solve. Certainly the figure itself acquires a subtler shading in the later work, and therewith a sinister aspect ; but what is the psychologic link between the two situations? Perhaps some wiser head than mine may ultimately decide, but so far I can only trace it to the conflict within the heroine's breast in each case ; a conflict masked by Isolde's irony, but openly confessed by Brynhild. Yes, and the figure soon returns, in our act iii, to wed itself to Wotan's "Wo gegen mich selber ich sehrend mich wandte . . . wüthender Sehnsucht sengender Wunsch" ; for he, too, is torn by conflicting emotions. At that hint I was about to leave it, when closer study of the last scene between Siegfried and Mime revealed this figure there as well, notably at its commencement, after "Willkommen, Siegfried" (violas), and its close, before "Nie thust du mehr 'nen Schluck" (1st violins). Here and in Siegfried's subsequent musings hereon—"Güte zwang uns nie zu Liebe"—the parallelism with Isolde's intended concealment of her true feeling is very complete, and the *Siegfried* reference may therefore be taken as a stepping-stone from the figure's simpler import in *Die Walküre*.—

We are not yet in possession of the precise date of completion of this immortal work, but may make a good guess at March 26, as arrears of correspondence begin to be cleared up the following day with a letter to Kapellmeister Skraup dated "27. März 1856," thanking him for *Lohengrin's* success at Prague (première Feb. 23) ; which itself dates another on the same subject to Frau Marie Lehmann, to whom Wagner apologises for delay in replying to her account of it: "at last, after long illness, I have finished the score of the 'Walküre.'" A similar apology opens a letter to Praeger of the day after that:—

Zurich, 28 March 56.

Best of thanks, dearest Friend, for your letters. You are right, I have been laid up again ; and when I at last had recovered I was seized with such a mania to get done with the score of my *Walküre*, in the completion of which I've been hindered for almost a year, that I stopped correspondence in every direction. Moreover, the older one grows—in sense and understanding—the more our little daily world shrinks up to zero, whilst what one still experiences is so entirely a thing of the interior as to be all but impossible to communicate. Not that the times one has passed with one's friends cease to exist for one—and you may *also* rest assured that you and your family are ever present to my memory—but when it comes to pen and ink, one really

finds nothing to write about. On the whole it's almost better to agree on that, else nothing remains but to tell of actual occurrences, aims and undertakings ;* and in this regard my present life is as poor as —on the contrary—my art-creations, which are eating me up, perhaps are constantly becoming richer.—Some day, when you come here to hear my present works produced by me, you'll say I'm right. Indeed, whoever has a claim on me of any kind, I can simply and solely direct him to my works ; I've nothing else to offer anybody.—

If you read the poem of the *Walküre* through once more, you will find such a superlative of suffering, sorrow and despair expressed, that the music for it could but constitute an awful drain on me—I should be unable to get to the end of a thing like that again ; yet in the finished work of art, of course, much takes a wholly different aspect, and may even delight where it was sheer despair that actually created it. But there, we shall see.—For the rest, I'm leading such a lonely, quiet life, that it would really puzzle me to give you an account of it. To cheer my heart, I'm looking forward to the time when Liszt is soon to visit me ; unfortunately I had to put off that myself last winter—because of illness !—

I was most heartily concerned about the serious illnesses in your little family. I can see you romping with your children, though, in your new little garden ; † I should like to have just such a cottage

* "Im Ganzen kann man sich fast eben nur hierüber verständigen, sonst aber bleiben nur wirkliche Vorfälle, Absichten und Unternehmungen mittheilbar." By no means an easy passage to catch the drift of, one can almost forgive *As* for rendering it "On the whole, we can only agree with each other, then there remains nothing but actual occurrences, views, and intentions to discuss." *Wie*, on the other hand, one cannot forgive for improving it into "Wenn man sich so intim kennt und versteht, wie wir, dann bleibt wirklich nichts als Tagesbegebenheiten aufzuzeichnen, und Ansichten zu besprechen, und Intentionen vorzulegen," any more than for developing "liebster Freund," at the letter's commencement, into "Lieber Ferdinand, theurer Freund !" Taken with its context, to my mind the passage resembles a polite mode of saying 'I can't be bothered to keep on answering' ; in any case, this is the last non-apocryphal letter to Praeger (yet published) until after his visit in summer next year.

† In the Post Office Directories from 1851 to 1856 Praeger's address appears as "31 Milton Street, Dorset Square," but in that for 1857 it has become "48 Pelham Street, Brompton," so that his household-removal must have occurred about Lady-day '56. In fact, Wagner's envelope bearing the London postmark "Apr 3. 56" is officially re-addressed from Milton Street to "Pelham Cottage, Pelham Street, Brompton."—As to the former address being represented to-day by "65," not "31," "Balcombe Street," I shall have something to say in the Appendix, as well as on another point in P.'s regard.

with small garden here myself, but alack it still remains beyond my reach. . . .

The remainder of this letter is of no particular moment. Excepting the parts already quoted in vol. v (pp. 145, 154 and 404), it simply consists of a rather vague invitation for summer (not fulfilled till the next) coupled with an admonition to "wait for my operas till you can hear them given by myself some day, as you would only get a very hazy notion of them now"; which looks as if good Praeger had either asked for presentation copies of the earlier scores, or craved a glimpse of Klindworth's pft arrangements of the later.*

With regard to the latter we learn something more definite from the letter to Liszt which appears to have been written next day (no. 213, *W.-L.*) as it answers Liszt's of the 25th. After Liszt's detailed explanation of his own financial position, Wagner cannot reconcile it with his conscience to accept Liszt's promised gift for household expenses: "But if you have managed to obtain the prospective sum for me by any means that does not pinch you personally, I will accept it to defray the copying of my full and pianoforte scores (which here comes very dear). Already I have laid out something on them, which has left a hole in my purse to be mended; but it would be impossible for me to let the writing be gone on with now at my own expense. So, in return for that sum I will undertake to have the full and pianoforte scores of all my Nibelungen pieces copied, and then to place the copies at your disposition, as your property, on the friendly assumption that you will lend them me whenever and as long as I need. Will that be satisfactory to you? †—The copy

* The expression "operas" (*cf* "sujets d'opéras dans ma tête," in the November letter to Madame) might easily apply to either, for my next footnote will shew *Rheingold* jocularly called an "operetta" to another 'musician of merit,' whilst *Tristan* itself is seriously denoted an "opera" just three years later (see end of cap. VII.).

† We do not possess Liszt's answer to this, if he made any, but from Wagner's letter of June 12 (see next chapter) we learn that the 1000 f. has to be "eaten into" for his Mornex cure; so that the *Walküre* partitur seems not to have been duplicated after all (see letter to L. of July 20), though the pft scores alike of that work and *Das Rheingold* were. In this connection I may cite a letter sent from Mornex to Heim at Zurich, of June or July '56: "Here is the long-expected piano score of 'Rheingold.' May I beseech you to look up friend Schmidt at once, and give him the manuscript to copy?"

of Rheingold is quite finished already: I'm expecting it back from London shortly, together with Klindworth's arrangement; so *that* would be at your behest as an earnest. Of the pianoforte score of Walküre the first two acts [copies] will soon be finished; the third act I only sent to Klindworth the other day, to be arranged. In the hope that you will agree to my bargain I shall let the copy of the Walküre partitur also be commenced, and as soon as that is ended you can have it too, since Klindworth works from my instrumentation-sketches.—If you have a little present leisure, however, and would care to look it through, it would give me a thousand pleasures to lend you the original score again (of the whole work now!), and I will fill up the copyist's time with the piano score of Rheingold I'm awaiting. You may guess my immense longing to know how the last act will please you, as I really have no one besides yourself to whom I could shew it with any good result.* It has prospered, seems to me the best thing I have written; a fearful storm—of elements and hearts—gradually calming down to Brynhild's magic sleep.—Ah! why must you still stay so long at a distance?! Cannot you take a small impromptu flight to me quite soon?? . . . I'm pausing in my work now, as you may imagine. For that matter, I am waiting to see what turn my health will take: my doctor wanted to send me to baths, but I can't and won't consent. If I at all

He must not be cross with me for having left him idle so long; he paid me out for it in advance by keeping me just as long waiting. But let him throw *everything* else on one side now, and go at the Klavierauszug neck and crop. At the same time I beg you to hand him the accompanying full score [Woelfel's transcript] of the same *operetta*, that he may copy the *scenic directions* into the pianoforte score as he goes on, and exactly at the places corresponding with the partitur; it must all be carefully set out, with special attention to spacing" (Steiner's *Neujahrsblatt* 1903). We hear that this Karl Schmidt—a compatriot of Wagner's—left behind him, at the end of the nineties, quite a collection of scribbled messages signed "R. W.," such as "Haven't you finished yet?" "Make haste and finish," and so on.

* The offer to lend Liszt act iii is repeated in no. 216 (some time in May), but appears to have elicited no response, for we read in no. 219, the 20th of July: "As you haven't even seen the last act of my Walküre as yet, I'm sending you my score again, that you—not another—may be the first to whom I make it known. Read it quickly through, if you have time," etc. To which Liszt replies, Aug. 1, that he and Hans are devouring the work at the piano: "For me it has the fabulous attraction of the lodestone cliff that rivets ship and sailor."

knew how to manage it, I'd take a trip to *Rome* with *Semper* in the autumn; we often talk of it, but always with the secret hope that *you'd* come too—a fresh caprice for you!" (the trip to Rome did not come off for twenty years).

The havoc wrought on Wagner's health by that *Walküre* scoring does not cease directly with its cause, for on the 29th of April he begins a letter to old Fischer thus: * "I have just had another bout of *Gesichts-Rose*, yet my humour declines to turn rosy. During an illness like that one's arrears of correspondence keep accumulating, and to clear off all my letter debts I must proceed as stingily as possible, not to put too severe a tax on my fund of communicativeness in favour of one creditor." Soon after, we hear he had "three relapses" of this troublesome complaint "in May alone," the last being his "*twelfth* this winter"; so there is no exaggeration in what he writes to Dr Pusinelli of Dresden, Apr. 28: "You can have no conception how such perpetually recurring annoyances [dunning of old opera-publication creditors] exhaust me now—now that my shaky or violently shaken health requires the most buoyant of atmospheres to keep me in heart for the completion of my great work. I have passed half this winter in bed; my hopes are fixed on spring and summer, if I only could come by real rest for once! Well, the *Walküre* has painfully got finished; it is finer than anything I've ever written—but has terribly exhausted me.—If I can get a little air and light and rest now, I hope to compose my *Young Siegfried* this summer. But *rest, rest!* else I cannot hold out!—Forgive this digression: no one, I know it, desires my welfare more than you! If all goes well, and I keep alive, in summer 1859—I think—my finished work shall be shewn the world—presumably in a provisory theatre expressly built for it at Zurich—under the title of a Grand Stage-festival (*eines grossen Bühnenfestes*), and then I firmly hope to welcome *you* as well here."

With that fallacious hope let me close this history of the completion by inches of a work which well might share the name conferred on *Tristan* by its author; for it, too, was a *Schmerzenskind*, a Child of Sorrow.

* At its close: "The *Walküre* is quite finished at last; it has turned out terribly beautiful . . . *Young Siegfried* is to be taken in hand soon. I shall present the whole in 1859 here [obviously misprinted "1857"]; seats are reserved for you all. Hunt me up a good tenor!"

III.

MARKING TIME.

Zurich apathy and Zurich company ; longing to escape.—Renewed appeal for amnesty.—Tichatschek's visit ; retreat to Mornex.—Berlioz sends no scores to Wagner ; Liszt sends his.—A 'nerve-cure.' Die Sieger. Attempts to sell the RING for a quiet refuge.—A rendezvous at Berne ; home again ; Otto to the rescue.

"The thing nearest my heart is utter resignation."

R. WAGNER to O. Wesendonck.

WINTER 1855-6, as seen, found Wagner for the most part in a sick-room ; we can therefore understand his shunning public appearances at Zurich concerts and the like, such as those of the preceding winters—particularly after the dose he had had in London. Yet one or two attempts were made to draw him from his shell ; among them, to conduct a local Mozart Festival proposed for March, in emulation of the Centenary affairs to right and left in Germany and Austria. For various reasons, obvious to ourselves, he was obliged to decline : his refusal leaked into the press without his reasons. February 15 he consequently sent the following to the *Eidgenössische Zeitung* :

I have had to decline both the invitation of the Musical Society to conduct a selection from Mozart at its fourth Subscription concert, and that of the theatrical lessee to direct one of Mozart's operas, because my health has already been so severely taxed by similar exertions that my doctor has advised me not to conduct any more this winter. In self-defence, however, I may add that I am still prepared to sacrifice my health itself to a Mozart celebration, if art-lovers here will make a corresponding sacrifice, and enable me to give a worthy rendering of the *Requiem* with a competent mixed chorus and full orchestra in a suitable building, which unfortunately is lacking* and therefore would have to be expressly erected.

* Steiner says "the old Kornhaus's predestination for a concert-hall had not yet been discovered"—so uninventive were the Zurich "art-lovers" of Wagner's

This direct appeal for reciprocity falling flat, it is small matter for surprise if Wagner never again took a share in the musical life, or torpor, of his place of refuge. Next September he writes Otto: "Coldly as I once left Dresden could I now depart from Zurich, where I have spared no exertion, no self-denying zeal [see v, 5 and 97-8], only to find that, just as in the former place, my sacrifices have all remained entirely fruitless in the end, and have not even yielded me the satisfaction of discovering in any single thing a trace of my activity." The good philistines (Otto himself excepted) did not realise what they were losing till it was years too late. If they had 'run up' a wooden building such as German towns no wealthier than their own were wont to erect for kindred purposes, it would have been the first step toward that "provisory theatre" desired for presentation of the RING "in summer 1859." In the autumn of that hoped-for year itself he writes Mathilde Wesendonck—from Paris: "Yes, children, had you Zurich people but gone the length of building me a middling decent theatre, in thanks for all the honest sweat I shed there, I should have had what I want for all time, and need go courting nobody again. Singers and orchestra, whenever required for the first production of a new work, I should always be able to procure as I wanted them; outer conductors and singers would have been bidden to these performances to take example by the rendering,—and that once called into being, I should have felt I might plod quietly on, untroubled for the further fortunes of my works . . . Then I should have needed no prince, no amnesty . . . nothing more than a decent, by no means a luxurious stage-building. People ought to be thoroughly ashamed of themselves, don't you think?!"

As for private intercourse that winter, with all those attacks of *Gesichtsrose* and worse, it must needs have been scanty. In one of the brighter intervals, however, we learn the arrival of his fellow-exile Gottfried Semper, for whom he had just obtained through Sulzer a professorship at the newly-opened Polytechnic (*cf.* iii, 472-5): "You know, perhaps, that Semper has now been installed here?"—writes Wagner to Liszt, Oct. 3, 55—"He is

day.—N.B. I have been obliged to clarify this 'public declaration' here and there, a form of authorship in which the master never shone.

a great delight to me: an artist to his finger-tips, and better-tempered than of yore, though still somewhat peppery.* Carl Ritter, too, is settling here: he pleases me more than ever; his intelligence is enormous; I know no young man to equal him. He really is very fond of you also, and understands you quite well." As we happened on Semper in the March letter to Liszt at end of last chapter—there is a similar reference in that to Praeger of a day or two previously—we may assume that Wagner saw him frequently this winter, when illness allowed. Carl Ritter, too, we found bearing a report to Liszt on Wagner's health in December, and evidently returning straight to Zurich, as Liszt sends "Best remembrances to Ritter" on Christmas Eve. We also found him visiting Schopenhauer on behalf "of the whole Zurich party" March 25; a day on which Liszt writes Wagner that Carl had called at Weimar (en route—March 23) but missed him, and adds, "I hope to meet Carl at Zurich; remember me kindly to him." When that meeting takes place, next autumn, we shall find it renewing the friction of six years back (iii, 56-7), with serious results for Wagner.

To these recent settlers must now be added Gottfried Keller, of whom we distantly heard in vols. iii and iv. A native of Zurich, born July 1819, the "under-sized, thick-set, broad-browed original," with his aggressively Bohemian ways and seldom-used but stinging tongue, had been absent from his birthplace—on a travelling stipend obtained from the Cantonal government through one of the Sulzers—since half a year ere Wagner's setting foot there. Through mutual friends they had learnt to prize each other's literary works, however, and down to the end of his life Wagner took peculiar pleasure in Keller's pungent pictures of

* Keller, who struck an intimacy with him afterwards, describes Semper next February (to Hettner) as "a man as erudite and cultured as he is a genius in art, and personally a sterling type of the single-minded artist nature." The uncongeniality of his surroundings nevertheless is evinced by a letter from Semper himself of Dec. 57 to Pss Carolyne: "My collegial relations here are shaping very disagreeably . . . My wife is still very weak and ailing . . . And with it all, to have to create (*schaffen*), and if possible, to cultivate society! —I tell you, your Highness, at times I feel very anchoritely inclined, and should like to be a Trappist on some reef in the Mediterranean, and gaze on nothing but the purple sea and fire-girt heavens. Already these mountains are an eyesore to me, and simply block my view." Another eyestrain sufferer?

Swiss life, as testified by Daniela von Bülow's note of thanks in February 1883 for Keller's letter of condolence; whilst the master's repeated greetings to the "Five Righteous," in his letters to Emil Heckel during the 'seventies, are clearly founded on the titles of Keller's *Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten* and *Die drei gerechten Kammacher*. How far these two men were personally adapted to get on together, is another question, the answer to which will appear anon; but it was very fair sailing at first.

Keller returned to Zurich from Berlin shortly before Christmas 1855, without having ever had the chance of hearing one of Wagner's operas; on the 16th of November he writes J. Sulzer, "My only grief is that I'm running away from the production of 'Tannhäuser,' which is setting all Berlin on tenterhooks." In January 56 (no exacter date is given) he writes back to Frau Duncker: "I am faring well at Zurich *bis dato* . . . There is a Rhenish family Wesendonck here, originally from Düsseldorf, but they were a long time in New York.* She is a very handsome woman (*eine sehr hübsche Frau*), Mathilde Luckemeier by name, and these people keep elegant house, also are building a magnificent villa outside the town. They have received me kindly. Then there are fine suppers at the house of an elegant Regierungsrath [J. Sulzer] where Richard Wagner, Semper who built the Dresden theatre and museum, Vischer of Tübingen [see iv, also

* Keller's statement needs some correction here, as both Otto and Mathilde Wesendonck were born at Elberfeld—he March 16, 1815, she Dec. 23, 1828—though Mathilde's parents removed in her childhood to Düsseldorf, where she was given in marriage to Otto (then also residing there) in her twentieth year, May 19, 1848. Only for about a twelvemonth, 1850-1, were they both in the United States, though Otto had lived there "a long time" before. In his "new complete edition" of *Briefe R. Wagners an Otto Wesendonck* (end of 1905) says Dr Golther: "The family 'van der Wesendonck' is of Netherland descent. Its pedigree goes back to the 15th century. In the 16th, 17th and 18th, the Wesendonks lived at Xanten on the Lower Rhine, considerable burgesses and merchants. Not much is known of the life of Herr Otto. At the age of 18 he went to America, commissioned by an Elberfeld house; on his return [how long after, not stated] he became European representative of the big New York import-firm Loeschigk, Wesendonck & Co. This position he retained till the middle of the sixties, when he definitively retired from business." Dr Golther adds another particular, viz. that Mathilde Luckemeyer was Otto's second wife, he having married for the first time in October 1844 but lost his first wife two months after.

Prose III. 113*] and some Zurichers forgather; and where, after sufficient carousing, one gets a cup of hot tea and a havana cigar at two in the morning. Wagner himself gives a solid midday meal at times, when the bottle goes merrily round (*wo tapfer pokuliert wird*); so that, after thinking I had emerged from Berlinian materialism, I find I've fallen from the frying-pan into the fire. I have also been to various public dinners already. They cook very well here, and there is no sort of lack of luxuries; so it was high time I returned to preach moderation to my fellow-citizens."

The self-irony of that last clause is manifest, for the pleasures of the tavern are of constant recurrence in Keller's tales and poems, whilst his biographer J. Baechtold (from whom all these data are taken) tells us that the future Staatsschreiber "often behaved rather badly at the symposia instituted by Wagner's intimate friend, Regierungsrath Dr J. J. Sulzer. For example, on one occasion at the big table round which sat Wagner, Burckhardt, Semper, Vischer, Etmüller and others, besides some ladies, in a torrent of invectives against an author friend of several present [Herwegh?] he smashed a small tray of costly Japanese porcelain in front of him with his fist, and had to be led away raging by 'Boom' [Baumgartner]."

So far as Wagner is concerned, we may exclude him from the night-birds who remained at Sulzer's till 2 A.M., since he abominated late hours, and we have seen what extreme care he had to take of his health this winter. As for his own hearth and home, a New Year's gathering or two would be prescribed by custom and his spouse's wish; but we have Hornstein's word that Sulzer sent him in the fish and game, and Wesendonck the wine: "His table was capitally served, but one could hardly speak of profusion. Even at his larger entertainments things went comparatively simply, and I have said above who furnished forth these feasts. Moreover, his wife took good care that the trees should never scrape the sky down." That is not to say, however, that some of his guests did not over-indulge, as Keller suggests

* Apropos whereof Dr Arthur Seidl has recently pointed out that Hanslick had nothing whatever to do with the long essay on Music in Vischer's *Ästhetik* (1857), as Wagner assumed, but it really was written by Dr K. R. von Köstlin of Tübingen, afterwards an ardent enthusiast for Bayreuth and the RING (see *R. Wagner-Jahrbuch* 1906, pp. 456 *et seq.*).

(or confesses?), for we may remember a letter to Uhlig of four years back: "Last Monday, our wedding-day, my Federals spent the evening with me; they tiddled as usual," and how Wagner expressed his "disgust at this wine-bibbing that doesn't even strike one spark of humour from these luckless men" (iii, 266-7, *cf* 347). Further, he was not entirely master in his house, as he tells Otto next September: "Zurich itself has become most oppressive and distasteful to me, through immediate social relations that rule me even in my household without my being able to give them *my* direction . . . Thus Zurich has sunk, in my eyes, to nothing but a geographic equation; and as such, or a mere place of refuge, it has become peculiarly irksome through the only company remaining to me" (new German ed.). Written soon after his return from Mornex, this throws fresh light on his first letter to Liszt from that temporary haven: "How I laughed when the excellent Princess apologetically announced me a visit of the family M. to Zurich! Luckily I'm safe from all that kind of calamity here! The sacrifices one makes in intercourse with wholly heterogeneous people, the sufferings and tortures it involves, no other person can remotely gauge. Such torments are the greater for very reason that they're grasped by no one else, and folk the most unlike us actually think we're just one of themselves; for they understand no more of us than we really have in common with them, but cannot comprehend how little of us—next to nothing—that is! Once more: the torments of company have become my most positive of all now, and my first care is the devising of means to isolate myself"—with special reference to his "flight" from Zurich to escape it.

In these circumstances there is instruction to be gained from Keller's humorous description of the less convivial side of Zurich habits (Feb. 21, 56, to Hettner): "Life here is a terrible racket. Every Thursday there are academic readings à la Singakademie, Berlin, in the largest hall of the town; whither the manikins and ladykins troop by the hundred, to sit out their two hours without flinching. Semper has held a profound and most delightful lecture on the Nature of Ornament. Vischer will wind up with 'Macbeth.' In addition there are a number of special cycles by single magnitudes; so that one sees waiting-maids flitting around every evening with big state-lanterns, to light the inwardly-illuminated ladies home. To be sure, it's also whispered that our strait-laced

Zurich dames have discovered in these prelections a highly respectable system of innocent rendezvous, and their thoughts aren't always centred on the lecturer." Again (spring '57 to Frau Duncker): "The Zurich craze for learning rages still; every week at least two prelections before ladies and gentlemen. It has led to war between the North and South Germans, on the point of pronounciation. Thus, Vischer holds beautiful lectures on Shakespeare; but the Saxons and Prussians make fun of his Swabian, and he turns furious. The other night, coming out from a North German lecture, said he: 'Des soll nun des richtige Deitsch sein, wenn so a Kerle sagt statt "verloren," "vorlochen"! und statt "Liebe," "Lübhe"!'. It set me in fits of laughter, and I passed it straight on to the Northerners."—Frau Mathilde herself is repeatedly twitted by Wagner for her share in this blue-stocking "craze" (*M.*, pp. 7, 18, 21, 144).

To dispose of Keller for the present, we find his letter of Feb. 21 continuing: "I often mix with Richard Wagner now, who in any case is a highly-gifted man and very winning. Moreover, he is a poet for sure" (*re Nibelungen* see iv, 89). By April the acquaintance has developed some degree of warmth, for Hettner hears again, the 16th: "I see a good deal of Richard Wagner, who is a gifted and also a good man." At that temperature we will provisionally leave it.

And the Wesendoncks? Extremely little of them can Wagner have seen since he left Zurich for his London four months. July '55, a week after his home-coming, he had to postpone a dinner engagement on account of Peps' last illness (page 3 *sup.*); he went to Seelisberg three days thereafter, not returning to Zurich till the middle of August; very soon after which he began to be ill himself, for billet 19 to Mathilde, "I am not well, and presumably shall have to keep my wife's birthday [Sept. 5] a prisoner to the house. Cordial thanks for your kindness" (evidently some thoughtful invitation in honour of the anniversary), can scarcely date from any other year. Then, just before his own confinement to his room for almost the whole remainder of 1855, the Wesendonck domicile was temporarily closed by the event alluded-to last chapter, which Liszt thus fore-tokened to Pss Carolyne, Aug. 4: "Wagner m'écrit de Seelisberg. canton d'Uri, pour me prier de différer ma visite jusqu'en Novembre à cause de Mme Wesendonck, qui ne sera relevée

de ses couches qu'alors." Wagner of course had been looking forward to sharing with the Wesendoncks the rare treat of Liszt's presence and playing. All that was frustrated by his own abominable health, and at the most there can have been but a visit or two in the region of Christmas, such as that impromptu entertainment suggested by billet 21, when an invitation from "the Familie Wesendonck" appears to have found him at home in the evening while his wife was enjoying the theatre. Next July he writes Otto: "Am I really to renew the experience of how a winter is passed at Zurich without the House of Wesendonck? I cannot get accustomed to it." So that from about the middle of January '56 (when Keller writes of them as still at Zurich) down to the ensuing summer, they must have been away in Paris, perhaps commencing with the Riviera for sake of Frau Mathilde's never robust health. Add to this their almost continuous absence from Zurich till about the spring of 1857, and you will see that during the two full years preceding Wagner's removal to the "Asyl" his opportunities of meeting either of the Wesendoncks were very few and far between. For more reasons than one, it is of importance to bear this solid fact in mind, though it has taken us a little ahead of chronology.

For his peace of mind, in one direction, it was well he did see little of them: the image long haunting him would be easier to exorcise when not perpetually revived to the bodily eye. But haunting his mind it was, and many a hint in his letters, particularly in those to Liszt, first becomes intelligible through our knowledge of those wonderful letters to *Mathilde* of two to three years later. Thus, when he wrote to Liszt in January of this 1856, "O if I could but transfer myself to the state of four years back!!" we may be sure it was not *only* the vulgarisation of his operas that he was thinking of, for the term exactly tallies with his earliest introduction; and doubly sure when we read these words but slightly higher in that letter, "Do try to come soon; if possible by the spring. Everything, everything—I feel it—depends on *this* meeting of ours." Then take the next real epistle to Liszt, that of the end of March (March 21 merely bringing a six-line note). Here he tells his bosom-friend how he often feels it "an unendurable pain to accept too many benefits" from *ferner Stehenden*—chiefly meaning Otto, of course—and goes on to speak of "the eccentricity in my whole situa-

tion, which makes everything affecting my most intimate feelings assume an acute phase at once." And now comes the key to these dark sayings, in the very next sentence: "A personal discussion with you on this subject, as well, has now become of the utmost necessity to me; here everything is so gossamer-webbed (*so nervös und feinfädig*) that it cannot be explained by letter. In my distasteful plight it needs such untold patience to keep up heart and zest for work, that it really is only for the ever rarer moments when in the thriving of my work itself I forget everything around me, that I can shake off my daily brooding how to maintain that zest in spite of adverse circumstances. And all this proceeds from the constant haunting of my wistful fancy by mocking chances of escape. But—decisively hereon by word of mouth!"—

It is easy to guess how the gossamer web, that in one sense had turned into fetters of gold, was beginning to embrace his very soul, and "escape" from Zurich, from what it held and what it could not hold for him, was growing to a paramount desire. The only company he loved was that he dreaded—"the presence of Frau Wesendonck always set him in a state of agitation; it seemed as if he could not bear her to concern herself with him," says Hornstein—whereas the dull convivialists, or just as dull professors, of the place were no fair compensation. And so, a fortnight after finishing *Die Walküre*, he writes Liszt one of the most important letters in the whole Correspondence; important not for any direct result attained, but for the glimpse it affords of his "revolutionary" past and his present attitude toward politics, also of his anomalous position in the contemporary world of art. For all which reasons, I shall quote from it pretty fully:—

April 13, 1856: "My dear Franz, Before undertaking anything myself with regard to my amnesty, I must take serious counsel with you; and since that cannot be by word of mouth just yet—as I so much should have wished it—I'll put my case as briefly as I can on paper." He goes on to relate how the Director of Police at Prague* has conveyed the advice (through Marie Leh-

* Where his *Lohengrin* had just come out (106 *sup.*) and a "Wagner week" was projected at the theatre, as Liszt tells his Brussels Freundin next August: "In imitation of Weymar, about the middle of September they will give Wagner's three operas in one week [and did, commencing with the *Holländer*, as novelty, Sept. 7]. . . . A considerable portion of the Prague public shews elevated taste enough to prefer *Lohengrin* even to *Tannhäuser*."

mann?) to naturalise himself as a Swiss citizen, in which event he could get a pass for Austria, and any "reclamations" from his fatherland would be met by the rejoinder that "they know no Saxon subject R. W." Liszt's reply points out the fearful risks of such a course; but Wagner himself had not set much store by it, except as a means of ensuring that *Tannhäuser* should only be produced at Vienna under his own superintendence, a condition he had been unable to enforce at Berlin. "It is of greater moment to me, on the other hand"—his letter of Apr. 13 continues—"to have Germany itself reopened to me: *not* so as to make it my head-quarters, for I can flourish only in retirement now, and should best secure that in some quiet nook of Switzerland [plainly longing to "escape" from Zurich], but now and then, and wherever there was question of a critical performance, especially of Lohengrin, to be able to procure myself the needful stimulus without which I must pine away at last. I'm *firmly resolved* not to let Lohengrin be produced *without me* either at Berlin or Munich [to be over-ruled ere long by monetary stress]. Then too, a representation of my *Nibelungen* is not to be *dreamt of* unless I first obtain freedom to make a personal tour of Germany, in order to acquaint myself with the exact vocal and histrionic material now at the various theatres. Finally, I have a heart's need to spend a part at least of every year in *your* proximity, and you may rest assured I should make more frequent and protracted use, than you, of the liberty to visit you."

So we come to the point: "Consequently I have determined to appeal to the king of Saxony for amnesty, and that in writing, when I shall frankly admit my [past] precipitance and categorically acknowledge that my promise never to mix in politics again, in any form, comes from the very bottom of my heart. It is to be regretted, however, that, should the other side be bent on mischief, such a letter might easily be notified to the public in such a guise as would compel me in my turn publicly to protest against a false and humbling version of my step; and that would cause an irremediable breach, making reconciliation impossible for all time."* To obviate a danger so extremely probable with a minister like Beust—who bequeathed a far worse calumny to

* Cf. his letter to Princess Wittgenstein of October or November 1854: "I have not the smallest hope of the Dresden amnesty [see iv, 342], for I do not believe it will come to anything—at least, in a form in which I could accept it."

his posthumous *Memoirs* (see vols. ii and v)—Wagner suggests that Liszt himself, armed with a recommendation from the Grand Duke of Weimar, should seek a personal interview with the Saxon king (successor to the injured sovereign) and lay all stress on Wagner's "*artist-hood*," not only as excusing "that strange political excess," but also as forming the motive for his pardon:—

Regarding that excess, as also its sequelæ for the next few years [the semi-socialist writings, *Art and the Revolution* etc.], I am ready to admit that I now appear to myself to have been in error and led away by passion, albeit I am conscious of having committed no real offence amenable to legal sentence, so that it would be hard for me to own to such a thing. As to my behaviour for the future, however, I should be prepared to make any binding declaration required; for the simple reason that it would only be an attestation of that cleared and corrected inner view which shews me the things of this world now in a light I did not see them in before, and points me solely to my art, from every quarter, never again to any field of political speculation. Furthermore, you would assure [the King] that my reappearance in Germany should never give rise to any sort of demonstration, which—although intended *merely* for the artist—might be interpreted by the evil-disposed as of a political nature also. Luckily I have reached that stage as *artist*, you might say, where my gaze is fixed on *nothing* but my art-work and its thriving, in nowise on the plaudits of the crowd. Without the smallest conflict with my secret wishes, then, I would unequivocally pledge myself to go quietly out of the way of any exhibition of public sympathy—offered me even as artist—most positively to decline all invitations to so-called banquets etc., eh! to do my best to make them impossible by the manner of my sojourn. In the event of the production of one of my operas, I should not even want to conduct in person, but simply and solely to ensure myself a correct conception on the part of the executants and conductors through attending the rehearsals; yes, if it seemed needful for avoidance of a possible demonstration, I would even declare myself willing to quit the place at conclusion of the rehearsals, i.e. before the performance: which ought to shew my only object plain enough. Finally, in my writings—even on artistic matters—I will also undertake to avoid anything misconstruable, not to say offensive, such as may have slipped from my pen in my resentment of yore.—In view of all these declarations, there accordingly could be no question of the future, but simply of the past; and that, with an artist, might surely be veiled in oblivion, not wreaked revenge on.*

* A postscript suggests conveyance of a copy of the Ring-poem to the Saxon King; which either indicates a poor opinion of that monarch's perspicacity, or

Liszt is touchingly implored to "make sacrifice of the two days a visit to Dresden would cost," to press this suit in person: "You are the only man who can speak up for me in the manner needed." But Liszt's reply, of the beginning of May,* says nothing of that part of the project. In my humble opinion it was the *only* way of guaranteeing that the King himself, and not his vengeful minister, should be made thoroughly acquainted with Wagner's appeal; yet there may have been Weimar court-reasons for not despatching the Hofkapellmeister as special envoy, and those reasons he may have preferred to pass in silence. What Liszt does report, is that his "latest steps and efforts unfortunately have led to no favourable result as yet—which is not to say that such is not in prospect"; but he "insistently begs" Wagner to approach the King in writing forthwith: "Send me a copy [draft?] of your letter to the King, from whom you should ask forgiveness, in the first place, only to the extent of *your being allowed to hear your works at Weimar* as that is necessary for your further mental labours and you feel sure you would meet with a benevolent disposition on the part of the Grand Duke here. It breaks my heart to have to dictate such formalities to you, but believe me—it is your only road to Germany. Once you have been here a couple of weeks, the rest may come a little easier," and so on.

The Correspondence offers no plain answer to a question which naturally presents itself: Did Wagner send off the said petition? Probably a letter from either side is missing here, for in June (no. 217) Wagner casually remarks: "The *only* interest my amnesty affair has for me, is that a happy issue will open me the road to you at all times; should the scheme succeed, I would impose myself on you awhile next winter season"; to which

the author's own conviction that his subject's trend is not so perilously 'revolutionary' as he himself proclaimed to Uhlig on the eve of turning the two dramas into four (iii, 253).

* No. 215 in the *W.-L. Corr.*, approximately dated by its postscript: "Johanna has been here this last week, and sang Orpheus and Romeo to the *most enormous* applause," since Liszt had written the "Freundin" Apr. 23 that Johanna was booked for "next Monday," i.e. the 28th. "I will tell you something more precise about her, on occasion," adds Liszt, to Wagner, presumably referring to her attitude towards her 'uncle's' operas.—For her Weimar, and immediately ensuing London appearances, see Appendix.

Liszt replies, a month later: "For the present your pardon business will remain *in statu quo*—nevertheless I hope you will come to me next winter, and am meantime preparing your apartment at the Altenburg.—*Speak to nobody about it*; I reserve what I have heard, to tell you *by mouth*." After that, the Correspondence itself has nothing more to say on this subject* till Wagner pleads in mid-December for "satisfying information," and all that Liszt can recommend to him, Jan. 1, 57, is to "take no further step." Through no apparent fault of anyone outside the Saxon court, the 'amnesty affair' had fallen through, for the—how-manyeth?—time. Was Wagner's petition of 1856, though, really sent in through the Grand Duke of Weimar? That is impossible to answer, but it is now quite certain the exile wrote one about this date, and forwarded it as near as could be got to the King—says his June letter to Liszt, "if the Saxon Minister of Justice [not Beust] will listen to reason"—through some channel or other. For the late Dr G. Schoenaich published in the "Bayreuth number" of *Die Musik* 1902 Wagner's draft of a later petition from Venice (see cap. VII.) in which direct mention is made of "my own written appeal" having failed in the past to obtain the boon solicited; and now Herr Glasenapp prints in the same magazine (Aug. 06) a letter to von Lüttichau dated "Venice, Feb. 9, 1859," in which Wagner remarks, "Three years ago I addressed myself to his Majesty direct, anent my pardoning." On each occasion the heart of all-powerful Beust was set as flint against him.

There was a Zurich sequel, too, and one that shews how rancorous was the feeling of the other side, how just Wagner's present aversion to the ex-revolutionary party. One of the local papers got wind of the affair, Heaven knows how, and must have added other names at indiscretion, as this is what Keller writes Hettner next October ('56): "Köchly and friends [see ii.] assert

* Sept. 16, 56, Liszt writes Pss Wittgenstein: "Vous avez parfaitement conseillé Wagner. On aimerait à l'aplatir le plus possible. Ce n'est pas beau, mais c'est comme cela. Heureusement il a *lui* de quoi faire du beau—et après sa mort on lui érigera une statue, comme à ce pauvre Schiller. Telle est la loi du destin qu'il est bon de comprendre, afin de ne s'y soumettre que dans la mesure exigible!" Obviously the "on" that "would like to flatten Wagner as much as possible"—i.e. humble him to the dust—was the Dresden court, and Carolyne must have conveyed him some 'diplomatic secret' during Liszt's absence in Austria and Hungary.

that that false rumour of the pardon-petition was deliberately set afloat from the Wagnerian side so that, after Köchly and Semper had published their *désavœux*, Wagner might curry favour by simply keeping silence. This I don't believe, at least not that he knew of it personally. On the other hand, he certainly wishes to be able to return to Germany, to breathe stage-air again and get his artistic feet on terra firma; so that he is in the situation of being obliged to keep silence concerning that story, not to ruin his game at the outset." So Wagner had prudently kept his own counsel, but his fellow-refugees (not including Semper, of course) do not come out of the tale very creditably. *Raison de plus* for that "isolation" in which he felt himself.

Before his temporary "escape" from Zurich, Wagner has a private rehearsal of *Die Walküre* act i, as he tells Fischer April 29, "a short while back (*letzthin*): I sang both the *Siegmond and Hunding*, and Frau Heim, a capital amateur, sang the Sieglinde; a friend accompanied." That friend, says Herr Steiner, was Baumgartner, and the letter from Mornex to Ignaz Heim already-cited (108*n sup.*) ends thus in fact: "My very best regards to Frau Sieglinde; tell her to study ahead, and forget the trouble brought upon her by her shocking brother Siegmund! Best greetings to Frau Stockar too [their landlady, see iv]. Baumgartner is an ass! Keller's a brick; remember me to him.—Your R.W."

As seen, that letter to Fischer began with "another attack of Gesichts-Rose"—so this spring was not particularly cheerful—but it also sent hearty thanks to Tichatschek for his recent *Lohengrin* début at Bremen: "It gave me great joy to hear that T. had sung *Lohengrin* at last. I knew I wasn't mistaken when I wrote that part and foresaw it would be one of his best. The more the pity I couldn't produce the opera with him [long ago], but had to leave it to muffs to create this rôle! I can readily believe Tichatschek is the best for it even now, and gladly would I be present for once to hear him sing it . . . My very best regards to him, and tell him I stood on my head here, in spirit, as he fully deserved!" Possibly that message itself inspired the famous tenor with the idea of following up a Carlsruhe 'star' engagement with a supplementary coaching by the composer, whom he had not seen since the work's completion seven years back. Anyhow, May brings to Zurich the only one of the older

Dresden colleagues excepting Devrient, next year, who ever called on Wagner there ; but at rather an unlucky moment. "Just as I was about to escape at the end of May"—writes Wagner from Mornex to Liszt—"Tichatschek dropped upon me unawares. This good creature, with his splendid childlike heart and winning little head, was most welcome to me, and his enthusiastic attachment quite did me good ; in particular also, his voice much delighted me still, and gave me the idea of trusting something further to it.* I wanted to take him to Brunnen ; bad weather kept postponing that intention till at last we chanced it, and en route I caught my twelfth attack of *Gesichtsrose* this winter. I had foreseen it all, and been in a state of terror the whole of Tichatschek's twelve-day stay. This abominable complaint has pulled me very much down ; I had 3 relapses in the month of May alone, and not an hour passes, even now, in which I do not dread a fresh attack."

Toward the end of this long but extremely interesting letter (oh, I mean to quote more from it) we get an indication of the date of that escape from Zurich : "The splendid air and nice quiet abode, which I have been enjoying these 2 days past, are already somewhat brightening me ; I'm beginning to hope to get well !" But we must not go by its printed date, "12. Juli 56," for there is a letter addressed to Breitkopf und Härtel from "Mornex am Genfer See, 20. Juni 1856" (of which anon), and another "Mornex, 21 Juni 1856" to Director Rottmayer.† The

* I cannot accept Hueffer's rendering, "and tried to persuade myself that I still had confidence in it," for "und gab mir ein, ihr noch etwas zuzutrauen."—Next February 9 we learn what that "something further" was : sending the pfe *Rheingold* to Tichatschek with a request to get it copied in Dresden, Wagner tells him, "You alone can sing my 'Loge,'" and bids him keep free for the spring of 1859 to sing *Loge* and *Siegmond*.

† "The good production of that difficult *Lohengrin* at your court-theatre [Hanover, Dec. 16, 55] delighted me greatly, and has relieved me of many a care. Herr Niemann, in particular, has been indicated to me as most excellent ; which is very good news for me, as I can reckon so seldom on tenors such as I need. Please give him my kindest regards, as also Herr Capellmeister Fischer, to whom I feel sure I have to ascribe an equally large share in the success ; and rest assured yourself of my sincere thanks for the scenic direction, which is of such extraordinary importance to the whole work." Dr G. Fischer, who prints this extract in his *Musik in Hannover* (1903), states that the letter was occasioned by the Hanover purchase of the *Holländer* score and stage-right for 50 F. d'or ; but that the first performance of that opera (May

12th of *June* must be the proper date, and we may therefore conclude that the master left Zurich about the 9th—on the advice of Dr Rahn, says Steiner.

“I have fled hither in search of health,” the letter begins, going on with that passage about “torturing company” (116 *sup.*). Let us pick it up where we dropped it last: “I’m unfit for anything, and, so it turns out, need radical measures to set me up again. Which means, I must observe a rigorous regime in diet and general mode of life; the slightest derangement of stomach and bowels reacts on my complaint at once. Moreover, greatest quiet, removal of all agitation, annoyance, and so on; further, Carlsbad water, certain hot baths, cold ones later, etc. [Rahn’s orders, or Vaillant’s?—*cf* 135 *inf.*]. In order to escape for this purpose as far as possible from home, and avoid all enticement to company, I have fled here, and found the very den I wanted. I’m residing two hours from Geneva, half way up the other side of Mont Salève, in glorious air. Detached from the main building of a pension I found a little summer-house,* which I inhabit all alone. From the balcony I have the most divine view of the whole of the Mont Blanc chain; from the door I step into a pretty little garden. The most complete seclusion was my

28, 57) was not followed by another for six months, and then for a further ten years! A gem of contemporary local criticism is the following: “Wagner, who with the most offensive conceit lectures the greatest composers before him like schoolboys, should take a lesson from a Rossini and Marschner how to treat a storm and the dæmonic without offending against the laws of beauty.”—“Rossini and Marschner” is good, but too tell-tale.—N.B. Hans v. Bülow writes Liszt, Feb. 17, 57: “I hear wonders about the genius of a young tenor, Mr Niemann of Hanover, who has converted the Anti-Wagnerians to ‘Tannhäuser,’ and above all to ‘Lohengrin.’ I spent an hour of my stay at Hamburg on visiting him, being unable to hear him . . . Wagner has invited him to the ‘Nibelungen,’ for Siegfried, from what he told me.” And so the master had, in a letter of Jan. 25: “From all I hear about you, I believe that in you I have found the hard-sought singer of my ‘Siegfried’ . . . If serious illness does not hinder me, the whole work will be ready for performance in the summer of 1859 . . . with a specially selected company, which must stand at my disposal for a half-year’s study . . . Save yourself for it, and remember you have still a great artistic deed in front of you.” Nearly twenty years after, Niemann played Siegmund at Bayreuth, having meanwhile figured in the Paris *Tannhäuser*.

* *Die Musik* II. 16 (“Wagner-Heft” 1903) has a photograph of the place: a modest little building of brick or stone. Mlle Latard was the pension-keeper’s name, according to H. Kling, *Guide Musical*, Oct. 18, 1896.

prime condition; I am served apart, and see nobody except the waiter. A dear little dog, called Fips—Peps' successor—is my sole society.* One thing I had to agree to, ere being granted occupation of this garden salon: I must clear out of a Sunday morning from 9 till 12, when a Geneva parson comes to hold Divine service for the Protestant natives in the same place I lead my heathen life in the rest of the week. However, I make the sacrifice gladly—were it only for the sake of religion; I think of compounding that way.

“It comes terribly dear, though, and without your subsidy I couldn't have managed the adventure at all; in other words, I am eating into the money I had destined for the copies of my scores [cap. II.]: it can't be helped. That money reached me from Vienna exactly on my birthday; accept my greatest thanks for this sacrifice! I know it's disgraceful you should be giving me money as well—why do you do it?! Your relative,† of whom I had never heard before, made use of the occasion to rejoice me with a few extremely friendly lines, which really sweetened the bitterness of having to receive money from you; please remember me to him and thank him most heartily.—My salon holds a piano, too—if not of the best sort; let's hope I shall soon pluck up heart again, and begin my *Siegfried* at last. First of all, though, your scores have to be gone regularly through. What a heap you sent me!!”

Here I must interrupt the letter again, as in vol. v we read the promise of a greater composer than Liszt to send the music-starved exile a speedy present of three scores, in return for those of *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser*. Had he kept that promise?—Three weeks after its making, Wagner wrote Liszt (Oct. 3, 55): “To a letter of mine in which, among other things, I had begged him to make me a present of all his scores if he could obtain them gratis, Berlioz lately replied that he cannot do that, because his earlier publishers won't give him any more free copies. I confess it would greatly interest me now, to go carefully through

* “The uncommonly clever, good and loving little dog you once sent to my home from your sickbed,” Wagner writes Mathilde three years hence; so we may date the thoughtful gift from last September.

† Eduard Liszt, generally called Liszt's “cousin.” La Mara describes him as *Stiefonkel*, i.e. step-uncle, with the explanation “younger half-brother of his father.”

his symphonies in full score for once: do you possess them, and will you lend me them; or would you even care to make me a gift of them? I should accept it gratefully—but much should like to have them soon” (on the threshold of act iii of *Die Walküre*). Liszt answers nine days later: “I certainly possess the scores of Berlioz, but for the moment have lent them all out, and it will take some weeks to rake them in. By the middle of November I will send you the pack—in which you will find much to appeal to you.” But the pack does not come; in the pressure of his own proof-correcting, perhaps Liszt forgot all about it. So we arrive at the spring of this year, when Liszt writes Wagner, March 25: “No doubt you have heard through [Carl Ritter’s] sister Emilie about our last Lohengrin performance [Feb. 24], which went off very satisfactorily. Caspari sang the Lohengrin far better than it had ever been heard here. The Princess of Prussia had requested this performance . . . An overflowing house and intently attentive audience were matters of course. Berlioz was present.” Full stop! To which Wagner replies: “Had you nothing further to tell me of Berlioz? I really was expecting to hear a lot about him. And am I not even yet to get one of his scores?—I’m pausing in my work now,” etc. (cap. II.). So neither promise had been kept, and indeed it seems that Wagner never *saw* a score of Berlioz’s before his migration to Paris in 1859. That does not sound very brotherly on the part of the French composer, and, after the absurd London charges of plagiarism (vol. v), one almost fears he had begged Liszt *not* to lend his scores in such a dangerous quarter.

A first-rate *Lohengrin* performance, and simply “Berlioz was present”! No wonder Wagner asked if there was nothing more to say. But Liszt dared not tell him; for we now know what there was to tell, since Liszt had written to others in the interval. First to the Brussels Freundin, Feb. 25: “This last fortnight has been absorbed by rehearsals (sometimes from 5 to 6 hours), first of *Cellini* for the Gd Duchess’s fête (Feb. 16)—very well represented and received perfectly, this time—and then of *Lohengrin* (my favourite work), which filled the house again yesterday in spite of all that competent and incompetent judges may say about it. From six to eleven at night the audience stifled and admired—and at the end of the representation I permitted myself to remark to H.R.H. the Princess

of Prussia: 'This sort of work can very well dispense with the advantage of amusing people.'—Litloff, who had passed three or four days with me after his Gotha triumphs . . . renewed Rubinstein's escapade of last year, and fled from Weymar the night before *Lohengrin*, as Rubinstein before the concert of *Berlioz*. As for the latter, he stood fire this time, and heard *Lohengrin* from end to end. On my return home I summed up to the princess [Carolyne] the impression B. had reaped from this marvellous work, telling her he held it in an esteem and affection analogous to that felt by Nélida [Ctsse d'Agoult] for the Pss W. Next Thursday, *Berlioz' la damnation de Faust* will be executed under his own direction." Less veiledly to Bülow, March 14: "Berlioz has spent three weeks here. The representation of his Cellini was very satisfactory this time, and Caspari sang the title-rôle perfectly. On the demand of Mme la Pcsse de Prusse we gave *Lohengrin* a week after, which Berlioz found little to his taste. Ourselves we did not speak of it at all, but he expressed himself to other persons in terms sufficiently uncouth (*assez peu ménagés*); which has grieved me. For the rest, this performance of *Lohengrin* made an enormous sensation here, and I believe you would have not been discontented with it. The two Mildes and Caspari had admirable moments, and Mlle Marx (from Darmstadt) declaimed and played her rôle [Ortrud] quite valiantly. For my own part, I avow, my admiration for this marvellous work goes on increasing; to my mind it is the highest manifestation of dramatic genius."

Who, after that, will again contend that the German master was the jealous party in the Wagner-Berlioz affair? The Frenchman cannot trust himself to say a word to Liszt about his rival's work, yet ejects his gall into the ears of Liszt's surroundings! One must condole with him on the pleasure his temper deprived him of, but may be certain he would be the last person to encourage Liszt to lend those scores. The nearest access Wagner had to them, for several years to come, was their reflection in Liszt's own—to which we will now return.

In the same letter in which Liszt discreetly muffled Berlioz' conduct in three neutral words, he informed Wagner, "I shall send you a few numbers of my Symphonic Poems in full score a

fortnight hence." Wagner promptly replies, "So I'm to have something of your new compositions at last?? Good: their crossing of my threshold shall be blest! I have yearned for them long."* A consignment of "the three first-published numbers" is announced in Liszt's letter of the beginning of May, for which Wagner's thanks would be expressed in that answer of his I have already assumed to be missing between nos. 215 and 216. Then the second three arrive the latter half of May, and Wagner acknowledges them in undated no. 216: "I have received the second parcel of your symphonic poems to-day: they make me so rich of a sudden, that I scarcely know how to contain myself. Unfortunately it is only with great difficulty I can gain a clear idea of them as yet—it would come like a lightning-flash if you could play them to me; but I'm looking forward to their study with a child's delight—if only I can get a little well first! . . . I'm just about to take a purgative, to ward off a fresh outbreak of my malady. Ah, if I could only set out straight for Purgatory itself!"

There again we have cause and effect. In the month of May six firstlings of a friend's to scan: "three relapses in the month of May alone." And our letter from Mornex unconsciously reveals the link: "In that ghastly month of May it was only with dim eye, and as if through murky clouds [temporary amblyopia self-confessed], I could glance through the six scores. But even so, I received that electric shock which great things give us, and I do know thus much: you are an amazing fellow, by whose side I can place no other figure in the realm of art and life. I was so struck by your conceptions and the broader outlines of their execution ["Ausführungsentwürfe"—a notable expression, to which we must return], that I craved at once for more and more of your new work, the 3 remaining pieces,† and—Faust and Dante. There you see how

* To Pss Wittgenstein, June 3, 1854: "Liszt's programmes [penned by Carolyne, though] attract me so much, that I long for acquaintance with the 'Symphonic Poems' themselves as the greatest treat in store for me upon the field of art. Cannot he send me the scores at least, as it won't be such an easy matter for me to hear him give the works themselves? How secretive he is, compared with me! . . . If I could but hear his 'Symphonic Poems'! My yearning for them is great."

† The six Symphonic Poems received were *Tasso* (first composed 1849), *Prometheus* and *Mazeppa* (1850), *Festklänge* (1851), *Orpheus* and *Les Préludes* (1854); all these, after many a revision, appeared simultaneously, May 1856.

I am : without having become intimate with the subtleties of the actual artistic execution yet, I wanted to go still farther ; presumably because I must despair of getting upon easy terms with these latter without a hearing. For no mistake could be greater, than to try for that through a clumsy picking-out on the piano ; nothing but a good performance, in proper tempo backed by perfect expression, can give one the whole picture in all its varied tints. And that's just where you are so lucky to be able to help yourself beyond all wish !”

Curious : perhaps without knowing it, he has hit the exact nail, the point where Liszt indeed was “lucky.” Whereas Wagner all along had had the pictures of *Rheingold* and *Walküre* nowhere but in his brain or on his music-paper, with an occasional ‘picking-out at the piano,’ Liszt had been able to try over *his* again and again, not alone with his wondrous ten fingers. It is a singular account Liszt himself gives, to others, of the manufacture of these works. First to Bülow, in that letter of mid-March : “The six scores of my Poèmes symphoniques will appear in a fortnight at last. You will see I have stinted neither care nor trouble, and even on the last proofs I made several sufficiently notable alterations.” More explicit to L. Köhler, May 24 : “The proof-correcting has kept me very busy ; for, although I had not omitted preliminary trials of these scores and repeated alterations in their writing out again,* many a thing looked different to me in print from what I wanted, and there was nothing for it but to try over again with the orchestra, have things written out anew, and ask for fresh proofs. The first 6 numbers have appeared at last,” etc. Quite definite, and somewhat startling, in a letter of

The “three remaining pieces” were *Hungaria* (1846-7), *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne* (1847-8), and *Héroïde Funèbre* (1849-50), also much re-manipulated between their original composition and their publication in 1857. To complete the Twelve, the *Ideale* (1857) appeared in 1858, *Hunnen-Schlacht* (1856-7) and *Hamlet* (1858) in 1861.—These dates I derive from L. Ramann's *Franz Liszt*.

* “Obschon ich es nicht an Vorproben, mehrmalig verändertem Ausschreiben der Partituren hatte fehlen lassen,” etc. The English edition is not quite accurate here : “although I had not omitted, in the first proofs, to have things altered in the scores many times,” etc., for the word “Proben” (in the unusual compound *Vorproben*) can only mean *rehearsals* ; “proofs” would be called either *Probe-bogen*, *Abzüge* or, as at the end of the sentence, *Correcturen*. But the later-published letter to Lobe sets the point beyond all question.

the same date to Prof. Christian Lobe (thanking him for "kind lines" in acknowledgment of the six scores sent May 18): "I am indebted to our band for many a not unprofitable experience, through the numerous trials to which I have submitted my scores during the last two years. Without pluming myself on exactitude, I may truthfully say I have spared neither time nor trouble so to set my things that to me they seem proportioned both in build (*Anlage*) and instrumentation. The various alterations, remodelings and workings-out, and above all the *colouring*—which has become a greatly increased need with me—have caused me to write out and try over from 3 to 4 different versions [!] of the full score of each of these first 6 numbers. Thanks to my appointment here, I could allow myself this rather tiresome and expensive procedure; from which I draw at least this profit, that, even should the things be judged bad, I [know I] cannot do them better, at any rate for the nonce."

Now I fancy the above, though not addressed to Wagner, will explain that puzzling term "*Ausführungsentwürfe*" we encountered a page or two back. We do not possess any letter of Liszt's accompanying his second consignment of scores to Wagner, but Princess Carolyne, "who will soon have to be dubbed Frau Private Secretary," is thanked for one in our first Mornex letter itself. Very well: after what we have just read, it would not be at all surprising if Liszt or his confidante had apologised for his scores as *Etudes*, or Orchestral Sketches, and even employed the ambiguous term *Ausführungsentwürfe*, which literally means "execution-drafts." Liszt remarks to the Freundin, May 12: "C'est le commencement de ma prise de possession d'une carrière, où bon gré mal gré il me faut faire un grand bout de chemin. Dans trois ans la preuve sera fournie;" to his cousin Eduard next year, "My *Préludes* are merely the *prelude* to my career as composer." A similar expression confided to Wagner—whom he had told, in fact, last year, "Before its performance a symphonic work only exists in the *clay*, so to speak" (!—see v, 35)—would at once account for his curiosity to see the "remaining pieces" ere going into the details of these forerunners, about which he delicately confesses to certain unspecified "doubts." Were not the two Symphonies proper foreshadowed as to come?

So it may well have been as preliminary Studies, that Wagner regarded these works at the first, and I am not so sure that we

should not do better to regard them from that point of view to-day, rather than as ripe products with a disputed claim to perfection. Only a year ago one of Liszt's most ardent panegyrists, Rudolf Louis, expressed himself in a special "Liszt number" of *Die Musik* (April 1906) as follows: "In the overwhelming majority of Liszt's works the *execution and working out* (Ausführung und Ausarbeitung) *lag behind the conception and ground-plan* [italicised by the author]. There is scarcely one of Liszt's original compositions which does not bear the stamp of highest geniality in its *idea* and the specifically creative *invention*. But there are also very few in which this idea has passed unalloyed into the 'manifestation'; which have not somehow remained 'in the sketch,' so to say, without full exploitation of their mighty inspirations. Indeed it has frequently been said that Liszt's scores for the most part betray the character of extremely talented but fugitive improvisations on the pianoforte."*

Is not something like that expressed in the long passage affectionately devoted to Liszt's scores in this first Mornex letter? Here they remind Wagner of his friend's inimitable style of pianoforte-playing; as that "must be irretrievably lost with your person," he continues, "you *had* to light on the plan of replacing your personal art by the orchestra, i.e. by compositions able to reproduce your individuality through the inexhaustible resources of orchestral delivery . . . Thus your orchestral works now seem to me a monumentalising of your personal art, as it were; and in this respect they're so new and outside comparison, that it will take Criticism a long time to discover what to make of them. —Good Lord! all this is very badly put, and liable to misunderstanding; but when we see each other face to face I shall have many a new thing to tell you, I fancy, things grown clear to me through yourself. If only I have real calm and lucidity then. And that needs sound good health; else my fatal excitement

* This is by no means so incompatible with that letter to Lobe (not published till 1905, *F. Liszt's Briefe* VIII.) as might at first appear; in fact the necessity for "3 to 4 different versions" of the scoring, before it could please Liszt, points to *translation* of the idea, or "improvisation," from one medium (pfe) into another (orchestra). In this work of translation, moreover, Liszt was largely assisted by Raff, who acted as something more than his musical amanuensis from the end of 1849 till summer 1856; see *Die Musik* I. nos. 1 to 15 (1901-2), where a whole series of contemporary letters shew Raff 'ghosting' for Liszt's orchestral scores of that period.

comes on at once, stopping everything and always leaving the best unsaid."—One sees to what a state of 'nervousness' his eyestrain had reduced him, and certainly these comments on Liszt's scores do leave a little to desire in the way of "lucidity" (*Deutlichkeit*). Still, the upshot is distinctly flattering to a novice, and in particular the postscript: "But your *Mazeppa* is terribly beautiful; I got quite out of breath, the first time of reading it through. I'm sorry for the poor horse, tho'; what awful things are Nature and the world!" So soon after his own *Walkürenritt*, it is characteristic that he singles out this composition; no less so, that he adds "but not the close" (137 *inf.*), for Wagner never liked that dash of *Spektakel*, as he afterwards termed it, without which Carolyne was never pleased.

Just above that postscript: "For Heaven's sake, dearest, onliest friend, don't be so reticent! If ever we compare our letters, I shall seem a perfect chatterbox by side of you; though you will come splendidly out of it as man of deeds.—Nevertheless, dearest Franz, a little confidentialness is also good! Make a note of that, you lordly benefactor!!—Farewell, and write me soon. I shall have another good turn at your scores, and fancy they'll set me afloat again" (for *Siegfried*, of course). After that not unmerited reproach, it is surprising to find Liszt's answer, of four weeks later (July 8, by sure internal evidence), making no other allusion than this to his friend's dissertation: "Accustomed as I am to *waiting*, I could wait no longer to tell you how I hunger and thirst to be with you again, and fire off all our pack of *nonsense*. As *hors d'œuvre* (which have the property of whetting appetite and thirst, you know) to your banquet of *Rheingold* and *Walküre*, I shall bring you my symphony on Dante's *Divina Comedia*, which is to belong to you; and was finished writing yesterday. The thing lasts a little under an hour, and perhaps will amuse you."—Really one would have expected something more than that, especially as Wagner had thus far been the solitary musician of renown to send the Symphonic débutant a word of hearty welcome to his new domain.*

* Adolf B. Marx, Spohr and Berlioz, had sent polite acknowledgments of receipt of the six scores May 24, May 27 and June 29, respectively—Berlioz merely adding, "dout je te remercie," the others promising to look into the works so soon as they had time (see *B. h. Z. an F. Liszt* II.).

The chagrin manifest in Liszt's self-mockery, coupled with his uncertainty that his Mass will be used after all at the consecration of the Gran cathedral, draws the following from Wagner, July 20, to cheer him up: "I cannot believe you will give up Gran entirely; so I shall expect to see you returning crowned with glory from the land of your fathers.—Your symphonic poems have now become quite intimates of mine; they are the only music I'm dealing in [so Berlioz' scores had *not* been sent], for I may not think of work myself while my cure is proceeding. I read one or other of the scores straight through each day, just as I would read a poem, fluently and without impediment. And every time I feel as if I had dived deep down into a crystal stream, there to be quite in my element, the world all left behind, to live my true life for an hour. Refreshed and strengthened, I emerge with but one longing, for your presence.—Yes, friend, *you can do it, you can!*—About that there isn't much to say, and the choicest expressions might easily sound rather trite. So enough—you'll soon be coming, now, and bringing *my Dante* with you. Grand, glorious prospects! How I thank you!!"

However we may disagree with their general verdict, we shall presently find the sincerity of these expressions, itself disputed in some quarters, confirmed by Wagner's letters to *others* (see cap IV.). Meantime, just remembering that the music-starved exile had not seen his chief friend for three hungering years, let us pass to more personal concerns.

"Since our reunion is the goal of all my wishes, I know no other present care than for thorough convalescence"—said the first Mornex letter. At the beginning of this second, of six weeks later, we find a systematic cure in progress: "What joy your letter gave me, dearest Franz, you perhaps can scarcely guess! I often fret about you when, after being so long without you, I cannot even get a decent line; then I keep thinking you have ceased to care for me. However, I shan't attempt to *write* you sense to-day, for your letter itself can only be answered by *mouth*. Lord knows, I'm mortifying my flesh by my cure chiefly so as to be perfectly well when we meet again at last. So far as my health goes, I could have done nothing wiser than to place myself under the direct charge of an admirable French physician, Dr Vaillant, who conducts a hydropathic establish-

ment here.* All my initial dislike of it was conquered when I recognised the great excellence of Vaillant (a Parisian); so I am going thoroughly to work on a careful plan quite new to me, and am certain of being completely healed of my complaint, which turns out to have had its origin in nothing but my nerves (*Nervosität*). It's more than possible, however, I shall have to continue it till the end of August."

This time he does seem to have hit on a doctor of talent, for a week ere the end of his course he writes Otto (Aug. 7—new Germ. ed.): "Apropos of your toothache &c, I am in the happy position of being able to give you good advice. Come to *Mornex*, and get healed by Dr *Vaillant*. Of course you won't—I know that well enough; nevertheless I repeat the advice, in firm conviction that no one could give you better, and that you'd thank me for it greatly if you would but follow it. I see you smiling; so enough of that.—For my own part, I consider myself lucky to have fallen into Dr Vaillant's hands by providential chance: the results of his treatment are so decisive that I now look to my future with an entirely new eye,† and regard myself as henceforth master of my health. I should like to extend that benefit to all I'm fond of: my wife has already pooh-poohed it ['whey-curing' at Seelisberg]; and you—you'll do the same. That's always the way!" To Roeckel also, Aug. 23, in a précis of the events of the past twelvemonth: "I came back to Zurich ill [from London], in course of the winter completed my Walküre with trouble (but—between ourselves—beautifully) amid constant relapses of *Gesichtsrose*, and at the beginning of this summer went to the neighbourhood of Geneva, where I have gone through a most successful water-cure under the control of a distinguished physician, whence I have only just returned."

* In the new German edition of the letters to Otto, that of July 29 alludes to "the foot of Mont-Salève"; so that Wagner must have abandoned his clerical "summer-house," half-way up the hill, very soon after entering possession of it, as his bodily 'cure' took two months. A postscript to the said letter is mildly entertaining: "For Heaven's sake, if you mean to delight me with another letter, simply address '*Poste restante, à Genève*—don't put Mornex at all. Your last letter went to Savoy, cost a heap of money, and arrived two days late."

† I have purposely retained the quaint expression "mit einem ganz neuen Auge," as it forms a pendant to the "mattem Blicke" of two months back, and unconsciously localises the prime seat of mischief.

Grateful remembrances of Dr Vaillant are revived two-and-twenty years later, when Wagner writes a young friend (Edmund v. Hagen, June '78—so Glasenapp tells us), advising him to follow his ancient example: "In the year 1856 my nerves had grown so troublesome that I was afraid of the least draught of air. The hydropath at Mornex (near Geneva) told me, 'You are merely neurotic (*nervös*), Sir. Remain two months with me, and you will *never* have any more of your discomforts.' This was fulfilled to the letter, and it transpired that all my other ills were merely secondary." For the time being the cure was effectual, no doubt, and more or less for a year or two after, since he writes Liszt the 1st of January 1858, "I am fairly well, and have still to thank Vaillant for my passable health; if I only could reward him!"—but Venice, Paris, even Biebrich, tell another tale, as we shall learn in due course. Thus, though his *Gesichtsrose* seem to have vanished for good, Wagner in '78 must have momentarily forgotten the subsequent troubles, largely induced by the same old cause: abuse of astigmatic eyes, combined with great psychic worry.

Unless it be that outlined in the first Mornex letter (126 *sup.*), we have no particulars of the "method of cure," saving that it is quite new to the patient and he "may not think of work" during its progress. In this second Mornex letter to Liszt (July 20): "During my cure here I have grown boundlessly indifferent towards my work; if people don't provide me with a big incentive I shall drop it, God knows. Why should a poor devil like myself go on breaking his back under such terrible burdens, if my contemporaries can't even afford me a workshop?" Apart from the allusion to Haertels (for which please wait), that is merely a stronger form of a remark in the June postscript: "I really would rather write poetry than music now; it needs enormous stubbornness, to stick to one's task like this"—which, in turn, leads up to something of still deeper interest: "I have two wonderful subjects again, which I must carry out some day: Tristan and Isolde (you've heard of that!)—and then—the Victory—the holiest thing, the most complete redemption; but *that* I cannot tell you.—I have had another sense to give it, though, than V. Hugo, and your music has brought it me—only not the close—worldly greatness, fame and chieftaincy, aren't at all in my line."

The expression "your music," i.e. Liszt's *Mazeppa*, "has brought it me" is puzzling enough, particularly as the final reservation seems to cut the entire ground from under its feet. Victor Hugo had split his poem into two independent parts, whereof the second turns the first into an allegory of the sufferings and ultimate triumph of artistic genius—an idea which to some extent might fit the original *Meistersinger* draft (of 1845) but naturally not "das *Heiligste*, die vollständigste Erlösung." Liszt, however, though printing the whole of Hugo's poem as programme to his own Symphonic, had robbed it of all symbolic meaning through that noisy, semi-barbaric "close" itself, which Wagner found so little to his liking. If there were anything at all in the *Mazeppa* music, then, to harmonise with the basis of Wagner's *Die Sieger* (as we shall soon find it entitled), it could only be the *sufferings* it depicts, as such, those sufferings which claim his sympathy for "the poor horse, too," that 'groaning and travailing of the whole creation in pain together until now' which calls forth his ejaculation, "What awful things are Nature and the world!" Thus the "ihm" whose sense he reads in quite another way than Hugo, can only be the term "victory" (*Sieg*),* without the smallest suggestion of affinity between two subjects as dissimilar as it is possible to conceive. Moreover, the MS. of the rough-drafted scenario for the new subject itself is dated "Zurich, May 16, 1856"; a time by which, even supposing him to have already received that particular Symphonic poem, Wagner had been able to cast no more than a "tired glance" at it.

Liszt himself is puzzled by the sudden announcement: "What on earth can it be?"—he asks in his long-deferred reply of July 8—"The fragmentary allusion in your last makes me very curious to hear the whole idea." Wagner answers (July 20): "Only *come*, and I'll willingly leave Saxony and all the rest of Germany unshorn awhile! Bring the Fürstin with you [L. had just suggested it], do you hear? The Child, of course, must not be

* Evidently this is the sense in which the late Dr Hueffer read the passage, when for the "ihm" in Wagner's "Ich wusste ihm aber eine andre Deutung zu geben," etc., he substituted the words "the final *Victory*"—"For the final *Victory* I have another interpretation than that supplied by Victor Hugo"—but unfortunately the capitalising of "*Victory*" has made it resemble a title instead of a thing.

missing. And if you all put me in thorough good humour, perhaps I'll trot my 'Sieger' out, though it will have its great difficulty; for I have long been carrying the idea about with me, but the material for its embodiment has only lately flashed upon me, most sharp and vivid *to myself* indeed, but not yet for communication. Moreover, you'd have to have digested my *Tristan* first, particularly its third act with the black flag and the white; not until then would the 'Sieger' seem plainer.—But what am I babbling?—Come, and bring me the Divine Comedy—then we'll see how to arrange the divine tragedy.”

The title—manifestly adapted from Schopenhauer's "Siegreich vollendete," i.e. the Buddha—has undergone a slight development since June; it is *The Victors* now, not *The Victory*. Still more significant is the bracketing with *Tristan*; which, by the way, must also have been rough-sketched by now, in all likelihood this spring.* The same connection of ideas comes out in the letter to Otto of August 7: "Don't relax your kind care for me yet, as I have a terrible deal to do on this earth still, before I can go to my rest; the *Tristan* has been joined by a second subject now, which so absorbs me that I should like to rush through all my intervening work, merely to get to execution of this newest plan. It will be called: 'die Sieger.'" Finally, to Roeckel, Aug. 23: "My main desire is health, to be able to accomplish all the plans of which I still am full. Unfortunately I'm fuller of them than I need; for, besides the *Nibelungen* pieces, I have a *Tristan* and *Isolde* in my head (Love as terrible agony) and a latest subject of all, 'die Sieger' (supreme Redemption—a Buddhist legend), which so beleaguer me that I have to exert great obstinacy to drive them back in favour of the *Nibelungen*."

It is with *Die Sieger*, then, and ulteriorly with *Parsifal*, that *Tristan* has a far more intimate association than the rather forced one with *Der Ring des Nibelungen* suggested by the author in after years (*P.* III. 268)—unless we are to interpret that later allusion in the sense of an insufficiently-noticed remark in the letter to

* Compare the allusion to "Grösse, Ruhm und Volksherrschaft," in the June letter, with *Tristan's* "des Tages Lügen, Ruhm und Ehr', Macht und Gewinn, so schimmernd hehr, wie eitler Staub der Sonnen sind sie vor dem zersponnen." Or may these lines have been originally intended for *Die Sieger*?

Roeckel, viz. that "Love, alas, is the really devastating factor" in the RING itself; which, indeed, would lend an unexpected meaning to Brünnhilde's paradox, "dass wissend würde ein Weib." *Die Sieger* was to be pendant and sequel, "redemption" from the agonies of love set forth in *Tristan*. Biographically the fact is of immense importance, especially when wed to the notorious question in another part of that letter to Roeckel: "Can you conceive a *moral action* otherwise than as an act of *renunciation*? And what else is the highest saintliness, i.e. the most complete redemption, than conversion of this principle into the basis of our every deed?" As we shall presently see, those words were penned just five days after a flying visit to both the Wesendoncks, and thus acquire a twofold force.

There is yet another reference to the twin subjects, before this year runs out. The Wesendoncks had sent him an engraving after Murillo's transfigured Madonna (see p. 158 *inf.*), whilst Liszt and the Fürstin appear to have presented him with one of Francesca da Rimini (as a parting gift in memory of the *Dante*); so he writes to Liszt and Carolyne, Nov. 30: "I've hung the 'Madonna' and 'Francesca' well, which was a pretty tough job; I had to hammer like Mime. Now all's secure, tho': the Madonna above my writing-table, and Francesca above the sofa under the mirror, where she looks capital. But if ever I get to my 'Tristan,' I suppose Francesca will have to come above the table then, and the Madonna will only return when I set to at the 'Sieger.' For the present I mean to intoxicate myself a little with the Victrix, and to imagine I also could do it," i.e. overcome. We must bear that in mind.

The *Sieger* scenarietto will be found among the Posthumous papers in vol. VIII. of *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*. It is nothing but a first rough sketch, scarcely filling one page. Not categorically divided into acts, three lines apiece sum up the simple plan of what we must regard as acts i and ii, whereas some twenty are devoted to the double *victory*, Prakriti's victory over carnal passion, and Chakya's (the Buddha's) conversion of his hearers. It must be confessed that, as it stands, the subject seems far less amenable to dramatic treatment than its earlier counterpart, *Jesus von Nazareth*; and this was probably the reason why Wagner eventually abandoned it—for the oft-told fable of his intending to dramatise it *after* the creation of *Parsifal*

is absurd on the face of it: he was not the man to repeat himself so flagrantly. Yet one can never tell what a Wagner might have made of this subject in the præ-*Parsifal* days. Already he had devised a much stronger motive for his heroine's rebirth as a Tschandala than that presented to him in Burnouf's version of the legend, whence he derived the other main features of his plot.* In Burnouf's story it was Prakriti's father, in her previous incarnation as a Brahman's daughter, who had rejected the suit of the Tschandala king, without her knowledge. In Wagner's plot it is Prakriti herself who had spurned and *mocked* the suitor; which not only deepens the psychologic interest and brings it into line with his future Kundry's "guilt from a former existence," but is more strictly in accord with the true Buddhist theory of *karma*.

It is quite certain that Wagner would not have stopped at this sole departure from his model, for the Venice Diary of Oct. '58 suddenly announces "an uncommonly weighty gain; without the least forcing, my plot acquires a great and powerful expansion. The difficulty here, was to adapt this wholly-liberated mortal raised above all passion, the Buddha himself, for dramatic, and particularly for musical treatment. It is solved at once by his own attaining to one final step in evolution . . . through intuitive emotional experience," etc., etc. Here we see the possibility of a great development extending back into the second act itself, though we still may doubt its possessing emotional force enough for realisation in musical drama—save in the far directer form it ultimately assumes in *Parsifal*, act ii. And when, nearly two years after that Diary passage, we hear that "the plan for my 'Sieger' would appear to be the sequel and conclusion of my Lohengrin: here 'Sawitri' (Elsa) fully overtakes 'Ananda,'" it is only to find on the very next page that its dethroner "Parzival

* See Karl Heckel's essay in the *Bayreuther Blätter* 1891, where we learn that Malwida von Meysenbug informed Herr Heckel that Wagner had borrowed his material from a short story in E. Burnouf's *Introduction à l'histoire du Bouddhisme indien*. This is confirmed by Herr Steiner's narration how a Dr Paul Hirzel of Zurich had met Wagner on the steamboat between Geneva and Rolle (evidently on his way home) in August '56, and Wagner had then and there extolled the Buddhist ideal of Renunciation as basis of all true Humanity, urgently recommending him "as theologian" to study Burnouf's essays (*Neujahrsblatt* 1903).

has been much awake in me again" (*To Mathilde*, August 1860). From that time forth we hear no more of *Die Sieger*; it has unconsciously been ousted by the superior dramatic power of a subject which had already annexed its best features.

A point of some interest in the last quotation is the change in the heroine's name. "I am reading Liszt's Music of the Gipsies [Carolysz's *les Bohémiens*]. Rather too turgid and phrasy: still, the forcible portrayal of the Gipsy nature (unmistakably the Tschandalas of India) took me vividly back to Prakriti (alias Sawitri)"—says an intervening allusion, Nov. '59; whilst the Venice Diary had concluded its account of the new development with an apostrophe to "Happy Sawitri! thou now mayst follow thy beloved everywhere, be ever near him, with him. Happy Ananda! she is nigh thee now, won never to be lost!" Turn back to vol. v, p. 254, and you find that Wagner had taken to London a volume of Indian legends edited by Adolph Holtzmann: "their reading has been my only pleasure here. All are beautiful; but—*Sawitri* is divine." The exact shape given by Holtzmann to the legend which then won Wagner's predilection is immaterial to our present inquiry, for that myth itself is in nowise connected with Ananda and Prakriti; the "Sawitri" of Indian mythology is a feminine Orpheus, in a sense, whose importunate devotion reclaims her husband from the regions of the dead. Wagner, therefore, has simply harked back to the older favourite for a more euphonious name.

If Burnouf's story suddenly supplied him with an "embodiment," however temporary, for that idea of "*holiest* renunciation" which had long been looming in his brain, his own plan for *Die Sieger* did not fade without leaving its imprint even on the music of the RING. For Herr Glasenapp once had it from the master's mouth that he had already conceived certain musical themes for this unexecuted subject, among them that which subsequently passed over into the sublime scene between the Wanderer and Erda, act iii of *Siegfried*; perhaps the most uplifting of all his musical thoughts, that symbol of *joyful* renunciation, commonly known as the *Welterbschaftsmotiv* or "motive of World-heritage," though "World-overcoming" would be more in harmony with its origin (see vol. iv, 379). Thus the Mornex brooding on *Die Sieger* was far from labour lost to his art; to say nothing of its profound influence on the approaching crisis in his private life.

To the Mornex time of lying fallow, too—the time when he “would rather write poetry than music”—must pretty surely be assigned the Buddhist variant of Brynhild’s farewell words, now printed at the end of *Götterdämmerung*, together with that other variant which lays such stress on *Mitleid* and *Erlösung* (see iv, 91-2). But both of these were rejected in the long run; rightly too, I think, as they would have been somewhat out of character with the rest of the picture. Their interest, once more, is mainly biographic.

The engrossment with those two “new subjects” is itself symptomatic of slackening in creative zeal for the RING, and prophetic of the long pause to supervene a twelvemonth hence. But one strenuous effort to provide for completion of the interminable task has yet to be made. So we have negotiations opened with Breitkopf and Haertel.

His last letter to this firm had been despatched April 5, forwarding them a promised pft arrangement (apparently Bülow’s) of the *Faust* overture, begging them to undertake a collected edition of his dead friend Uhlig’s essays, among others “his very valuable long treatise on ‘The Choice of Motives,’ as yet unprinted,” and offering to write an introduction thereto, “the fee, of course, to go to Uhlig’s widow” *—a proposal we hear no more of, and may therefore set down as declined. But that letter had not alluded to the *Ring des Nibelungen*, although its first moiety had been finished but a week before, and in July 1852 we found Haertels themselves offering to publish it “when the time came” (iv, 68). In April 1856, then, he must have felt the time had *not* come; but by June he had revived a pet personal scheme which needed capital, as we shall learn, so casts the die. *Rheingold* and *Walküre* are finished in full score—he tells Haertels, June 20—he means to start on “Young Siegfried” as soon as his health is re-established, to have ended “Siegfried’s Death” by summer 1858, and in summer 1859 to bring the whole work out: “With my ‘Nibelungen’ I hope to be furnishing a national work, in the noblest sense popular, and even am of

* From Dr Altmann’s *R. W.’s Briefe nach Zeitfolge u. Inhalt* (B. and H., 1905), where over a hundred of Wagner’s letters to the Leipzig firm are summarised. It is devoutly to be hoped the text of these historic documents will be published ere long; very little of it is offered as yet in direct quotation.

opinion that the poem by itself ought not to leave the national mind unstirred to higher sympathy;” after their proposals have been submitted to him, he will hand in the two finished scores and pftc versions, should they desire: “a copy of the poem he sends to-day.”

Haertels appear to have entertained his application quite cheerfully at first, for he writes again July 10, thanking them for their “readiness to go farther into the matter.” He now bids them not to take either “*Lohengrin* or *Tannhäuser*, or *Weber’s Oberon*” as a standard of valuation: here it is question of an “unusual destiny and an incalculable future”; as he has no heirs of his body, and is in straitened circumstances, it would be self-robbery if he proposed “a royalty-contract, as with *Lohengrin*”; he must try to acquire a tranquil country-seat with the fee for the *Nibelungen*, and therefore asks “10,000 thalers in gold” (circa £1500) to be paid in instalments; he wants the separate finished parts engraved forthwith, but not issued till the whole is ready; he will see to good pftc arrangements, and finally would like the poem (already circulated privately—see vol. iv) to be promptly published.

Written ten days after the above, that second Mornex letter to Liszt explains the situation:

I sent you a parcel yesterday; it contains the original scores of *Rheingold* and the *Walküre*,* to which a singular history will probably attach. Let me tell you in brief:—

I shall go to pieces, and become incapable of further work, if I cannot at last find the dwelling I need; that is to say, a small house to myself, with garden, and both of them remote from all the din, particularly that damnable piano din, which I’m accursed to be unable to escape whithersoever I turn—even here—and which has made me so nervous that the mere thought of it stops my thinking of work.

* As seen in cap. II., the Wölfel transcript of *Rheingold* had already gone back to Zurich, whereas there was no duplicate of *Walküre*. Postscript to this letter: “I most earnestly beg you to let me have a line at once, announcing the safe receipt, or possibly the non-receipt of my scores. I am always in great alarm when they are on the road”—naturally, after that prolonged uncertainty about his autograph *Rheingold* score last year (see vol. v). August 1 Liszt acknowledges receipt, in terms already quoted (109n *sup.*), adding that, as he is soon starting for Hungary, he will leave the two scores in Pss Carolyne’s safe keeping “until you write to her that they are to be sent on to Haertels.”

I've been trying in vain for four years to fulfil this wish of mine [*cf* iii, 249, 433], but nothing save the purchase of a plot of ground, and the erection of a house for myself, can procure me what I want. I had been brooding like a lunatic on how to manage it, when it at last occurred to me a short while back to offer *Haertels* my *Nibelungen*, to obtain from them the needful money. Well, they have declared their readiness to do something out of the ordinary to come into possession of my work, whereupon I have laid my demands before them . . . [*vid. sup.*] . . . It is pure desperation has driven me to apply to *Haertels* for the wherewithal to lay out a freehold according to my mind. If we come to terms—which will soon decide itself—I shall have to hand them my two scores in the first place, for future publication ; but for the present they are only to keep them just long enough to take a copy, and then send me the originals back. In any case—to get the money—I was obliged to offer them an act of seizin ; but of course they must lend me the scores for the time of your visit, if not copied by then—that is self-understood. As you yourself, however, have not yet seen the last act of my *Walküre*, I'm sending you the score again, that you—not another—may be the first to whom I make it known. Read that act quickly through, if you have time, but hold the whole in readiness to forward to *Haertels* as soon as I beg you . . . [*His present "indifference" to the work; p. 137 sup.*] . . . I have told *Haertels* that, if they cannot assist me to a detached house on high ground, I shall drop the whole bag of tricks.

To this part Liszt replies (Aug. 1) : "Your idea of functioning as house-owner at Zurich is characteristic, and I wish you joy of all the building diversions in front of you. Dawison lately told me that his Berlin bout had paid him the price of a villa near Dresden.* For your scores you ought to be able to acquire at least the whole of Zurich, at that rate, with the seven cantons and lake thrown in!" And so he ought, if the wretched world would only rate things at their lasting value before it grew too late to help their author.

Otto Wesendonck must have been informed of the new proposal about the same time as Liszt, for Wagner writes *him* July 29 : "As to the further particulars you want of my project, at present I can only give you them so far as touches my intention, since *Haertels* have sent me no definite answer yet. Never-

* See p. 89 *sup.* Dawison himself writes the Fürstin, May 9 : "What would become of me if I were vain enough to take you at your word, and acquiesce in the collocation 'Shakespeare, V. Hugo, Dawison'—of which you hold me worthy?"—O Carolyne !

theless I may assure you that all the eventualities you fear have been well provided for in my proposals. Nothing, of course, is to be published ere completion of the whole, except in the case of my death *before* completion, or of my abandoning it and not observing the appointed term—a fairly long one—when that would be allowed, to compensate the publishers for fees already paid. Naturally, the stage-rights would be reserved to myself. Did you really think me so bad a man of business as to overlook these points? See here: it annoys you to be addressed as a mere business man, and you do me an injustice if you deny me any business sense at all," etc.

Perhaps the most interesting portion of this letter is that not published till the recent "complete" German edition, and its omission by Frau Mathilde herself (1897-8) simply adds to its interest:—"For that matter, whenever one doesn't treat you as a business man, but has at the other side of your nature with thanks and cordiality, why do you always get so painfully embarrassed? (I do not allude to our last scene of this kind, for you were rightly perplexed by an error of mine then, which I did not perceive until later; wherefore in my last letter * I seized the opportunity of acquainting you with the correction of my mistake.) But even at other times, and after repeated occasion on your side for outpourings of the heart on mine, you could never have done with them quick enough, as if they made you wince. Isn't that true? And yet you say I do you an injustice, to see nothing in you but the man of business. You foolish friend, do credit me with sense enough to know that a man of business, as such, would never give a *doit* for me!—Allons donc!!" Decidedly that tells its tale; see the exordium of Wagner's letter to his sister Clara, two years hence.

Return to Haertels and the RING. Since they had been in no great hurry to reply to his letter of July 10, he writes a couple of lines Aug. 7, enquiring if they had received it. His reminder crosses their belated answer of Aug. 5, the exact nature whereof does not transpire, for Altmann's summary of Wagner's next (Aug. 12) merely tells us that he thanks them for their responsiveness and makes "fresh proposals regarding payment," now

* Dr Golther adds a footnote: "The letter is not preserved"; so we can form no notion what it was for which Otto had been mistakenly thanked.

suggesting something in the shape of an annuity with remainder to his wife, should she survive him. Here he promises to get "first-class editions-without-words arranged by skilled composers for the pianoforte," and, to give Haertels a clearer idea of his music, invites them to Zurich to hear Liszt play the two completed scores, as he "would not like them to be buying a pig in a poke."

Simultaneously with his reminder of Aug. 7 to Haertels he had written Otto that their continued silence made him fear his terms were pitched too high. How they received his suggestion of the 12th, may be gathered from a brief allusion in another epistle to Otto toward the end of the month (undated): "Here is Breitkopf und Haertel's letter, which will shew you that no sober person cares to league himself with me, once he thinks it over. My laboriously built-up hope, nay, all but instant certainty, I must regard as foiled once more, and resign myself afresh to the tortoise-march of my sluggish fate." Similarly a few days later (Sept. 1): "I ask of the world nothing more than a workshop and leisure to labour therein; I do not crave for sweets of fortune. Yet just what I want I really oughtn't to ask of the world, as it cannot be its purpose to favour such liftings above it: I feel that plain enough. Why do I not desist from inadmissible claims? Here I am, wishing to turn out a work the buyer doesn't even value at the author's cost of nourishment while writing it! And that's the upshot of the plaudits and renown I've won! Could anything be bitterer, and yet—as the world wags—juster?"

It must have been somewhat in this strain he answered Haertels' last letter, for we subsequently learn through Liszt that his reply "almost offended Dr Haertel," and next spring, in fact, we shall find Wagner excusing himself to them for that reply (*teste* summary). Dr Altmann records its date as "Zurich, 22 September 1856," but I fancy there must be a small error here—no matter on whose part—as one can scarcely imagine an angry letter forming the prelude to the *Siegfried* music (commenced that day); wherefore, until production of the text itself, I feel disposed to assign it either to August 22 or September 2, the day after the last remark above to Otto.* Its full contents, however, would be of far

* Sept. 4 we shall see Wagner writing Pss Carolyne that the negotiations with Haertels are already broken off.

more interest than its closer date, since one would like to witness the exact degree of scathingness with which Wagner demanded back his Ring-poem "as it roused them to no sympathy, or else their interest had been quenched again by the verdict of third parties" (Dr A. suggests "Otto Jahn?"). From the "poem" alone being specified, one gathers that Haertels had not seen the scores themselves (still at Weimar); consequently the judgment of history should be somewhat mitigated in their regard, as there had been very few of Wagner's private friends who could conceive it possible to turn these dramas into music, before the event.

That is by no means the end of the Haertel-RING affair, but there we must provisionally leave it. Already it has taken us back to Zurich before Wagner himself has left Mornex.

July 29 he had written Otto: "My cure is steadily progressing, but in any case I must remain here till the 16th of August. On the other hand, visitors from Germany (sister, friends etc.) have already announced themselves for then [here follows another 'new' part], so that—even if I had no other pressing reason [money]—I must go straight back without a break. Consequently, the only way for us to meet at all this summer would be for you to come and see me here (at the foot of Mont-Salève) before the 16th August. Well, you're meditating a trip to the Lake of Geneva, it's true, but Lord knows if it will exactly suit you to come while I am here: judging by antecedents, I expect you will not take that trip until I'm safe home on the Zeltweg. (You seem to have quartered yourselves nicely in Paris; for which you also ought to get the order they're about to take away from Semper)." The allusion to Semper, in connection with Paris, is beyond me; was it a 'legion of honour'? But Frau Wesendonck's suppression of that "judging by antecedents," etc., is quite in harmony with her omission of the previous 'new' passage in this letter (146 *sup.*). Clearly she did not wish to furnish the inquisitive with the smallest clue to an intimate domestic secret in her lifetime; equally clearly, in 1856, and earlier, Otto already guessed far more about his wife's affection for Wagner than the latter himself did. The nobility of this extraordinary character, silently curbing his jealousy for pure love's sake, comes out more forcibly with every little fact we learn.

Within another ten days Wagner has learnt from Otto that the Wesendoncks' Geneva trip will *not* take place till he has left the neighbourhood; but it looks as if Otto had invited him for a few days either to Paris or some half-way house, and again we have a 'new' bit—in the letter of Aug. 7: "As I expected to be able to end my cure on the 9th inst., I had informed my intending German visitors I should be back at Zurich the middle of August. However, I since felt the necessity of sacrificing another week to my cure, which will accordingly terminate on the 16th; consequently I am compelled to travel home direct, were it but to keep my promise. Under any circumstances, however, I couldn't have thought of a pleasure-trip, as the more serious object of my cure has already cost so infinitely more than I should have been able to allot to pleasure, that—but we'll say no more about it—! Sapienti sat!*" —So, if we are even to shake hands this summer, the solitary chance would be on my road through Berne—where I believe, however, I shall barely stop an hour. But can I possibly ask you to incommode yourself by a journey to Berne on purpose? [Old ed. now—] I shall be coming through Berne by the Lausanne post on Monday evening the 18th.—Liszt has now definitely promised me to arrive at Zurich the 20th of September; I hope to be able to enjoy his company in the best of health by then. For the moment I'm expecting an elder sister [Clara], also a Weimar friend [Franz Müller] who is making the journey expressly to visit me." This is the letter commending Dr Vaillant's treatment, but the chance of a rendezvous has quite as much to do with its general elation of tone. "Valeat mundus!" says the old edition, but the new thus follows it up: "I won't attempt to thank you for so obligingly sending the musical journal; were I to keep thanking you for all the goodness and kindness you shew me, there would be room for nothing else in my communications." Once more the former editing is not without a subtle *arrière-pensée*.

* Aug. 3 he writes a Bremen correspondent that he had heard about the local *Lohengrin* through Tichatschek, but the production had been unauthorised (see also Apr. 29 to Fischer); consequently he had ordered his Berlin agent, Michaelson, to recover a fee of 15 louis from Dir. Wohlbrück, but the agent has informed him the director prefers to pay direct; the addressee (unnamed) is therefore begged to see that Wohlbrück sends at once a "draft on Paris or Geneva," as Wagner is undergoing "an expensive cure" (Altmann's summary).

Three days after, to Otto again (a whole 'new' note): "Mornex, Sunday evening.—Dearest friend, please answer by return whether you mean to dedicate a day to me at *Berne*? If you can, which would greatly delight me, I should reach Berne on *Monday morning* (18th inst.) and not leave for Zurich till the evening; I've discovered it's possible this way. In that case I should call upon you at the *Faucon d'or*. If you answer by return, your letter would find me at the old address still.—Your R. W." Evidently next morning brought a message from Minna, for, on the heels of this brief note to Otto, Aug. 11 Wagner writes Frau Mathilde his only longish letter to her since that from London fifteen months ago (itself the first of any length): "It is a matter of making one more effort to obtain a life-lease ["or perhaps ten years," we read a little lower] of the Bodmer property at Seefeld, near Zurich . . . and my wife, whom I have commissioned to make overtures to Frau Bodmer, desires the help of a third person who should tell that lady all the ingratiating things which neither she nor I can say; and to act as that third person, honoured friend, my wife considers no one more fit than yourself. So our heartfelt prayer goes up to you, to write Frau Bodmer and try to win her to my part. For that—my wife thinks—it might be advisable if you laid stress on my great need of such a quiet country home as her estate affords; perhaps also—so thinks my wife—if you pricked the lady's pride a little, and pointed out to her the honour it conceivably might bring her, to supply me with a haven for my future art-creations." We shall soon see how the Bodmer lady viewed that very real distinction (what would her heirs not have bid for it now!), but there are two other points of more immediate moment: 1°, the fact of Minna's high opinion of, and friendly feeling toward Mathilde, to the present; 2°, the fact, kindly imparted to me by Herr Steiner, a native of Zurich, that the Bodmer house stood a little way back from the long road called Seefeld-strasse and close to the *right* shore of the lake, *almost half an hour's walk* from the 'Green Hill' on the opposite shore—wherefore the propinquity of the subsequent 'Asyl' was none of Wagner's actual seeking.

The letter of Aug. 11 to Frau Mathilde concludes with "Need I say how much it would please me to be able to bid good-day to you as well at Berne?" And so on the 18th takes place the "friendly rendezvous" for which Otto is heartily thanked about

a week later, not only in words, but also by a personal tour of inspection: "Through my wife I had already learnt that your fears lest your elaborate plantings might be ruined by the persistent heat were baseless; yesterday I convinced myself by a visit to your splendid estate that not the smallest harm had been done, and promised the gardener to inform you of this good result of his care. So: all is in good condition, and the lovely flowers and shrubs quite entranced me by their freshness" ('new').

It would be the 19th or 20th of August that Wagner reached home, and, as this letter tells Otto: "Since my return to Zurich I've quite got over my fatigue [two nights in the diligence] and increasingly detect the good effects of my cure. I found my household, as you knew, augmented by some ladies; one of whom, my sister, is particularly agreeable to me." From his singling his own sister, Clara Wolfram, for the compliment we may infer that the others were Minna's friends or relatives, and not particularly agreeable to him, as indeed is half suggested in his letter of a fortnight later (116 *sup.*). "Beyond these, there has arrived my Weimar Regierungsrath and red-hot enthusiast,* bringing me news (*Neuigkeiten*) which Liszt had hinted and probably will further define; news which, coinciding with another experience, have much shaken my plans for a future home." That "other experience" was the letter from Haertels, now enclosed to Otto (147 *sup.*), whilst the news brought by Müller must plainly be the following: "Strangely enough, on the same day [as that letter] I heard in the discreetest confidence, for the present, that the Grand Duke of Weimar quite seriously intends to draw me to Weimar by hook or by crook; also that, informed of my pressing need of an absolutely tranquil and invigorating dwelling-place, he thinks of offering it me at the Wartburg or one of his country-seats."

* Franz Müller; see iii, 62. Wagner's June letter to Liszt: "Franz Müller congratulated me most touchingly on my birthday. I cannot write him a separate letter to-day, but beg you let him hear a part of this, and assure him that his friendship does me worlds of good. If he can't visit me with yourself, I hope to make his thorough acquaintance at your place in the autumn—if the Saxon Minister of Justice lends ear to reason. Even his notion of visiting me made me most happy." Liszt to Wagner, Aug. 1: "Franz Müller will visit you at Mornex, the middle of this month, and bring you his work on the Nibelungen." The venue, of course, had to be altered by Wagner; but so was the "work," to judge by a brief note of this autumn (*M.*, p. 12).

That would indeed have been a pendant to the harbouring of Luther, but German princelets in more modern days have not been quite so independent as in the Middle Ages, and of course the necessary sanction was unobtainable from Beust. Wagner himself does not view it with too eager an eye, but the Berne rendezvous seems to have made him savour the virtue of "renunciation" more keenly than ever; for in this letter, as in its two successors, he seriously contemplates "forsaking a refuge made almost unrelinquishably dear to me by a few irreplaceable friends." For "few" read *two* "irreplaceable," but in the second line must certainly be ranked the famous architect: "I found Semper much eased in mind, as I expected, and relieved of his gloomy forebodings. Otherwise everything as usual." A temporary return of the Wesendoncks themselves is also foreshadowed in the final 'new' paragraph: "I have heard of no change in Liszt's plans, to the present; should anything be altered as regards his arrival, I'll let you know at once. Meantime let me hear what you propose doing yourselves," etc.

Liszt's plans had been mapped out Aug. 1: "In a week I go to Hungary, and my Mass will be performed the 31st of August, at the Gran solemnity for which it was composed. For various minor reasons I must pass a couple of weeks thereafter at Pesth and Vienna, so that I cannot reach Zurich till about the 20th of September. Probably the princess will come thither, too—with her daughter." "The 20th September I shall be better than ever"—was Wagner's cheery answer, on the point of leaving Mornex—"But do write the Erard she is to send me a grand this instant, I'll pay it off 500fr. a year. Don't forget.—I must have it by the time you come." The Erard grand was not obtained till nearly two years later, and then through a triumph of wheedling such as a previous note from Mornex had impressed on Liszt himself: "My stars, Franz, I've a splendid idea!—*You must procure me an Erard grand!!*"*—Write the widow that you visit me three times every year (!) and absolutely must have a better piano than my old tin-kettle [brought from Dresden]. Tell her a hundred thousand crackers, and persuade her it's a point of honour to have an Erard standing in my house.—In brief, don't ponder, but act with the audacity of genius! I *must* have an

* The firm had lent him one in London gratis (vol. v).

Erard. If they won't make me a gift of one, they must loan it—on a yard-long lease!" Liszt did not quite believe in such 'audacities of genius,' and replied (Aug. 1): "Whether Madame Erard will place a grand so advantageously as you suggest, is a doubtful question, which I will enquire of her upon occasion." Liszt's occasion not appearing to offer, Wagner has to go without for the present, *i.e.* till he exhibits that audacity in person.

With Liszt expected so soon, and a flat already full of visitors, it was useless to think of starting work again just yet. Indeed it would have been difficult with all this hotch-potch of scores-sale, chalet, hazy Weimar patronage and hoped-for amnesty, seething in a brain not quite so durably restored to equilibrium as it fancied. Aug. 23 the long "renunciation" letter goes off to Roeckel; but that itself contains the following: "I'm nothing but Artist—and that's my blessing and my curse; otherwise I would gladly become a monk (*Heiliger*) and have my life prescribed me in the simplest mode. As it is, like a fool I run about in search of rest, *i.e.* that complex rest of an untroubled life of ease sufficient to enable me to—do nothing but work, be nothing but artist. And that's so difficult to come by, that I often have to laugh out loud at my eternal hunt for rest."

From his telling Roeckel nothing of the contemplated purchase of his scores—in fact, he talks of needing them "by me" for their sequel—we may judge that by August 23 Wagner has received the Haertels' freezing verdict, but doesn't wish to plague the prisoner with any more of his personal troubles. A week later there is a fresh trouble to add to them, for he thus begins his letter of Sept. 1 to Otto: "That's how everything is going with me, dearest Wesendonck!—Here you have the Bodmer letter back; please give your dear wife my best thanks again for her attempt at intervention." The "again" makes it certain that Mathilde had accompanied Otto to Berne; the ignorant snub to which she had just been treated by the Bodmer lady, for "pointing out to her the honour" of securing such a tenant, is to be deduced from the next sentence: "Once more I feel much and deeply humbled; the thing nearest my heart is utter resignation, since my every effort makes me feel a fool."

But Mathilde has quietly determined not to let him taste the bitterness of resignation bordering on blank despair. After that remark on the world and its middlemen (p. 147 *sup.*), followed by

an unflattering estimate of the patronage of "princes," comes a passage plainly demonstrating that Otto now has volunteered effective help: "So you want to replace both music-publisher and prince, 'entre nous,' to the best of your power? My God, were I in your place and could manage it, assuredly I'd do the very same, for giving is more blessed than receiving; indeed that is the fundamental nature of a man whose giving (in my fashion) has literally drained his powers. I scarcely thank you for your handsome offer, as I know full well the feeling of ability to make it must be a pleasure which rewards itself far more than any uttered thanks could do. Should it come to your being able to fulfil your purpose with me wholly, and should I ever play a rôle in Art's history, truly no mean place should be assigned yourself therein; and to ward that place for you with clamant energy would be a true contentment of my heart. Have you a mind to lift us both so high?"

Published when both were dead, this letter has fulfilled its own promise; allow it to complete its picture of the situation fifty years ago: "Meanwhile things weigh on me like lead, and I feel incapable of any soaring to fresh hope as yet; each means of helping me to rest, and wholly setting free my tortured soul, seems so impossible. Out of a bustling, prickling, stinging, hammer-and-tongs-ing home I stare into the world outside: which, the more I seek to fix my eye upon a point of rest in it, the more antipathetic does it shape itself beneath my gaze. Nothing do I see before me save a hideous jostling void of gibbering faces, and if I spy out traits of sympathy, they're always coupled with the shoulder-shrug of impotence. Is a miracle about to shew me power and sympathy combined in *you*? I hardly dare believe it! Let me look at it a little closer, to bring me to my senses.—Adieu for to-day! God knows what will become of Your Rich. Wagner."

Perhaps this indeterminate offer of Otto's was the reason why Wagner sent that "almost offending" reply to Dr Haertel—in which case September 2 would surely be the latter's date. That he "hardly dared" to build upon the offer yet, however, is confirmed by a letter of Sept. 4 to Princess Wittgenstein:

With what impatience I am awaiting my friend [Liszt], dear Frau Kapellmeisterin, I cannot tell you. My whole inner and outer life has been turned to a vortex, revolving restlessly around the axis of

that Wiedersehen. To make its value quite complete, though, I assure you that *you* must come too, both *you* and *the Child*. Liszt gave me hope of it; if you set that hope at naught, then Liszt would have a bad half-hour. Make ready to start, I implore you!—

I further entreat you, for to-day, at once to send *to me*—to Zurich—the two scores of *Rheingold* and the *Walküre* which you are guarding. My negotiations with Haertels have fallen through, and the cottage I've wanted so long for a peaceable workshop is standing once more in the sky; hard by Walhall, I fancy, where I hope some day to find it if a quiet refuge near the Altenburg is not offered me before.

So the scores are *not* to go to Leipzig, but to me; where in your presence we—Liszt and myself—will try what we can do with them.

I was at Gran [in spirit] the 31st of August, and helped to celebrate Liszt's Mass. Have you good reports? Was he content?

A thousand best wishes from your reunion-crawing

RICHARD WAGNER.

Would Carolyne have really relished Wagner's transference to Weimar? It is a question which keeps assailing one, in view of the rather lukewarm efforts made from that direction to obtain the needful sanction. An occasional visit, well and good (*cf.* 122-3 *sup.*); but, two Kings of Brentford? No, it would scarcely be human, either of her or of Liszt, to have warmly desired it. Moreover, the peace of the distinguished Altenburg would have been troubled far sooner, though in different fashion, than the peace of the Green Hill. Of that we may be confident, since the whole atmosphere of the Princess's salon was precisely the same, only intenser, as Wagner was seeking to flee from.—The choice was never very actual, but at this moment its mirage was vivid, as will be seen in Wagner's next to Otto.

From his marginal note to the letter of Sept. 1 we learn that Otto replied on the 4th; consequently—unless his little trip to Brunnen (*vid. inf.*) came between—Wagner appears to have taken some four or five days to deliberate ere sending his long answer of the 10th. "You are a dear good fellow," it begins, "and believe me, I recognise the exceptionalness of your sympathy profoundly. I almost despair, tho', of its being possible to help me: my life is a sea of contradictions, out of which, no doubt, I can only hope to emerge with my death. What have you not already done to help me bring my situation to a rest! and ever and again all turned out insufficient.

Special needs, peculiar deferences I have to observe in my immediate household, unexpected hindrances and so forth, all make it harder for me, after each attempt, to fix a standard for my maintenance." He passes to those "social relations" discussed at the commencement of our chapter, but in this opening passage itself we have at once a silhouette of his domestic worries and a warning to his would-be rescuer.

On the threshold of closer relations with the house of Wesendonck than he had entered hitherto, this letter is of such supreme moment that I must reproduce its whole remainder, resuming where we dropped it on page 116 :—

It is time, I feel, to close this chapter of my past, and I candidly confess I should do it with the greatest coldness of heart, had I not knit *one* bond precisely here as never in my life before : the bond of thanks and heartiest friendship to Your house. Believe my love of truth, I am speaking no idle word. The boundless indulgence and untiringly repeated proofs of interest you bestow on me must have a deeper ground of sympathy—considering the many points of difference in our natures—than is to be met with often in this life, or saving most exceptionally. In this assurance please behold the *only* reason of my hesitation what to do, and toward which side to lean. My sighs and wishes go out to complete retirement and repose : to be able to taste it in the immediate proximity of a family become so generously dear to me ; to be sure of ever finding shield and sympathy for grief and joy in these most intimate relations—would be a happiness no other could replace. But—can I thus fling on you the unalleviated load of my existence? After my continual experiences of the great difficulty of my position, must I not feel sure this load would grow too heavy for you?—Indeed I do hold it high time to recover my senses and think at least of a division of the burden. Only, where shall I set its real centre of gravity? In Weimar, or my sanctuary with you?—

Before proceeding to the long 'new' passage, I should observe that all these "you"s are *Sie* in the original, not *Euch*, i.e. they denote Otto alone—a remark that has its bearing on "the many points of difference in our natures"; whilst the writer's single-mindedness is shewn by the unconscious mode in which he strikes the hidden spring of Otto's benefactions, that "deeper ground of sympathy" concealed from *him*. Never can there have been more signal evidence of the old adage, Love is blind. To us, the bandage now removed, it is clear that Frau Mathilde

was inspirer of her husband's offer to the renunciant friend of an "Asyl"—he has just used the word—"in der nächsten Nähe" of their Villa; and more than that, of a pension. The latter he distinctly refuses; what mortal in his circumstances could wholly decline the former?

To me it seems imperative to profit by the favourable intentions of the Weimar court for an alleviation and improvement of my ways and means; under the perpetual lash of petty cares, this consideration is decisive. If in return I could enter engagements that would leave me free to enjoy my haven near you undisturbed—for I no longer say "at Zurich"—my fondest wish would be accomplished. I very much fear, though, I shall not arrive at the improvement of my livelihood on such easy terms; for with a prince, alack, it certainly is more a question of the kudos of material possession of an artist, than of that inner satisfaction you propose.—Well, the near future will decide what I have to expect. Perhaps it will arrange itself that I'm to live at Weimar in the winter, and may spend the summer months with you; although it would not fully satisfy my stricter wish, still I should regard that as the most tolerable compromise. Then if you were able to give me a nest in your neighbourhood, perhaps on the small Widemann plot,* I would hie me from the north each year before the swallow, and nurse but one remaining wish, to die near you at last.—For the present I've abandoned all enquiries, which, for the matter of that, always seem to bear no fruit for me; after your invitation, too, my good conscience in their regard has fled; I *cannot* hunt for what good luck is going to *give* me. To that extent I've turned a fatalist.—On an excursion I made to Brunnen again for my sister's sake, my Colonel Aufdermaur was all aflame for my carrying out the older plan, which he believed would now be easier to execute. That would be charming, but—it would not be near you; and moreover, merely for a comparatively short time in each year. His proposal, therefore, was somewhat of a cramp to me.—

As you're coming so soon, let us hope, I really might have spared myself this letter, had I chosen to leave you uninformed about my inner workings at this time of fresh upset; but no, it has been a comfort to me, as ever, to make sure of your sympathy.—As Liszt has

* I learn from Herr Steiner, who had the information from Herr Wiedemann himself (still living five years since), that this little property was in fact the same as Wagner's subsequent "Asyl." Otto had heard that a doctor wanted to build a sanatorium there for sufferers from nervous complaints—probably epileptics and so forth—and naturally desired to spare himself such painful neighbours by adding the plot to his own. Of his ultimate success we shall read in Wagner's letter of next January.

announced *no* change in his itinerary, I still assume he'll get here about the 20th September; should I hear anything to the contrary, I will let you know forthwith.—[Here ends the 'new' part.]—

To our next meeting, then! How we shall issue from it, with heavy heart or light, must soon appear. Whatever comes, tho'—I hope we shall not *part!*

A thousand greetings from Your

RICH. WAGNER.

From this we learn how much depended on preciser outlines of that Grand Ducal mirage which Liszt was expected to focus, and it seems to have been expressly for a conference with him the Wesendoncks were hastening back to Zurich. It therefore is a little disappointing to find that so late as September 10 Wagner still is allowed to await him "about the 20th," whereas Liszt had written Carolyne from Pesth on the 2nd to suggest her joining him at Prague "vers le 27" for a performance of his mass on the 28th, foreshadowed to Rubinstein so long ago as the 21st of August and "half accepted" two days previously (see L. to C., Aug. 20). But it is partly excusable by Liszt's preoccupation with his own affairs and social whirlpool; and at least it yielded Wagner the advantage of a longer presence of the Wesendoncks than they probably had intended.

They must have arrived at Zurich on the 20th itself, for Wagner's next to Otto, though undated except with "A glorious Sunday morning," most certainly was written on the 21st. In my 1899 translation of the *Letters to Otto* I assigned this little note to the end of November, but the various restitutions in the new German edition have cleared up many a doubtful point, and among them stands the homely postscript of this note, which proves a quite recent arrival: "We shall see you to-day, shall we not? I hardly dare entice you to table." The part we knew before is eloquent of something deeper, of something very vital to the future: "Dearest friend, my letter-writing done, I had set apart this lovely Sunday morning for self-collection in preparation for my work, and was just stealing down into myself when the Murillo came. Once more you've made a famous hit; to me this pure ascending being shall be a precious omen!—Heinrich [from the Hôtel Baur] had to help hang it at once, and now a perfect magic rays upon me from the wall.—

"Best, warmest thanks!

"You dear, good, faithful benefactors!"

IV.

LISZT'S SECOND VISIT.

Sister Clara.—Liszt's Hungarian expedition and Gran Mass; Mazeppa and Lohengrin excerpts at a Strauss concert, Vienna; from Prague to Zurich.—Princess Marie; the Fürstin and the Professors.—Liszt's birthday, act i of Die Walküre; he stumbles at act iii!—The Dante symphony and Wagner's estimate; an "ad libitum" close.—Wagner and Liszt laid up; Liszt set to the Parerga.—St Gallen concert and farewell banquet.—"On Liszt's Symphonic Poems."

It all is brought about with so much time and trouble, simply to be shared with an army of Zurich professors in the end.

R. WAGNER to Liszt.

THE work for which we found Wagner "self-collecting" when Murillo's Madonna arrived was the music of *Siegfried*, the date of whose actual commencement is furnished by Herr Glasenapp as Monday the 22nd of September, 1856, though the first sheet of its MS. is undated. Evidently Princess Wittgenstein had sent word but a day or two previously that the Liszt party's visit would be postponed for three weeks, Wagner having told Roeckel in August that this composition was not to be thought of till that visit was over: "I shall go through my two finished scores with him; then, refreshed and stimulated, I hope to take my *Siegfried* in hand and bring him ripe into the world next year." Not to waste any more time, he naturally would start on it as soon as he had definite news, and by Liszt's arrival he had completed the composition-draft of three quarters of the first scene, as we shall learn in cap. V.

Every available hour in those three weeks of waiting must have been devoted to pushing ahead with this work, since the

only missive on record that possibly might fit in here is the undated note to Frau Mathilde: "My sister is obliged to keep her bed," etc., apropos of an invitation to dine at the Hôtel Baur, with a suggestion of "Boohm," i.e. Baumgartner, for "the vacant cover." Apparently the Wesendoncks had spent the previous evening at the Wagners', and Mathilde had defended the RING against Minna and her philistine chorus; for a half-joking postscript adds: "The house is about my ears (*Ich habe viel Noth im Hause*) through your speaking disrespectfully of *Rienzi* yesterday"—a first little cloud between the households, and that must itself have been fleeting. But the reference to *Rienzi* is not so casual as might appear. Oct. 27, Wagner writes his Dresden benefactor, Dr Pusinelli: "Liszt wants to give *Rienzi* at Weimar. Hitherto I have been much against it, as I think it premature, and fear that to bring forward this earlier tendency of mine will lead to confusion. Consideration for yourself,* however, shall wean me from that opposition, and I believe I may predict to you that *Rienzi* will soon be in general demand, as already has begun to be strongly the case with the *Holländer*."

That prophecy was over-sanguine, but the mention of Liszt seems to cast a new light on the note to Frau Wesendonck, and it now looks as if the subject had been mooted at a Zeltweg evening-party in the first ten days or so of his visit, probably after everyone concerned had been treated to a hearing of some portion of the RING (see later). In the *Mathilde* volume I followed Dr Golther in conjecturally assigning this note to September, since Wagner's sister Clara had arrived mid-August, as already seen. But we now know that her stay at Zurich was quite a long one, two months at least, certainly overlapping the advent of the Weimar trio; for Minna writes to Liszt next February 28 (her only published letter to him):

* Dr Pusinelli, as may be remembered (ii, 389), was one of the friendly creditors in the opera-publishing venture of some twelve years back. A crisis had arisen in consequence of the death of the publisher (Meser) last spring, and—to judge by this letter's commencement—Dr Pusinelli had now come to the rescue once more. Adoption of *Rienzi* by the general run of theatres would of course be to the benefit of the publication-creditors, as well as of Wagner himself.—N.B. The Weimar première did not come off till four years later.

Most highly-honoured Friend,

As the wives of your friends commend young talents to your protection with much success,* I also venture to approach you with a big petition, for which you will very kindly excuse me.

Indeed I would gladly have spared you such molesting, if it had not been a relative whose mother has pressed us to apply to you on behalf of her young talented daughter.

It is the daughter of Richard's sister, Mad. Wolfram, the same little woman you will probably have noticed in our house when you were here last.

My niece was engaged some time at Leipzig two years back, and afterwards at Stettin, for young heroine's parts, and pleased much at both places . . . many people think her very pretty, a requisite which seems to me needful for the theatre. She will write you a letter herself very soon, and send in her repertory. My husband and I therefore beg you to support this application to the best of your power, and pledge us once more to the greatest and sincerest thanks.

To convince himself of Fräulein Wolfram's abilities, perhaps Herr Intendant von Beaulieu might allow a couple of trial or guest-rôles on his stage, which would lead to an engagement in case of approval. . . . My niece's address is, Fräulein Rosalie Wolfram, Chemnitz.

We hear no more of this application—which in any case must have reached Liszt at a time when illness would prevent his furthering it—but Frau Wolfram's own rôle in future domestic events is of sufficient importance to demand our closer acquaintance with that "same little woman," as Minna oddly calls her.

* The key to this preamble—obviously a 'start' provided by her husband—is to be found a month earlier (Jan. 27, 57), when Wagner forwards Liszt a letter from some other person, with the comment: "According to my wife, this B.A. is a slim, very good-looking young fellow—as you will probably guess from the X's interest in him.—So try and let him make his *début* as Tannhäuser and Lohengrin at Weimar under your own direction; in which case, not only shall I know that *he* is best looked after, but also obtain for *myself* the surest account of the young man's value. Perhaps you will therefore be kind enough to send for him shortly?" Feb. 16 Liszt promises to do as desired, thus motiving Minna's "with much success," though by the middle of April he has to report unfavourably on the "vocal talent" of Frau X's protégé, who "has been a month at Weimar." Here "the X" seems to stand for Frau Herwegh, whilst Wagner's own manifest non-acquaintance with "B.A." affords additional evidence that Minna went a good deal oftener 'out' than he.—About the same time a second Zurich recommendee, Frau Rauch Wernau (see vol. iii), makes a failure as "Ortrud" at Weimar; which may haply account for Rosalie Wolfram's non-engagement there as actress.

The last we saw of her, and that but distantly, was two years since, when Minna paid her a visit of a week or two (iv, 337). Previous to that, Minna had been temporarily left in her cheerful care on Wagner's retreat from Dresden, 1849 (ii, 364-5); whilst Clara was the last of his family to stay with them at Dresden, Sept. 48, just as she was one of the first in 1842—production of *Rienzi*—on which occasion Richard writes his Paris sister Cécilie: "Good Clärchen gave Minna and myself the most delight [of all the family]. She stayed twelve days with us, and felt and made us very happy; an excellent dear creature, full of feeling and without a grain of affectation [his eldest surviving sister Luise's prerogative]. She's certain to have written you by now: Minna has quite become her sister, as already yours: what a lot we three did talk about you!"

Clara was $5\frac{1}{2}$ years older than her youngest brother. In 1824, then aged seventeen, she made her *début* as opera-singer with considerable success (i, 89); but a faulty method of training, habitual in the Germany of those days, ruined her voice in a very few years. Together with her husband (i, 128), she abandoned the stage toward the end of the thirties, to settle at Chemnitz, where he entered into business. By no means the best off of the family in a worldly sense, rather plain than pretty, but with eyes and mouth the essence of humour and good-humour, she proved the truest friend to brother Richard of them all. In 1836, just after his Magdeburg engagement and while hunting for another whereon to found a wedded home, he writes his mother: "So Cläre is with you, the good, good creature!" October '51 he writes a niece, third daughter of Luise Brockhaus: "A letter from your Aunt Clara informs me of your valiant love for me, and behold! it has set me aflame. I court the love of nobody, and leave to themselves what people think of me . . . but if merely a finger of true, unconditional love is held out to me, as one possessed I snatch at the whole hand, draw the entire being to me if I can, and give it just such a hearty kiss as I should like to give yourself to-day. See! that's the way of us madmen who care not a fig for fame, honours or riches!"

There you have the workings of true sympathy; the good Samaritan well knew what joy that dole of love would bring her brother. There was little need of speech between them: as he tells her in 1868, "with a few words, a look, a squeeze of the

hand" she had braced his heart by her "sterling, loyal feeling" for his *Meistersinger*; yet he had written her husband: "Lord, how I should like to have a good chat with her every day of my life!" Her womanly judgment he rated high: "If only good Cläre could go and see Minna again, that I might have someone to give me a lucid account of her!" (to Wolfram, Feb. 64); and as late as 1874 we find him writing to herself: "Among all my brothers and sisters, you really are my greatest intimate." In childhood and early manhood it naturally had been his sister Cäcilie, so nearly of an equal age; but with advancing years it was Clara whose staunch affection stood him in most constant stead. To Cäcilie he writes in January '62, that dreariest of all his months in Paris (exchanged for Leipzig by her husband and self in '44): "Child, *why* in those ten long years did you not once come to Switzerland? Yet *Cläre* found her way!"—and again, Dec. '68: "When I was bolted and barred [from Germany] why did my own relations never come *to me*? Of course it knit a bond between myself and Cläre, that she paid me a decent Swiss visit in those days. Moreover, it was her I found at Dresden [autumn '62?] when it was a case of rendering endurable an extremely painful meeting with my unfortunate wife."

To the general reader the last sentence will be somewhat of an anticipation, but we may reasonably reflect a little of its hidden sense on Clara Wolfram's Zurich stay. To have a good angel like *her* in the house for two months and more, must have been a boon of certainly no lower value than the visit of his artist friend.

And now we must go in search of Liszt himself, who has been much on the move, earning his first actual outer triumph since he cut short his career of touring virtuoso nine years back.

The morning of the day on which he starts for Hungary—August 7—he writes Raff, among other things: "I was at Sondershausen on Sunday [the 3rd] . . . The band there, under Kapellmeister Stein (whose acquaintance I had not made before), played two of my Symphonic Poems—'les Préludes' and 'Mazeppa'—with quite uncommon zeal and excellence." That would be the first performance of *Mazeppa* outside Weimar, whereas *les Préludes* had been given with equivocal success at

Berlin last December (p. 87 *sup.*); but Liszt says nothing of his works' reception by the Sondershausen audience.*

He reaches Prague the 8th, Vienna next day, Gran the 10th—to take stock of the new basilica and its organ (to be played by Winterberger when he arrives)—and Pesth the following morning. Here he is in his element, upon his native heath, and his first letter to Pss Carolyne—whom he keeps posted almost daily in every detail of these weeks of absence—waxes eloquent over the very garb of his countrymen, “their carts and teams, their carriage and their way of smoking—all has a character of its own. Nothing anywhere else can replace these things, this racial physiognomy, when they are bound up with one’s earliest memories, and if one has preserved intact that *sentiment de la patrie* which is the tonality of the Hungarian’s heart, as of the Pole’s” (her own).

For the time being, Pesth becomes his head-quarters, and not only his own letters, but those received by Carolyne from his deputy, the violinist Edmund Singer (see *Glanzezeit*), are full of the enthusiasm aroused in his compatriots by the presence of an artist who so munificently had come to their assistance after the great inundations of eighteen years previously. There had been intriguers at work, headed by Count Leo Festetics, to substitute another Mass for his, “but the opposition was so *conspuée* every day, almost every hour, for a whole fortnight, in the newspapers, salons, cafés, theatre and church, that it has yielded me a well-nigh unexampled triumph in advance. It is now proved beyond contention that I form an integral part of the national pride,”

* Neither does disciple Cornelius in his delightful Jean-Paulesque “Im Loh,” an article published in the Berlin *Echo* of that month; see his *Aufsätze über Musik und Kunst* (B. and H. 1904).—The first outside performance of any of the Sym. Poems appears to have been of the *Orpheus* and *Prometheus* at Brunswick, whence Liszt wrote Carolyne Oct. 18, 55, immediately after the concert: “I have reason to be content, with the execution in the first place, but also with the half kindly, half reserved disposition of the audience. If I do not deceive myself, this is something like a *serious* success—that is to say, one of those successes where the individual or the work *s'impose de fait* as something quasi-inevitable [what Bülow would call a “fiasco d'estime”?]. With 2 or 3 years' patience I believe I shall arrive at my due.”—Feb. 26, 57, the *Préludes* and *Mazeppa* were conducted by Liszt at a Gewandhaus concert for the benefit of the Orchestral Pension-fund; the work first-named had a philistine success (as usual to this day), *Mazeppa* a dismal failure.

and so on—he writes the Brussels Freundin, Aug. 13. Festal receptions of every kind are showered upon him, but “my deportment, I believe, is simple and serious,” he assures the lady of the Altenburg whose “instructions” he is obediently “endeavouring to follow.” In that serious simplicity I suppose we must include his request that she will forward him “several replicas of my medallion by Rietschel, also a few copies of my biography by Bussenius, as I could find means to make good use of them.” Such personal souvenirs would only be a reasonable return for the “satisfactions d’amour-propre” yielded him by the preparations for his Mass, which “I begin to think a decidedly fine work, though I must soon write a second and a third.” After its first public rehearsal, at Pesth the 26th of August, “it is a fairly general remark in the town, ‘Quite a new style of music, no doubt, but to bring you to your knees’”; true, “I do not believe my thought and feeling are precisely understood by the public here—but it has a keen idea of something out of the common.”

So the Gran performance—one might say the consecration of the cathedral, had not that withdrawn into the background—takes place Aug. 31, conducted by Liszt himself in the presence of the same Emperor of Austria who reigns to-day, and “As résumé of the impression produced by my Mass”—Carolyné hears two days thereafter—“I may tell you that every head was turned towards the choir, during almost the whole of its execution; judging by the eye, there must have been 4000 persons in church.” The Pesth newspapers “are all aflame with enthusiasm for the unction, the spirit and grandeur of Liszt’s sacred tone-creation” (writes Singer); but alas, though “many people shed tears” on its repetition at the Parish church of Pesth, Sept. 4, irreverent “Vienna journals, with a parti pris of spite against me, accuse me of transplanting *Zukunftsmusik*, nay, the *Venusberg* itself, into the church.”

Those Vienna journals made a slight mistake; for the part of *Tannhäuser* transplanted into the *Graner Messe*’s “Sanctus” is the *final* chorus of Wagner’s opera, whereas its “Cum sancto Spiritu” comes straight from *Rienzi*’s “Santo spirito cavaliere.” However, even so fair a judge as the late E. Danureuther, whom nobody will accuse of a parti pris *against* the Bayreuth master’s friend, not long since wrote as follows: “Liszt came to interpret the Catholic ritual in a histrionic spirit, and tried to make his

music reproduce the words not only as *ancilla theologica et ecclesiastica*, but also as *ancilla dramaturgica*. The influence of Wagner's operatic method, as it appears in *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, and *Das Rheingold*, is abundantly evident;* but the result of this influence is more curious than convincing" (*Oxford Hist. of Music*, vol. VI., 1905). Liszt himself, in fact, remarks to Bülow at the end of '56, "That '*coup d'église*' of yours [B. had thus described the Mass in a letter to its author] is an admirable trouvaille, and I envy you it greatly. All the same, we must keep it to ourselves, for it would be playing into the hands, in appearance at least, of the heap of imbeciles and hypocrites who form a coalition against us." So nearly resembling a *coup de théâtre*, it would have played into their hands indeed, after Liszt had described the attitude of "the very numerous auditorium" (*sic!*) at Pesth—"the Stadtpfarrei church was packed," he says—as "nothing but one humble prayer to the Almighty and the Redeemer!" (to Eduard Liszt, Sept. 5).

Just after leaving Pesth, chief forum of his present success, Liszt writes the Brussels Freundin that he has "the choice of being either modestly proud, or proudly modest." The reader must decide how he *did* choose, after perusing the continuation: "The fact is, I believe I may say so in all modesty and good conscience, there is none among the composers known to me who has such an intense and profound feeling for religious music as your humble servant. Moreover, my studies old and new, of Palestrina, Lasso, up to Bach † and Beethoven, who are the summits of Catholic [!] art, give me a great *appoint*, and I have entire confidence that in three or four years I shall have taken complete possession of the spiritual domain of church-music, which for the last twenty years has been occupied by none but mediocrities *à la douzaine*," etc., etc.—friend Berlioz' *Requiem* and *Te Deum* apparently not counting.

Berlioz, on the contrary, after hearing this "coup d'église" at S. Eustache in Paris ten years later, exclaimed "Hélas, quelle

* Both the *Rheingold* and *Lohengrin* preludes are drawn on for Liszt's Graner "Kyrie" and "Gloria," and so on.

† Obvious in this case, as the only really fine theme in the *Graner Messe*, that of the "Credo in unum Deum," is borrowed from the *Credo* of Bach's giant in B minor; just as the subject of the first fugue in the *Wohltemperirte* is mendelsified into the introduction of the *Dante* symphony.

négation de l'art!"—having archly asked Pss Carolyne two years previously, "Quel est ce musicien de notre connaissance qui s' imagine être aussi compositeur? Je ne devine pas"—or as J. Tiersot neatly puts it, "Liszt voulait que Berlioz reconnût qu'il avait du génie, et Berlioz s'obstinait à n'en vouloir rien faire." Berlioz' judgment, no doubt, was not infallible—as evidenced in the matter of *Lohengrin* and *Tristan*; but what vitality does Liszt's *Gran Mass*, or any of its four successors (including a *Requiem*), exhibit in the Church to-day? And how are they regarded as "art" by musicians of sufficient courage to set aside those "personal considerations" which Berlioz so deplored in Liszt's *Princess*? Let Dannreuther once more supply an answer:

Looked at from a musician's point of view—apart from the glamour of an ancient ceremonial, apart also from the fascination of Liszt's unique personality—a large proportion of these compositions appear wanting in that specific musical character and in those distinctive features which make for consistency and coherence of musical interest. Pieces, to a certain degree well put together, are found to contain bare and arid stretches, full of intention perhaps, and full of feeling, but full, also, of wearisome and pointless particulars. The means of effect employed by Liszt are neither commonplace, nor especially eccentric, extravagant, or in any technical sense deficient. The devotional feeling that prompts their use is evidently sincere, amounting now and again to true fervour and passion; yet, in the end, the entire endeavour fails to convince the mind's ear, and leads to little that is complete or even likely to prove of enduring value as artistic work. If a man chooses to employ the pianoforte or the chorus and orchestra for devotional purposes he is bound to be watchful of his mode of musical expression; mere emotional improvisation will not suffice; for his experienced hearers are always inclined to resent any shortcomings in the musical substance or workmanship, and to assert, with increasing emphasis, that the cause of piety is but ill served by deficiencies in the essential elements of composition (*Oxford Hist. Mus.* VI., 220).

To resume Liszt's tournée: After a performance of his earlier *Mass* for men's voices and organ only, at the consecration of the *Herminen-Kapelle*, Sept. 8; after "a grand concert at the theatre, which I conducted the same evening. The first number on the programme was 'les Préludes,' and the last the 'Hungaria' (nos. 3 and 9 of my *Symphonic poems*). 'Les Préludes' had to be played twice over, owing to the interminable applause, and at the 'Hungaria' there was better than applause—men and women

wept" (to the Freundin, Sept. 16); also after his election as Franciscan "*confrater*," or lay-brother—he departs from Pesth the evening of Sept. 13, "in the same fashion as I had arrived, without drums or trumpets, but with the consciousness of having done pretty well all I had to, and as I ought to," and reaches Vienna the next.

Vienna, Sept. 15: "Strauss will execute some pieces from *Lohengrin* and the final march of *Mazeppa*, at the *Volksgarten* this evening" (to C.). A fortnight earlier: "On the 15th Strauss (!) will execute my *Mazeppa* at Vienna, and proposes me a grand serenade"—also to Carolyne, who is told on the 16th that "Strauss's soirée was very successful, and people encored the *Mazeppa* final movement, as also the two pieces from *Lohengrin*.* The programme bore the words, '*Zu Ehren der Anwesenheit des Herrn Doctor Liszt.*'" Apart from that, "I have succeeded in nothing but boring myself at Vienna," though pourparlers were opened then for "publication of my Mass at Government expense," "and I confidently anticipate that this publication will establish the significance of my work in public opinion. The work is in truth of 'pure musical water (not in the sense of the usual *washy* church-style, but rather in that of a diamond's water) with the profound spirit of *Catholic wine*'" (to Eduard next November, obviously quoting from some reviewer, but with a characteristically Lisztian parenthesis).

Prague is reached again the 21st, and a "sensation de l'emotion" expected for the rendering of the Mass in that cathedral on the 28th, despite the jealousies of local composers. With aid from the pianist Dreyschock (who presently sends "kind regards" to Wagner), however, and a few little dinners, Ambros at least is won over to Liszt's "banner," and the press comments go partly in his favour, though Dreyschock writes Oct.

* "Two of the three pieces from *Lohengrin* were encored," says the letter of even date to the Brussels Freundin. As we learn from the *N.Z.* of Sept. 26 that the *Lohengrin* pieces were the "Prelude, Bridal chorus, March [entr'acte?] and Bridal procession"—in fact the London Philharmonic programme of 1855—one would have liked to know *which* the "two" were.—This was by no means Johann Strauss's earliest patronage of Wagner, for one hears that he began his propaganda with the *Tannhäuser* Pilgrims' Chorus and the *Lohengrin* entr'acte March 27, 1853 (*teste* W. Nicolai, *vid. inf.*); quite a plucky act on Strauss's part, as A. Meissner writes the Fürstin in 1860, "I myself heard the *Tannhäuser* overture hissed down at Vienna in 1852."

I that "*Gluckists* and *Piccinists* both are waiting with impatience for the next performance" ten days after Liszt's departure. "So my little summer campaign is ended"*—Liszt writes Carolyne just after the Prague celebration—"and I may return to our blue room which I have missed so much for more than six weeks past. We shall be face to face again next Wednesday," i.e. October 1.

Liszt had directed the Brussels *Freundin* mid-September, "Write me to Prague until the 28th. I shall get back to Weymar about the 2nd October, but not remain there more than three or four days. The Princess and her daughter are going to Switzerland; I shall accompany them as far as Stuttgart, where I shall make a little halt, and rejoin them a week later at Zurich." Wednesday, Oct. 8, from Stuttgart to Köhler: "Reply to me care of Richard Wagner, Zeltweg, Zurich. I shall reach there next Sunday, and pass some days with our great friend. By the beginning of November I shall be back at Weymar" (fate ordered otherwise). From the same place to Carolyne, who has gone on in advance with her daughter: "A note from Mme Kalergis reached me just after your departure, and I have accepted the hospitality she offered me by taking possession of two little rooms in the house which she occupies, and whence I write you. She pretends to be very tired of all the discords in the 'European concert,' and of the part of first flute which she plays there; consequently she is sighing for solitude, and means to build a 'cottage' at Baden-Baden . . . Toward 11 o'clock I shall play my *Préludes* and *Orphée* with her, which she does not disdain to patronise and propagate, so she assures me."* More plans for

* A week earlier: "I have been obliged to draw on Vienna for another 500 fl., which will carry me as far as Weymar, I hope. That makes a total of 2000 florins in the last 6 weeks—which seems to me enormous; but, with all the economy imaginable, it has been impossible for me to get along with less, what with tailors, subscriptions, advertisements, etc., which have absorbed more than the third of that sum. I might have asked a thousand fl. from the Cardinal, for board and travelling expenses [Gran]—but on reflection I refrained, and confined myself to pointedly expressing my desire to receive nothing from his Eminence but a souvenir without pecuniary value."

† To Bülow next December: "Mme Kalergis—whom I saw at Baden [meaning Stuttgart] the commencement of October—spoke very well of you, and you appeared to have wound her up to a very high *diapason* of propagandism, which charmed me. She played 3 or 4 of my *Symphonische Dichtungen* splendidly, and I have to thank you for fulfilling your professorate so well." As to this lady herself, whom we shall meet again hereafter, see vol. iv.

Lisztian propaganda, private and press, are discussed in this letter, but the only other part worth quoting is that relating to the travellers, with its pretty echo from the Franciscans in a sentence translation would ruin: "J'espère que bon Dieu a envoyé bon petit frère soleil, pour vous accompagner dans vos pérégrinations au lac de Constance, et prendre soin que les petites sœurs montagnes et eaux soient revêtues de leurs plus belles parures pour vous faire fête, et tenir petits discours mystérieux à l'oreille de Magnolet [Pss Marie]. Monday evening [Oct. 13] or Tuesday morning at latest — according to whether I am detained at Mainau [visit to the Baden Grand Ducals]—Magnolette shall repeat it all to me with her own dear voice, which still is captive to her heart, and the most soothing of music to mine." Postscript: "Till Monday, then! I am going to write to Wagner [letter not preserved]. Here is a phrase that struck me in an article of Lacordaire's which I am reading: 'La religion s'avance avec la multitude des esprits droits, dans un progrès plein d'immutabilité.'"

Before the ladies are rejoined by Liszt, let us refresh ourselves with a peep at the silent member of this trio, sweet Princess Marie, now aged nineteen. We met her last three years ago, in Paris (vol. iv), and know her best by the simple title Wagner then conferred on her, *Das Kind*; and behold you, Alexander the Great von Humboldt writes her mother two summers thereafter: "May the sun, which is treating us now with 'économie de chaleur,' light up our lake in honour of the witty and amiable princess, and of l'Infante who has a dread of complimentary epithets" (methinks that final touch says something). Ary Scheffer, who painted her portrait in Paris a few weeks later, also writes her mother that November ('55): "It is difficult for me to talk about your daughter at the present moment. To me she is the realisation of the ideal my imagination has been pursuing this many a year, as painter. To have beheld it ere closing my eyes, is a happiness for which I render thanks to Providence. So I did not deceive myself when I believed there existed a beauty more perfect than beauty itself—that which seems at first to hide away, to leave the soul to express itself in all its dazzling purity." The Dresden sculptor Hähnel, June 1856: "Please tell the young

princess I have kept her memory in the highest reverence, and cherish a great longing to look once more into those limpid windows of her soul"; again in August, "Tell the adorable princess that I only regret my not being a poet, my inability to speak to her in sonnets, and that I cannot find the right expression for impressions felt."

The classic-landscape painter Preller, long established at Weimar, had written of our princess Marie two years earlier: "Knowing no fitter epithet for her, I can only call her the Indian Fairy-tale."* Bülow, as we have seen, christened her "the good fairy of the Altenburg"; whilst the poet Geibel named her "Fay Abonda"—according to A. Meissner, who adds: "The name fits the princess capitally, and I envy Geibel his invention of it." Meissner indeed, minor poet and novelist, goes into ecstasies over her; his wont with everything proceeding from the Altenburg,† but this time warranted. In 1859 he sends congratulations for her name-day (Aug. 15, Assumption of the B.V.M.): "Just as she bears the name of her in whom the world has centred every highest attribute of womanly beauty and nobility, so, unforgettable by those who have but seen her once, herself she stands a living miracle of grace of mind and heart!" A fortnight thence, upon the news of her engagement to Prince Constantin zu Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst (whom she married that October): "I had accustomed myself to thinking of the princess as by your side forever, raised high above male mortals in her maiden glory. To me she was a marvel; I had seen no one to compare with her, and I placed her in a world apart, an exceptional exist-

* So we have the right answer at last to Wagner's puzzled enquiry of Liszt, Sept. 54: "Why do you keep that Indian fairy-tale all to yourselves? I've prose enough around me" (*cf* iv, 254*n*).

† His raptures over Liszt's Mass and Sym. poems are something phenomenal, as revealed by upwards of a score of letters in the *Glanzzeit*. Take this for a specimen: "Liszt turns Goethe's *Tasso* into music—it waxes a thousand times greater, great as a *Tasso* Shakespeare might have penned! He turns Schiller's *Ideale* into music; the poem almost shrinks to nothingness." After the concert when Bülow conducted the *Faust* overture for the first time at Prague, and the *Tristan* prelude for the first time anywhere—Liszt's *Festklänge*, *Mazeppa* and Hungarian Rhapsody for pfe and band being included in the programme—this precious adulator writes the Fürstin, "I am sorry all the big orchestral pieces were not by Liszt," adding, "Does not your Highness think the [*Tristan*] libretto an utter failure? For my own part, I know not how music can save it" (March 21, 59).

ence. I never could conceive that she should alter, age, become another; in the light of her sweet beauty I believed her like the stars, that also know nor change nor ageing. To every living man I grudged her, not deeming any worthy to possess her," etc., etc.

Finally we have Cornelius' saner testimony that same autumn 1859. First to the Fürstin: "Were I 1000 miles away or merely a league, were I rich and powerful or even poorer than I am—my feeling for the princess Marie would ever be the same. I am sincerely attached to her, and if Providence willed so, words should be outvied by deeds." Then to his brother Carl, recording the marriage: "They are to live at Vienna, and I am sure to find a very sympathetic patroness in her, as she has shewn me the sincerest friendship for several years. She is a highly talented, spotlessly good, and adorable creature."—

Evidently the two princesses reached the Hôtel Baur a little earlier than Liszt himself; so we may linger yet a moment with them. "My companionship with the two ladies, and particularly the Fürstin, has had a good effect upon me in the end"—writes Wagner to Otto three days after bidding them farewell—"The example of the Fürstin's great kind-heartedness has attuned me to more gentleness and government of my so very excitable temper, so that I am returning to my solitude as from a school, with the feeling of having learnt something." Of itself, however, that "in the end" (*schliesslich doch*) suggests relief from the protracted strain of Fürstin's actual presence, whilst a letter to Bülow of the preceding day (Nov. 29) endorses the suggestion: "The day before yesterday I accompanied Liszt—who had been over 6 weeks with me—to the Lake of Constance. We have been much together, yet our intercourse would have been still more fertile if illness on the one hand, on the other the Fürstin's awful Professor-hunting had not interfered with us somewhat seriously. However, seeing what the lady truly is, a monstrum per excessum of brain and heart, one cannot be cross with her long. Only, it needs Liszt's matchless temperament, to stand such vivacity; with a poor devil like myself it often disagreed—I can't endure this everlasting racket.* Consequently I am really almost glad to come to rest again, and be able to think of resuming my work."

* It is scarcely fair to lay all the "Aufgeregtheit" at Pss Carolyne's door. We have just witnessed some of it when she was absent, and a little over a year hence A. Meissner writes her concerning Liszt's second turn at

To Liszt himself next May: "No longer can I build great hopes on our next reunion. There's always so much afoot, that we have to be in a perpetual rush; and that is terribly against me. I'm no use at all, except when I can concentrate my thoughts: distraction is the death of me. . . . Quite frankly, dear children, you can't go on for long like this; what would ruin the rest of us in no time, must become the ruin of you also in the end. Listen, my Franz, come [2nd pers. sing.] to me [at the Asyl then]; not a creature shall know you are here, we'll keep entirely to ourselves, and you shall let us spend the needful care on curing you.—Ah! that will sound all rubbish, and you'll scarcely mark that it's a counsel of despair; but—*something* must be done, and if I see things black, the realities of your accounts [of your health] indeed are of no hue to let me see them pinker.—For everything in the world, reassure me on this, and believe me that no triumphs, even those which you earn for yourself, can give me the smallest pleasure while I know how dear you buy them.—We shall see what you answer me; but I beg you, do not answer casually—lightly." A few weeks later (June 28, 57): "During our last companionship at Zurich I gained such alarming impressions of the extraordinary pace at which you people live, that I now am really less surprised at the Fürstin's being laid up, than at your keeping up."

More specifically, the New Year following that: "Were I to conjure up the greatest boon that could befall me, it would be to see you suddenly open my door! . . . Were I free, you'd often

Prague: "Perpetual motion, nerves on the stretch, small sleep, much worry—and in spite of all, this never-failing energy, this freshness. Often have I thought when watching him, 'If there be one thing I deplore about you, Fortunate, it is that you so seldom can be alone!' They are always swarming round him, the little epigoni—Lilliputians round Gulliver. Yet solitude must rank among a nobler spirit's best possessions; the world scares dreams. How mournful must a genius lay itself to sleep, methinks, if it has been moving in 'society' from morn till night: 'The muses could not greet me—men were there!' However, nothing disturbs him, he seems to have time for all; indeed it is as if he had ten lives." Meissner was right, had he but drawn the strict conclusion—apparent enough from the lack of depth in Liszt's innumerable letters. Bülow drew it, later on: "Liszt's worldly life is unpropitious to the calling of a great composer. They cannot be men of the world or society; take Bach, or Beethoven. . . . If we hear too many voices outside us, we cannot pay attention enough to the voice of God within" (New York 'interview,' 1875—*cf.* 185*n inf.*).

undergo a similar surprise. But such miracles no longer are like to come my way ; it all is brought about with so much time and trouble, simply to be shared with an army of Zurich professors in the end ! I am not very many-sided, you see ; my ideas revolve in a fairly narrow circle, though the objects within it (among which do not think I include quite the Zurich professors !) luckily are wide as the world.—But look you ! if I bear a hearty grudge against your eternal and multifarious obligations and engagements, I have a very special reason : they keep you so away *from me*. And—honestly—our being together is all I care for : that is the well-spring, to me, the rest is but a gutter. . . . I have made friends with the X's [Köchlys ?], merely not to be left out of their invitation again next time [you come]. But I regret it terribly already, and all their raving about our Fürstin cannot make me relish this devil's brood of Professors . . . Did I write any foolery to our dear Child last time ? I can't remember, but God forgive me all my sins, as I pardon him so many in this world of his ; and where God forgives, the Child ought not to sulk. Least of all should *you* be cross with me, for you surely can't help knowing that I love no man as yourself, ay, that it was through you I first arrived at genuine love. And if the Fürstin is cross with me, she must take it soundly out of Prof. M[oleschott] or Prof. V[ischer] next time ; for at bottom this class of persons alone is to blame for my making anybody angry" (Jan. 1, 58).

To a large extent G. Keller shared that final sentiment, as seen last chapter. Here is what he says next February of this particular occasion (to L. Assing) : "Last autumn the Liszt-Wittgenstein household was here, to pass a matter of some weeks with Wagner, and every capacity of Zurich was beaten up to form a court. Myself I was cited a couple of times [by Herwegh and Moleschott] by way of experiment, but precious soon set loose again. With the other Brutuses, on the contrary, the Fürstin had pronounced success, and they all are full of her praise, especially since she has begun writing interesting letters to each in turn, Vischer, Moleschott, Köchly, etc.* Moreover she has sent all

* In that *Glanzzeit* already referred to (*8on sup.*) we find enthusiastic answers from : Moleschott, Jan. 18, 57 ; Frau Wille, Jan. 28 ; Köchly, Feb. 22 ; Semper, Dec. 8 ; Vischer, June '58 and Jan. '59. Köchly's letter contains an item of interest : "I have only met Wagner once, at a perform-

and sundry the big Rietschel medallion of Liszt to hang up at home"—supplemented a month later by a similar snarl delivered to Frau Duncker: "Liszt was here last autumn, with his Wittgenstein and that younger princess . . . Richard Wagner has become very crack-brained and egoistic again in consequence, for Liszt encourages him in all his follies. The Ferschtin Wittgenstein swore friendship with all the learned notables of Zurich, writes them long epistles, and presents them with huge plaster medallions of Liszt. Among others, Frau Köchly got one, but is jealous of Frau Herwegh, who got the Fürstin's as well. The latter is a clever lady, for all our learned fire-eaters and Brutuses extol her. Only poor I found no favour in her eyes, and have neither letter nor medallion; a grief I can't control."

The first few days, though, must have passed more in private. To say nothing of the important subject which Otto had returned to Zurich, over three weeks since, expressly to discuss with Liszt—that nebulous Weimar offer, particulars whereof still escape us—there was Liszt's whole budget of Austro-Hungarian experiences to open for the delectation of himself and friend; there was Wagner's "doleful tale" to unfold at last to "both of you," to Liszt and Carolyne—as we learn a twelvemonth hence—and their advice and sympathy to lay to heart; and last, not least, there were the new compositions of both sides to furnish endless matter for intimate enjoyment or debate. Some five days after the guests' arrival, Keller writes H. Hettner (Oct. 18): "Liszt with his Fürstin is at Zurich now, raving music with Wagner appallingly. He will remain here some weeks." This is that letter of Keller's which passes on to Köchly's innuendo *re* the amnesty already dealt with, and as he has no further gossip to impart to us at present, we may bid him *Au revoir*. But it is somewhat singular that, whereas at the year's beginning we heard through Keller of the Wesendoncks as entertainers, all our contemporary witnesses are silent on that point this autumn. Both husband and wife met the visitors nevertheless, for Wagner's letter of Nov. 30 tells Otto (a 'new' paragraph): "Among Liszt's parting words to me,

ance of *Wilhelm Tell* . . . when we sat next to each other and had a thorough good talk. He is said to be isolating himself completely, but to intend moving this spring to the Willes', who have gone to Venice to Frau Wille's parents"—the last rumour, *re* Wagner, well capping this archæologist's earlier false conjectures.

aboard the steamer at Rorschach, were the most cordial greetings to the Familie Wesendonck. Moreover, his two ladies bound me to procure them news as soon as possible about the health of your dear wife, whom they thought looking very poorly when they said goodbye to her.* As this letter commences, however, with "I promised to write you so soon as I had anything right good to tell," it would seem that the Wesendoncks had left Zurich for Paris again about a month before. Beyond the first fortnight, then, during which Frau Mathilde apparently was ailing, though occupying the same hotel, the Liszt-Wittgenstein party had no serious rivals in its social battues.

Details of these latter are not very plentiful, as our chief characters were almost all within a stone's throw, with no need for more than an occasional brief note; but one or two events have found their record. The first is an operatic performance, Oct. 21, recalled to Liszt next May by Wagner's reference to "a singer you heard here in *La Juive*," the said singer being Frau Pollert, a recent acquisition of the Zurich manager's; the same Frau Pollert, strange to say, who played "Isabella" in the sole performance of *Das Liebesverbot* just twenty years gone by. That was the eve of Liszt's forty-fifth birthday. Next morning, Oct. 22, brought the hero of the day a sheaf of postal and telegraphic marks of homage: among them a diploma from the Circulus harmonicus Academiae Jenensis with an "allusion to the Gran Basilica and my Missa solemnis," for which Dr Gille of Jena is thanked in due course and promised "one of the earliest copies" of the score for edification of his Circulus; also a "beautiful, meaningful poem, soaring high with soft-powerful wing-stroke" (sounds Carolynian) from a literary Dr Adolf Stern of Dresden. No Dresden poem ever came on Wagner's birthday (only bills), but Liszt seizes the present occasion to put in a word for the exile: "I have taken the liberty of sending your poem to Pesth, to share my delight in it with a handful of friends there. —Despite my indisposition [see later—he is writing Nov. 14] I am spending glorious days with Wagner here, and feasting on his

* The first words of Wagner's letter of Dec. 6 to Liszt are: "I did not forget to transmit to Paris the greetings and enquiries of you all; Wesendonck has answered me, enclosing a letter from his wife to the Fürstin, which I herewith beg you to deliver."

Nibelungen world, of which our journeyman musicians and chaff-threshing critics can have no notion yet. It is hoped this colossal work will come to performance in the year 59, and for my part I shall leave nothing undone to assist that production (which undoubtedly will involve manifold difficulties and exertions) to come off at the earliest moment. Wagner requires an altogether special building for it, and a not everyday troupe of performers and bandsmen. As goes without saying, the work can only enter the world under *his own* control; and in case this is to be in Germany, as is much to be wished, his Pardon will have to be gained before all else.—I comfort myself with the old saying, What should be, must be!”

The sincerity of Liszt's general conviction is attested by one or two other letters from Zurich and after, which we shall come to in time; its *depth* is a little discounted by Wagner's to Otto of Nov. 30: “As net result of this particular visit of Liszt's, I may tell you that my friendship for him has not been lessened, but materially increased. The amiable ardour with which he confessed to me, in the end, that he had much needed myself to initiate him into the real depths of my work agreeably dispelled the misgivings aroused in me by many an evidence of a more superficial conception; so that I have been able to find a friendly answer even to the question, how that superficiality was possible.” If Wagner had but furnished us that “friendly answer”! As he does not, we must seek it in the adjective, like so much else.

Our more immediate concern is with the performance on the evening of this birthday of Liszt's, for which the Fürstin had arranged a banquet on a lavish scale. “All possible sorts of people were drummed together,” says Keller of her Zurich entertainments in general, so we need not vex our memories with a list of professorial lions and their mates, but take for granted that the Wesendoncks stayed on till then. At table Wagner toasted the hero of the day in glowing terms—“You all know Liszt the musician, but I alone know Liszt the friend”; then the grand piano was opened, Liszt took his seat at it, and the first act of *Die Walküre* rang forth, the vocal parts sustained by Wagner himself—a remarkable feat of endurance—and Emilie Heim, who had been studying the music of Sieglinde for many a week. On the 25th the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* devotes a paragraph to this performance, speaking of “the giant work which, unique of

its kind, belongs to the most imposing (*Grossartigsten*) the art of music has ever produced. With this tone-poem [!] the reformatory endeavours of Richard Wagner in the realm of musical drama, through setting up a new artistic form, come to light of day in full perfection. His much-decried idea of the 'Artwork of the Future' was no art-philosophic dream; it has turned to deed, and, epoch-making, will shake the whole musical world!"—in which one may detect a touch of the Roman hand of Carolysz, possibly also to be traced in the Leipzig *Signale's* notice "from Zurich, Oct. 23."

The Professors' verdict can only be conjectured, but Frau Wille—whom we have been unable to consult for a long time, owing to the meagreness of her recollections of this period—shall now be begged to supplement our tale: "In the autumn of this year [given as 1854!] Liszt came to Zurich on a second visit to Wagner; this time accompanied by his friend the Frau Fürstin Wittgenstein and her princess daughter. Wagner had completed a little of the Nibelungen (*Einiges aus der Nibelungen*), adding music to the words of the poem [drolly dry]. He wished to submit what had progressed thus far to his friend's opinion. A pretty young Swiss lady, wife of Capellmeister Heim—who had a splendid voice, and whom Wagner distinguished, though she possessed no artistic finish—sang the difficult voice-parts at sight,* with the greatest obligingness. A brilliant gathering had assembled in the drawing-room of the Hôtel Baur, on Liszt's invitation if I remember aright. Liszt was highly delighted with Wagner's success and the greatness of his Nibelungen; entirely free of envy, he stretched both hands to the admired master. Even to-day it makes me glad to think of the heartiness and warmth of their communion.—Liszt frequently came to Mariafeld with his ladies, accompanied by Wagner."† The dear lady breaks off

* This *can* only apply to act ii or iii, on subsequent evenings, if even to them. I am sorry to have to trip so excellent a lady up, but it is astonishing how these little errors travel farther. — Heim, by the way, was not "Capellmeister," but conductor of a singing-club, the "Harmonie" (*cf* iv, 117).

† Says Frau Wille's letter of next January to the Fürstin: "How often we have recalled the pleasant hours we passed with you last autumn. If you only would come again soon, and at the height of summer, when Switzerland is so beautiful and it does one good to be amid the peace of Nature! How much it would rejoice us if we might hope to see you oftener and longer in

into an account of Liszt's kindness to Dr Wille thirteen years previously (see iv, 139-40) and tells us no more; but is it not odd to hear the only use to which she puts Liszt's "hands"? He had been "stretching" them to some purpose for over an hour, and much more probably the whole performing trio fell on one another's neck after the final chord.

We hear of a smaller gathering at the Hôtel Baur, Nov. 1, when the Death-herald scene was rendered by the same performers; also of a third, presumably in the last week of Liszt's stay, when the entire second half of act iii was attempted—so that Wagner not only was his own first Siegmund and Hunding, but also his first Wotan. Remarkable is Liszt's failure to appreciate that closing scene; at least it would be, were it not a repetition of his first experience with each work of Wagner's in turn, until now. One might be tempted to lay the blame at the door of Frau Heim, if Liszt had only made that one acquaintance with the scene; but he had already gone through it with Bülow at Weimar, and surely tried it more than once in tête-à-têtes at Zurich. Yet this is Wagner's plaint to him next May: "I have astonished myself by having brought off such a thing [as act i of *Siegfried*], for I had begun to imagine myself an atrociously bungling musician again, since last we were together. Little by little, however, I worked myself back to self-confidence: I practised up the big last scene in the Walküre with a lady singer from our theatre whom you heard in the *Juive*; Kirchner accompanied, I hit my notes famously, and this scene which so annoyed you (*Dir so ärgerlich*) completely answered all my expectations. We did it three times in my rooms, and I'm quite satisfied. The fact of it is, the whole scene is so subtle, at once deep and subdued, that it needs the tenderest, most sensitive and perfect rendering on every side [which *must* include the pianist], to make it understood: that accomplished, its effect is certain. Of course a thing like this, though, is bound to tremble on the brink of positive dislike (*des äussersten Missfallens*) if it be not approached on all hands with every faculty religiously intent: to reel it off, as we attempted, is out of all question. For my own part at

our house than this last autumn, when you came in frost and mist and had to freeze here!!! Wille and I have kept you faithfully at heart; indeed it must be your constant experience, that whoever *knows* yourself, your sweet daughter and Liszt, can never possibly forget you."

least, in such a case—as if instinctively—I lose all capability and mind ; I become downright stupid.”

“On the brink of positive dislike”: it simply is amazing ! The only loophole is that hint of inattention, which may imply the trial of this scene in very *petite comitté*, with the Fürstin ever inter-punctuating. In no case, however, does it redound to Liszt’s quickness of insight ; and it really seems a blessing that he saw his friend so seldom. A few more cold douches like that, and Wagner might either have stopped composing, or have spoilt his choicest passages to favour Weimar taste. Who knows, as it is, that this damper had not much to do with the shelving of the RING not long thereafter ? Only six months prior to Liszt’s visit, Wagner had told him of this scene itself, “It has prospered, seems to me the best thing I have written ;” seven months after that visit, speaking of their late “attempts at the piano,” Wagner tells him, “I felt that only through a first-rate representation should I be able to explain a good many things even to yourself.”* What an outcry would have been raised, had anyone but Liszt been guilty of this piece of philistinism.

Yet we have read his words to Dr Stern—probably before that trial—and on the same day as his letter to Stern (Nov. 14) he wrote Dr Gille : “I shall have much to tell you verbally of Wagner. Of course we see each other daily, the whole day long in fact. His *Nibelungen* are an altogether new and glorious world, for which I long have yearned, and which the most enlightened minds will welcome with enthusiasm yet, what though the footrule of the mediocre may prove too short !” To Alexander Ritter, next month (Dec. 4) : “I had a splendid time with Wagner, and his ‘Rheingold’ and ‘Walküre’ are incredibly *perfect wonder-works*.” Further, to the Brussels Freundin next Jan. 30 : “Wagner has finished the score of his *Rheingold* and *Walküre*, and I went through them with him—something *sublime* ! At present he is working at the ‘*junge Siegfried*,’ and by the end of the year I think he will have completed ‘*Siegfried’s Tod*’ and

* The reader is entreated to correct a most unfortunate slip in the English edition : “I felt that a good many things would be explained to myself only by a good performance.” Subversive of Wagner’s whole procedure, such a rendering is the reverse of the sense of the German text, “ich fühlte, dass ich selbst Dir über manches mich nur durch eine gelungene Aufführung deutlich würde machen können.”

thus arrived at termination of this unheard-of task, a tetralogy of lyric dramas. In 59 I hope the 4 works will be represented on four consecutive evenings, and I shall do my very best to facilitate this tremendous enterprise of his." The big general impression has largely redeemed that "evidence of superficiality." Still, the latter is not definitely retracted: disheartening though it had been to the composer, it is passed with calm oblivion in his friend's tardy reply.

It is not that one disputes Liszt's right, or the right of much smaller men, to point out defects, whether real or imagined, in so colossal a creation as the RING; but what gives us pause, is that on one of the extremely rare occasions when he expresses disagreement, either with Wagner's works or with those of infinitely lesser intimates, he should have selected a gem of the very first water. As a rule we have found him shunning all particulars in private,* and that would appear to have been a consciously-adopted attitude, since he writes Carolyne in August 1869, after witnessing a dress rehearsal at Munich: "The whole town talks of nothing but *Rheingold*, but not in its praise or its author's. As for myself, I refuse to enter into questions of detail—but simply maintain that the *Ring des Nibelungen* is the most sublime artistic effort (*tentative d'art*) of our epoch." Also July '70, after two Munich performances apiece of *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*: "On the public in general the *Walküre* has produced a greater and more favourable impression than the *Rheingold*. The duo that ends the first act, between Siegmund and Sieglinde, was very actively applauded; also Brünnhild's apparition to Siegmund, and the *Walkürenritt* [not a word about the "Abschied"!]. As for myself, I profoundly admire the total—without dwelling too much upon beauties of detail which bound the audience's enthusiasm (*sans trop m'arrêter aux beautés de détail, qui limitent l'enthousiasme du public*). Great works should be embraced entire, body and soul, form and thought, spirit and

* Among the rare exceptions are his citation of the Hunding-rhythm in his letter to Wagner of Oct. 55 (p. 77 *sup.*), and of Donner's "Heda! Hedo!" in those of Dec. 56 and Feb. 57. On the last occasion, quoting the musical notes for a second time since his Zurich visit: "Since that 'Heda!' has kept hammering in my head I can enjoy no other [music], old or new, and dream of nothing but the *Ring des Nibelungen*; to which may God's mercy soon help me!"

life. One ought not to carp at Wagner for his lengths (*sur des longueurs*)—it is better to expand one's scale to his"—as Wagner told him fifteen years before.

Considering that by the time of their writing there had long risen more than a coolness between Wagner and the Fürstin, these last two letters prove the whole-heartedness of Liszt's Wagnerian cult, even though, as part-author of so many past critical essays, he rather surprises us by declining to venture on details. But that "se grandir à sa mesure"? Of course he means it here from the receptive side; but he had also tried to put the maxim into practice from the productive—which has its perils, as old Æsop taught us—and we now approach a case in point.

After *Die Walküre* the—*Divina commedia*. What wellnigh super-human power it presupposes, to render justice to that theme! No mind not conscious of supremest mastery should dare approach it; and if Liszt succeeded, his might rank among the very greatest names in music. Some say he did succeed; a very few, but that few included Wagner. Let us see how this amazing verdict came about.

Shortly after Liszt's Zurich birthday celebration a return-party was given by the Herweghs at their residence, the "Falkenburg," on the Sonnenbühl. Here Liszt played his newly-finished *Dante* symphony, or a selection therefrom—one can scarcely conceive his monopolising the company's attention for the best part of an hour. Selection or not, it included the best thing in the work, the "da Rimini" episode, which moved his host to dedicate to him a graceful poem, signed Oct. 30, the first and fifth of whose six stanzas I reproduce:

Die lichte Blum' im dunklen Kranz,
Den aus Geschicken Du gewunden,
Francesca war's, o Meister Franz,
D'rin ich Dein Wesen tief empfunden.

O mehr als Zauber von Merlin!
Wie goldne Himmelsfunken blitzen
Die überird'schen Melodie'n
Aus Deinen trunknen Fingerspitzen.*

* See *Briefe h. Zeitgenossen an F. L.*, III. Strange to say, not a single letter from Liszt to Herwegh, or *vice versa*, is contained in the many volumes of Liszt's correspondence. We possess an extract, however, from a letter of

The magic of Liszt's "inebriating finger-tips"—the poet's shade must forgive my rescuing his participle from misconstruction—had an immense deal to do with the "over-earthliness" of the "melodies" they discoursed, as we know from Wagner's testimony: "It often was indifferent *what* you played us, or by *whom*" (Mornex letter). There further was the rapt, ecstatic gaze that spake unutterable things, and hypnotised an audience. Though it seems that a passing illness prevented Wagner's attending Herwegh's soirée (*vid. inf.*), Liszt played his *Dante* to him privately, doubtless more than once, and the mesmeric effect would be the stronger for its concentration on one hearer. Thus Wagner writes a twelvemonth thence:—

My dear, dear Franz, these lines are meant to reach you just as you are going to the first performance of our Dante.* Must I not feel my very vitals wrung, to think that I must keep aloof from you on such a night, unable to obey the dictates of my heart, which in any circumstances—were I free—would drive me hundreds of miles to unite with you, the soul of you, on such a wedding-day? So let me be with you in spirit; and if your work succeeds, as it cannot but, please honour my presence to-day by paying heed to nothing that goes on around you: neither to the crowd, which ever must remain a stranger to us, even at the moments when it takes us in; nor to the connoisseurs or fellow-artists—we have none!—but look into my eye as you would do if playing to me; and—be assured—it blissfully and blithely will shine back on yours with all that inner understanding which is the only recompense to you and me . . . [goes on to recall that

the Fürstin's to the poet dated May 19, 1858, apropos of Liszt's setting of "Ich möchte hingeh'n" (1844): "These last few days I have had occasion to think about you more than ever. While preparing a fairly considerable collection of Lieder for the press, Liszt re-sang me the one he had composed to your poetry. I do not know if I have told you he had sung it to me for the first time eleven years since, in the earliest days of our acquaintance, and this song had been one of the first revelations to me of his genius. Your name thus found itself mingled with our earliest remembrances. I cannot tell you how vividly this all came back to me! If you would care to give me a great pleasure, you would send me these verses written out by your hand and signed with your name. Do not refuse me, for it will only take you a few minutes to copy these strophes, and I shall gain so long a joy" (*Die Musik* III. no. 23). We remember a similar petition to Wagner three years previously (see v, 270).

* At Dresden, Nov. 7, 57. The "our," of course, refers to the promised dedication.

night at Zurich when Liszt strolled home with him after hearing his "doleful tale"] . . . However many an impression I may lose, what you were to me that evening—the wondrous sympathy there lay in what you told me on that homeward walk, this heavenliness in your nature—will follow me to each existence as my most precious memory. Only one thing can I set beside it : what you have told me in your works, and above all, what you told me in your *Dante!* If to-day you make that public property, remember it can only be in the sense wherein we bear and wear away our face, our body, our existence, under the eyes of the world ; not to receive it back beloved and understood. Be mine to-day, entirely mine—and rest assured, you then will be entirely yourself and what you can be!—

So, a safe journey through Hell and Purgatory! There in the hallowed flames in which I've plunged, the world all left behind me—there will we twain clasp hands!

Glück auf!

Dein
Richard.

What better cordial could a man desire, at such a Rubicon? Yet it is the "inner" message in this work, that Wagner lays all stress on, its personal revelation; as he puts it in the essay to be dealt with at our chapter's end, "To see what another individual sees, we must see it with his eyes—and Love alone succeeds in that." Supposing his great affection for Liszt had made him see and taste wine where there was little but water?

Well, though the other of Liszt's two chief models, Berlioz, had gained a brilliant triumph there in 1854 (vol. v); though this *Dante* was given with the selfsame band, for its benefit, and in the selfsame theatre; though Liszt wrote Carolyne six days before, on the eve of his rehearsals, "Saturday's concert seems promised sufficiently happy auspices, to judge from my good reception by the musicians here, including Reissiger"—the Dresden performance proved a bitter disappointment. Four years later, von Bülow writes his friend von Bronsart: "I warn you off any attempt with the *Dante*. The 'Inferno' is extremely dangerous in a small building. How I entreated the master, in vain, to replace this work at the Dresden concert 1857 [which Bülow and his wife attended] by shorter, more come-at-able pieces! Other influences prevailed [Carolyne had also arrived in advance]. The Prometheus, which pleased, was slain by the disagreeable impression of the *Dante*; and the Dresden terrain, none of the more unpropitious, was

ruined for long to come.—It is no 'white-livered philistine' who sets his seal to this."*

We now will take a bigger leap into the future. The *Dante* symphony had been performed at Prague, March '58, with moderate success—"the Francesca episode interrupted by storms of applause," says L. Ramann—a performance which Wagner, of course, could not attend. August 1865 came Pesth, "with signal success," as was to be expected from Liszt's compatriots ;

* In maturer years : "Liszt's instrumentation is splendid ; he is more harmonious than Berlioz, and less extravagant. In the *Dante* symphony, to be sure, there is a deal of hubbub ; but that is no reproach there, and moreover is a solitary [?] exception. Still, Liszt cannot take the rank of other great masters, for his music is built on homophony, not on polyphony—the special mark of German music" (from the said 1875 report of *The World* interviewer, New York, which Bülow forwarded to a friend as correct in the main.—N.B. I have to quote from the German translation). Then to Bronsart again, Aug. 77 : "Kreuznach-Baden = Purgatory-Paradise, though not the *Dante*-Lisztian, which I consider infernally boring." And have we not quite recently witnessed the failure of a magnificent performance to make the *Dante* aught but a colossal weariness to a London audience of the best predisposition?—an audience which turned with glad relief to works by Elgar, Richard Strauss and Wagner. Here is what one of the ablest and fairest of our English critics said on the occasion : "Is there any future for Liszt? He would be a bold man who ventured to affirm it. Periodically one of his major works is resuscitated, and a few enthusiasts express the fond hope that he is coming into his own at last ; but there the matter ends. The dusty scores, representing so much toil, and thought, and skill, and noble aspiration—everything, in fact, except real creative genius—are returned once again to the silent shelves for another term of years until someone else is bold enough to repeat the same unprofitable experiment again. Unprofitable, because no one really and truly likes Liszt's music in the sense that the music of all the really great masters is liked and enjoyed. Many are glad to hear it, no doubt, for the pleasure of making better acquaintance with it, and in the hope, perhaps, of getting to like it better ; all must recognise its cleverness. But mere interest and respect for its technical qualities never yet availed to keep alive any music, however respectable or well meant ; and that of Liszt is hardly likely to prove the exception to what must be regarded as a salutary rule. The '*Dante*' symphony, which was revived under Richter at the London Symphony Orchestra's concert on Monday [Dec. 3], has its merits, like all its companions from the same pen . . . But as a whole how *langweilig* and dull it is !—not necessarily because it is so long, but simply because it is manufactured music from beginning to end. It is the correct thing to congratulate Dr Richter upon his revival of the work—although one may indulge simultaneously the private hope that he will not repeat this particular good deed too soon" (*Westminster Gazette* Dec. 5, 1906).

Wagner was then in the Tyrol. Rome followed *ca* 1866; particulars are lacking, but Wagner never went to Rome till ten years later. Finally Hanover, May 24, 1877, when Liszt writes Carolyne: "Maintenant elle semble presque admissible dans les programmes;" at that moment Wagner was in London. There had been no other band-performances (except the earlier Weimar trials), neither was there any between the date last mentioned and the appearance of Wagner's Bayreuth article, *The Public in Time and Space*.

Thus chronologically informed, we shall be able to rid ourselves of a great misconception. The thick-and-thin adherents of Liszt's *Dante* are never tired of quoting Wagner's Bayreuth article, which devotes two pages to its general praise; but it does not seem to have occurred to them to enquire what he meant by a "renewed hearing." It being impossible for him to have ever heard this composition rendered by an orchestra—contrary to what they appear to assume*—let us try to ascertain what sort of "hearing" he really had in mind.

The said article appeared October 1878 in the *Bayreuther Blätter*, itself founded in January of that year as a kind of magnified Parish Magazine for the Patronat-Verein. Just as this monthly was primarily circulated "*unter uns*," so the recent "hearing" Wagner speaks of had clearly been a private one. Liszt visited Wahnfried for about ten days in April 1878, and again the last ten days of August. On one of these two occasions, more probably the latter, he must have re-played his *Dante* to his host, and it would not at all surprise one if he dropped a gentle hint that it would be gratifying if something were said about it in the newly-founded *Blätter*; where, as a matter of fact, the said article appeared in the earliest possible issue after his departure.

To my mind that makes all the difference. When Wagner called that "tone-poem of Liszt's the creative act of a redeeming

* Probably misled by a footnote to the succeeding paragraph: "During a performance of the *Dante* symphony in Leipzig, at a drastic passage in the first movement a piteous cry was heard from the audience: 'Ei! Herr Jesus!'" But Wagner does not say "I heard," merely "hörte man"; moreover, I can trace no other sign of a *Dante* performance having ever taken place at Leipzig prior to the date of this article. Manifestly he is speaking on Liszt's information, and has confounded Hanover with "Leipzig."

genius," and "one of the most astounding deeds of music" (*Prose* VI. 92-3), he was to a large extent taking the will for the deed, the sketch for the picture. He makes no reference whatever to its orchestral effect, though the full score had been in his possession nearly twenty years; he simply speaks from the impression Liszt had once more left upon him through the magnetism of his personal rendering. It is fairly evident that, unlike those of the non-virtuoso Berlioz and Wagner, Liszt's works were improvised on the keyboard—in 1860 he writes Carolyne, "The fancy took me to compose Lenau's *Zigeuner*, and I very soon found the whole contour for it at the piano"—and on a fine instrument, with his incomparable plasticity of touch, he naturally could do the fullest justice to them, not to mention a prudent omission of tedious "lengths" of repetition. Under the immediate impression of such a rendering, and filled with generous sympathy for his friend's non-recognition as composer, it is small wonder if Wagner let his pen run away with him into exaggeration of the merits of a work that stands in crying opposition to the principles set forth a year thereafter, by no means for the first time, in another Bayreuth article which seems, in fact, intended as an æsthetic antidote (*ibid.* pp. 179, 188-91).

When all is said, the gist of Wagner's eulogy is directed to the selfsame feature as his letter of 1857, to what he terms the "transfiguration" (*reinste Verklärung*) or "redemption" of Dante's poem, i.e. to Liszt's making his symphony end in that "loss of consciousness itself" which Wagner's London Dante-letter had upheld as infinitely preferable to a "dogmatic Paradise," and which he made the termination of his own *Tristan und Isolde*. But that *Dante* "transfiguration" itself, or rather, the close thereof, has a somewhat singular history, which shall help us back to Zurich.

Liszt's original plan was to divide his symphony into "3 movements, Hell, Purgatory and Paradise" (*cf v.*, 298): its finished form presents the nomenclature, "Inferno, Purgatorium, Magnificat"—betraying a curious sense of terminological balance, even if a happy circumvention of the problem. His *Inferno* is a self-included movement; his *Purgatorium* melts into his *Magnificat*; but now comes the crux. Says L. R. in her analysis (*F. Liszt*):

The close of the "Magnificat" presents two versions, in reality two closes of opposite kind. The first loses itself instrumentally in the suprasensual, and fades into the empyrean . . . dying away on the chord of $\frac{9}{4}$ [*ppp*, on *f* sharp], a mere breath. The second, on the contrary—which joins on to this after the fermata, and is marked "*ad libitum*"—makes the trombones, trumpets, then the horns, majestically shout out *ff* their "Hosanna, Hallelujah" above a scale of triads . . . whereupon the chorus sings "Hallelujah ! Hallelujah !" *unisono* with utmost force, and the work closes with the chord of B major . . . The first close, or rather, a division of the close into two, was not the master's original intention ; Richard Wagner instigated it, when Liszt and the Fürstin visited him at Zurich in 1856. Wagner disputed the æsthetic justification of a renewal of energy, and tried to convince Liszt that the "Magnificat" should lose itself ethereally in the clouds, but the Fürstin stood up for the other ending. In recognition of the correctness of both [!] views, the master sought to do justice to each, as the partitur shews, and left it to the judgment of the conductor to omit the second close or bring it to hearing. It is not [?] difficult, however, to decipher from the "*ad libitum*" where the master's unrestricted judgment meant the close to lie. But Wagner would not even allow of that *ad libitum*, and expressed himself irately about it : "There one sees what influences he follows."

Of course the infinitely greater "master" would not allow of an *ad libitum*. Far better to have left the Meyerbeerian effect of Carolysszt's original version unredeemed, than to publish to the world Liszt's inability to come to a decision on so grave an artistic issue. What should we say if Shakespeare had offered his Hamlet or Juliet an *ad libitum* recovery, Wagner his Lohengrin an *ad libitum* relenting? Neither is it a solitary instance of Liszt's un-masterfulness : in his *Loreley* he offers the singer the choice of curtailing its end ; to the singer of *Ich liebe dich* he offers the identical alternative left open to the conductor of his *Dante* symphony.

Frl. Ramann does not specify to whom, or when, Wagner "expressed himself irately" (*grimmig*) regarding that "*ad libitum*"; but it can hardly have occurred till he received the published score, over two years after the Zurich visit. On the other hand we seem to have some evidence of a hot dispute, quite possibly connected with the *Dante* "close" itself, in a tiny letter of *the* master's merely dated "Friday evening" (no. 224, *W.-L.*): "I regard my running away from you as a perfect inspiration, which ought to bear abundant fruit for you as well as me!—I'm going

to bed at nine—do you the same—have a good sound sleep—and tomorrow morning let us shew a pair of sturdy faces fit to front the world.—I'm studying a little Mephistopheles [Liszt's?] ere turning in!—If you consent, we'll walken-küre tomorrow.—A thousand gods be with you!" The hint is borne out by one of three newly-published Zurich notes of Wagner's to the Fürstin, which we may assume to have followed a conciliant billet from herself next morning: "I should not know where to commence or finish, if I tried a little to express the feelings your boundless kindness summons up in me!—Believe me, it makes me sing very small myself, and my remorse simply wakens and strengthens my sentiments of profound esteem and love towards you; so that—sincere as it is—I scarcely feel its bitter any more.—Completely yours, R. W."—which also sheds a ray of light on that clause in the letter to Otto, p. 172 *sup.*

We should not suppose that their pre-occupation with personal products would leave Wagner and Liszt much time just now to glance at those of others; yet in a necrologue on Theodor Kirchner (*Die Musik* 1903) we read that he played Schumann's *Manfred* overture and D minor symphony with Liszt, on one of the latter's two visits to Zurich, but "they failed to conquer Wagner's antipathy towards his fellow-countryman." Possibly it was during the present visit, as death had only recently released poor Schumann (July 29) from his tragedy of the last two years, and that subject would be uppermost in Kirchner's mind; but Wagner's "antipathy" was not a whit greater than Liszt's own, i.e. a merely partial one—*cf Prose* III. 117—they by no means treated Schumann's gifts *de haut en bas*, as some of their pert adherents did and still are doing. It is an odd conjunction, though, that Smetana reports to Liszt next April: "I have been playing much of Wagner's, Schumann's, and your music in private circles here, and found the receptivity I sought. The inhabitants of Gothenburg had been left to their own devices hitherto, and had not the remotest notion of what is going on in art."

Another member of Liszt's party flits across the stage, but only flits; like Kirchner, an organist, but of much wider reputation: Alexander Winterberger, born 1834, a pupil of Liszt's. In August, Liszt had written Rubinstein: "Winterberger has just had fabulous successes at Rotterdam, Haarlem &c., where he gave a number of organ concerts, very well attended . . . I think

of making the journey to Zurich with him, and en route we shall explore the organs of Ulm, Stuttgart, Fribourg and Winterthur" (Kirchner's preserve, the last). But this organ-virtuoso was taken on the Hungarian tour beforehand, and the harmonium on which he had to accompany at Pesth appears to have proved the last straw for him, since Liszt writes the Fürstin Sept. 16: "In lieu of a telegram I am sending you Winterberger, who needs a fortnight's cure, and will rejoin us in Switzerland. The poor young man has swollen feet, and ought to consult [Weimar doctors] . . . I shall give him rendezvous at Stuttgart the 6th of October." Whether he came with Liszt or followed, a day's trip to Winterthur, to try the organ, must have figured on the party's programme, explaining the next tiny letter from Wagner (last week in October?): "Dear Franz, by everything you and I hold holy, believe my word that I am sick, and need the utmost rest and care if I am to hope to enjoy you again tomorrow. Last night I developed a severe catarrh—usually a very welcome medicine to me—with a leaden weight in all my limbs, inflamed throat, and the rest of it. To sit in a cold church, under such circumstances, would really be more than rash; whilst even any other dissipation might simply retard my recovery.—So, to a sensible meeting tomorrow! Give Winterberger my heartfelt regrets."*

His health was not so firmly re-established by the Mornex treatment, after all, that he could stand this constant gadding. Next morning: "I can't help thinking it a piece of luck, that you're cultivating some other acquaintances here besides me this time, and therefore I can vanish for a spell without too great remark.—My catarrh has developed such very fine proportions that, with due attention paid it, I have hopes of a thorough riddance from my ailments of last winter; already, though as in fetters of lead, I feel the benefit of this self-help of Nature's. I'm certain of being better than ever within a few days, and look forward to offering you the fruits of my recovery in the form of quite cheerful spirits.—For to-day I am still a strict patient, and can't possibly think of the visit to Herwegh [*cf* 183 *sup.*]. Should you mean to gladden me with a glimpse of you, I warn you that from 12 to 4 o'clock I shall be sweating; you would therefore

* By a curious oversight, probably due to haste, the late Dr Hueffer has omitted not only this final sentence, but all allusion to the church.

find me a less appalling sight before or after.—The hardest blow was my having to miss yesterday's organ concert; submission, however, has helped me over all.—I mean to see if I can bring off the letter to the Grand Duke to-day. A hundred-thousand heartiest regards to all the rectory!—How goes it with yourself, you indefatigable?—Apparently “the rectory” is a playful hit at the Franciscan third-order of which we heard some pages back. The allusion to the Grand Duke suggests a lack of definition in the Weimar news Liszt brought with him, consequently need not detain us.

Perhaps it is to the day after that, again, we must assign another dateless billet to the Fürstin: “Most worshipful Magnificus,* I'm not at all the thing, and singing is out of the question just yet; so the only wish left me is to be able to enjoy *your own* company soon, that *I* may have something at least to hold on to.—I'm hoping to see Liszt before long, who will bring you a further report on me.—In any event, please reserve me a tiny wee mite of the spark of affection Liszt leaves you ladies over; for, even though I'm but a clumsy, tedious, leather-headed musicant upon the whole—I am wholly and entirely attached to you.—Richard the Catarrhist.” He must have fairly recovered his voice, however, a day or two later, to enable that second *Walküre* recital (Brünnhilde-Siegmond) to be held Nov. 1.

It was Liszt's turn next; for the “indefatigable” succumbed himself next day, and was laid up for a fortnight—one result being a week's prolongment of his and the Wittgensteins' stay.† The nature of his illness is only to be gathered from a subsequent allusion to “my Zurich ‘clous,’” but it was not too painful to prevent his reading; so Wagner put him through a mild course of Schopenhauer. We hear of it almost by accident, Bülow writing Liszt next January 23, at end of a fairly long letter: “I

* Plainly in allusion to that close of Liszt's *Dante*; possibly the Princess had sent an intimation of its success at Herwegh's the night before, together with an invitation for this evening. The masculine gender of “*Hochverehrter Magnificus!*” is not without its significance, in view of “the influences Liszt follows.”

† Liszt continued ailing more or less until next spring, and writes a correspondent March 24, 57: “For the moment I am nailed to my bed by a whole nursery of boils (*clous*), which now are flowering on my legs and I regard as doors of exit for the complaint that has been incommoding me pretty severely since the end of October.”

have only time and space to commend my soul to you . . . and to ask you if the curious [New Year's] gift—rendered more elegant by its binding, thanks to the good taste of Mlle Cosima—is pardoned in view of the prowess of Schopenhauer.” It is more than pardoned *pour le moment* (“as our friend Belloni says”), for Liszt answers: “Let me thank you again very amicably for the present you have made me of the volumes of Schopenhauer. They arrived most apropos, as I was thinking of buying them, and will be doubly agreeable as coming from you. The *Parerga & Paralipomena* were a regalement to me during my illness at Zurich,* and I shall re-peruse several chapters of them with pleasure; among others, that on ‘*was einer vorstellt*’ etc., and even those university-girdings, which at least have the merit of a certain *entraînement de bile* that sometimes carries more conviction than the best of arguments.” He never appears to have dived very deep, though; † else we should not find him jauntily alluding to Schopenhauer’s “*prétendu système*” (to C., May 59), or christening that sage a “*philosophe des paradoxes*” (to the Gd Duke, Feb.

* His correspondence with von Bülow supplies no further details of it, for his only other remark to Hans anent the visit is that in a letter of Dec. 28, 56: “I should have so much to tell you about my stay at Zurich, and Wagner in particular, that I do not know where to commence. So let me reserve all these excellent memories for our next meeting.”

† Liszt’s other references to Schopenhauer are contained in letters of April 58 to Carolyne and to the Brussels Freundin, Aug. 61 to Bülow (asking for a loan of Frauenstädt’s book—just after *Wagner’s* Weimar visit), July 71 and Jan. 75 to Carolyne (mere namings), and July 73 to Bülow. None of these evince acquaintance with more than the glittering rind of the *Parerga*, and the only one of them running to more than two lines is that in the letter first-named: “Schopenhauer has very lucidly brought out the differences between Greek philosophy and the religion of Christ, in the Dialogue on Religion in the 2nd volume of his *Parerga*, which contains two of the finest and most powerful pages I know of as apology for Christianity. No doctor of the Church has better marked the infinite distance between Aristotle and Plato and the Evangelists—for nothing can compare with Love, as nothing can replace it.” The selection of these two pages of “Demopheles” argument (see Reclam ed. vol. V, 362-4) is singularly unfortunate, as they are directly followed up by “Philalethes” with an indictment of the Inquisition etc.; but still more characteristic is Liszt’s citation of them as counterblast (!) to Köppen’s *Religion des Buddha*—which Carolyne alone had been reading—seeing that themselves they claim for Asia a “thousand-year priority” in the true Christian “view of life.”

76), to say nothing of "that snarling old cur, Schopenhauer" (to Wagner, Aug. 59). The "*alte knurrender Pudel*" was utterly beyond him, as Wagner must have discovered already (see cap. I.), and he did wisely not to vex Liszt's peace of mind with *The two Fundamental Problems* or the *Welt* itself.

For his own part, from his visitors' enforced tranquillity Wagner reaped a beneficial relaxation, and we find him writing Fischer Nov. 7—with a request to forward certain scores still left behind at Dresden, "as Liszt is pressing me for my arrangement of Palestrina's '*Stabat Mater*'"—"I'm getting more and more satisfied with my health; my last cure did me a world of good, and I fancy I've got rid of that infamous *Gesichtsrose*." Nevertheless, his respite from the minor evils of catarrh is not for long. Perhaps those Dresden scores arrived in time to strain his eyes again; at any rate the Fürstin gets a letter (Nov. 15?): "Saturday evening, 7 o'clock.—Dearest Kapellmeisterin, I've caught cold again, Lord knows [how]. On my way from you I had a shivering fit; I am somewhat feverish, and think it wiser not to leave the house again to-day.—My keeping away this evening will have the advantage that Liszt will not feel tempted to quit his bed before the time; perhaps tomorrow, Sunday, he will make the experiment with a better conscience, and we'll celebrate that resurrection quite cosily together.—Heaven grant him patience, and to you wise ladies a right comfortable stove! 'Tis the only way of supporting the atom of life one has just to support, especially for those who do not want to give it up yet—which really would be the most sensible course for myself: for maybe you will have perceived that things are in a wretched state with me.—A right Sunday-like Sunday is wished you all by Your Saturday-moody R. W."

In a couple of days they were both in good trim enough for Wagner to send a definite promise to St Gallen in respect of a parting concert, postponed before; though it may be doubted whether Wagner's recent chill had not left a little huskiness behind, helping to betray Liszt into that extraordinary "annoyance" with *Wotan's Abschied*, which we must suppose to have been sung on one of their very last social evenings. Presumably the 19th would be its actual date, as it would certainly have been preceded by a Lisztian rendering of the *Walkürenritt*, an

echo whereof is preserved in the shape of a six-bar autograph signed "So reitet man in der Luft!*" Zurich, 20. Nov. 56. Richard Wagner." For whom it was penned, we are not informed by the editor of *Die Musik*, in whose first "Bayreuth-Heft" it appeared in facsimile from the original now in the possession of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Vienna. In all likelihood either Liszt or the Fürstin begged it for Prof. A. L. Zellner, secretary of the said society, then busy writing up Liszt's Mass. However that be, a second autograph is despatched by Liszt next day to Louis Köhler: "Enclosed, dear friend, is a brouillon of the prelude to Rheingold, which Wagner has handed me for yourself and I am sure will give you pleasure. After having to spend a couple of weeks in bed—which has lengthened my stay here—I am getting ready to go to St Gallen with Wagner the day after tomorrow,† to give a couple of my Symphonic poems there with a very respectable band (20 fiddles, 6 contrabassi, etc.)."

As announced in the *St Galler Tagblatt*, Liszt and Wagner had promised their co-operation "for nothing but art's sake, and it therefore will hardly be necessary to remark that this concert is far removed from any thought of speculation"; but the determinant cause was Wagner's eagerness to get a fuller taste of Liszt's works himself. For some time past the St Gallen Musik-director, Sczadrowsky, had been giving a series of subscription-concerts with an orchestra that should have put philistine Zurich to the blush—of course Liszt gave no concert *there*—and hardly had the news of Liszt's arrival in Switzerland got about, than Sczadrowsky sent an invitation to the two friends to come over and adorn his enterprise (one rather suspects, with a hope Liszt would *play*). Wagner replied, toward the end of October, accepting for the pair of them, begging that the string band be increased to "18 good violins, 6 violas, 6 celli and 4 basses," offering to bring Fries from Zurich as 1st oboe and Bär as 3rd horn, and proposing, in addition to two of Liszt's Sym. poems, a symphony

* "That's how one rides in the air": not at all a bad motto for the coming aero prize-winner.

† Unless he has mistaken the date when he signs "21. Nov. 56," he naturally means that the concert will be *held* "übermorgen," for they had to be there by the 22nd for rehearsals.

of Beethoven's and his own Ballad and Sailors' Chorus from the *Dutchman* (in the long run the *Dutchman* dropped out). The date originally fixed was the 16th of November, but on the 13th Wagner has to telegraph a week's postponement on account of Liszt's health. The 18th he writes Sczadrowsky, definitely accepting for the 23rd "as Liszt is well again," begging substitution of an aria of Gluck's for that contemplated from Mozart's *Tito*, and stating whom his party will consist of: "not the Wesendoncks, only Liszt (3 persons) and himself (2 persons)."*

So "Liszt, 3 persons" bid farewell to Zurich and its professors Nov. 22, accompanied on this short first stage of their return by "Wagner, 2 persons"; which may either mean Heisterhagen—leader of the Zurich string-quartet, who also lent his services—or that unfortunate Minna who 'counted' so little, outside her domicile, that it is the rarest thing to catch a glimpse of her except when she waxed extra troublesome. With or without her (the full text of the letters to Sczy inclines me to with) the chief party put up at the "Hecht," and promptly rushed off to rehearsal, the lion's share of which would naturally fall to Liszt, though the band had already been coached in his novelties by its normal conductor. As for Wagner, on rather shaky testimony we hear that during his part of the rehearsal, the *Eroica*, "he marked the crescendi so strongly with his foot that he trembled all over, and could not keep it quiet even when a longer pause came. High and shrill, his voice was heard above the strongest fortis. As he had conducted no concerts since a longish time [just 17 months] he soon grew tired, and told those near him that he felt like an old post-horse unexpectedly put into harness again. At the concert itself, Wagner, who looked a little short by side of Liszt, appeared in big jack-boots of felt." If we accept this tale, 'without prejudice,' it is clear that Wagner had not so thoroughly recovered from his recent maladies as Liszt had temporarily, and possibly those redoubtable felt boots—which

* Since 'first proof' of the above, a friend has kindly procured me the back number of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* containing the full text of these letters, which, with a few cognate particulars, I accordingly shall reproduce in the Appendix. It now is evident that Sczadrowsky had run over to Zurich at least once in course of the pourparlers, and the Wesendoncks may *then* have proposed attendance; but they clearly had left Switzerland before this final message.

seem to have become a byword at Zurich *—were telegraphed for in hope of staving off that "violent cold in the head" with which we know he reached his home next Thursday.

The following is the actual St Gallen programme :—

THIRD SUBSCRIPTION CONCERT.

Sunday the 23rd November 1856.

In the hall of the Library (new Schoolhouse) with considerably reinforced band.

Part I.

Under the direction of Herr Dr FRANZ LISZT :

"Orpheus," symphonic poem for orchestra . . . Franz Liszt.

Two Romances from (1) "Armida," (2) "Iphigenia
in Aulis" Gluck.

Sung by Fräul. Stehle (conductor, our Herr Sczadrowsky).

"Les Préludes," symphonic poem for orchestra . . . Franz Liszt.

Part II.

Under the direction of Herr RICHARD WAGNER :

"*Sinfonia eroica*" L. v. Beethoven.

Success on this occasion was wholly Liszt's, not Beethoven's or Wagner's. The latter writes Otto *inter alia* that day week: "The 'Eroica' gave me small delight; in my unspeakable exertions to drive an already fagged-out orchestra to the height I wanted, my own pleasure in the thing was done for"; his praise of Liszt must wait awhile, but he tells Liszt three weeks later, "I won't face an audience again." The former is silent toward all his friends on the quality of Wagner's share. Writing cousin Eduard, the 24th, says Liszt: "Quite a notable concert took place at St Gallen yesterday. Wagner conducted the Eroica symphony, and in his honour I presented two of my symphonic poems. The latter were excellently given—and received. The St Gallen newspaper has several articles thereon, which I am sending you."—Here is a sample from the local *Tagblatt*:

* The St Gallen concert itself stirred bad blood in the sister city, for the *N. Berl. Musikzeitung* of Dec. 17, 56, reprints the following from a Zurich newspaper: "The concerts of the Allg. Musikgesellschaft begin next week. Richard Wagner has again declined all share in them. This, together with the circumstance that he has just set forth on a triumphal progress to St Gallen with Liszt—who made a longish stay here—naturally is taken very ill of him by his local admirers." Wagner had something better to do, this winter, than indulge such ungrateful "admirers"; he had act i of his *Siegfried* to compose.

It may indeed be an event unlikely to recur for centuries, that heroes of the art of tone conduct a concert at St Gallen, and one of these two men, who stand before us as musical Dioscuri, presents us with works of his own. Here you see two men at one in aim [?] and ungrudgingly rejoicing in each other's greatness: the one an outlaw, plucking a full rich laurel-wreath of the beautiful on alien soil—the other, after flying from triumph to triumph, suddenly retiring with free and fixed resolve to let his unspent power flow forth in pure and noble artworks. So may both figures stand as beacon-lights before our eyes, though it no longer is granted to have them bodily among us.

I do not know the precise date of this lucubration, but the same kind of thing had been going on for five whole days by word of mouth before what Wagner calls the "painfully protracted sojourn at St Gallen" came to end for sheer lack of fresh fuel. Frau Fürstin was a born propagandist, and the last drop of enthusiasm had to be squeezed out of the tiniest grape ere she could leave it in peace. Small though the place, it was an unrivalled opportunity for advertising Liszt, not merely as friend and benefactor—which he was—but also as patented creative peer of Wagner; and she made the utmost of it.* Wagner's letter to Sczadrowsky of the 18th had spoken of a projected stay at St Gallen from Saturday to Monday: the visit, much against his will, was prolonged till Thursday. After the two "heroes of the art of tone" had been "borne to their hotel in triumph"—a proceeding to which *Wagner* was unaccustomed—and after they had signed their names to a "diploma" presented to each of the bandsmen with the first few bars of the two Sym. poems and *Eroica* on it,† a complimentary banquet had to be engineered at the Hecht, you see, for Wednesday; a banquet at which both "heroes" were toasted as a matter of course, and which Wagner describes (to Otto) as "so well meant, and at which I was made

* Liszt to Wagner, Dec. 12: "Our St Gallen concert has not remained without an echo at Munich, and immediately after my arrival Lachner . . . proposed to me to send to St Gallen for the scores of the two symphonic poems, in order to give them at a subscription-concert while I was here. I thanked him most politely for the distinction, but reserved to myself the taking advantage of it another time" (*cf* 203 *inf.*).

† According to *Die Musik* (vid. sup.) Wagner added to his quotation the words "*So dachte Beethoven über heroische Dinge*"—"That's how Beethoven thought, on heroic things"—the irony, needless to say, being unintentional.

so much of, that—against my previous obstinate resistance—I was brought to speech myself at last.”*

Nov. 27 came the private leave-taking at Rorschach, whither Wagner accompanied his somewhat exhausting guests, and whence he returned that evening “in shocking weather, cold and empty, to the Zeltweg” and “domestic (?) peace,” as he severally tells Otto and Liszt on the 30th, by when he has “not left the house since.” His envoy to the travellers is significant in many ways: “Here I sit once more, gazing after you all. Best thanks to you, dear Fürstin, for being the first to send me tidings! I am no little relieved that you were able to continue the journey to Munich without any harm † and will be able to rest it off there rather more comfortably than at the St Gallen Hecht. Rest off—what am I saying? You indefatigables!—A thousand heartfelt blessings attend you wherever you go! What you people have become to me, your hearts must tell you; so rich an estate you are to me, that I hardly know how to survey it.—But you also are a constant penitential sermon; I cannot think of you people without feeling heartily ashamed of myself. How is it even possible that you can bear me, seeing how unbearable I appear to myself?—I am not without intention to reform, however . . . I mean to lock myself away in ‘*Purgatorio*,’ and try to turn so good that I may greet you soon, best Franz, with the ‘*Magnificat*.’ You’ll always keep ahead of me in that, though;

* In a paragraph of Dec. 19 recording a subsequent St Gallen concert with “Scene from the Flying Dutchman, Spinning Chorus and Senta’s Ballad,” the *Neue Zeitschrift* quite plaintively adds: “Unfortunately we still lack a detailed report of the concert under Liszt and Wagner. All we are able to say, is that the latter expressed himself about Liszt’s compositions with the greatest appreciation” (it was nice of him, to have kept his *Flying Dutchman* scene away from competition). The belated report in question, evidently written by a St Gallener, who pleads illness as cause of delay, appeared in the *N.Z.* of Feb. 20 and 27 and June 26 (!), 1857. Here, besides high praise bestowed on the two works of the other of the “*Dioscuri*,” a long sympathetic account is given of Wagner’s “wonderful conducting of the *Eroica*,” and we further learn that there was “a large audience although it rained in torrents.”

† The indomitable manageress must have been a little ailing herself, as Wagner’s next, Dec. 6, asks after her health in particular.—On the 16th he bids Liszt “thank the most excellent of all Fürstins a thousand times for the most surprising cushion, and especially for the famous German letter.” Cushions seem to have been a little weakness (or physical necessity?) of his.

for there you are unique, true Virtuoso! . . . My blessing on you all! May the good 'Freundin' soon thoroughly recuperate, for Munich's big Professors to have their joy of the Rectory! Dear good Fürstin! And dear, dear Franz: '*mon bon grand,*' good and great—that's you; my blessing on you! Fare all three of you well; forget the cross and ugly part of me, and remember nothing save the kindness you have thought me worthy of.—Adieu, I'm ever yours!—My wife hasn't scolded me once, though I was crotchety enough yesterday. She sends her most powerful greetings, and thanks you all for your friendship."

At last we have an indubitable peep of Minna, and though Liszt retained none too flattering an impression of the Zeltweg ménage, "*cet intérieur auquel une certaine part exquise d'intimité faisait défaut*" (to Mme Laussot, Oct. 63), the poor woman herself had fallen captive to his bow. Her letter of next February winds up thus: "Let us hope you have returned from your Leipzig exertions with good health, and success, to the most faithful and affectionate of nurses.—How dull and dreary is our life here, so far as art goes, you probably have gained a small idea; if only one could conjure back the past, your visit, were it but for moments!—In conclusion, please give the Frau Fürstin and the Prinzessin my best regards and the assurance of my unchanging affection. The like to yourself, great Master, from your most grateful admirer, Minna Wagner." Frau Wille, too: "I do not see Wagner often—Wille calls on him more frequently—I fancy he is feeling sad and lonely since the loss of Liszt and all of you. The other day I told him that a friendship such as unites him and Liszt is of itself so great and rich and rare a boon, that the mere knowledge of possessing anything so high and glorious, methought, should make one thankful for a privilege past other men's! Wagner is indescribably lonely here; * but would he not be, anywhere?—For a man who towers over others, in mind and nature, must stand *alone*—but at the same time has communion with all higher spirits" (to the Fürstin, Jan. 28).

The two ends of Liszt's own New Year's letter to his friend: "Here I am in bed again with a whole flora of my Zurich 'clous,' but alas, have *you* no longer near me, and must keep my New

* In after years the worthy soul forgot, and flatly denied this loneliness; see iv, 127. Contemporary letters are the only stand-by, after all.

Year's day with you on paper. Better than I wish you from the bottom of my heart, you could not fare; the hope of being of some service to you yet, and perhaps of soon passing some time with you [at Weimar], keeps me alert and cheerful, though outward omens are none of the most auspicious. . . . I am chafing to get back to my works. As soon as I am well again, I shall shut myself entirely up in them and make you altogether present to me in the spirit till we at last can be together in the body also."

And the Symphonic Poems?

Next January 30, Liszt writes the Brussels Freundin: "Wagner's sympathetic interest in my symphonic works has been a great delight to me. I never expected them to suit him to such a point and at all points. Have you heard that, before my departure from Switzerland, Wagner and I conducted a grand concert at St Gallen, at which I had 'Orphée' and 'les Préludes' executed in his honour? They had got an excellent and good-sized band together on purpose, and these things produced a great sensation, not diminished by the next day's criticism (very favourable this time)." It sounds a little strange, for a man accustomed to the voice of Europe, in days of old, to clutch at the "very favourable" verdict of a third-rate Swiss city in the same breath with which he mentions Wagner's; but did Wagner agree with Liszt's music "at all points"? We have heard of his verbal demur to the close of the *Dante*, and have read his written to that of the *Mazeppa*; let us now hear what he wrote about Liszt's works in general, and the Symphonic poems in particular, immediately after St Gallen.

To Bülow, Nov. 29: * "Liszt's compositions have won me quite. It will take the asses—and that means wellnigh everybody—a long time to dispose of this phenomenon; to myself he is clear and near, even where I stand farther off him, and I have made up my mind without reserve as to the eminent worth of his creations. At St Gallen—where they had prepared a sort of musical festival for us—he performed me his Orpheus and Préludes, the first whereof I consider quite a unique masterwork of the highest perfection. The Préludes, too, which I only could

* See *Bayreuther Blätter* 1900, p. 163.

wish had a little more originality in the principal motive, are handsome and bold" (*schön, frei und nobel*). The third epithet is so seldom used by Wagner—who mostly employs the true German "*edel*"—that its sense is somewhat dubious; * but one sincerely thanks Heaven that a piece of bunkum like *les Préludes*, † which shocks one more at every hearing and is only redeemed from the depths of vulgarity by its little pastoral episode, did *not* quite satisfy him at a most essential point, even when under 'the influence.' No wonder he wished its principal motive "a little more originality," seeing that its first and best statement is simply a dilution of the eight-bar opening of the *Freischütz* overture, whilst its *marziale* appearance (toward the end of the piece) must have sounded commonplace indeed to a man who himself had put immensely more grit into a kindred figure in his youth. In the *Feen* phrase I quote below you already see a master of melodic backbone, who at the other end of his life will give us its highest development in the heroic theme of Parsifal; in the "martial" variant of the *Préludes* theme—but no, let it speak for itself:

LES PRÉLUDES
(Allegro marziale animato)

DIE FEEN (Allegro molto, con fuoco)

Arindal: Ich ha-be Muth zu je - - dem Kampf

If we had cause to be thankful that Wagner qualified his praises of *les Préludes* when writing to von Bülow, we may be still more

* Of Alwine Frommann he says in 1845, "welche bei einer wohlhabenden Freundin sehr hübsch und nobel wohnt"—i.e. "she is living with a wealthy lady in very fine style." On the other hand, at the end of the *Sym. poems* essay itself he calls Liszt "ein viel zu nobler Mensch, um Euch zu betrügen"—"much too much of a gentleman to deceive you."

† L. Ramann gives a weird account of the origin of this work. It was planned in Paris *ca* 1844, she says, as a species of cantata entitled "Les 4 Eléments (La Terre, Les Aquilons, Les Flots, Les Astres)," but, "after progressing some distance," Liszt grew dissatisfied with the text, and abandoned it. Then in 1854 he is supposed to have taken it up again, and "turned The Four Elements into a symphonic poem with a Lamartine programme." As in 1849 Raff writes that he is "partly instrumenting" for Liszt a "concert-overture, the Four Elements," a fifth element is at once introduced, viz. that of confusion. But does not the work's re-christening—with a title, to boot, which even L. Ramann deplures—strike a blow at the very roots of the symphonic *poem*?

thankful for his eloquent reticence thereon in his letter to Otto next morning: "I promised to write you, dear friend, as soon as I had anything right good to tell you. Well, Liszt thought our St Gallen adventure was something right good, and begged me to write you about it . . . [the party's greetings—*vid.* 176 *sup.*] . . . So, to stick to nothing but the agreeable, I will tell you of the concert's good result. Liszt's 'Orpheus' made a deep impression on me; it is one of the most beautiful, most perfect, ay, most incomparable tone-poems. To myself the enjoyment of this work was great; his 'Préludes' served the audience better, and had to be repeated.—Liszt was made very happy by my unfeigned appreciation of his works, and expressed his joy affectingly" (goes on to the *Eroica*).

The above leaves us in not the smallest doubt of the sincerity of Wagner's admiration for Liszt's *Orpheus*—there could be no earthly reason for feigning approval of it in a letter to Otto—and I think that offers us a clue to his attitude in general. In *Orpheus* Liszt shews the dreamy side of him, that "heavenliness in his nature" which Wagner knew and loved. Even here is small originality of draughtsmanship: the introductory held note for the horn is flagrantly borrowed from that swelling trumpet-note which so characteristically ushers the first section of the *Rienzi* overture in and out, whilst the thematic material would scarcely arrest notice if met in a crowd; but, as Dannreuther has said, "Of the 12 Poèmes Symphoniques 'Orphée' is the most consistent from a musical point of view, and is exquisitely scored" (*Enc. Brit.*), and again, "the little masterpiece *Orphée* is pure self-contained music" (*Oxford Hist. Mus.*). There is a tender quality about this simpler tone-poem more likely to keep its composer's fame alive than all his swagger or his psalmodising; the same quality of delicate half-tints which Wagner must have recognised in portions of his longer works, as of the *Dante* and the *Faust*, and which comes out so clearly in his songs. As to these latter, not long after being bored to death by *S. Elisabeth*, I remember hearing a couple of them well sung, i.e. subduedly, at a Bayreuth *conversazione*, and shall not forget the general astonishment when their author's name passed round. The entirely wrong side of Liszt's music had been forced down our throats elsewhere; the right side was a minor revelation.

That *Orpheus* will conduct us to Wagner's famous open Letter,

but we must first take a sentence or two from Liszt's tirade of a bare week after St Gallen to A. Ritter, who had asked permission to give *Orpheus*, *Tasso* and the *Festklänge* at Stettin: "The frank common-sense of the public is everywhere so held in check by the daily drivel of the men of 'but' and 'still' who live by criticism . . . that I must regard any rapid circulation of my works as almost an imprudence. . . . And what right has all this *canaille* of percussion instruments, cymbals, triangle and drum, upon the sacred field of *Symphony*? Believe me, it not only is aberration and confusion of ideas, but also a pollution of the species itself!—Should you think otherwise, allow me at least to restrain you from compromising yourself too deeply so near the gates of infallible Berlin Criticism, and do not let me drag you with me to perdition by my jugglings with sound." The bitterness of the sarcasm, discharged on an unoffending disciple, shews how the Prussian iron had eaten into Liszt's soul, despite his late Hungarian triumphs and their friendly Swiss echo. Last July he had written Wagner, "I may boast of a much thicker, more impermeable skin than yours": the above at once confutes the boast and affords an inkling of the impression of disappointed hopes Liszt must have conveyed to his comrade at Zurich.

So Wagner sympathetically resolves to throw the full weight of his own now fairly honoured name into the scale, as Liszt had done for him six years ago when the position was reversed. After an encouraging request to be sure and send the remaining scores (Dec. 6), and again, "Can't I have your *Mountain-symphony* yet? Mind you don't forget me when it's out" (Jan. 27)—on the 8th of February 1857 he drops a hint of what he is planning, and what he doubtless would have executed two months since, had it not been for act i of *Siegfried* and a host of complications we shall meet next chapter: "Tell the dear Child she shall shortly—very shortly—get a letter such as she wants from me, but not on 'Indian poetry' (droll idea!); no, on something my heart is full of, and to which I perhaps shall give no other name than 'Orpheus.' But I must be in a thoroughly good mood for it first . . . The Fürstin is cross with me, I feel it! However, I know I shall soon make it up with her. A thousand kind regards to her.—Farewell, best friend, dear Orpheus!"

That was on a Sunday. By the following Sunday the letter to

the young princess, which Wagner knew would compensate her mother for any previous friction, is finished and despatched; a letter plainly destined for publicity by a concluding paragraph just as plainly not. The emblematic title '*Orpheus*,' first contemplated, could not very well be used; so the letter came into the world—*Neue Zeitschrift*, April 10—under the more prosaic heading "A letter by Richard Wagner on Franz Liszt" (see *On Franz Liszt's Symphonic Poems—Prose III.*), Wagner's only literary effort for three years past and another three to come.

Specifically critical it makes no pretence of being, as its author explains to Liszt May 8: "I could not help feeling touched that my Letter should have given you such joy, but am sure you have taken the good will for the deed; for *much* of what I wrote can mean little save to few, just because it was so difficult to write much that would have been of more profit and importance maybe to the many. I had entirely to refrain from describing your separate poems, and, honestly, for the reasons given in the Letter: I neither *can* nor will attempt so lame a thing again [presumably, as his "Programmes" to the *Eroica*, etc.]. Consequently I had to limit myself to shewing the *intelligent* the road that had opened to *me*; whoever cannot follow it thereafter for himself, neither can I help him any farther." That "road" indeed was simple, too simple for those not subject to Liszt's magnetism: "Only trust, and ye will marvel at the gain your trust will bring you!"—says the concluding apostrophe, naively unaware that that is the very essence of the 'confidence trick.'

Apart from a few pregnant but inconclusive pages on the difference between the concert-overture and the "symphonic poem," and again between Berlioz' and Liszt's conceptions of the latter,* this whole essay is a *captatio benevolentiae*, therefore should not be too closely scrutinised. Neither would such a scrutiny be altogether fair to Wagner, for we do not even yet possess the Letter in its genuine text. What we have, is a

* One cannot help sympathising with Tiersot, when he says of Liszt: "Il n'est pas niable que son invention du 'poème symphonique' soit assez mince venant après la 'symphonie dramatique' de Berlioz, quelles que soient les belles paroles par lesquelles on s'est efforcé de nous démontrer que ceci vaut beaucoup mieux que cela" (*Hector Berlioz*, p. 314), and with the Bülow of 1884: "To-day I find the more complete ideal of the 'symphonic poem' in Mendelssohn's overtures to *Hebrides*, *Melusine*, *Meerestille*" (letter to Prof. E. Breslaur, *H. v. B. Briefe III.*).

reprint of fifteen years later (*Ges. Schr.* v), strictly following the *Neue Zeitschrift* version of 1857 at all points save a mere handful of clerical errors;* but—an astounding but—that *Neue Zeitschrift* version was a mutilation effected without Wagner's consent or foreknowledge! Had we not become more or less familiar with the literary code obtaining at the Altenburg, we should scarcely have thought such a thing possible; but its history stands in black on white, all but the original document itself and detailed particulars of its amendment. Let us have that history.

Back from the 15th of April to the 16th of February (57)—when a letter of Liszt's crosses Wagner's essay in the post—we possess no correspondence between the two principals, neither does any appear to have passed; but a postscript to a letter of March 26 † tells Eduard Liszt: "In the next number of Brendel's paper there will appear a longish letter of R. Wagner's on my individuality as composer, which will be of interest to you." That "next number" would be due next day, March 27, but a week thereafter Liszt writes Brendel himself, Apr. 3: "I believed Wagner's Letter was in your hands long ago, and could not understand why it had not appeared yet. Pohl has again been playing a too marked *ritenuto assai*, which Fräulein Riese has had to make good as the personification of *accelerando il più possibile*.—You will hardly need my formal assurance that I attach quite a particular value to this letter, any more than that

* Among these the only one not absolutely insignificant is the *N.Z.*'s omission of a brief clause, essential to the meaning, now replaced by "mit der Kundgebung der bestimmten Originalität" (*Ges. Schr.* vol. v, p. 241). Presumably Wagner had forgotten all about the alteration incident by the time of this 'collected' edition, 1872; for even the expression "neueren Kunstform," to which he categorically objected in his reprimand to Brendel, is faithfully reproduced there.

† Dealing again with impenitent critics, and containing the singular passage: "But would-be grave musicians affect to treat all instruments of percussion *en canaille*, not to be allowed within the decent pale of *Symphony*. They heartily deplore Beethoven's letting himself be seduced into employing the big drum and triangle in the finale of the 9th symphony. In Berlioz, Wagner and my humble self, it need not surprise; 'birds of a feather flock together,' and as we [?] are treated as impotent *canaille* among the musicians, it is only natural we should live on good terms with the *canaille* among the instruments." Would that be "modestly proud," or "proudly modest"?

I have not in the smallest degree caused Wagner to write it, beyond sending him and playing him my scores.—Simultaneously with its appearance in your *Zeitschrift* I wish to have a *separate impression* printed, *superiorly* but *simply* got up (without border ornament), and beg you, dear friend, to send me 50 to 60 copies of this impression (at my expense).”*

What Pohl was doing with it all those weeks does not transpire, though we soon shall learn that somebody in Liszt's entourage did not quite like the Letter. The share of Frl. Riese—a Leipzig pfe-teacher erst pupil of Liszt, and an acquaintance of Wagner's—is still more indefinite; perhaps she fair-copied *accelerando* after Pohl's *ritenuto* blue pencil had done with (or for?) the autograph itself. But no sooner has the resultant appeared in print, than it draws down on poor Brendel a reprimand from Wagner dated Apr. 15: “Valued Friend, I have read in your *Zeitschrift* the reproduction, somewhat unduly delayed, of my Letter on Liszt, and found to my regret that it was very incorrect—even to the point of omissions distorting the sense (through carelessness of the compositor). I meant at first to send you an errata-list [for publication], but upon reflecting that such supplementary corrigenda are never read together with the text, I have decided to forward a corrected copy to Zellner at Vienna, asking him to publish it in his journal forthwith. It is with no idea of punishing you for the negligence I have been victim of, but simply of inducing those who take an interest in the thing to re-peruse the Letter, thus corrected. On the other hand, if you deliberately altered expressions such as ‘*purere art-form*’ (into *newer*, etc.), you at anyrate have greatly misunderstood me, and in that case would have to regard my correction as a demonstration against yourself (even if merely *privatim*). However, the presumable root of most of the errors lies in your having been handed, not my manuscript, but merely a transcript: this, nevertheless, you ought not to have accepted.—Shall I be seeing you soon?” etc.

Already in the alteration branded one smells a *Zukunft* rat, but docile *Brendel's* guiltlessness is proved by the ensuing correspondence between Wagner and Liszt himself. If we may go

* On the 13th of the following March (1858) Liszt writes Carolyne, from Prague, “If you will send me ten copies of Wagner's letter on the *symphonische Dichtungen* I shall be able to make good use of them.”

by the collocation as published, Wagner had sent this letter on to Liszt for forwarding, with a covering couple of lines: "I should be glad if you would communicate the enclosed correction to Brendel also, so that this good creature may come by a notion of his bad editing!" From the fact of the letter to Brendel being found among those to Liszt, however, it looks as if the latter did not forward *it*, but a mollification thereof; a conclusion confirmed by the nonchalance with which Liszt glides over all that in a reply to Wagner by return of post (Apr. 19): "You prepared me a fine Easter-day [12th] through your Letter, uniuquest of friends; and the *unleavened bread* of love, which you offer me therein with such true friendship and kindness, brings me strength, recovery, and complete oblivion of all leaven elsewhere!—Accept my heartiest thanks for it, and let it be a joy to yourself to have bestowed so great and intimate a joy on me. We must not let that joy be troubled by a few omissions and misprints. The essential is, that you are fond of me and deem my honest efforts as musician worthy of your sympathy; this you have said in a fashion none else could!—I candidly confess that when I brought you my things to Zurich, I did not know how you would receive and regard them.* I have already had to hear and read so much about them, that I really retain no opinion at all, and simply go on working from an ineradicable inner conviction, without raising any claim whatever to recognition or assent. Several of my closer friends—e.g. Joachim, Schumann formerly, and others †—have assumed a distant, shy,

* Had he forgotten so soon the two letters from Mornex, when Wagner had seen all but the *Faust* and the *Dante*?

† To Carolyne next month, from Aachen (music-festival): "Les dispositions peu bien veillantes de Berlioz à l'égard de mon activité et mes tendances ont transpiré ici—et ne contribuent pas à mettre Berlioz en meilleure lumière, car le gros des gens explique cela simplement par l'envie, et ne se trompe peut-être pas entièrement." The tacit assumption of superiority shews up more clearly in a preceding passage of the same letter, concerning *l'Enfance du Christ*: "Pour ma part, je ne l'admire que dans une certaine mesure. Aussitôt mon *Élisabeth* terminée, il faut que nous composions le *Christ*, dans le sens que nous donnons à cet ouvrage."—Joachim's notorious letter of de-Weymaration was not written till the following August; softened by expressions of personal attachment, it contains the following: "I am entirely inaccessible to your music; it contradicts everything my assimilative powers have drawn from the spirit of our Great, from early youth. Were it conceivable that I were ever robbed of all I have learnt to love and venerate in their

or adverse attitude toward my musical products: I take it in nowise ill of them, and cannot repay them in kind, since I continue to feel a sincere and penetrating interest in their works.—Imagine then, dearest Richard, the unspeakable delight those hours at Zurich and St Gallen gave me, when the life-bearing flash of your eye pierced its way to my soul and embraced it with love!

One has an uneasy feeling that “wo Dein strahlender Blick so belebend und versöhnend in meine Seele drang und sie liebevoll umfasste” is more an imitation of his friend’s, than in Liszt’s personal manner (which is better represented by the “*Azymen*” at the commencement); but what one really wants to know, is why he should make so light of “omissions” that stirred up Wagner’s wrath to such a pitch. An indirect excuse is furnished by the next paragraph: “Things are looking very sadly at the Altenburg. The Fürstin has been rather seriously ill for the last three weeks, and cannot leave her bed. The princess [Marie], too, has had to take medicine, and may not leave her room yet—whilst for my own part (after having to keep my bed for a full six weeks) only the last few days have I been able to limp about the theatre and Schloss.” In such circumstances the Altenburg may well have been unable to superintend the copying of that Letter, but as Liszt thought it of sufficient importance to be reprinted forthwith as a pamphlet*—a favourite panacea of his—why did he not send the autograph direct to Brendel for a rough proof to be struck, and then submit his own amendments to *the author*? He was particular enough about proofs and misprints with the Carolyszian essays, whilst he had long since had a taste of Wagner’s sentiments in that regard (vol. iv, 483, 488). Neither is it mere conjecture, that some of the “omissions” were due, not to negligence, but to

creations, of what *I* feel as music, your strains would fill up nothing of the enormous, crushing void for me.” One would not like to have had to write that; but how many of us, with the best will in the world, have felt it!

* *Forthwith* it was, for on April 27 Liszt writes his cousin: “Wagner’s Letter has appeared in a separate reprint, and you are receiving several copies of it, as I believe you like it and will make good use of it.” Clearly it had been reproduced in pamphlet form without waiting to give Wagner a chance of correction, or Liszt’s letter of the 19th would have told him, ‘But all that shall be put right in the reprint’—whereas this pamphlet is not even mentioned to its author.

intention ; for Wagner's answer of May 8 (p. 204 *sup.*) goes on : "As regards the misprints, I mean to amuse myself shortly by sending you a corrected copy, when you will understand my turning huffy ; only, the blame seems to be less Brendel's, than that of the manuscript's copyist, who accomplished his task very cursorily. I am not speaking of the tendentious omissions, which you effected (*besorget*) and had a perfect right to, but of utter slovenlinesses. However, that's all in order now, and can't happen so quickly again."

Here it is clear enough that Wagner had meantime heard from Brendel that certain *tendenziöse Auslassungen* had either been operated by Liszt himself or delegated by him to Pohl ; * whilst the meaning of "all in order now" is supplied by a fragment of a letter to Brendel of April 25 : "Zellner has just written me that he has already published excerpts from my Letter," i.e. in his *Blätter für Musik &c.* It would be interesting to get hold of a copy of Zellner's periodical, and thus substantiate the minor perversions to which Wagner most objected at the time ; but it would be far more interesting to unearth the original autograph and ascertain the nature of those "tendentious omissions," since the adjective itself suggests their touching points where Liszt was not at one with Wagner. Probably they would not amount to anything very serious in themselves, but one does not altogether relish a cooked testimonial. Merely as guess-work, I will indicate two places where omissions of the nature hinted may possibly have been made : *a*) p. 251 of *Ges. Schr.* vol. v—for the general reader I have to speak in terms of that, or *Prose* III. 250—where a long paragraph on Berlioz seems to break off abruptly ; *b*) on p. 252 *Ges. Schr.* (P. III. 251) a dash occurs, just after Wagner has announced his intention of "telling something about the formal side" of the Symphonic poems—an intention scarcely executed as the text now stands. But these are pure guesses, and since Wagner gave his friend full absolution for the mangling, once effected, I suppose we must not visit it too heavily on Liszt who gave carte blanche to Bülow to expurgate whole passages, or alter scoring, in his instrumental works.

* In any case the Fürstin wrote him (W.) very shortly after the essay's appearance ; see tiny no. 27 to *Mathilde*.

In the long run, however, that unlucky essay gave no one satisfaction.* Two years from Wagner's plenary indulgence, he writes to thank Liszt for belated receipt of his *Dante* (see cap. VII.), then adds: "But if I say anything more on it, even to yourself, it will fare with me exactly as before, when I wrote my Letter about you to M. For I had a brand-new experience regarding that Letter not long since. K[arl] R[itter] had never read it; luckily I found it among my papers at Venice, and gave it to him. Then he came and disclosed to me how he had heard from certain people—themselves not far from you †—that I really had expressed myself evasively in this Letter, and taken uncommon pains to say nothing very definite about you; he had worried over this himself, and was highly delighted, after reading the Letter, to discover the enormous import I attached to you therein. So—astounded at the possibility of misconstruction—I read my Letter through again myself forthwith, and certainly had to chime in with K.'s invectives on the incredible denseness, superficiality and triviality of the individuals who had found it possible to mistake its meaning. But I further swore an inward oath, not to let *another word* of mine be published. We know what *we* are to each other, and can re-affirm it between ourselves from time to time for our refreshment; but as for telling the world what we are, I'll be— —! It's too incredible!!"

To that Liszt replies in a mere postscript (May 14, 59): "I

* Within three weeks of its appearance, in fact, Liszt sent for Raff and begged him to write "an analysis of all his symphonic poems, about 300 pages long . . . he did not want the things praised, simply an objective account of the technical construction and poetic contents," as "people on all sides were trying to club him to death, and he had no one who could do anything effectual for him." Thus Raff himself on the day of the interview, May 1, 57, adding that "in course of the debate, which lasted 3 hours, I explained to him the essentials of my disagreement with his tendency." A handsome fee was offered Raff, but he refused that forthwith, and eventually declined the whole job (see *Die Musik* as before), doubtless feeling rather shy of expounding a technique in which he himself had had no inconsiderable share. The task was ultimately undertaken by young Felix Draeseke, in a series of articles contributed to Brendel's second periodical, *Anregungen für Kunst &c.*, 1858-9.

† Karl Ritter, whose Zurich quarrel with Liszt I reserve for chapter V., had lately 'made it up' and spent some days at Weimar in December 58. He appears to have been rather a two-faced young gentleman, though, from what Glasenapp has to say of his unpublished letters of that period.

told you at the time how *profoundly* your Letter to M. on the Symph. poems rejoiced me,—no notice should be taken of the tittle-tattle which denseness, triviality and spite have raised about it." For all that, the "*Geschwätz*" had soaked in, at the Altenburg, and thus this generous Letter came itself to form the gradual solvent of a friendship which had thriven ever closer until then. For, of praise Liszt was insatiable: despite his friend's most solemn blessing on the *Dante*, autumn 57 (1834 *sup.*); despite his renewed assurances concerning it in 59; despite the "great joy" Liszt's *Faust* had given him in 61 *—despite all this, we find Liszt writing Carolyne in after years: † "There is no more reciprocity . . . than with Berlioz, Wagner, etc., whose ideas and works I admire most sincerely, without their rendering me the like! Happily, I find more than compensation on the side of sentiment—the principal affair in life!"

What a history that complaint sums up, and what an æsthetic code! Nothing but the most preposterous Mutual Admiration Society could have satisfied a man who places Berlioz, never to be drawn into the smallest eulogy of his 'original' output, in the same boat with Wagner, in all conscience drawn quite far enough "Berlioz, Wagner and my humble self" are to be entitled, forsooth, to "the like" (*la pareille*), i.e. an equal admiration of their creative efforts! But why? Supposing Garrick a contemporary of Shakespeare's, would he have been astonished at the heaven-born dramatist's gently waiving any claim of the comedian's plays to equal rank; would he not rather have treasured up the smallest crumb of recognition? And Liszt had

* If he expressed it to Mathilde Wesendonck a fortnight afterwards, how much more must he have expressed at the time to Liszt himself, who writes Carolyne, Aug. 12, 61: "Wagner a été fort aimable vers moi."—Yet that letter to Mathilde reveals the same discrimination between the two aspects of Liszt's music as traced before: "His *Faust* really gave me great joy, and its second part (Gretchen) made an unforgettably profound impression on me. What filled me with great sadness, was that all this could only be executed with quite unusual mediocrity; everything had to be seen to in *one* rehearsal, and Hans, who conducted, did wonders to make the performance even tolerable." All the defects in the work are magnanimously transferred to its performance, which Liszt himself, however, denotes to Carolyne as "parfaitement réussi."

† In *Liszt's Briefe* VI. (pp. 310-1) this note is furnished with a conjectural date "[Rom, September 1871]," on what grounds I know not; but Berlioz had died in March 1869.

a basketful from Wagner—all scattered in his quest of the loaf withheld.

For this extraordinary pretention, and its consequent warping of a very generous character, the recipient of that tiny note herself must primarily be held accountable. When she first met Liszt, in 1847, he was at the zenith of his fame as pianist, with fully half a life in front of him; just because she liked a little *Pater Noster* and a dreamy song, she made him bid goodbye to a career in which he had no equal, perhaps will never have, to adopt the more ambitious path of composer on the heroic scale. She could supply him with poetic bases, more or less effective; what she could not, was a gift which *must* have shewn itself long, long before the age of 36, if ever it was in him. Had she only let him go on playing! The world of his contemporaries had been the richer for thousands of inspiring hours; posterity had been the poorer for what, with very rare exceptions, it lief would miss. It is an infinitely pathetic tale of unexampled talent palsied by a clever lady's fad.

In the light of that little note we can better understand the Bayreuth article of 1878. It was Sir Joshua Reynolds' opinion that great artists "praise only the inferior men among their contemporaries, those who by no possible chance can ever be their peers"; but if Wagner stretched a point in praise of Liszt's "creations" then, it was out of pure compassion for wounded pride. On the other hand, if, apart from certain reservations, he saw more to fascinate him in those works than we can see, it was solely through the medium of his personal love for Liszt.

V.

“SIEGFRIED” AS TORSO.

Composition of act i.—Liszt-Ritter quarrel stops Wagner's ‘pension.’—Alarms of war.—The “Asyl” acquired; Siegfried's forge-songs.—Weimar mirages; Liszt fruitlessly sounds Haertels.—Act i full-scored.—Moving in.—Music of act ii begun; interrupted by a momentous resolve.—A “frivolous” sale of Tannhäuser to Vienna.—Mysterious Brazilian offer.—Conferences with Devrient; Gd Duke of Baden's patronage.—Composition of act ii resumed and finished; the RING then laid aside.

“No longer can I attune myself to Siegfried; already my musical gaze is roving far beyond.”

Winter 1856.

“I have done myself violence; in the best of moods I've torn my Siegfried from my heart.”

Summer 1857.

“I THINK of resuming my long-interrupted work with a will,” says the letter of Nov. 30, 56, to Otto; of the same date to Liszt, “I must try and break the news of his mother's death to Siegfried tomorrow morning”—marking the exact point of interruption by that six-week visit. Dec. 6 to Liszt, “I shall have finished the first scene in a day or two” (*dieser Tage*). Altogether, then, the prelude and first musical scene of *Siegfried*, a little over a third of the whole act, took just a month to ‘sketch.’

Allowance made for the physiologic impossibility of working more than a couple of hours a day without suffering for it, that is fairly quick, though scarcely quicker than the composition of a similar stretch of *Die Walküre* two years since; when its author had written the Fürstin (*cf* v, 3-4), “So soon as I reach my *Young Siegfried*, things will probably go much faster.” But here was fresh ground to break, and, after the ominous prelude set as background to sly Mime's ambitions, this first scene is a very

lexicon of *brio*, of fertile change in tempo, rhythm, timbre, dynamics—all firmly held together by a framework of two sharp-cut figures: for Mime, a fussy derivative from the long-familiar Smithy theme; for Siegfried, a motive stamped with all the headlong impetuosity of lusty youth (“Jugendkraft” some label it):



Into this frame is deftly built a series of episodes enough to generate at least a triplet of Symphonic poems. Take that accompaniment of “Es sangen die Vöglein so selig im Lenz,” with its proem at Mime’s “Mein Kind, das lehrt dich kennen,” and its envoy at Siegfried’s “Siehst du, nun fällt auch selbst mir ein,” etc.; the most exquisite of idylls, called up in the stripling’s fancy “as from out a dream”—the master’s explanation to his Bayreuth band:



It is at the eighth note from the close of this example, its turning-point, that Siegfried begins his “Es sangen.” Take the next *four* notes, in fact the seven (the analysts never give you more than two of them), and you get an obviously intentional reminiscence of Sieglinde’s “Du bist der Lenz,” at once supplying balance to our melody and shewing the drift of its former inceptions; then turn to its final appearance (violins, before “Wer Vater und Mutter mir sei!”), and you find it end precisely as the accompaniment to that sentence of hers did. Indisputably this is no coincidence, but expressive of the same longing in mother and son; and indeed the first half of the tune had been anticipated by the voice in Siegfried’s earliest speech to Mime: “Nach bess’rem Gesellen sucht’ ich, *als daheim mir einer sitzt.*”*

* Similarly it is passed in rapid review, so to speak, when Siegfried demands confirmation of Mime’s pedigree-tale: “Soll ich der Kunde,” etc.—another

The lovely melody returns in act ii, not only to embrace his touching “Ach! möcht’ ich Sohn meine Mutter sehn!” but to develop into still more wondrous beauty when he entreats his “liebes Vöglein” to conduct him to a “gut Gesell.” Nor can Wagner quite dispense with it in later works: in *Die Meistersinger* we find its buoyant working-out, with variants, in Walther’s “Am stillen Heerd,” where the connection with Spring is emphasised once more; in *Parsifal* we have the tender opening phrase repeated for Kundry’s idyll of the hero’s childhood, “Ich sah’ das Kind an seiner Mutter Brust.” Another of the many links that knit the master’s dramas into one harmonious whole.

This *Siegfried* scene indeed is rich in idylls, for all the bustling humour of their frame. Listen to “Nun kam ich zum klaren Bach,” with its probably deliberate suggestion of the second movement of Beethoven’s *Pastorale*; or again, “Alle Thiere sind mir theurer als du,” a delicious little contrapuntal duet for voice and violin—by no means the only specimen of counterpoint in this act by a long way, and clear proof of Wagner’s variance with the anarchist Weimar ‘school’ and its contempt for “antiquated frippery.”* How could he resist its use, when he had such a splendid vehicle at hand as our first example? Here is another specimen, from Mime’s first attempt to soothe the lad: “Willst du denn nie gedenken was ich dich lehrt’ vom Danke?”—doubly interesting through its foretaste of the cradle-song in the much later *Siegfried-Idyll*:

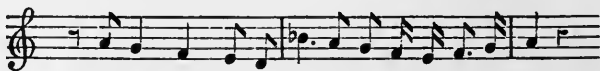


Perhaps the finest of these episodes, however, is the account of the youngster’s birth and pedigree, passing the loveliest motives

instance of the organic unity in the present scene. A part of it is put to very subtle use in act ii, to express the affectation of parental solicitude with which Mime attempts to cloak his “Denn hasste ich dich auch nicht,” etc.

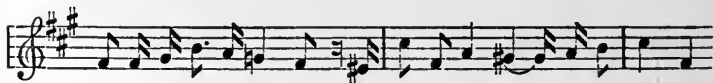
* See Liszt to Rubinstein, April ’55, regarding an outsider’s oratorio: “C’est la vieille friperie du contrepoint—die alte ungesalzene, ungepfefferte Wurst: [mus. ex.] pantoufle, à perte de vue et d’oreille! Je tâcherai de m’en priver pour ma Messe, quoique ce style soit très usuel en fait de musique d’Eglise.” Nevertheless Liszt added a fugue to his Mass *after* the 1856 performances.

from *Die Walküre* act i through the alembic of his musing fancy—"all the *sentimental* bits are Siegfried's concern alone," exclaimed the master at rehearsal—and leaving as its lasting legacy that Sieglinde theme which haunts him throughout the rest of this drama. How delightful, too, is the musical setting of Mime's dry little statements, e.g. that "doch Siegfried, der genas." But the whole art of musical dialogue had now attained perfection in a Master's hands, witness the melisma of the commencement of Mime's narrative :



Mime: Einst lag wimmernd ein Weib da draussen im wilden Wald:

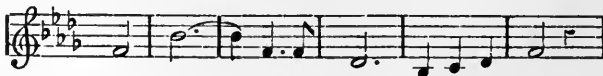
Compare this with traditional recitative, and you will appreciate what Wagner meant by "verse-melody," what life he puts into the smallest detail, without the faintest touch of bombast. It is of interest, also, to compare it with the opening of another narration composed fourteen years thereafter, Waltraute's in *Götterdämmerung* :



Waltraute: Seit er von dir ge-schieden, zur Schlacht nicht mehr schick-te uns Wo-tan:

Perfected by 1856, 1870 can only vary, not improve upon the style ; the feel of these two examples is quite the same, the actual melodies differ.

As a final instance of the tunefulness of Wagner's mature 'declamation,' so easy and natural that any other setting of the words appears unthinkable, I may cite the following from Mime's introductory monologue :



Mime: der Nib - - - lungen Hort hütet er dort.

Directly after the announcement of Dec. 6 to Liszt, "I shall have finished the first scene in a day or two," comes a brief passage ; the full sense of which has not been grasped as yet, I

think (at any rate it has only just dawned on myself): “Curious! not until composing, does the real essence of my poem open out to me; secrets hidden from myself till then disclose themselves at every turn. Thus, too, it all grows much more strenuous and forceful.” Now, the first of these two sentences, being of much wider application, is frequently quoted as throwing light on Wagner’s method—which undoubtedly it does; but, considering the time when it was written, there is peculiar interest in the second, “*So wird auch Alles viel heftiger und drängender.*” Very few textual changes, and infinitesimal, had its composition so far operated in this scene: on the eve of its close comes that most important one detailed in volume iv. There I observed with regard to this change, “The actual date cannot at present be fixed, but a probable would be the Spring of 1856, when Wagner had just completed the score of his *Walküre* . . . and, with ‘Wotan’s Farewell’ still ringing in his head, ‘*Wer meines Speeres Spitze fürchtet, durchschreite das Feuer nie*’ would naturally suggest the Wanderer’s ‘*Nur wer das Fürchten nie erfuhr*’ etc., and thus pitch the key for the whole recasting of the *Siegfried* fear-episode” (iv, 32). But those words of Wotan’s had been sung by Wagner himself, as seen in cap. IV., only two to three weeks prior to this letter, and the last scene of *Die Walküre* had been worrying him ever since.* Bearing that in mind, I think the “*viel heftiger und drängender*” provides us with a still more probable date for this striking change in the first scene itself. Arrived at the commencement of a musical climax, with Mime’s production of the splintered Nothung, the composer must have felt horrified at seeing more than 100 verses ahead of him ere he could really let his hero leave the stage; naturally he looked a little farther than his nose, and the anti-climax of a false exit and return must have shocked him into transference of his Fear lesson from this first scene to the third, an expedient which at the same time would give it a dramatic reason and obviate that instant chilling of the lad’s excitement. He therefore takes a dozen verses from the older ending, to give room for development of

* Even in the letter of Nov. 30, after playfully alluding to the “surreptitious vanity” engendered by Liszt’s parting gift of “shirt-studs”—which he had so little opportunity of displaying—he adds: “And that’s just how I’m making my Nibelungen; you always think at once of the Effect of the performance, I of nothing but the studs that lurk there.”

his hero's impatience at sight of his heritage, makes them lead into his glorious hymn of freedom "Aus dem Wald fort," and lets *that* form the close of the scene while our veins are still tingling. *Viel heftiger und drängender.*

So it was the musician who put the poet right here, just as he had done to a smaller extent toward the end of act i of *Die Walküre*, and we appear to have caught him red-handed. If—after his sumptuous presentation of the Wanderer's entry—he had only gone farther, and told the poet he had set him an almost impossible task with that competitive examination which constitutes the main body of the second scene! But the truth is, just at this juncture the twofold creator was in a most distracting personal *Klemme*, or fix.

"Taking things all round, it needs a lot of stubbornness if I'm still to bring this off; and really you have not given me quite the proper zest for it. However, I expect I must go on with it purely for myself, to pass my life away. So be it, then!" That is how he continues the announcement of Dec. 6 to Liszt, whose long-anticipated intercourse had left a shrewd suspicion that the huge masterpiece was no longer being created "for my true friends alone," but "purely for myself." The discouragement is still more obvious in this letter's close: "I need music—and Heaven knows, you are the only one can make it for me. I feel too wretched a musician, whereas I believe I have discovered that you are the greatest musician of all time [certainly meaning, executant]. That will be mighty news to you!"* Similarly, ten days thereafter: "The whole musical world cannot give me the artistic stimulus I need; you alone can. Everything which nature and defective cultivation have denied me—as musician—no one but yourself can make good to me by communication. Without that stimulus my meagre musical powers are bound to lose their fertility, I become dispirited, laborious, heavy; the act of producing, I feel it, may [eventually] become a torture to me. Never have I felt this more keenly, than since our last reunion"—to Liszt Dec. 16, barely three weeks after parting. The "artistic

* This is followed by a highly interesting communication of another kind: "Tell M[arie] I've been looking up the old red letter-case again, and have put my biography in order down to the 1st of December 1856." Probably the said "biography" formed the nucleus of the private memoirs dictated ten years later to his future wife.

stimulus,” renewal whereof he craved so soon, was therefore more than questionable; like alcohol in its after-effects, one might call it rather a depressant.

But that was by no means all—rather a symptom of the ‘fix,’ than the ‘fix’ itself. For all the personal joy it gave him, Liszt’s visit had a very serious effect upon the master’s fortunes, little as one might divine it from *their* correspondence. “To my sincere regret”—Liszt informs A. Ritter in that letter of Dec. 4 (p. 203 *sup.*)—“I only saw your brother Carl a couple of times in the first days of my stay at Zurich. By word of mouth I will tell you how this negative relation, so entirely against my wish and expectation, came about through your brother’s own touchiness (*durch eine gereizte Empfinderei Ihres Bruders*). That I gave him no serious cause at all, I surely do not need assure you; as for the future, however, I must quietly wait till Carl comes to his better senses.” As “Carl” was a particularly close friend of Wagner’s, of longer standing than Liszt himself, this wounding of him by some overbearing word must have placed the master in a very awkward predicament at the time, perhaps reflected in one or two of the billets dealt with in cap. IV.; but its serious consequences did not develop until after Liszt’s departure, as we learn from the account of Herr Glasenapp, who himself has seen the (unpublished) letters both of Karl and Wagner to Karl’s mother, and speaks of “Liszt’s surprisingly brusque behaviour (*auffallend heftiges Benehmen*) towards Karl Ritter, and the latter’s ultra-sensitiveness.”

Doubtless Wagner was hoping against hope that a quarrel betraying an element of childishness on both sides might be decently patched up ere Liszt left Zurich; anyhow, it is not till three days after bidding him farewell that Wagner deems it necessary to notify the misadventure to his benefactress. “A letter of November 30 to Frau Julie Ritter”—says Glasenapp (*Leben* III. 131)—“makes the first episodic mention of this affair. It is followed next Sunday, Dec. 7 [evidently in reply to her anxious enquiries] by a detailed treatment covering *seven* pages, with a whole-page postscript, and a note of Karl Ritter’s to the master as enclosure, also Ritter’s confirmatory lines to his mother, in which he ‘declares himself fairly in agreement’ with Wagner’s report [which consequently must have been submitted to him first]; then on the 24th of December by a letter 8 pages long, the first 4 of which

deal with Karl Ritter's further attitude towards him, the last 4 with the most delicate scruples as to continuing to accept the family's *subvention* after rupture with one of its members."

We do not learn the nature of Karl's "further attitude," any more than of the original offence, but may guess that that part of Liszt's letter of Dec. 4 referring to himself had meanwhile been communicated to him by his brother, and rekindled his wrath to such a pitch that Wagner had definitively to make a very painful choice between two of his greatest friends. The master's letter of Dec. 16 to Liszt in fact bears witness to a bombardment with disturbing notes from Karl, though he chivalrously refrains from a more direct allusion: "Since my return from St Gallen I haven't seen a soul again—excepting Herwegh. Solitary walks, a little work and reading, have formed my whole existence; to which I have only to add some other vexatious attacks on my scanty repose, which have scarce allowed me breathing-space, and made my condition very insupportable."* Not until a fortnight after his last letter to Karl's mother does he quite simply tell Liszt of the upshot, without a murmur (Jan. 6, 57): "Something important has altered since you left me; I have definitely renounced the R[itters'] pension." He merely states it as a reason for approaching the publishers

* He immediately turns the subject off, but in a mode which itself betrays that *letters* formed the present trouble: "Only the Goethe-Schiller Correspondence has edified me much; it brought our own relation to my mind, and shewed me precious fruits that might be borne by our co-operation under happier circumstances." Half a year later (July 57) we find that Liszt has "been reading the Correspondence between Schiller and Goethe on your recommendation" and makes an apt quotation; but the ordinary comparison of these two Correspondences will not hold water for an instant. On an earlier page (134) we saw the contrast drawn by Wagner himself, for Liszt himself, between their own epistles; next May (57) he tells Liszt: "I regret that our correspondence is so badly kept up; we never thoroughly speak out our thoughts, but—barring a few hasty ejaculations—mostly just skim along the surface of us"; whilst Bülow hears, Oct. 59: "I never get a real letter from Liszt, at the most mere answers to my own, and always from half to a quarter their length. . . . If I accost him, he is the most excellent friend imaginable, but—he does not accost me. Whence, then, am I to keep drawing matter wherewith to accost him?" (*cf* iv, 255.) As for Liszt, a fortnight after the said apt quotation he writes Carolyne: "If one omitted from these 2 big volumes the names of Schiller and Goethe, no one would trouble to read them" !!

afresh, and confirms it just as dispassionately a month later (Feb. 8): “Since I have given up the R.s’ subvention, I must try and secure an income in an *independent* way.” No reply of Liszt’s to the letter of Jan. 6 having come down to us, we possess no index to his remorse at learning that his amour-propre had ended in depriving his comrade of a revenue enjoyed for five unbroken years. Even at the eleventh hour one would have thought a graceful apology to Karl for the initial offence more in keeping with the Franciscan diploma than that masterly-inactive policy of waiting for a junior to “come to his senses”; but the Berlin *Tannhäuser* affair has already shewn how *difficile* the “bon grand” could make himself at times.

As if that were not a heavy enough cloud to be hanging over the second scene of *Siegfried*, two days before the last of those three letters to Frau Ritter we have the following to Otto :

Dec. 22, 56.

As you keep sending me such beautiful verses,* I shall have to begin responding with music !

Children, what a magnificent portfolio you’ve sent me : it’s clean impossible to put unruly Siegfried in ! Lord knows what I must save it for.—

It would have been still nicer, tho’, had you bestowed yourselves on us for Christmas. On that you’re absolutely dumb, alas, and the rich gift has almost made me sad, as it seemed to say you’d stay away a long time yet. May I be mistaken !

Or do you—as good Prussians—mean to leave us stranded in the coming strait of war ? That would not be nice of you ! For my part, I am left enough already ; I fear lest all may leave me soon—even my zest for work at last. No longer can I attune myself to Siegfried ; already my musical gaze is roving far beyond, away to where my mood befits, the realm of sadness [*Tristan ?*]. In truth it all appears to me [*scene 2 of Siegfried ?*] so stale and superficial.

You can form no notion of our solitude now, whilst my health is also dull and leaden. Perhaps I must soon clear out of here myself—as a political refugee ; apparently for France, if the Grand Duke of Weimar doesn’t aid me first. Not that *that* will grieve me much !

* If the “verses” were really Otto’s, they must simply have been a joke. On the other hand, as both allusions to them are omitted in the first edition, one rather suspects them to have been Mathilde’s ; in which case Wagner’s “happy swallow” lines (see *M.* p. 12) may possibly have been enclosed to her in reply.

But do send us word soon *when* you're coming. I was *much* delighted with your first accounts; may things have promptly gone on well with you!—

There would have been many another thing to say, and likewise to report [the Ritter incident?]; but I meant to tell you nothing but good, and have already played false to my resolve—of sheer necessity. Indeed mine is a curious case!—

So make the best of these disjointed lines, and if such lovely verse occurs to you again, do let me have it! But above all take my hearty great thanks again for the excessively handsome gift, and still more for the continual love and sympathy you give me.

Greet wife and children most kindly, and rest assured of my constant true devotion.

Adieu!

Your R. W.

It was a very actual danger, this transient alarm of war, since the King of Prussia was threatening at that moment to enforce his titular suzerainty over the canton of Neuchâtel, and the Swiss were mobilising to resist him. Gottfried Keller writes to friends in Berlin next February and March: "The war-scare was taken in great earnest here . . . For a couple of months I laid aside all work, wrote leaders, fired at targets, spouted in the cafés, and generally went to the devil. My sister knit stockings for the soldiers, but got them done too late and much bewailed it. 'Never mind,' said I, 'they'll do for me.' She made me pay her for the wool, though; so like a sister! . . . We had firmly made up our minds to devour the Prussians, man and beast. Imagine my small self, for instance, with a long lieutenant of the first regiment of Guards half down my gullet! Luckily that sort of dish always bears at least a toothpick on its cover." Keller could joke when the peril was over, but even he considered it no laughing matter at the time, on his own confession.

How the Neuchâtel (*alias* Neuenburg) dispute was settled to the lasting benefit of the Swiss Republic through the not wholly disinterested diplomacy of Napoleon III., is more a subject for the political historian; but the momentary precariousness of our hero's personal liberty is by no means exaggerated either in the above letter to Otto or in a hasty note to Liszt of the same epoch (undated): "I must be thinking of security against conceivable unpleasantness from the expected operations in Switzerland. Could not the Grand Duke obtain me from the *Prince of Prussia*, as Commander-in-chief of the army, a letter of safeguard against

maltreatment or capture by the Prussian military? If this cannot be got, in the conceivable event of an invasion by the Prussians I should have to flee to France; which would be highly inconvenient to me. I feel sure you will be good enough to do your utmost to relieve my mind.—It would be best, indeed, if I could come to Weimar shortly; but it seems I'm still to be exposed to all the pitfalls of my situation.” To this Liszt replies, from his sickbed, on New Year's day: “I wrote to the Prince of Prussia direct and at some length, on your behalf, the day before yesterday. Presumably he will convey me an answer, which I then will let you know. The danger of a Swiss war does not appear to me very extreme; still, I thought it a good opportunity for drawing the Prince's attention to the hardship of your fate, at such crying variance with your fame and artistic deserts. The Prince is an honourable character, and one may expect his intervention to turn to your advantage later on.—Meanwhile, I think, you ought to take *no further step*, nor waste *another word*, since it would lead to nothing but useless humiliation.” He also speaks of an interview at Carlsruhe three weeks earlier, when the Grand Ducal pair of Baden had expressed their lively interest in Wagner's works, and of a similar expression by “our own Grand Duke on my return, though he immediately added his fear that nothing could be done for you off-hand”—a theme whose variations are far from exhausted yet, as Wagner felt when he replied, Jan. 6: “My amnesty will never come to me till *Saxony* shall think it time; those gentry mean to shew their independence.”

Whether the Prince of Prussia ever answered Liszt, we know not; but the war-scare must have appreciably diminished by the 6th of January, for Wagner not to breathe another word to Liszt thereon. In fact his letter of about that date to Otto winds up thus: “In all reasonable probability war is no longer to be feared, and even in such an event I fancy I shall be able to remain here under safeguard”—the last word, “geschützt,” seeming to refer to the hope held out in Liszt's communication of Jan. 1.

The letter to Otto last-cited marks the commencement of a momentous era in its writer's life; it is therefore worth a little trouble to decipher its closer date. The autograph bears none, beyond a pencilled “Februar? 1857” added by Frau

Wesendonck herself when preparing the original edition, apparently after consulting '*Wagner-Liszt*,' where Liszt is told under "8. Feb. 57" that "W. has actually bought that little property, and offers it me on a perpetual lease." But a letter of Jan. 27 to Liszt had spoken of "the sketch for the first act of *Siegfried*" as already finished, whereas this to Otto begins with "Des Vaters Stahl fügt sich wohl mir: ich selbst schweisse das Schwert.' I had got exactly thus far," and so on. Moreover, that sketch itself is terminally dated "20. Januar 1857," and we surely must allow at least a fortnight for composition of its last quarter. Taking that as a limit on the one side, on the other we have the manifest reference to Liszt's of Jan. 1 (that "geschützt"), which could not reach Zurich before the 4th or 5th, but is answered on the 6th. So we may safely claim the *fifth of January* for our letter to Otto, thereby accounting at the same time for a hint at the close of the answer to Liszt, "I shall write you further very soon, on other things I hope will make us happier"—beyond which hint the writer could hardly go just then, Otto having requested him to keep those "other things" a secret for the present.

I fear I have not kept that secret quite so well as Wagner, but must excuse myself by his poetic omission to date this all-important document, which we will now resume after its *Siegfried* motto: "I had got exactly thus far, and was just thinking out the motive to denote this sudden turn, the start of the amazing forge-work, when your letter stopped me with the *confidential* tidings; so you may judge how it stands with my work for *to-day*. I may well give up 'to-day,' however, when I see in front of me so long and fair and work-inviting a 'tomorrow,' for which I have to thank the rarest friendship and most loyal sympathy!"

We will pass the recapitulation of his wishes of the past five years for a quiet little country home to work in, and re-enter at a 'new' sentence continuing the story of last autumn (cap. III.): "The last and fondest of those wishes was that of dwelling on the Widemann estate; here everything combined to make fulfilment wear for me the pleasantest of aspects: for that very reason, though, and since my wishes had been dashed so often, from the first I almost placed no *serious* faith in its realisation [End of the 'new']. You will remember how I took the news of the acquisition of this plot by the mad-doctor—so particularly

obnoxious to yourself—with great composure in my own regard ; I was so at home in all that sort of thing, so used to shipwreck. Would you like to know, then, how I took the really quite unhopèd-for news of the success of your endeavours for this property *to-day*?—A deep, deep calm invaded me ; to the depths of my being I was wrapt in a benignant warmth, without the faintest ebullition.* But all at once such sunny brightness fell upon my eyes, that the whole world lay transfigured and at rest before me, until a solemn tear dissolved that picture into a thousand prismatic tints. Dearest friend, never have I experienced a thing like this before ; so *radically* furthering a force of friendship had never yet entered my life. And what I felt was not so much rejoicing at the gotten ground, as the glorious warmth vouchsafed me in the knowledge of your friendship, the sense of being carried, which suddenly removed all weight from me, all pressure.—You dear good creatures, *what* shall I say to you? As by a stroke of magic, all is suddenly transformed around me! All hesitance is at an end ; now I know *where* I belong, *where* I may weave and fashion, *where* find support and comfort, strength and recreation, and henceforth I can face unmoved the chance and change of my career as artist, its toils and its exertions ; for I know where I shall find refreshment, rest again : in the most literal of meanings at the side, in the lap of the faithfulest, the most affecting love and friendship! O children, you shall be content with me—indeed you shall!—For this life I belong to you both ; and my successes, eh! my mirth and productivity shall rejoice myself, for I will fondly cherish them to make of them a joy to you!—O this is splendid ; it has settled *much*, yes, *much*! Could I but paint to you the marvellous deep calm that fills my soul to-day!—Now do arrange for me to see you soon ; I long for it with all my heart, even if I did not live so isolated here.”

It was magnificent of Otto, and the more so if he already felt a little jealous of his protégé, who thanks the *pair* of “swallows” for this future nest. And we must thank them, too, for thus they gave to us the *Siegfried* forge-songs, the whole last quarter of act i. Just as their Murillo gift had reached Wagner

* Almost the identical words in which the Venice Diary reminds Mathilde of a later day (see *M.* p. 42).

while "stealing down into himself" in preparation for scene 1, and proved indeed a "happy omen" for its composition, so, after other things had intervened to put him out of humour with his work—to make him deem it "stale and superficial"—this sudden prospect of repose, and above all, the sympathy it typified, at once inspired him with fresh zeal, with all the exultation needed for that swinging close. Excogitation is dispensed with now; no more need to think out motives ("*eben sann ich dem Motive nach*"), they flock uncalled. From "ich selbst schweisse das Schwert" to the fall of the curtain the whole scene is aglow, all drafted at white heat, never a moment's flagging, an endless flow of new and powerful ideas. And the one for which he actually was searching when the joyful tidings came? He had only to harness the first three notes of Siegfried's horn-call, augmenting its first interval—as already for a moment in scene 1, when the lad first approaches the anvil—and "the amazing forge-work" starts with all the energy of youth directed to a definite aim.

So Wagner at last had a haven in view, away from the "five pianos and a flute" hedging him round on the Zeltweg, as he tells Klindworth next May; away from the flesh-and-blood smith neighbour with whom he had to drive a bargain, we hear on fair authority,* not to hammer while his fancy's 'prentice was at work. But, with his usual piebald luck, he had simultaneously lost his only regular income. However nominal the rent of the coming Asyl,† money was needed to live in it, and although that also might have been supplied him by Otto, had he chosen to "cast the whole burden" on the shoulders of this noble friend (see 156 *sup*), he naturally wanted to preserve a certain "independence." So—notwithstanding his words to Liszt of mid-December, "I have not failed to lay to heart the strong hints you gave me concerning the hopes I lately cherished of a Weimar pension"—now that the Ritter subsidy is definitely renounced on the one hand, whilst

* That of Frau Wesendonck, *Allg. Musikzeitung* 1896. In any case the smith was real enough, for Liszt writes Wagner in June 57: "I am delighted you now are able to abandon yourself to your genius and complete the gigantic mountain-chain of your Nibelungen without being distracted by neighbouring smiths and piano-players."

† To Tichatschek, Feb. 9: "At Easter I shall move into a lovely cottage near Zurich which a friend is letting me cheap."

on the other the prince has just renewed expressions of warm interest, Wagner writes Liszt January 6: “I beg you, nay, I authorise and urge you to confer with the Grand Duke as soon as possible, and obtain a definite statement from him as to whether he intends to substantiate his favour toward me either by granting me a pension out and out, or by making me an annual and adequate allowance for three years, until completion of the Nibelungen. In the event of a pension for life, I of course should undertake to spend a portion of each year at Weimar, and place my services at his disposal, so soon as Germany stands open to me again. You will remember our talks on this point, as also on the possible co-operation of other princes well-disposed to me; but what I now am anxious for, is—*prompt and final certainty*. I want to know *precisely* how I stand now, when I am most in need of help. Uncertainty sets me quivering between hope, expectation, wish and longing; a state which not only demoralises me, but complicates my situation more and more. In short, I want to know *where* I’m to look for my friends. So, Much-endurer, consider this your last attempt at mediation between me and a world my exact position in which I must now appraise.”

It is a little peremptory, but that Grand Ducal mirage had been mocking long enough. Its forms in the last few months were protean: now of intercession with the Dresden court—“last winter you left me with a firm belief in a speedy release from my exile” (to Liszt next June)—now of pecuniary assistance, and again of an eventual production of the RING at Weimar. If there were any substance either in the first or third form, no surer test could be applied to them than the second: let the Grand Duke loose his purse-strings to the tune of a paltry two or three hundred a year, to keep the artist going, and the other phantom forms might soon consolidate.

But that was clearly too severe a test, for a whole month elapses during which we have no reply from Liszt, even if Wagner had one, whereas the latter writes his friend Feb. 8: “I suppose I need scarcely tell you that, in case you come to terms with Haertels, anything else should be *completely dropped* now; in fact I have determined to preserve my independence as thoroughly as possible in the future.” The Ducal pension wraith accordingly is laid, at any rate for another two years, though the chimera of

a Ring-production is thrust into its place from Weimar's side, since April 28 brings this from Liszt: "As to the performance, I still am hoping the G. D. will find the means for me—that is, for *you*, as in this instance I can merely be your correpetitor." A few months later, however, Wagner himself sums up the issue: "Rarest of friends that you are, you have done your best to cheer me up and keep me in heart for work, now this way, now another; but I know you can really mean nothing beyond that." Was it really so, or did Liszt over-rate his own influence? In either case the prince had proved a failure; so let us try the publisher.

Alike from the letters of Dec. 16 and Jan. 6 we learn that during his Zurich visit Liszt had volunteered to bring Haertels to the scratch, and Wagner had given him full authority. In that of Jan. 6 Wagner tells him that, owing to relinquishment of the Ritter pension, it is essential to bring those RING negotiations to a head as soon as Liszt is well enough to run over to Leipzig; in which case "I am prepared to accept any offer, as I know that, however small the amount, I can expect no *more* in any other way." Then Feb. 8, "I am certain my amnesty will come at latest in the course of 1858,* and that—I hope—will so far change my situation at a blow, that it *then* will depend on myself to lay a solid basis for my livelihood. Therefore the only rational thing for me to do, and the only thing I see the smallest chance of doing, is to secure myself a free and not too scamped provision for the next few years, down to the completion and production of my magnum opus. Well, nothing strikes me as better adapted to this end than the sale of my Nibelungen to Haertels,† which I begged you to conclude for me according to [your] best judgment. So everything hinges on your succeeding

* Can Tichatschek, whom he answers next day, have mentioned such a Dresden canard? Alas, it was no more.

† From this point to the end of the next sentence I again must caution the reader against the late Dr Hueffer's rendering: "whom I have asked to settle with me according to his own judgment. It is most important to me that this should come to pass, and I hope, in any case, that if Härtel accepts the offer I shall receive all that is required." The German runs thus: "Nichts kann mir zur Erreichung dieses Zweckes nun geeigneter erscheinen, als der Verkauf meiner Nibelungen an Härtel's, den ich Dich gebeten habe, nach bestem Gutdünken für mich abzuschliessen. Es kommt nun darauf an, dass Dir dieses gelingt. Jedenfalls denke ich, wenn Härtel's überhaupt noch auf das Geschäft eingehen, dass ich das Nöthige durch sie erhalten werde."

in this; [for] if Haertels entertain the deal at all again, I think I shall obtain through them at any rate the needful. It would be desirable that they should pay me a thousand thalers for each full score,* and in each case on receipt thereof; thus, for that of Rheingold now (at once), and perhaps for that of Walküre as well now—‘Siegfried’ shall be in their hands by the end of this year—yet, as I told you before, I must even content myself if they want to give me rather less. At the worst it will be enough to last me several years, and once I know exactly what I’ve got, I can cut my coat accordingly; for I have made up my mind, in any case, to transfer the stewardship of my receipts henceforward to my wife”—which might have been as well, some years ago.

Liszt replies Feb. 16: “The next few days will bring me the opportunity of busying myself for you with a will. On the 22nd I go to Leipzig, to spend a whole week there. Thursday the 26th, *Préludes* and *Mazeppa* will be given in the *Gewandhaus* (for the benefit of the orchestral pension-fund), and on the 28th I am to conduct a Leipzig performance of *Tannhäuser* for the benefit of Herr Behr (‘Landgraf’), when the Mildes will sing Elisabeth and Wolfram.† In the interval I hope to succeed in cashing some *Rhine copper* for the *Rhinegold* at Haertel’s, in which case I shall let you hear at once.” There follows that gap of two months in the Correspondence, during most of which time Liszt was laid up, so that it is not till the 19th of April we hear: “In a few days I will write you more at length about the Haertel affair, which unfortunately still is sticking at a quite unprofitable stage.” It had stuck there for at least a month already, a whole month lost to Wagner’s “patience,”‡ and though he does hear

* Less by three fifths than his original demand of last July, unless we are to add something for the (vocal) pfté scores, not mentioned here.

† From a letter to Carolyne of Feb. 28 itself we gather that, in consequence of Liszt’s indisposition—“Je vous supplie de n’avoir aucune inquiétude sur mon état physique. Il est seulement plus prudent et plus commode que je garde le lit aujourd’hui et demain”—*Tannhäuser* was put off till March 4. A letter from Hans to Liszt of the latter date points to the performance actually taking place that evening.

‡ One must make allowance for the victim of “une maladie peu dangereuse mais fort incommode,” though we possess letters of his of March 8, 17, 24 and 26, April 3 and 15, to other correspondents, one or two of which I have already quoted. However, the letter of March 26 to Eduard shews that Liszt had involved himself in almost more than he could manage, for it begins

“more at length” just nine days later (Apr. 28), it is only on the 9th of June that he receives a full account—part of which it will be necessary to take at once:—

“In elucidation of the Haertel affair I enclose you his two letters of March 4 and 16. At the end of February I had had a long conference with Dr Haertel at Leipzig, when I tried to get him to renew his earlier proposal to you, as that appeared to me to offer you the most advantage. After a few days' consideration he sent me the letter of March 4, which I answered in the same sense as my conversation, doing my utmost to make plain to him that this matter should be looked at from the standpoint of a colossal *enterprise*, rather than from that of an ordinary commercial *transaction*, and telling him I considered the firm of Breitkopf und Härtel, which had already acquired the Lohengrin and the Three Opera-poems [*Communication*], the properest for such an enterprise. I kept no copy of my letter, but can assure you it did not contain a word you need disavow. Haertel's letter of March 16 is in entire accord with that just addressed to yourself.”

Since it is clear that there the matter *dropped*, as between Haertels and Liszt, we will reserve the next few sentences awhile and pass to where this letter of June gives Wagner further details of the Leipzig interview in February: “What I principally impressed on H., beyond the self-evident importance of the nature and constitution of your work, was the possibility, nay, the imminent certainty of its performance—which of course is

thus: “I am sending you at last [for the Vienna publisher] the pianoforte score of the Mass, which, much as I wished to, I was unable to put in order earlier, partly because of the mass of things, letters, business-matters, that crowd upon me, partly also because of my indisposition, which has compelled me to stay in bed for over three weeks.” That of March 17 (to W. Stasoff) itself casts a side-light on the Haertel affair: “Relativement à l'édition de ces Partitions [Beethoven] pour deux Pianos de Mr Séroff, je m'y employerai volontiers selon votre désir, tout en vous avouant que mon crédit sur les Editeurs n'est guère plus considérable que sur les Docteurs susmentionnés, ces derniers contribuant de leur mieux à maintenir en circulation toute sorte de coq à l'âne qui empêchent les Editeurs à se risquer dans des *entreprises folles*, comme il leur est si péremptoirement démontré!”—to ourselves a plain hint that some “Doctor” (Jahn?) was suspected of fouling the RING pourparlers, since the 17th was the very day on which Liszt would receive the second Haertel letter mentioned in the text above. The only pity is that he should have kept *Wagner* so long in suspense.

absolutely scouted on all sides. ‘I pledge you my word’—I told him in conclusion—‘that barely a year shall elapse between completion of the Nibelungen, which is to be expected the end of next year, and its stage-production; and that Wagner’s friends, with myself as foremost of them, will leave no stone unturned to compass that production. The very certainty of this anticipation makes it desirable that the work should appear in print, in order to supply at once the needful handle for reviewing it,’ etc., etc., etc.”

That last clause, “*um sogleich der Beurtheilung den nöthigen Anhaltspunkt darzubieten*”—translated by Hueffer, “so that the necessary standpoint for its judgment may be supplied”—forms such a tame conclusion, that it rather weakens Liszt’s presentment of the case; but we must transfer ourselves to April, this time the 28th, when he first enlightens Wagner as to the “quite unprofitable stage” reached six to seven weeks previously: * “After discussions of the Nibelungen affair with Haertel by word of mouth and letter, in which I held fast throughout to the *main point* of Haertel’s *first offer*, and continually led him back to that, entirely waiving all his vague suggestions of some lesser substitute—the case stands about thus: that I may assume he would not reject a letter in which, referring him to my discussion, you were simply and somewhat courteously to invite him to carry out his former proposal. But it is upon this first proposal [of his] that I think it imperative to base the whole resumption of the matter, and, to be quite frank with you, I found Haertel very doubtfully inclined to entertain it now because the turn you gave to the transaction in your second letter to him had almost offended him. †—So consider if you will write him to this effect. I should

* Written during another recurrence of his malady, the letter begins with an enthusiastic account of a Weimar performance of *Lohengrin*, “this incomparable work,” and one cannot help feeling that that adjective accounts for much.—N.B. The “many,” which follows “After” in Hueffer’s translation, has no warrant in the German text. Discussions, it is true, are *plural* there, but they were limited in fact to one interview, two letters from Haertel to Liszt, and one reply of his, as we have just learnt from his letter to Wagner of June. I ought to add that Liszt’s German is by no means so clear and precise as his French; he never appears quite at home in the language.

† For “second” we clearly must read fourth or fifth (see 147 *sup.*), whilst the “it,” which Haertel seemed disinclined “to entertain now” (*jetzt darauf einzugehen*), must mean the affair in general, not simply that “first proposal.”

advise you to, as it is hardly to be expected that a better proposition will be made you from anywhere else, and yet it seems to me of moment that your work should be published."

The darkness in which *we* are left as to the exact nature of "Haertel's first offer"—probably a royalty with 'something on account'—is scarcely chargeable to Liszt; but the darkness in which this letter must at first have plunged Wagner, as to the true position of affairs, is wellnigh Cimmerian. He is advised to resume negotiations at the point where they were dropped by Liszt, in fact to "refer to my discussion" (or interview?—*mit Bezugnahme meiner Besprechung*), yet those two responses from the firm itself are neither summarised nor sent him until six weeks later, i.e. some three months after their receipt. However, by dint of transposing Liszt's clauses, he must have discovered at last that their meaning in plain German was this: A letter of your own (last summer) had so ruffled Dr Haertel's feathers, that it was quite impossible for me to smooth them; your only chance is, to beg his pardon prettily and ask him to begin again.—But why not have written, or even telegraphed, as much two precious months ago?

If he feared Wagner might borrow a leaf from his book, and "quietly" refuse to apologise for a real or imagined offence, Liszt should have known his friend better. Hardly has the author of the RING got a desk in place at his new home, than he despatches his "courteous letter" to Haertels, May 7, thus summarised by Altmann: On his visit last November, Liszt had begged to be allowed to resume negotiations with them concerning the *Nibelungen*; he (Wagner) excuses himself for his former letter, returns to their proposals of the 5th of August 1856, and hopes a cordial understanding may be come to. Next day he writes Liszt himself, among many other things: "I also have to thank you for your hints in respect of the Haertel affair. Candidly, its settlement is of such importance to me that I followed your advice immediately, and have written Haertels in such a fashion that they are sure to consent now—always provided they have been duly instructed by you in the object itself. That I assume, of course, and thank you most heartily for.—So we shall see."

Either the "offence" given last autumn was not so very serious, or the present amende must have been specially charming, for we find Wagner thanking Haertels on the 19th for their

“friendly letter” and again inviting them to come and hear the finished scores, as he expects Tichatschek, Niemann, Louise Mayer* and Klindworth, this summer, but could also offer them exact acquaintance with his work at any time with the aid of Kirchner from Winterthur (Dr A.’s summary). The same day he writes Liszt: “I received the accompanying answer from Haertels to-day. They refer in it to a letter to yourself: should the latter contain any sort of indication how a settlement may be arrived at with them, I would beg you to let me see it; should it not, it could be of no use to me.—It is sad to be compelled to hawk my work like this, to secure myself something *certain* for the next few years, and in any other case I assuredly should bide my time in the calm conviction that people would then seek *me*; but I’m obliged to make every effort to induce Haertels to purchase *now*. Above all, I perceive that time and occupations did not permit you † to make these gentlemen properly acquainted with my music; so I have invited them to visit me this summer and meet Klindworth (who has announced himself for a visit), with whose assistance I mean to do a little nibelunging for them, to let them gain some faint idea. So please be kind enough to return me the pianoforte score of Rheingold for a while, as we shall need it for my project.”

There we see the inconvenience of an honorary agent’s not keeping his principal posted, for Wagner is still in the dark as to

* We heard of Frä. Mayer first in the Leipzig production of *Lohengrin*, winter ’53-4 (iv, 200), then in the Prague production of *Tannhäuser*, winter ’54-5 (v, 91). After playing Elsa in the Prague production of *Lohengrin* (Feb. ’56) she had been promoted to Vienna, where Liszt renewed her acquaintance last September. In February 1857 Wagner writes her—see later—that Liszt had told him (apparently at Zurich) of her “particular exertions to get my operas mounted at the Kärnthnerthor,” i.e. the Vienna opera-house; March 26 again: “I hereby sue you with all fervour for the representations of my big work. I expect to have entirely finished it next year, and if all goes well, to present it three times over at a quite unusual festival in the summer of 1859, with picked artists and in a theatre to be erected expressly for it, presumably at Weimar (if Germany stands open to me again by then).” We have already seen him apply to Niemann for his Siegfried, to Tichatschek for Loge and Siegmund, and we further learn that Johanna had sent him word through Billow that she would be delighted to play Brünnhilde if he still would have her.

† “Dir nicht erlaubte”—past; not future, as in the English edition, “will not allow you.”

Haertel's ultimatum of two months previously. And that brings us to the passage I have held in reserve from Liszt's answer of June the 9th: "Haertel's letter of March 16 [to me, now enclosed] is in complete accord with that just addressed to yourself.* As the matter now stands, it seems to me very doubtful if Haertels will consent to make you a fresh offer of an honorarium; that is, unless the direct impression of your rendering of the work should prove so powerful as to bear down all their mercantile demurs. On your side, also, I do not think it advisable for you to make them a fresh offer; and probably you have hit on the best expedient by inviting them to Zurich to be given at least a foretaste of your work—as circumstances stand, it remains the most promising *chance* for you. Haertel's present idea, of course, is to hold out nothing to you but the prospect of an eventual honorarium *after* publication of the work, and after covering that publication's costs. You seem, however, to suppose I lacked time and convenience to tune the Haertels to another and a better key—but *in that you are greatly mistaken*, and you may be perfectly sure I would gladly have remained at Leipzig a whole month and longer, and have played and sung *Das Rheingold* to the Haertels several times over, if I could have nursed the smallest hope that it would bring the goal a hair's breadth nearer. What I principally impressed on H.," etc. (230 *sup.*).

Clearly Liszt is a trifle huffed this time, but equally clearly he had never played Haertels one note from the work—or he surely would have mentioned it, and what they thought of it, besides his verbal arguments. That the playing and singing of angels would have outweighed the big financial risk, is scarcely probable, but with Bülow and the Mildes at hand it might at least have been tried; for we must not forget that Liszt had *volunteered* to bring these tough negotiations off, nor that it was *his* feud with Karl Ritter which had just robbed Wagner of a certain, if insufficient income. Not a word on the latter point escapes him, strange to say, but after that *précis* of his conversation given above, he winds up thus: "I will weary you no longer with such

* Presumably; but either it or that of March 4 must have contained further *particulars*, or Haertels, naturally assuming Wagner's knowledge of its contents, would never have referred him back thereto: in fact, Liszt now forwards both those letters "in elucidation of the Haertel affair."

gabble, but merely beg you *not to excite yourself* [!] and neither to drop nor write a hasty word, since the affair is of decided importance [who knew that better?], and it is very difficult to beat up publishers one might entrust it to. The publication of the Nibelungen in full and pianoforte score requires the sinking of a capital of at least 10,000 thalers, which few business firms could easily afford. Allow me for the present to advise you to keep perfectly calm, and simply and repeatedly (if need be) invite Haertels to visit you, postponing all further discussion as to the mode and nature of the publication till the moment you have brought them to a closer insight into the thing, that is, until the Zurich meeting.—Thy Franz.”

Exasperating as is the tone of this ending, it contains one sentence which demolishes the repeated suggestion that Wagner's own irritability had formed the chief stumbling-block. The true difficulty was the large outlay, here estimated at about £1500, for mere out-of-pocket costs of engraving and printing the scores, let alone a suitable remuneration to the author. Against that rock the waves of all Liszt's rhetoric might break in vain—unless he could bring up subscribers to cover a good share of the risk. Enthusiastic prophecies, such as “Le million se trouvera,” are all very well for after-dinner oratory, but millions do not find *themselves*. And so, like any other business firm confronted with a “colossal enterprise,” the Haertels must have shrewdly judged.

The decisive effect of Liszt's palpable failure, also of its ambiguous mode of intimation, will concern us later; already his tardy rendering of account has taken us some months ahead. We were trying to find Wagner a means of support, on his coming removal, but as yet have found none, either with Prince or with Publisher. There remains but the Director, and unfortunately the majority of the German theatres had already bought his two most popular operas once and for all. Vienna, after sulking long, was just commencing to relent; but, since nothing solid in the way of money came from there just yet, we will take that story toward this chapter's close. What did arrive thence was a tiny *douceur* from a Men's Choral Union, acknowledged on the first of April, appropriately enough: “Your ducat has given me great joy. It is the first friendly token that has reached me from Vienna. Hearty wishes for further acquaintance and friendship.”

But for a minor fee or two,* then, were it not for Berlin's *Tannhäuser* tantièmes it would puzzle one to guess how he pulled through the first few months of 1857 at all.

Our quest of ways and means has taken us away from *Siegfried*, the composition-draft of whose first act we left completed January 20. The eyestrain entailed by the comparative rush of its last quarter in the feeble winter daylight may be judged from this passage in the letter of Jan. 27 to Liszt: "My health is so run down that for ten days past,† since I finished the sketch for the first act of *Siegfried*, I have literally been unable to write another bar without being driven away by excruciating pains in the head. I sit down every morning, stare at my sheet of paper—and end by being glad to get as far as Walter Scott. The truth is, I have overtaxed myself once more; but what is to freshen me up?? With the *Rheingold*, under similar conditions, things still went briskly; the *Walküre* already caused me severe pain; and now I'm like a cottage-piano badly out of tune (so far as my nervous system goes)—a nice thing to drag my *Siegfried* out of! With this last, methinks, the wires will snap at last, and then there'll be an end. However, *we* can't alter it, though it really is a dog's life!"

The contrast alike with the letter to Otto of three weeks since and with that of twelve days hence to Liszt (228 *sup.*) is so remarkable, that even the effects of cumulative strain upon a "nervous system" good Dr Vaillant had not so permanently braced will hardly quite account for it: "*what* is to freshen me up?"—asks Wagner, instead of hinting at a brighter outlook, as already to Liszt himself Jan. 6. The only explanation I can think of, is some hitch or delay in actual transfer of the little property. Wesendonck had begged him to keep the information secret for the present, as a man of business naturally would before the deeds were handed over; in all probability, therefore, Wagner had since heard, either from Otto or his Zurich architect, that

* Old Fischer is begged Jan. 2 to send *Tannhäuser* to Basle, and Feb. 12 to send the *Holländer* to Carlsruhe, whilst in March the first-named opera seems to have been acquired for Düsseldorf—all that we know of at present, and Carlsruhe would scarcely pay prompt cash.

† A symptom in itself, with so accurate a writer; the "zehn," of course, is a *lapsus calami* for "sieben."

the conveyance still was halting—a way conveyances have—and his thermometer promptly fell to zero. Thus on the succeeding day, Jan. 28, he begins a letter of congratulation to a niece (third daughter of F. Brockhaus) dejectedly enough: “My dear Clärchen, I have not forgotten you, you see; let that suffice you, and forgive my having left your letter so long unanswered! Anyone who looked close at my life, would rather wonder at my having any pleasure left to take in this and that. I never have true rest: either great excitement during work, or great, prolonged exhaustion following it. In the intervals I am seldom in the right mood for a letter, and still seldomer have anything agreeable to relate. I wanted to write you in a thoroughly good hour for once; my conscience warns me, however, not to wait for it too long,” etc.*

Early in February the lawyers must have completed their formalities, at once removing Wagner's fears and pledge to secrecy, for we have heard him tell Liszt on the 8th, “W. has actually bought that little property, and offers it me on a perpetual lease.” Life again is worth living, or shortly will be, with at least a quiet nook to work in: “As soon as I have recuperated a little, I think of instrumenting my first act while I am still in my present abode. But I can't think of resuming the *composition* here; I have suffered too much of late from the unrest of this house—both musical and unmusical.” To Tichatschek also next day, Feb. 9, “I am pulled down by this winter climate, and have had to make a pause after completing the first act of ‘Siegfried.’” But that pause was already approaching its end, for the *Letter on F. Liszt*, signed Feb. 15 (see cap. IV.), itself is a sign of recovery. We therefore may assume the said instrumenting, preciser dates whereof are not obtainable, to have been begun somewhere about the 16th of February and continued, no doubt with minor interruptions, down to its completion somewhere in the first half of April—after which there would be no possibility of working for another three or four weeks. The letter to Liszt of May 8 refers to “long-interrupted work,” yet adds that

* In course of the congratulations: “I could scarcely help smiling at the shade of timidity with which you announced your betrothed as an officer . . . oddly enough, I have made the acquaintance of very outspoken enthusiasts for my operas in that calling, and at Dresden in particular I had very staunch friends among the officers of the Guards.”

“the first act is entirely finished, and more successfully than all.”

It is this letter that tells of those three trials of “the last big scene from the *Walküre*” with Frau Pollert as Brünnhilde (179 *sup.*). These evidently took place in the Zeltweg flat (“bei mir”) between the middle of March and the middle of April, for we have a tiny note to Frau Mathilde: “All in order. Will you be coming over awhile for the last act of the *Walküre*? I—hope so.” We do not know exactly when the Wesendoncks returned from Paris, but presumably it would be in the course of March, as their son Karl (sole present survivor) was born in the Hôtel Baur the 18th of April, their own villa not yet being ready to receive them.

The time of the Wagners’ removal now drawing near, we will set out for a look at their new home—a figurative look, since the building itself was pulled down some twenty years ago by the next proprietors, leaving nothing but a part of the foundations.

All but half an hour’s walk from the Escherhäuser on the Zeltweg, down into old Zurich, across a couple of bridges, through the suburb of Enge, and out along the road that skirts the left bank of the lake. Following this road as it mounts to hem a long acclivity known to all Zurich as the Gabler (forker) but rechristened by Wagner “the Green Hill,” we come to a lane on our left, the Sternengässli, leading down to the shore by his old abode of 1850-1 (see iii, 48). Opposite that turning, on our right a lane leads upwards, separating the grounds of the Villa Wesendonck from the late Widemann plot. Ascending this lane and passing through a wicket in its right-hand hedge, we find a modest house with no pretence to ornament overlooking us on our left, while its pleasure-garden slopes down to the highway out of which we turned, and we have to suppose a kitchen-garden in the rear. Had we pursued the high road a few paces farther, we should have arrived at the Wesendoncks’ carriage-drive; had we continued along the lane, it would have taken us down the western slope of the Green Hill to the Sihl valley and the Albiskette on its farther side, a favourite walk of the new tenant’s.

The little house, henceforth to be immortalised as the “Asyl,” had hitherto been used as nothing but a summer-box, and was completely destitute of means for winter habitation. So Wagner’s

first practical inspection would necessarily be attended by his landlord's architect, whose praises he had sung to Wesendonck last August: “I'm very pleased to hear you will be in such good company on your mountain tour, as that of Herr Zeugherr; he is a kind-hearted man, of deep culture and refinement”—the latter two qualities amply evinced by the harmonious proportions and absence of all meretriciousness in the design of the mansion hard by. Last autumn, also, this gentleman had been presented thus to Liszt: “To afford you a little more distraction, I herewith introduce Herr Architect Zeugherr (an acquaintance of Ernst's). He is hunting up a *country cottage* for me to compose in, but has found nothing as yet; perhaps you may inspire him.” No really structural change can have been counselled by Zeugherr, or Wagner would have been unable to move in so soon as he did; but there was many an internal alteration to be effected, more particularly in the matter of flues and partition-walls, so that Klindworth hears next May of “the turbulent time from February onward, when I was devoting all my pedantry to superintending the reconstruction of the new cottage and urging the workmen on.” As it was, they and “especially a Saxon locksmith” had not quite done intruding on his privacy even by May 8, when he writes his long letter to Liszt under “the big window with the splendid view of lake and alps.”

This “big window”—probably one of the said improvements—may easily be identified in the photograph of the Green Hill's crown of lodge and palace reproduced in the *Mathilde* volume; facing due south, or as near as may be, it looks straight down the Wesendoncks' broad terrace. In the attic storey above we can trace the outlines of a fairly roomy guest-chamber, which will soon entertain a succession of visitors; beyond it there appears to be a box-room, and behind it, under the side gable, the servants' sleeping-quarters. The rest of the arrangements are thus described by Pohl, a quarter of a century after: “Wagner's talent for fitting up his home as comfortably and cosily as possible, wherever he settled, had proved itself here as usual; the little house was by no means luxuriously, but very dwellably equipped. He occupied the upper [i.e. ‘first’] floor himself, his wife Minna the parterre. His rather small study looked across the upper part of the lake to the Glärnisch; next to it came a narrow music-room, and beyond that the salon with a verandah on the side

toward Zurich." Pohl's topography, however, is plainly a little at fault: consult the photograph and you will see that the verandah is attached to the front of the same room whose side wall has the big window facing south, i.e. to Wagner's study, but beyond the front of the main building a narrower extension may be detected whose window or windows *would* look north "toward Zurich."

From Paris two years hence the master writes Frau Wesendonck: "Were you to walk into *my* étage here, you would almost think I hadn't left the Asyl. The same furniture, the same old desk, the same green hangings, engravings, everything just as you knew it; merely the rooms are still smaller"—not fewer; and there his sitting-rooms were two, a "salon" and a "little cabinet" for work. In the Asyl his "green study" evidently was the larger room and held his grand piano, whilst the "tea-room" leading out of it to the north would serve, of course, for Minna's more formal reception of company as well as his own. Behind his study and also opening into it by means of curtains, though with a door on to the general stairway, lay his bedroom (hidden by trees in the photograph), where the predominant colour again was green (see *M.* pp. 31, 64, 88, 126, 192). Downstairs, in Minna's parterre, would lie their ordinary meeting-ground, the dining-room.

And now for the removal. Expecting to be able to take possession "by Easter" (April 12 that year*), Wagner seems to have given his Zeltweg landlady rather too premature notice, for his letter of May 8, written "ten days" after moving in, tells Liszt: "The putting of this little house in order—which, for that matter, has turned out very neat and to my mind—took a considerable time; so that we were hustled out before there was any possibility of moving in. My wife fell ill, too, so that I had to keep her from any hand in it, and shoulder all the packing up myself alone. We went to the hotel for ten days, and finally moved in here in terrible weather and cold; so that really nothing but the thought of a definitive re-settling could have kept my spirits up."

Twice "ten days" back from May the 8th, makes their seeking refuge at the Hôtel Baur exactly coincide with the accouchement

* It is orthodox here to introduce the "first idea" of *Parsifal*, but, as we have no contemporary mention of it, I reserve it for the *following* Good Friday, 1858.

there. When they reached the Asyl—April 28, according to the above—their surroundings were just as little cheering for a start, “with the heating apparatus not quite fixed yet. Freezing, we huddled among the furniture piled up all round us, and waited for our fate.” Not a very bright omen for the long-coveted Asyl. But the last extract itself is taken from an answer of May 6 to something lacking since last year—a letter from his former benefactress, dear Frau Ritter: “With what sadness I have thought of you this long time, what gnawing inward sorrow, must remain my secret. . . . It was with fear and trembling, I broke open your letter; but tears streamed from my eyes, precious lady, when I read the grand, sublime affection you bestow on me. This letter warmed us through and through, and lit our day of moving to our Asyl into a radiant feast-day of the Sun.”*

We may now return to the long letter of the 8th to Liszt: “Now all is housed and fitted as we want it, everything in its permanent place [not so, alas!]. My study is arranged with the pedantic elegance and eye to ease you know; my desk stands at the big window with the splendid view of lake and alps; † tranquillity and peace surround me. A pretty garden, very well matured, offers me room for little strolls and lollings, and to my wife the pleasantest of occupation and diversion from her fads about me; in particular, a good-sized kitchen-garden usurps her tenderest care. ‡ Quite a charming terrain has been gained for

* The above were the only extracts published from this letter until the very eve of the present volume's going to press, when there appeared a booklet on A. Ritter by S. von Hausegger (Marquardt & Co., Berlin, Nov. 07) containing a few of Wagner's letters to Frau Julie—including this one, in which the master thanks her for spontaneous renewal of “my only *certain* income for the present,” particularly as “there are profound reasons, dictated by my sense of honour, for not accepting my *neighbour's* aid again.” More than a twelvemonth elapses, however, ere *Carl* is reconciled.

† Quite certainly the Weimar party had been taken to see the new Villa last autumn, when the neighbouring little house would also be pointed out to them; if the “big window” was not already one of its attractions, that addition may easily have been reported to the Fürstin in the letter mentioned lower down.

‡ To another correspondent (Gustav Schmidt of Frankfort?) next month, “My wife is planting vegetables and flowers.” To Fischer of Dresden next October: “I live in the greatest seclusion from the world now, even from Zurich—*i.e.* very seldom go into the town, but stay at home in my nice little house, watch my wife attending to the garden, work, and go for walks in a pleasant valley.”

my retreat, you see; and when I reflect how I've been longing after such a place for years, and how difficult it was to get even a chance of it, I feel compelled to recognise in this good W[esendonck] one of my greatest benefactors. At the beginning of July, too, the W.s hope to take possession of their estate themselves, and their neighbourhood promises me all that is friendly and pleasant. So, one thing achieved!—and I hope to be able to resume my long-interrupted work very soon; at any rate I shall not leave my pretty Asyl, even for a brief excursion, before Siegfried has come to a thorough understanding with Brünnhild."

After the passage about *Siegfried* in connection with Liszt's disapproval of the close of *Die Walküre* (179 *sup.*): "My opinion of myself has quite cleared up, though, and when you hear my Siegfried's forge-songs you'll get a new experience of me." Skipping that discussion of the *Symphonic poems* Letter, already dealt with, we next come to "Best thanks for the Lohengrin [performance]. To myself the work stays nothing but a sort of shadow; I really don't remember it, do not know it at all. You people do all this among yourselves, and never seem to realise that I also might wish to be there. Nevertheless, I respect the mysterious silence so religiously observed by my high and highest patrons on the ticklish question of my return." Whatever of personal reproach may involuntarily exude from that, however, is removed by a whole page devoted to the tenderest solicitude for Liszt's own health,* concluding thus: "I don't *thank* you, as said, for the sacrifice involved in your last fine Lohengrin performance. On the contrary, had you told me, 'I have hung Lohengrin, you, myself, and everything else on a peg, to look after curing myself properly,' I should have thanked you with tears from my heart. Tell me something similar very

* We had a good part of this in cap. IV., including an invitation to come and be "cured" at the Asyl; here I may further quote the following: "I wrote the Fürstin very seriously about your health some time ago, and am anxiously awaiting a full reply. Now I hear through you that our large-hearted friend herself has long been ill, which really confirms all my fears. So I fain would ask yourself at least to tell me what you have decided to do for thorough restoration of your health. Are you still determined to force the Aachen festival, or have you found a doctor with the pluck to veto these incessant exertions and sacrifices of yours, and completely to withdraw you awhile from a world that is ruining your health more and more???"

soon, or I shall never write to you again, and I'll burn Young Siegfried, smithy-songs and all.”

Just one more item: “It only remains to thank you for the last three scores, received at last, though they were quite like good old acquaintances. I shall take them regularly in hand now, since their study is to re-initiate me as musician for commencing my 2nd act”—a compliment repeated seven weeks hence: “Your last three Symphonic poems have given me painful joy again; for I could think of nothing while reading them but my distressful situation which dooms such things to dumbness for me, of all people, who can help myself so little [to a hearing of them]. The greatest delight, such as your Mountain-symphony, thus turns to chagrin.” Nearly half the music for act ii stood sketched by then; had those scores exerted any influence on it, beyond that of fresh contact with the art in general and a harmonic subtlety or two in particular? The *Hungaria* may naturally be set aside forthwith, as also the *Héroïde funèbre*: neither of these could waken a responsive chord in a German *Siegfried*. But *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne*? The very title suggests a bond of sympathy with Wagner's subject, and right at the commencement of this symphony we find



for muted strings, “mysterious and tranquil” (above a *pp* quivering of the big drum). Shut certain other music from your mind, and you will say: Own mother to the *Waldweben*! And so, in a sense, the *look* of the thing may really have been. Yet that look can have served as nothing but an apt reminder; for, leave out the muting—scarcely a monopoly of New Weimar—and you have, impoverished to unison, the very pattern of the *Rheingold* shimmer, the score whereof had lain so many months at Weimar more than two years since.

If it was the “Mountain-symphony” that reminded Wagner of this his earlier nature-motive, we may be fractionally grateful to Liszt for the incomparable result, the leading feature of act ii of

Siegfried; but there were other voices, not so mute, which had a far director share in it—the voices of the Wood itself. It was springtime when the tenant of the Asyl commenced his daily walks along the Sihlthal, and first sat listening to the warblers in his hillside garden. Those were the musicians he idealised as soloists in his *Waldweben*; those and their fellows lingering in his memory from rambles outside Dresden. For the whole bird-choir has lately been identified by a Dresden contributor to the *Bayreuther Blätter* (1906), Dr Bernhard Hoffmann: Yellow-hammer, Oriole (golden thrush), Wood-lark, Blackbird—all common to both places—Wood-warbler and Nightingale, to be heard here and there near Dresden, but not at all near Zurich. And Siegfried's own particular songster, the bird he had "never heard before"? As Dr Hoffmann proves to us, that is the voice of the Blackbird not only glorified in itself, but enriched with accents from the Nightingale. Thus had Wagner gone to Nature for his model, like Walther in his *Meistersinger*: "im Wald, dort auf der Vogelweid', da lernt' ich auch das Singen"—only, it needed a *master* as pupil.

And then there was the inspiration of the songless "swallow," who—with her mate of course—is bidden to "inspect her edifice tomorrow," that tomorrow being at once the writer's birthday and head-date of the composition-draft of *Siegfried* ii, **May 22, 1857**. "The Muse is beginning to visit me; does it betoken the certainty of your visit?"—says this little note,* which also shews how themes would sometimes come unbidden: "The first thing I found was a melody I didn't at all know what to do with, till of a sudden the words from the last scene of *Siegfried* came into my head. A good omen." Which words? Impossible to say; but they can hardly have been "Sie ist mir . . . Eigen, Ein' und All'," whose melody came equally unsought just two years later (*M.* 156).

"Yesterday the commencement of act 2 also occurred to me"—continues this note of May 21—"and as *Fafner's Rest*, *der ich*

* Its first sentence characterises the present position of the Amnesty appeal. The King of Saxony was expected at the Wesendoncks' hotel, and Baur had enquired of them the proper colour for decorations; they passed the question on to Wagner, who prefaces its answer with "I have naught to say to my country's father; if he were to think of calling on me in my swallow-nest, I should shew him the door."

ein humoristisch gemüthliches Moment abgewann.” Faced with that most elusive of all German terms, “gemüthlich,” also with that ambiguous Romanic “Moment,” in the *Mathilde* volume I simply rendered this last clause, “which has an element of humour in it.” To redress the balance, I now offer an alternative reading, “from which I have won a touch of grotesque complacency.” With neither am I satisfied, but the second will better help us to an understanding of the extraordinary melody allotted to that ponderous instrument, the contrabass-tuba : *

(all to be played an octave lower)



Cannot you see the grim monster tucked cosily up in its cave, enjoying the dronish slumber of a brute beast without much brain to prick its conscience? Clearly, this long-drawn tuba melody is meant to typify its pleasant dreams; the beast positively purrs, so snug has it made itself, and one feels inclined to go and stroke it. Here one will not be guilty of irreverence if one indulges in a quiet laugh—really one did hear laughter on *Siegfried* nights when the world was younger—and though the tragic Ring-theme soon turns our laughter to a sense of apprehension, the beast slumbers blissfully on; till at last we hear nothing of it but a contented hum, varied by the occasional ‘tritonus’ of its engaging snore, for all the Curse-theme’s thundering above. The picture of Fafner’s *Gemüthlichkeit* is complete.

So entirely has Fafner wormed himself into his creator’s good graces, that the next glimpse we obtain of this second act’s music consists in “Ich lieg’ und besitze: lasst mich schlafen!” provisionally set out in full score, above the lines to Liszt, “You wicked friend, at least you might give me a sign how you’re faring, and whether you forgive my fears about you!—May 30, morning, after a good night! R. W.” From this we

* It is curious to compare this with the theme for bassoons and cello near the beginning of the second scene of *Walküre* ii—surrounding Wotan’s “O heiliger Schmach!”—the notation of the first halves of the two themes being almost identical, whereas rhythm and tempo make all the difference in idea.

may infer that between a fifth and quarter of the second act had been composed, including the embryo of its instrumentation, in the short space of nine mornings, avouching the benefit of the Asyl's "tranquillity and peace." To be sure, it did not call for much new matter, but there are few better examples of the true dramatic treatment of musical dialogue. See how the restless cupidity and ill-controlled revenge of Alberich are contrasted with the quiet dignity and irony of Wanderer Wotan. What could be finer, for instance, than the latter's "er steh' oder fall," or "zwei Niblungen geizen das Gold"? The orchestral accompaniment also, to my mind, gains much by being cast more in one mould than was that of the companion Wanderer scene in act i, which sent us journeying through heaven and earth. Here everything bears on the *emotions* of the characters before us on the stage, even to that whispered reminiscence of the *Abschied*, on the Wanderer's entry and exit, which tells more graphically than any words the history of these roamings of the lonely god.

That, however, already treads a disputable field. For this second act of *Siegfried* holds a quite unique position in the music of the RING—the reason for which we shall learn in an instant—its scoring not having been taken in hand till eight years after its composition. Until its so-called 'sketch' or 'draft' shall have been collated with the finished product, we shall never know for absolutely certain whether we are dealing with 1857 or 1865 work. There can be little doubt that the vocal part was written almost, if not altogether, note for note as it stands to-day, whilst the main outlines of the instrumental treatment would also be the same (in skeleton); but it is self-evident that the chief beauty of this act, its wonderful orchestral weaving, would naturally turn out somewhat different after *Tristan* and a considerable portion of *Die Meistersinger* had been completed, from what it might have been before.

But why was *Siegfried* laid aside at all, and at what point?

For a fortnight at least from the Fafner autograph, composition went on swimmingly. Judged by a letter to them of next autumn, Haertels had accepted Wagner's invitation to come and make personal acquaintance with his new creations, and it only remained for himself to fix a date. But—June 13 he receives Liszt's letter of the 9th (see pp. 234-5). What *that* meant, was the

practical failure of his sheet-anchor; not for lack of good will, but partly for lack of concentration, grip, tenacity, partly for lack of solid ground to hold to.*

What was to be done? If there really was so little chance of a remunerative arrangement with Haertels as Liszt had at last declared, some other quarter must be tried, if only to learn the worst. There was another prince, besides Carl Alexander of the constant mirage, who had lately professed a lively interest; so, the day following receipt of that damping letter, Wagner writes his former Dresden friend, E. Devrient, now Intendant to the Grand Duke of Baden. The nature of none of his letters to Eduard Devrient has been disclosed yet, merely their dates, but it surely is significant that there were two of this June in quick succession, 14th and 20th, shortly followed by a visit from their recipient. Certainly, the *Holländer* had been secured for Carlsruhe last February, and a letter of the 12th of that month would naturally be in connection therewith; but after writing Devrient again the 24th of April and 9th of May, one would imagine Wagner had pretty well exhausted the *Holländer* topic, the production not taking place till next December. I therefore should conclude that in that May letter he had mentioned the communication sent to Haertels two days previously, whilst June 14 he begged the Carlsruhe Intendant to sound his prince as to any prospect of assistance from Baden, at the same time asking Devrient's advice on the general situation. Of course this is pure conjecture, but Wagner's crucial letter of June 28 to Liszt begins, "So, dearest Franz, I have got the length of being able to reply to you"; and that not only suggests an intermediate step elsewhere, but would allow time for him to have received a reply to his second letter to Devrient (June 20) and formed a definite resolve accordingly.†

This is the momentous resolve: "I shall have no more worry with Haertels, for I have determined at last to abandon the obstinate enterprise of my Nibelungen. I have led my young Siegfried as far as the lovely woodland solitude; there I have left him beneath the lime-tree, and taken leave of him with brimming

* For Liszt's confession of impotence, July 10, see end of next chapter.

† There can be small doubt that for the "practical friends in Germany" who deprecated continuance of the RING at this juncture—see *Prose III.* 267—we may read E. Devrient.

tears—he's best off there.—If I'm ever to resume the work again, either that would have to be made very easy for me, or I should have to be able myself by then to make it possible to *give* the world my work, in the word's fullest sense. Indeed these chafferings with Haertels—first contact with that world which was to help me realise my undertaking—were merely the last straw needed to bring me to my senses and let me recognise the great chimera I had nursed. You are the only one (of importance) who shared my belief in this undertaking's possibility, but maybe simply since you also had not yet taken its difficulties into sufficient account. Haertels, on the other hand, being asked to shed prompt cash, take a more accurate look at the thing; and quite certainly they are right in considering an eventual performance of this work impossible, if the author himself cannot even arrive at its completion now—without *their* help." That was the true crux of the matter. All sorts of foolish taunts have been levelled at Breitkopf and Haertel: Wagner himself was much juster to them. If his "high and highest patrons," to say nothing of firmly guaranteeing a performance, could not so much as club together to provide the author with his means of living while at work, with what justice could anyone expect a firm of publishers to risk large sums of money on so frail an "enterprise"?

"For my own part," he continues, "there was a time when, even without the chance of living to see this work performed, I could conceive, commence, and half complete it. Last winter, too, the confidence with which you bade me farewell, and your reliance on a speedy release from my soundless exile, gave me the courage—then already needed—to continue. But needed it was; for, after remaining eight years without refreshment by a good performance of any of my works, my condition was becoming unbearable at last . . . Since the last hope has now been totally destroyed again, such an indomitable bitterness has come over me, that I cannot possibly lend credence to any more prospect-painting. Rarest of friends that you are, you have done your best to cheer me up and keep me in heart for work, now this way, now another; but I know you can really mean nothing beyond that. Wherefore—I have made up my mind to help myself as follows:—I have formed the plan of carrying *Tristan und Isolde* out forthwith in moderate dimensions, to facilitate performance, and of producing it at Strassburg a year from to-day

with Niemann and Frl. Meyer. There is a fine theatre there; a neighbouring German court-theatre (perhaps Carlsruhe) shall lend me its band and the rest of the company (inconsiderable); and thus, by aid of God and my own right hand, I think of setting something before myself again to bring me back to vigour and self-knowledge.”

In itself that was reason enough for suspending the RING, but a still more pressing one remains. The new plan, he goes on to say, would appear to be the only chance of restoring “equilibrium” to a financial position temporarily relieved by “a somewhat frivolous act” (*vid. inf.*), but “absolutely unsecured by anything beyond.” As a matter of fact, the plan was not so altogether new: last December 16, on the point of renouncing the Ritter pension, he had informed Liszt that in case both Haertels and Carl Alexander failed him, “no other course would be left me but to abandon the Nibelungen for a simpler work—such as the Tristan—which would have the presumable advantage that I could get it rapidly on to the theatres.” Merely, Liszt’s *douche* of the 9th had brought things to a sudden head.

Other points of interest in this answer of the 28th must wait awhile, to let us hasten back to *Siegfried’s* fate: “Whether my Nibelungen will come back to me later, I cannot foretell; it all depends on moods beyond my own control. I have done violence to myself for the nonce; in the midst of the best mood I’ve torn my Siegfried from my heart and laid him under bolt and bar as one buried alive. There I mean to keep him, and nobody shall see an inch of him, since I have to lock him from myself. Peradventure sleep may do him good; but I’ll fix no term for his awakening. It has cost me a hard, tough battle, to go this length—but there we must leave it.”

Exactly where had it been left? That Where, I fancy, will also furnish us the When.

“Beneath the lime-tree” does not of itself afford our answer, as Siegfried is left there more than once in course of act ii. Neither is the form of the statement, “Ich habe meinen jungen Siegfried noch in die schöne Waldeinsamkeit geleitet,” quite free from ambiguity; since the “noch” might mean “again,” instead of “as far as.” Without further data than this letter, then, we should be uncertain if the composer had reached almost the end of the act, or merely its middle, before taking his stern

resolve. However, we now know that Fafner was still "alive" in the early days of July, and that settles the point: by June 28 rather less than half of the composition-draft of act ii can possibly have been completed. But we have already seen the first half of *that*, again, completed in nine days ending May the 30th; and as Wagner remarks that he was "in the midst of the best mood" when he broke off work—who can doubt it while listening to that lovely "da bang sie mich geboren," etc., with its anticipation of *Tristan* iii?—it is only reasonable to conclude that he had been progressing at something like an equal rate, not more than twice as slowly. Our second question is consequently answered: the arrest of act ii can have occurred no later than mid-June, therefore in all probability June 12 or 13, i.e. immediately on receipt of Liszt's missive. Indeed, it must have been sheer impossible to work while a "bitter" inner battle was raging; "the best mood" had been dispelled. For good? Not quite, as you will have guessed. Even that "violence done myself for the nonce" is rather a sign of relenting; but we must pick up other threads first.

The first of those threads to pick up, must be that "somewhat frivolous act, the sale of my Tannhäuser to the Josephstädter theatre, Vienna." Its strand of "frivolity" resides not only in the choice of establishment—a case of 'Hobson's choice'—but also in Wagner's former declaration (p. 120) that Vienna should not have *Tannhäuser* unless he could superintend its rehearsals in person. But that declaration is almost a year old now, and was mainly inspired by distrust of the official Kapellmeister; whereas in 1857 the prospect of amnesty, and therefore of personal supervision, is receding farther and farther, while finances are steadily worsening: which makes a world of difference.

The affair was none of Wagner's seeking. His old Riga acquaintance, Johann Hoffmann, after passing on to the Frankfurt directorship (see vols. i and iii), had now become lessee and manager of the Josephstädter, itself a theatre of second rank, and its summer succursal the Thalia; and he it was who made the overtures, toward the end of February 57.* Wagner's reply, of March 2,

* Hoffmann's side of the correspondence has not come down to us, but may easily be reconstructed from the group of Wagner's letters to him and his con-

declares “it is my intention not to surrender my Tannhäuser to Vienna without securing good receipts,” and explains that a production at a minor house would necessarily affect his prospects at the Kärnthnerthor (Vienna court-opera), to which, moreover, he is partly committed already through the “generous exertions of Fräulein Meyer”; accordingly he has written her to ascertain the real intentions of her chief, and must await her answer, “expected daily,” before he can entertain Hoffmann’s proposal.

It was on the 23rd of February that he had written Fr. Meyer, *inter alia*: “Should you need an adviser, I beg you to apply to Laube; he is an old friend of mine, and though I have long lost sight of him, I assume that no one in Vienna would give you better counsel in my interest than he.” After waiting nearly three weeks for her answer, “half in annoyance, half in a moment of weakness” (as he confesses to her, March 26) he makes a definite offer to Hoffmann:

Zurich, March 14.

Dear Friend,

To cut the matter short, you pay me *one hundred francs* per performance of Tannhäuser, and make me an immediate advance of *two thousand francs*, i.e. my fee for 20 performances, on receipt of the score. For the following 30 performances you liquidate my *tantième* quarterly; after the 50th performance I forgo any further emolument.—

My demands are based on Berlin experiences. There, where the representation is by no means to my mind, each repetition brings me in 300 francs and over, on an average; in course of the first year there were 22 performances.* I had accordingly proposed not parting with my opera to Vienna except on similar terms. The Kärthnerthor [*sic*] would have had to grant me at least double what I’m asking of you . . . Some years ago, when it occurred to Kroll’s theatre at Berlin to want to mount my Tannhäuser [see vol. iv], of its own accord it offered me 30 performances at 6 louis d’or apiece . . . I really see no reason why I should cheapen my work for the benefit of that disgusting crew, the Viennese reporters. . . .

So, if you mean to stun me, just make out the contract, and send the 2000 fr. on; when I will declare myself captive, and await the further fate of Tannhäuser.—

ductor, Stolz, reproduced in Prof. W. Nicolai’s interesting contribution to the *Richard Wagner-Jahrbuch* 1906, from which I borrow the leading particulars.

* That would represent about £260 for 1856, but £85 of it had been advanced in May ’55.

God be with you, old friend!

The Devil take Vienna if it does not coin me money—that “gemüthliche” den is damnably indifferent to me otherwise . . . * [Greetings.]

A quasi-condition is also introduced, “a starring engagement of Niemann from Hanover; he is the best Tannhäuser—and that rôle is the crux.” Hoffmann seems to have originally agreed to it, as Wagner writes him next August 25, “It was with great delight I heard that Niemann was to sing in your first performances”; but alike this engagement and that of a young barytone whom Wagner himself had been coaching at Zurich for “Wolfram, a part which is always taken wrong”—and whom “I had really thought of sending to Berlin”—is shuffled out of by the “old friend.” As the sequel will shew, Hoffmann was an adept at shuffling, and although Wagner writes him March 23 that he will need the “2000 frcs agreed by you” before the 3rd of April, as late as May 8 he (W.) writes the young conductor Stolz: † “One can hardly blame the few friends I have in Vienna, if they keep urging me to withdraw my score before it is too late—a course for which my friend Hoffmann’s surprising silence unfortunately might furnish me excuse enough,” winding up with “My best regards to Herr Director Hoffmann, though he is keeping me in a very disagreeable uncertainty about him. I hope he will break his strange silence towards me at once, and let me have the needful satisfaction.” That extracts the stipulated advance at last, Wagner thanking Hoffmann on the 21st for “your last letter with enclosure,” but even now he cannot yet obtain the “formal contract” requested long ago; we may

* “I hate the Kärthnerthor theatre so much, that I would gladly see it dealt a handsome slap through your success,” says the letter of May 8 to Stolz. His dislike of the Vienna opera-house and its Italian proclivities—expressed to Fr. Mayer herself in his apologia of March 26—was of quite ancient standing; September 1843 to Schumann: “I have received another invitation from Vienna for an opera, for 1844-5, asking me to send in my scenario; but I have procrastinated for the past 6 weeks! A perfect horror holds me back from dealings with that abandoned Vienna; does this city really still form part of *Germany*? To myself it is exactly as if I had been asked to write an opera for Asia Minor”—and he declined the offer, as seen in vol. ii (pp. 34 and 65), since he “hated that Donizetti city.”

† The autograph of this long epistle was presented by Brahms to the Wagner-museum (then at Vienna) on his visit of April 24, 1892.

assume it to have been eventually executed, however, as a letter of Aug. 25 to H. refers to “the fact of my pecuniary interests being completely secured.”

Passing from the monetary to the artistic aspect, the letter of March 23 to Hoffmann had said, “If your theatre is very large, the strings would need still greater strengthening: 10 first, 10 second violins, 6 violas, 6 violoncelli and 4 double basses, at the least.” The letter to Stolz remarked: “Experience has taught me that the relatively best performances of my operas have come to pass at minor theatres, since they mostly had young active and zealous conductors in charge, who put forth all their strength to give the representation a character of something quite out of the ruck . . . I hate the representations at our largest theatres chiefly because of the sloth and ill-will of the older type of Kapellmeisters, who have lost all capability of getting out of themselves; so that one mostly fancied one had done one’s utmost, if one cut whatever wouldn’t go. . . . But the main point is the working of the singers; mostly Austrians, I suppose, with all their faults. Do try and tune them to an altogether different key from that in which they are used to singing Donizetti and Verdi; above all, set your face against the smallest liberty with the tempo. Nowhere have I written recitatives; even where there is little or no accompaniment, all was conceived in strict tempo, without any dragging. The note values, in especial, must not be altered” —Wolfram’s “very difficult first song” in act ii being instanced as a case in point.

From the letter of May 21 to Hoffmann himself: “I think it a very good idea of yours, to interpose another opera before ‘Tannhäuser,’ only I should have preferred something else to a thing like [Auber’s] ‘Marco Spado,’ from which the singers of ‘Tannhäuser’ can learn nothing but bad. Do not forget, dearest friend, that we are playing a bold game; only by suddenly shewing the Viennese something totally different from what they are accustomed to, and by doing it with great assurance and aplomb, can we hope to win. That I have been warned off the undertaking from all sides, need not alarm us: I know the prejudice, but also know the value of a sterling deed where least expected. Such a deed, however, is yours to do. Not for a moment do I doubt your lavishness, and I am quite sure you will do all in your power to turn out something presentable; only, no

possible outward splendour would long be able to conceal an inward void. Take another good look at your singers in the light of your wide experience, and if your Kapellmeister is as capable as I assume, then support him with the greatest energy, I beg you, in his ordering of the rehearsals; should he want any further explanations, I shall be delighted to furnish them."

A few days before the Thalia première Wagner received an application from Director Moritz Ernst of Mainz (who had put on *Tannhäuser* in that city Dec. 54) for the right to mount *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin* and the *Holländer* at the Theater an der Wien "next summer with an élite troupe." He promptly informs Hoffmann thereof, Aug 25, saying: "I have answered him to-day that my ancient friendly relations with yourself, in addition to what I have learnt of your good treatment of my operas at other places . . . had determined me to commit the [Vienna] representation of my operas in the first instance to yourself," subject to the issue of this *Tannhäuser* venture. How Wagner's loyalty was rewarded by Hoffmann, we shall learn in cap. VII. Meanwhile it is only needful to record that the production took place Aug. 28 in the literally suburban Thalia, a huge wooden booth then standing near the Schmelzer cemetery, but since pulled down, with a clientèle accustomed to enjoy its blood-and-thunder "in its shirt-sleeves"—if we may believe Zellner—"when it found its coat too hot." The first night, with singers all more or less beginners, was only saved from prompt disaster by what Zellner's journal signalled as "an admirable, a finely nuanced, in one word a truly artistic rendering of the orchestral side of the work." But little by little Stolz pulled the whole thing together, so that nearly forty performances were given before the run came to an end next Spring. And thus, despite the croakers who had pestered Wagner for so many months, Vienna at last was so far conquered that the opera-house itself thought fit to bring out *Lohengrin* the following August (for which consult cap. VII.).

The next thread to present itself is a frayed one, beginning and ending none knows where. Its first documentary trace appears in that letter of May the 8th to Liszt: "Joking apart, the Emperor of Brazil has just caused me to be invited (*jetzt hat mich der Kaiser von Brasilien auffordern lassen*) to go to him at Rio Janeiro, where I am to have everything in plenty. So—if not

at Weimar, at *Rio!!*” The meaning of “if not at Weimar” is to be found, of course, in the preceding sentence anent his “high and highest patrons’ mysterious silence” in respect of his amnesty; but the channel of the Rio invitation remains a greater mystery. From the “jetzt” it would seem of quite recent occurrence; can it have been the bragging of some chance acquaintance at Baur’s table d’hôte, or had it come by post? Nearly fifteen years afterwards we read that “An agent—real or bogus—of the Emperor of Brazil disclosed to me his sovereign’s penchant for myself and German art in general, and tried to get me to accept an invitation to Rio de Janeiro, as also the commission to write a new work for the excellent Italian opera-company there” (*P.* III. 269); but here again it is not explicitly stated whether the request was made by word of mouth or letter, though the term “*eröffnete*” certainly leans toward an oral discussion.

Our first trace of this extraordinary offer having shewn itself May 8, we pass to the 19th—the next letter to Liszt—and find no mention of it at all. On the contrary, here Wagner speaks of his compulsion to sell his RING scores to ensure himself “something *certain* for the next few years” (233 *sup.*); evidently he has banished Rio from his mind as too illusory to build on. But six weeks later, in the letter of June 28 announcing suspension of *Siegfried* and so forth: “I may assume, I hope, that a practicable opus—such as my Tristan is to become—will very soon yield good returns and keep me afloat for some time. Moreover, I’ve another odd idea with it: I think of getting this work translated into good Italian, and offering its first Italian reproduction to the theatre at Rio Janeiro—which probably will mount my Tannhäuser meantime. I shall also dedicate it to the Emperor of Brazil, who will shortly be receiving copies of my last three operas; and all this together, I imagine, will shed enough to keep me from the dogs awhile.” The self-styled agent’s first advance, whether epistolary or personal, had plainly been followed by a specious letter in course of the last week or two.*

* Can we trust Praeger for once? Says *As*: “When I was at Zurich, Wagner showed me two letters from august personages. First, the Duke of Coburg . . . The second letter was from a count, favourite of the emperor of Brazil. The emperor was an unknown admirer of Wagner’s, it appears, and was desirous of commissioning Wagner to compose an opera,” etc, etc. After what we have heard above, this may be true, or it may simply be an em-

On whatever yarn this fantastic bait was dangled, Wagner's temporary swallowing of it was real enough to make him write to Haertels the end of next September that he "even has a prospect of producing *Tristan* in the Italian tongue at Rio Janeiro." But there the thread breaks short, not another trace of it appearing till we reach the retrospect already cited, from which I now will quote a few more sentences: "By the spring of 1857 I had entirely completed the music of the 'Rheingold,' the 'Walküre,' and a large part of 'Siegfried.' But now there entered a reaction . . . For eight years it had been with the greatest trouble I had so much as been able to materialise the sound of an orchestra, from time to time. Germany, where they were giving my *Lohengrin* which I myself had never heard, stayed closed against me. The condition to which I was reduced by such deprivations seems to have been realised by none of my German friends . . . Unfortunately it seemed as if even those who previously had felt moved to advance my big project were not quite averse to a prudent holding back; and so, when I laid one silent score beside another, not to open it myself again [figuratively speaking], at times I deemed myself one walking in his sleep . . . Then, as it were a medicine against this growing depression, there arose in me the wish to carry out a long-conceived dramatic subject which, by not exceeding the dimensions of my earlier works, might afford me an immediate prospect of performance. . . . In the circumstances, it will not be inexplicable that a very curious offer from without—whose mention would strictly more belong to my biography*—should also have influenced me somewhat actively in the conception of this new work. An agent [etc., *vid. sup.*] . . . On my side the occurrence went no farther than amazement at

broidery of the *Ges. Schr.* passage. What casts suspicion on it, is the part I momentarily dotted out: "First, the Duke of Coburg offered him a thousand dollars and two months' residence in the palace, if he would score an opera for him. The offer was refused, for he said, 'Look, now, though I want the money sadly, yet I cannot and will not score the duke's opera.'" Unfortunately that Coburg offer, also mentioned in the *Ges. Schr.* (cf *Prose* VI. 169), had been disposed of two years before P. first met Wagner (see iv, 120-2).

* Shall we find it in his Memoirs some day?—Less than five years after the above was written and published, this same Emperor of Brazil, Dom Pedro II., attended the first Bayreuth performance of *Rheingold*, and paid a flying call at Wahnfried late that evening to express his great delight with the work and sorrow at being compelled to resume his journey next morning.

its strangeness, and its only result was that arising from my reflection on the possibility of dealing with Italian singers for execution of a work of mine” (*P.* III. 266-9). We may hear a little more of that result hereafter.

The third of our threads will quickly reconduct us to the point where *Siegfried* made its halt.

Since that reminder to the “swallow” to “inspect her edifice and hear all about the commencement of act 2,” our first record of a renewal of old Zurich ties is the tiny note: “Dear Herwegh, I quite see I must have at you with a ceremonial invitation, before I can lure you out to my Asyl; so I beg you and your dear wife to spend Sunday evening here. Don’t make it too late—say, about 6 o’clock—as I want you to inspect our dominion by daylight. Hearty greetings . . . Enge, June 5, 1857.” A few other friends besides the Wesendoncks—who of course would frequently be passing to and fro as their Villa reached the stage of final touches—may be presumed to have soon followed suit; but the next recorded invitation is again addressed to Herwegh: “Dear friend, Devrient (Eduard) will be here on *Wednesday*. Please come and dine that day at 2. Your R. W.—Enge, June 29, 1857.”

Probably Devrient arrived on the Tuesday evening, June 30. The next two or three nights at the Asyl must have been given up to entertainments in his honour, for Keller writes Frau Duncker, July 4: “Eduard Devrient was here these last few days, and stayed at Wagner’s. There were readings from Shakespeare and ‘Faust,’ and musicings from Wagner’s big Nibelungen-work, where things go very high-poetically. Pretty ladies sat busily around in beautiful attention, and your humble servant kept diligently still in quiet ugliness.”* Shakespeare being Devrient’s

* What can one do with such a sentence as “Hübsche Damen waren fleissig im schönen Dasitzen und meine Wenigkeit ganz emsig in stillem Unschönsein”? Its snarl is quite in harmony, however, with a previous note to Freiligrath, Apr. 30: “Then we have Richard Wagner, a highly gifted man, but also somewhat of a friseur and charlatan. He keeps a sideboard (*Nipptisch*) on which one sees a silver hair-brush in a crystal dish, etc.”—probably a reminiscence of one of the last gatherings at the Escherhäuser. Poor cross-grained Keller, so “pretty ladies” brought him dainty gifts from Paris. He accepts his invitations, all the same.

speciality, possibly the *Faust* reciter was Wagner himself: deponent sayeth not.

As may be judged from their frequent interchange of correspondence immediately before and after, there was more than social entertainment at back of this flying visit. Some six days from its termination Wagner tells Liszt, July 9: "The Grand Duke of Baden has just written me quite a surprisingly amiable and friendly letter, which really is of value in my eyes as first sign of a rent in that timorous court-etiquette observed towards me. The cause was a small attention I have shewn the young Grand Duchess, for which her husband thanks me quite touchedly and touchingly in her name and his own.—Moreover, Eduard Devrient was here three days last week; he inaugurated my little guest-chamber. I spoke to him also of my *Tristan* project, which he favoured much; only he was against Strassburg, and—prudent and cautious though he otherwise is—he volunteered to bring about a first representation at Carlsruhe under myself. The Grand Duke also would seem to have got wind of something of the sort already—apparently through Devrient—for in one passage of his letter he plainly hints his confidence of seeing me at Carlsruhe soon. As God will! but so far as I can see, I shall have to work a little miracle again, to make people believe in me.—With my work itself—as you may easily imagine—I'm going through a time of great unsettlement.—Keep to it that I have you here in September; that's the chief thing!"

There are sundry points for consideration in this rapid sketch (thrown off with another guest in the house). For the first time are we brought into direct contact with Friedrich of Baden, born September 1826, proclaimed Grand Duke Sept. '56 after four and a half years of Prince-Regency. A fortnight from his proclamation he had married Princess Luise, born 1838 to the Prince of Prussia (subsequently first German Emperor), her mother being sister to the reigning Grand Duke of Weimar. The Baden interest displayed in Wagner was therefore more or less of Weimar stock, and Liszt might claim it as his planting. On the other hand, E. Devrient—not only as a still older, though far less zealous friend of Wagner's (see iv, 158-60), but also as the Baden Intendant—was naturally the proper intermediary, if Wagner contemplated putting that interest to a practical test. And here we see that Devrient's counsel, which we assumed to have been

already sought by letter, has taken definite shape upon his Asyl visit: the “small attention shewn the young Grand Duchess,” an Album-autograph, was evidently sent at his suggestion and through his personal agency, i.e. he bore it back with him to Carlsruhe. Duke Friedrich’s letter of thanks, accordingly, can only have been received by Wagner about a couple of days before the latter mildly breaks the news to Liszt’s susceptibility. How Liszt will take it, remains to be seen; for his letter of July 10 is not, of course, an answer to the above, but crosses it.

If we feel a little anxiety as to how Liszt will take the news that an allied court has been approached without his intervention, another dock planned out for launching of the next new drama, we shall better sympathise with the expression “Mit meiner Arbeit selbst lebe ich in grosser, schwankender Aufregung.” I have rendered this, “With my work itself I’m going through a time of great unsettlement,” but no presentable translation will quite convey at once the “agitation,” or “excitement,” of the *Aufregung* and the “oscillation,” or “swaying from side to side,” of the *schwankender*. Here the outward uncertainty has its counterpart in an inward struggle: the “battle” had not really ended when *Siegfried* was “buried alive” last month; like his mythic sire, the wielder of Nothung has plainly burst through bolt and bar, challenging his would-be supplanter to a final combat.

Thus Wagner had informed Frau Ritter five days earlier, July 4, not that he *has*, but that he is “about to leave Siegfried alone in the forest for a year, so as to take breath with a ‘Tristan und Isolde.’” Moreover, it still depends on ‘moods beyond his own control’—on what he later calls his “dæmon”—for “the poem [*Tr. u. Is.*] still is slumbering in me,” he tells her, “I shall presently proceed to summon it to life; but not until that thoroughly contents me, shall I deem the project meet for execution.”*

Combining these two passages, we learn that *Siegfried* was resuscitated July 4, i.e. directly after Devrient’s departure: its author had not had the heart to leave it so abruptly to the chance of future waking. But we may go a little farther, and define the exact spot where the suspended work was then resumed. In a

* Unfortunately the full context is not available, even yet; cf. footnote to p. 241.

note to Frau Mathilde we find the following: "For your personal gratification I may tell you, since yesterday evening I have not been able to work again; * Calderon, however, is committed to rest.—Devrient sends you his kindest regards. For the rest, the world still is wagging, Fafner alive, and everything as it was." This riddle is undated, but forms part of an invitation "for Sunday evening . . . a Sulzer-feast," that Sunday evening being July 12.† Consequently it must have been penned between July 5 and 11, and as it conveys greetings from Devrient, to whom Wagner replies on the 7th, already our choice is narrowed down—to the alternative of 6 or 7. We may plump for 6, as the inability not only to work, but even to read that morning, is sufficiently explained by the arrival of another guest, F. Praeger, whose presence at the Asyl on the 6th will be proved from another source hereafter. So we have Fafner "still alive" the 6th of July, after two preceding mornings' work; and thus we reach the conclusion that act ii was resumed at the point where Siegfried's horn-call rouses that delectable beast from his lair.

The interruption caused by Praeger's arrival would scarcely extend to more than his day of installation, since the letter of July 9 to Liszt shews Wagner in the midst of "work" again, and Ferdinand himself informs us: "While I was with Wagner it was his invariable habit to rise at the good hour of half-past six in the morning. If Minna was not about, he would go to the piano, and soon would be heard, at first softly, then with odd harmonies, full orchestral effects, as it were, 'Get up, get up, thou merry Swiss-boy.' That was his fun. Early breakfast would be served in the garden, after which Wagner would hand me 'Schopenhauer,' with my allotted task for the morning study. This plan, though Wagner's, was one which coincided happily with my own inclinations. I was, as it were, ordered up to my room, there to ponder over the arguments of the pessimistic

* In the *Mathilde* volume I translated this as "of late I have been unable to work again at night"; but I now am convinced that the "seit letzthin Abend" of the German edition (which Dr Altmann reads as "letzthin abends") is a misprint for "seit letzten Abend." I ought to have guessed so at the time, as working at night was quite contrary to Wagner's habit.

† A note dated "Zurich, 9. Juli 1857" invites Heim and his wife "for Sunday evening, in honour of Sulzer."

philosopher, and so be well prepared for discussion at the dinner-table, or later, during our regular daily stroll” (*As*, 291). Capital—a whole paragraph we may implicitly believe.*

Save for a day’s outing, then, composition of *Siegfried* ii could go steadily on. Oblivious of the guest above, Fafner could succumb to “odd harmonies” and breathe his affecting last words,† Mime and Alberich enact that unique tragi-comedy which cutting managers so love to drop, and finally the wretched Mime could literally talk his head off in that inimitable scene which so piqued the listener’s curiosity that he broke all rules, he says, and “entered the room” (see iv, 185-6)—unpardonable offence for which, or haply for its sequent scolding, *Wie* tells us the composer rewarded him by writing out the “dem Kind nur den Kopf abhau’n” passage as souvenir for Lüders (a statement I reproduce ‘without prejudice’). A fuller account of this visit must be reserved for our intermezzo, next chapter, but it would seem to have come to an apt termination with the despatch of the “eckliger Schwätzer,” leaving Siegfried and his creator in simultaneous peace.

Now the act soars up to heights unscaled before. In all the range of music is there anything more transcendent than that glimpse of noonday rest, “Hoch steht die Sonne,” or its gradual transition to the stirrings of a young desire, or again, that “So wird mir der Weg,” where we hear the very beating of the wings of Siegfried’s feathered guide? When Wagner bade farewell to *Siegfried* after pencilling the last chord of its second act, **July the 30th, 1857**, it cannot have been for lack of inspiration, but since this final gust of inspiration was already blowing *Tristan*-wards.

Ere bidding *our* farewell to *Siegfried*, let us call on the last of this summer’s guests for his contemporary impression. “Wagner was in splendid trim yesterday,” writes Hans von Bülow to Pohl,

* With this proviso, that the “merry Swiss-boy” (whistled by the *parrot*, we shall hear in cap. VII.) would more probably apply to the guest than the hostess, whom *Wie* describes as “promptly descending from her orphaned [!] bedroom with kindly cheering face,” whereas Pohl says *her* apartments lay below.

† The last note of the Sword-theme (bass trumpet) accompanying Fafner’s “*fallte ein rosiger Held*” should be *f*, not *e* flat (as engraved); the master’s own correction recorded by the late H. Porges, *Bayr. Bl.* 1890, p. 378.

Sept. 4, "and the promise which a glance into the score of 'Young Siegfried' gave me is colossal. What a giant of a man!" Then to Brendel, Sept. 7: "There is *only one* Wagner; what astounding creative resource! The Nibelungen, as I now am making its acquaintance through him, is a work of whose sublimity you can barely form a notion from the earlier operas; a work which towers, I should like to say, into centuries to come. And this gigantic humour!" Finally to Julius Stern, his Berlin principal, Sept. 19: "I can write you nothing about the 'Nibelungen'; language is too feeble to express one's admiration. Only this: even specific musicians who retain an ounce of honesty in their blood, who haven't turned to petrefacts of dulness and rascality, will be *amazed!* Nothing like it, nothing approaching it, has ever or anywhere been written—no matter in what art, what language. From thence one looks sheer down upon, looks *over*, all besides. 'Tis a true deliverance from the world-bog; and after grasping that so thoroughly, with these conviction-leggings on me I can return to the metropolis assured that scarcely shall its mud bespatter me again."

Had there been a few more like Hans, with power added to his faith and energy, the Ring-music need never have been suspended with but one act of *Siegfried* finished, another act rough-sketched.

VI.

ASYL GUESTS.

F. Praeger's real visit: two harmless apocrypha; Asyl life 'as he knew it.'—Edward Roeckel.—Robert Franz.—Richard Pohl; elusive testimony.—Hans von Bülow and his bride; the "new poem" read.—"Liszt never came."

I had German guests this summer; Ed. Devrient, Präger and Röckel (from England), Robert Franz, and others, stayed with me longer or shorter, and we had a deal of music: 'Rheingold,' 'Walküre,' and the two finished acts of Young Siegfried.

To W. Fischer, Oct. 29, 57.

OF Devrient, who "inaugurated my little guest-chamber" at the beginning of July, we have disposed already. The next on the above list is our chatty old friend Ferdinand Praeger, whom we naturally must ask to tell us something of his visit, though we may require to pull him up from time to time:

"In the summer of 1856"—begins cap. xxi of *As*—"I spent two months under Wagner's roof at Zurich. As it was holiday time for me, and Wagner had no engagements of any importance, we passed the whole period in each other's society debating, in a most earnest, philosophical, logical manner, art matters, most of our discussions taking place during our rambles upon the mountains." When it came to translating this passage for *Wie*, Ferdinand's modesty rebelled against the arrogation to himself of logic and philosophy, but he stuck to "1856" and "zwei Monate"; whilst, to place the date beyond all doubt, he repeated it in both versions for the opening of cap. xxii. Rather a bad start, in the light of Wagner's letter to Fischer, for it proves that Ferdinand kept no diary or note-book, not even a dated souvenir of this visit, and relied on nothing but a fragile memory.

Softly—the visit-chapter is wedged between a 'letter' winding up its predecessor and another on the opening page of its

successor, and both of these are dated more or less, the first at the end of the 'letter' itself, the second in P.'s context. That first I must reproduce *in extenso*, after cautioning the reader that these two 'letters' form the commencement of a sequence of ten (and a vulgar fraction), covering the period down to and including April 1865, for whose genuineness we have not the warrant of one shred of producible evidence. Here, then, is what *As* prints in final embellishment of its chapter xx :

That's right, dearest Ferdinandus, to determine to leave Richard Wagner of the future to come to the R. W. of the present. My *alter ego* will not regret it. When you are here I will hammer out the "Walküre" to you, and I hope it will force its way from ear to heart. Then there is a bit of the "Siegfried," and that, too, must I sing to you. How my head is full of projects for work !

Minna is very delighted at the prospect of seeing you, and says she will treat you as a brother. I have told her how heartily you enter into the mysteries of household matters, and are of just that temperament to agree with her, and appreciate that domestic skill for which I am totally unfitted. To me also your presence will be a delight, for I can talk to you with open heart, and have much to say to you. Now see that you do not let anything intervene that shall prevent your coming. I am just now full of work, and when you are here I shall work all the same. Some hours during the morning shall be devoted to work while you shall be sent upstairs to deeply study Schopenhauer,* and then shall we not argue and discuss like orators in the old Athenian lyceum ! Two months, and you will be with me ! ah ! that is good ! † Then bring all your brain-power, all your keen penetration, for you shall explain to me some obscure passages in that best of writers, Schopenhauer, which now torment me exceedingly. He will, perhaps, cause you many researches of the heart, so you must come fully equipped with all your intellectual faculties in the full vigorous glow of health, and then I promise myself some happy hours. ‡ And what shall be your reward ? Well, the

* To this sentence *Wie* adds a clause which I will distinguish by italics : "Du kannst während der Zeit auf Deinem Zimmer oben, *von wo aus Du eine herrliche Aussicht hast* ["whence you have a splendid view"], Schopenhauer'sche Philosophie studiren," etc.

† *Wie* alters this to "zwei Monate wirst Du bei mir bleiben ? Das ist mir lieb"—i.e. "So you will stay with me two months ? I'm glad of that." The humour of it is, that the alteration represents Praeger as having made an utterly preposterous suggestion, and Wagner as having meekly fallen in with it.

‡ For a second time *Wie* is more modest ; it reverses the promise : "und

“Walküre” shall entreat you, and man, the original man, “Siegfried” shall show you what he is! * Now, good, dear friend, come!

Mind, now, no English restraint and propriety; both that invisible old lady, Mrs Grundy, that hovers over the English horizon, ruling with a rod of iron what is supposed to be proper and virtuous!

Heartiest greetings to dear sister Léonie, and tell her that her son, Richard Wagner the elder, sends his best affection to the younger, and inquires whether he has yet been taught how to make money.

Yours,

RICHARD WAGNER.

P.S. Ferdinand, bring me a packet of snuff from that shop in Oxford Street, you know, where you got it before for me.

R. W.

ZURICH, May, 1856.

Well, we know for certain that no Wagner autograph corresponding to this ‘letter’ either was included in the batch of one-and-twenty sold to the purchaser of the *As* and *Wie* MSS.—who imagined he was buying every Wagner document addressed to Ferdinand reproduced in the book—or is to be found among the fifteen rediscovered by Praeger’s widow in that lumber-room wooden box (see v, 396 *seq.*), or, again, has ever been heard of in the world outside. To be sure, we have been vouchsafed the text of no more than two of those fifteen rediscovered ones as yet; but the late Mme Praeger simultaneously supplied us with a numbered catalogue of all of their modes of address—“Lieber Freund,” etc., etc.—and neither “dearest Ferdinandus” nor *Wie’s* equivalent, “liebster Ferdinand,” figures once therein. Such modes had certainly been used by Wagner at the end of his genuine letter of January 56, “liebster Ferdinand,” and at the commencement of that of July 15, 55, “Liebster Freund Ferdinandus”; but that is not the point, or rather, it would simply furnish Praeger with a model. The point is, that the authenticity of the very first words in *this* ‘letter,’ the ‘letter’ we have just read, is attested by no discoverable Wagner autograph,

ich verspreche Dir viele glückliche Stunden”—i.e. “and I promise you many happy hours.”

* All this about “man, the original man,” is dropped by *Wie* in favour of “Ausdauer hast Du, das weiss ich, und Deine Belohnung soll die ‘Walküre’ sein und ‘Siegfried’”—a sentence, one may safely say, that can never have issued from Wagner’s pen.

though there cannot have been the faintest reason for destroying such a document.

Pass to the other end: what rational being ever dates his private correspondence that way? One might give the day of the week, or the day of the month, with no year-date; but "May 1856" is only two-fifths less outrageous, for anything except a magazine or preface, than "Wednesday 1856" would be. Even supposing the original to have once existed, then, the date has been added by Praeger without a warning sign. In itself that might be a venial offence—though not to be passed without a head-shake—if the contents placed the date's approximate accuracy beyond dispute; but one salient feature of this alleged document is its complete incompatibility with the middle half of 1856, apart from any bearing on F. Praeger's visit. From March 28 of that year, when P. had really been informed of the completion of *Die Walküre*, until the last nine days of September, Wagner was the reverse of "full of work" (see cap. III.) and had not commenced "a bit of 'Siegfried.'" Neither had he any "upstairs" room in 1856 at all, to say nothing of *Wie's* addition of "a splendid view," for he then was living *in a flat*.*

Shall we take it another way, and try to fit this 'letter' into 1857? Then, as Praeger followed on the heels of Devrient, its "Two months, and you will be with me," would range it early in May, just after Wagner's moving in. Very well: that would comport with the "upstairs," the "full of work" (not altogether, but in the near future) and the "bit of 'Siegfried,'" though we should be surprised at his not speaking of *an act*, in lieu of "ein Stück"; but imagine Wagner not alluding to the change of dwelling, when we have seen him 'full of' it not only in his letters of May 6 and 8 to Frau Ritter and Liszt, but also in that of May 18 to Klindworth! Instead, he is made tell Ferdinand "how heartily you enter into the mysteries of household matters, and are of just that temperament to . . . appreciate that domestic skill for which I am totally unfitted." This, directly after Wagner's "pedantic" superintendence not only of the fitting of

* Apropos of that Escherhäuser abode (*cf.* iv, 99) an amusing story is told by R. Fricke, of course at second or third hand: Wagner was coming out of the building one day, when a would-be interviewer accosted him, "Excuse me, does Herr Richard Wagner live here?"—"Certainly; two flights up," replied the victim, and walked away.

his new abode, but also of the whole removal!—No, this ‘letter’ will not wash either way in *As*; and if one turns to *Wie*, one chokes with laughter at the thought that anyone at any time should have debited Wagner with such Anglo-German as “Mein Kopf ist voll von Projekten für neue Arbeit,” the original whereof the reader will have no difficulty in espying above.

Save for the cryptic innuendo toward its close, intrinsically this ‘letter’ does no great harm; but, looked at more minutely, it forms an object-lesson in Praeger’s method of concoction. Starting with the “dearest Ferdinandus” from a previous genuine letter, we immediately come to “Richard Wagner le jeune . . plus du futur que moi,” i.e. the Praeger baby, from the letter of Nov. 55 to Madame—balanced at the other end by a second quotation from the same epistle. Then the last preceding genuine letter to himself is tapped for “the ‘Walküre,’” that to Madame for its “multitude de projets de sujets d’opéras dans ma tête.” The long central paragraph, so entertaining through its unconscious humour, is mainly a self-glorification of P.’s dressed out as forecast, but moulds one telling sentence on dim recollection of the mislaid letter of Dec. 57, “Ich hätte Dir über manches vielleicht mein Herz auszuschütten gehabt” (“Perhaps I might have had to pour out my heart to you on sundry matters,” if they had met in Paris—see next cap.). Finally, the postscript is based on a small commission referred to in the letter last-mentioned, and presumably mooted in its immediate predecessor among the ‘wooden box’ collection, “da hast Du gleich die Hände vollauf [?] mit mir zu thun, so dass der Tabak eine Nebensache wird.”—A congeries of plausible odds and ends, you perceive, the fruit of an agglomerative memory attempting to reconstitute a set of documents it possibly once knew by heart.

But what has become of the other London friends? Not a greeting is sent them, not a question asked about their welfare! And that is the more disastrous, as Klindworth himself was expected in summer 1857. Put it that our beautiful ‘letter’ was written *before* Klindworth had announced his visit, i.e. before May 18: then, as Wagner has a good deal to say to him about Praeger (see v, 122-3), surely he would have also told him that P. was coming in July.* Put it that it was written *after* the

* In fact the May letter to Klindworth shews that the same Dr Gerber

letter to Klindworth, and in reply to a self-invitation of Praeger's : then Wagner would surely have told P. that another London visitor was expected at such and such a date ; moreover, there would be no room then for the "two months" interval before P.'s visit. Whichever way you look at it, again the thing breaks down ; and the only conclusion to come to, is that Praeger's visit was a hastily-conceived affair, perhaps the result of his getting wind of the invitation to Klindworth. For all we know, he may even have taken his host by surprise, as his friend E. Roedel did directly after.

To suspect the aged Praeger of some deep design in persistently antedating his Swiss trip, is quite another matter ; I cannot hold with it, the cause of muddle is so obvious. Had not Wagner's genuine letter of March '56 invited him for *that* summer ? * Having mislaid the whole of his correspondence with the master for the next nine years, what more natural than that the greybeard should mistake 1856 for the year of his actual visit ? No ulterior motive is needed at all : the 1856 invitation was staring him in the face. We have only to suppose his oblivion of its non-fulfilment, and the rest is easy : he would imagine himself to have sent an acceptance in the course of April, and Wagner to have endorsed it with effusion in May. Now we can understand the form P. gives to this apocrypha, "That's right," etc. ; a fresh invitation sent in 57 could not have plunged *in medias res* like that, but "That's right" is quite a happy notion for commencement of an apocrypha separated by only one line of context—"The next

whose warnings against Praeger it ridicules is expected at the Asyl this summer, and has to execute a commission for Wagner in London first, whilst Klindworth is begged to come together with him (G.). Most certainly Wagner would have taken the precaution to tell Klindworth of any date already appointed for Praeger, so as to avoid a collision : his only guest-chamber might accommodate two friends, at a pinch, but could scarcely lodge three foes.—N.B. Klindworth's visit was eventually deferred till next year ; whether Gerber came or not, does not appear, as the next we hear of him is his committing suicide on his way to America in '58.

* "Now try and visit me yourself, but wait for my operas till you can hear them produced by me some day ; at present you would get nothing but a very hazy notion of them. Therefore if you want to have anything of me, just come to myself ; you'll give me great pleasure by doing so. I shall remain here all the summer, but, if I can manage it, shall go to Rome with Semper in the autumn—at least, that is my wish" (March 28, 56, before the Mornex cure was ordered—*cf* 106-8 *sup.*).

letter is again dated from Zurich"—from the real invitation of March 1856. Why should P. trouble to ascertain if his harmless link would square with facts? It was his very own visit; might he not do as he pleased with it?

Should you desire an exacter date for his arrival at the Asyl, we can fix it to within twenty-four hours, and almost entirely without his aid. In the second of the two published 'wooden box' letters—both of which shall reappear at their proper season—i.e. in a letter of January 58, Wagner refers to "poor Müller, whom you met at my house." Now, the daughter of Wagner's oldest Zurich friend, Alexander Müller, wrote to Herr Glasenapp toward the end of the seventies: "On the 6th of July 1857 we paid our goodbye-visit to the 'Gabler,' next to Herr Wesendonck's villa, previous to a journey into Germany. Meister Wagner played us the Feuerzauber, and told us his plans [?] regarding the performance of his Nibelungen." As Glasenapp justly concludes, Praeger must have met A. Müller on *that* occasion, since people do not pay an "Abschiedsversuch" unless they are going away for a month or two; Devrient having "inaugurated" the guest-chamber during the first three days of the month, P. must therefore have arrived on the 4th or 5th. Personally, I should say he came the afternoon or evening of the 5th, his further installation adding one brief morning to Fafner's sluggish life (*vid. 260 sup.*).

How long did he stay? "In the summer of 1856 I spent two months under Wagner's roof at Zurich," says he, cap. xxi, and again the first line of cap. xxii, "From the time I left Zurich in the autumn of 1856," etc. But just as we had Wagner's own testimony to rebut the blundering "1856," so we have it to prune those too exuberant "two months." Directly after mentioning Devrient's visit in a letter to Frau Ritter of Oct. 8, 57, Wagner adds: "Then came my London host (*Gastfreund*) Präger, an absurd, but good-souled hypochondriac (*ein närrischer, seelensguter Hypochondrist*), and stayed with me a couple of weeks." Well, "ein Paar Wochen" may mean anything from 12 days to 20, but by no possibility can it be stretched to a month, to say nothing of two; so that Praeger must have left the Asyl between a week and a fortnight before the finish of the composition-draft of *Siegfried* ii—which tallies with his tale of bearing home an autograph (for Lüders) from Mime's last adventure.

Some are inclined to reduce his visit to the lower figure or less, on the involuntary evidence of that apocrypha with which he starts cap. xxii, after the preamble: "From the time I left Zurich in the autumn of 1856, to the untoward fate of 'Tannhäuser,' at Paris, in March, 1861, of the several letters which passed between Richard Wagner and me I reproduce the few following, as possessing more than a personal interest. On the 17th July he writes:—" but I do not think that altogether fair. When a document itself is so obvious a fabrication, it scarcely is permissible to draw historical conclusions from its loose-flung date. Not unwisely, Praeger left the year to our discretion; shall we be so ungracious as to pin him to the month? An unadorned "17th" would have been still more artistic, but he deigned to clothe it with "July," out of pure commiseration for our hankering after details. We may take it or leave it, as we please; if we do not like July, it can be changed to June or January at a moment's notice, with none but the printers to blame. For this apocrypha is meant as something universal, something with "more than a personal interest." It begins with "Hard have I toiled at 'Siegfried,' for work, work, is my only comfort"; it ends with "But listen, Ferdinandus! I am pondering over the Tristan legend. It is marvellous how that work constantly leaps from out the darkness into full life, before my mental vision. Wait until next summer, and then you shall 'hear something'! But now, my health is poor, and I am out of spirits" (followed by suggestive dots and the signature). What could be more impersonal, more studiously indefinite? With our grovelling notions of chronology, though stumbling at the "health is poor,"* we might imagine that the *Siegfried-Tristan* combination points to '57; but Ferdinand has loftier ideas, "Not long after the above reached me, Wagner's health did begin to give way, so that his next letter [clear proof of deprivation of that wooden box] is dated:—Venice, October, 1858." If *we* choose to allot "the above" to July 1857, though he seems to favour a still more impossible 1858, that is our look out: it would ruthlessly reduce Praeger's visit to zero, since this yearless apocrypha has not a word upon

* Even *Wie* says that Wagner was "feeling particularly well" during P.'s visit, and from the Spring of 1857 to the end of that year we do not meet with one complaint about ill-health.

the subject, not even a greeting from Minna to the departed guest; but as P. made no claim whatever to a visit in 1857, we cannot tax him with inconsistency. It was in the summer of '56 that Wagner's health was really "poor" and under treatment, and that he probably wrote Praeger to "wait until next"; but P. has done his best to recollect those truant letters, and we must not be too hard on him if his results refuse to fit our history: they were not intended for it, but to pad his own.

Seriously, that clumsy but harmless apocrypha assigned by Ferdinand to an æonic "the 17th July" may be swept aside as not worth critical consideration.* The year which its contents most nearly would fit, is 1857; but even that is quashed by its total silence as to Ferdinand's proved visit, which could have only just come to a premature end. In Praeger's own despite, then, we will not be so cruel as to accept such evidence, but give him the full benefit of Wagner's "couple of weeks"; especially since he claims in *Wie* to have "given Wagner a couple of days' rest" by taking a solitary trip to the Lake of Lucerne and the Rigi—where he "burst into tears for a never-felt enthusiasm" at sight of "the eternal snow," answered by Wagner (?) when they met again, with "The same thing happened to me; we understand each other."

But it is high time to let Praeger continue his story, and give us what he quaintly terms "a domestic picture of the creator of the 'Walkyrie,' whilst that work was actually in hand [!]. . . as herein we see the man, the actual man, the human being, with

* The signature in *As* is "Thine, Richard Wagner," in *Wie* "Dein Richard." In *As* we have "The efforts of the grand duke¹ are fruitless; one hopes for the best, but that best comes not," to which is appended a footnote: "¹Alluding to the action taken by Frederick of Baden (whose wife was a lover of Wagner's music) to secure the reinstalment of Wagner as a citizen of Germany"; in *Wie* the substance of that footnote is incorporated in the 'letter's' text: "Die Bemühungen des Grossherzogs von Baden, mir Amnestie zu verschaffen, sind vergebens; immer nur hoffen,—es ist zum verzweifeln!" We are accustomed to similar discrepancies in P.'s reproduction of the genuine letters, but here he had not even the excuse of "the owner being some thousands of miles away."—The rest of the 'letter,' a fairly brief but dotted one (the dots disappearing in *Wie!*), is of no importance: an allusion to Schopenhauer founded on the genuine letter of July 7, 55; a "You tell me that Goethe says"—to give the thing the look of being an *answer*, with still more disastrous effect on our credence; and two sentences parodied from the *Epilogue* in *Ges. Schr.* vi (see *P.* III. foot of p. 267).

his irritabilities and good humour, all under the gentle sway of a soft-hearted, brave woman." Here he does not mean Frau Wesendonck, but "that solitary, heroic Minna," whose "sway" may have been gentle enough before strangers, though Liszt had seen the other side of it. "Minna may be spoken of as a comely woman," says *As*, "Gentle and active in her movements, unobtrusive in speech and bearing, possessing a forethought akin to divination, she administered to her husband's wants before he knew them himself"—is that what Wagner meant when he told Liszt how glad he was the kitchen-garden gave his wife "diversion from her fads about me"? But *As* opines that Minna "is not to be confounded with the German housewife, so often erroneously spoken of as a sort of head cook.* She was eminently practical, and full of remedies for sickness.—In art, however, Minna could not comprehend the gifts of her husband. He was an idealist; she, a woman alive to our mundane existence and its necessities. She worshipped [!] afar off, receiving all he said without inquiry [?] . . . She had been a singer [!] and an actress, and could, in a manner, interpret his work [!], but the meaning of it lay deep, hidden from her. It was not her fault, yet she was to suffer for it. Still I must point out that all Wagner's works were created during the period of his first marriage. His union with Cosima von Bülow is dated 25th August, 1870, since which time 'Götterdämmerung' (a poem written in 1848) and 'Parsifal' only, have been given to the world"—a perverse peroration, revealing the drift.

From Minna as Praeger knew her we may pass to a genre picture of her husband: "The animal spirits and activity of Wagner have before been referred to by me. He really possessed an unusual amount of physical energy, which, at times, led him to perform reckless actions. One day he said to Minna, 'We must do something to give Praeger some pleasure, to give him a joyful memento of his visit; let us take him to Schaffhausen,' and though I remonstrated with him on account of his work, he insisted, and so we went. We stayed there the night." Here

* Somewhat contradictorily expressed; *Wie* pulls it straighter, enlivening Ferdinand's morning task at Schopenhauer with "Occasionally, also, I accompanied Minna into the garden, or even the kitchen, and gave her many a description of the usages in England as regards the much simpler art of cooking there."

As has neglected a detail, made good by *Wie*: "an evening I shall never forget [though *As* had]. I had stolen away to procure the welcome bottle of champagne [a dearth of waiters?], at which Wagner tried to growl at first; but after supper it made such an effect that Wagner and Minna gave me a description of their Magdeburg episode, in which the histrionic talent of both displayed itself most brilliantly. Both transferred themselves in fancy to the first days of their love, and memory gilt the present." Back to where we left prosaic *As*: "Breakfast was to be in the garden of the hotel. The hour arrived, but Wagner was not to be found. Search in all directions, without results. We hear a shout from a height. Behold! Wagner, the agile, mounted on the back of a plaster lion, placed on the top of a giddy eminence!" *Wie* explains the "eminence" as a portico of the hotel, and tells us that Wagner was "waving his hat" and shouting "Minna! Ferdinand!" after leaving them only an instant: "How he had got up so high, and even how he got down again, I have never been able to understand; for just as Minna and I were hurrying up the long flight of stone steps in alarm, Wagner rushed forward to meet us," etc., etc. But *As* continues: "And how he came down! The recklessness of a school-boy was in all his movements. We were in fear; he laughed heartily, saying he had gone up there to get an appetite for breakfast. The whole incident was a repetition of Wagner's climbing the roof of the Dresden school-house when he was a lad. Going to and returning from Schaffhausen, Wagner took first-class railway tickets. Now in Switzerland, first-class travelling is confined to a very few, and those only the wealthiest, so that Minna expostulated with him. This was typical. As he described himself [in a jesting letter to Madame], he was more luxurious than Sardanapalus, though he lived then on the generosity of his friends to enjoy such comfort. Minna was the housewife, and strove to curb the unlimited [!] desires of a man who had not the wherewithal to purchase his excess. And Wagner was not to be controlled, for he not only travelled first-class, but also telegraphed to Zurich to have a carriage in waiting for us."—Such is this guest's requital of a treat expressly organised "to give him a joyful memento of his visit."

As for everyday life at the Asyl, "The morning's work over, Wagner's practice was to take a bath immediately"—at least *As*

says so, *Wie* adding that it was a cold one and intended to "refresh him after the great exertion of his composition; it was a very beneficial habit he had contracted from a hydropathic cure, and often stopped his erysipelas," from which he suffered no longer. In the afternoon his host and P. would go for "rambles upon the mountains" more elaborately described by *Wie*, when "the new dog never failed us. Comical enough was the effect of our ascents. Wagner climbed with all the daring of a chamois-hunter, and took a positively childish delight in seeking out steep paths, to try and wring from me the cry 'I can't get up.' I had observed this, and firmly resolved not to shew timidity by hanging back; so that I often risked breaking my neck [avaunt, seductive thought!] but still 'followed my leader': a piece of vanity for which I also was rewarded by presentation to Minna as a worthy member of the trio consisting of 'Wagner, the dog and the Praeger, all three proved mountaineers!'"* On how many heroes may not personal vanity have exercised a similar influence!"—a soft impeachment owned this time.

One of these rambles will lead us by a zigzag path to a theme of less "personal interest," if we only have patience: "We were

* Another "mountaineering" tale is pitchforked into Praeger's closing chapter, apropos of his Munich visit: "A born actor Wagner? Certainly. Out together one day he related to me the story of his climbing the Uri-rothstock in company with a young friend," etc. The young friend's identity remains unspecified by *As*, which also scamps the story; if anyone, most probably it was Uhlig (see iii, 167), but *Wie* has ideas of its own: "With a few others, he [W.] was climbing the precipitous Uri-Rothstock one summer. One of the company was a young pupil, by whose mother [Frau Ritter] his yearly pension in Switzerland was paid him; the former was scrambling up the rock behind Wagner, and suddenly exclaimed 'I'm turning giddy, I shall fall.' Wagner told me his blood ran cold and every hair of his head stood on end, when he thought of what the consequences of such an accident would be for the mother; he clutched hold of a bush with his left hand, wheeled round, and with his right hand seized the youngster, who already seemed almost unconscious, and swung him up in front of him, throwing his whole weight on him [!] and laughing 'Drive on, coachman!' and talking to him all the while as if there were no possible danger, he shoved the young man up before him. 'But when we reached the top,' said he, 'I made a vow never to undertake anything of the like again.' I must add that Wagner's description of this scene was so dramatically graphic, that it was sufficient in itself to set his histrionic talent in the clearest light." The nature of that "vow" is left in Praeger's usual fog, but the experience—if authentic—may account for the "sympathetic vertigo" of which we have heard before (p. 65 *sup.*).

on the top of one of the heights overlooking the Zurich Lake, discussing the much debated Schopenhauer, when I observed that pessimism, in a well-balanced mind, could only lead to optimism, on the ground that, 'what cannot be cured must be endured,' and jocularly cited from Brant's 'Narrenschiff,' written in the quaint language of the fifteenth century . . . Wagner stopped, shouted with exultation, and then commenced probing my knowledge of one of our earliest German poets. He assumed the part, as it were, of a schoolmaster, and so when we arrived home, in a boyish manner, he, delighted, called aloud to Minna before the garden gate was opened, 'Ach, Ferdinand knows all about my pet poets.'

Why were we English so shabbily treated? *Wie* turns the latter part of this into quite an animated episode: "Wagner's shout of delight and astonishment, when, after pursuing this point, he found I had made the same diligent studies in our oldest writers as himself, alarmed the dog, who started barking violently, and looked about for the cause of commotion. This reminded Wagner that we should come upon a chalet not far off, where they made a special kind of Swiss cake which would enlarge my geographical experiences. No sooner said than done. We climbed and scrambled, up and down, till we reached the spot and three portions of 'Strietzel' were served us; for the dog, as Wagner always held, was human too.* As we sat there resting, a

* In an earlier chapter of the twofold book we hear more about the dog, in a similar sense, though Fips and its predecessor are rolled into one (as seemingly also with that *Striesel*—cf p. 5 *sup.*): "The bracing air of the mountains, too, he sought as a means of removing the [physical] ills under which he suffered. He was fond, too, of taking 'Peps' with him in these rambles. 'Peps,' it will be remembered, was the dog who, he used to assert, helped him to compose 'Tannhäuser.' He was passionately fond of his dog, referred to him in his letters with affection, and ascribed to him feelings and a perceptiveness only possible from a man loving the animal kingdom as he did . . . He loved 'Peps' with a human love. Taking his constitutional on the Zurich mountains, 'Peps' his companion, reflecting upon his treatment by his fatherland, he would declaim against imaginary enemies, gesticulate, and vent his irascible excitement in loud speeches, when 'Peps,' 'the human Peps,' as he called him, with the sympathy of the intelligent dumb creation, would rush forward, bark and snap loudly as if aiding Wagner in destroying his enemies, and then return, plainly asking for friendly recognition for the demolition. Such an expression of sympathy delighted Wagner, and he was very pleased to rehearse it all to his friends, calling in 'Peps' to go through the performance,

sort of school-examination began, Wagner testing me in the authors cited by me; and since he found me saddle-firm in this respect, and a close acquaintance with the Dutch language and also with Plattdeutsch [!] made it particularly easy for me to understand old German, he really was as pleased as a child, and called out to his wife from some distance, 'Minna, what ever do you think! Ferdinand knows all my pet books, and has possessed the self-same reverence for the old-German element from childhood up. It really is comic that we had never remarked it before [quite so], but in that foggy London one loses all relish for anything but money-making; and even that is impossible to me, since there exists no copyright for my operas there: what do I want with their enthusiasm?' This was Wagner's constant refrain when I prophesied a brilliant future for his music in England."

The jumble Praeger makes of everything shall not deter us from the point he was leading up to when a wistful memory of that wooden box sprang up to cleave his path. After an equally deflecting paragraph on improvisations from the *Leipzig Tageblatt* (see v, 384*n*), *As* brings us back to our objective: "He had spoken to me of Godfrey von Strassburg, saying, 'To-morrow I will read you something good.' He did next day read me 'Tristan' in his study, and we spoke long and earnestly as to its adaptability for operatic treatment. Events have shown it to have been the ground-work of the music-drama of the same name. But at the time he spoke, it appeared to me he had no thought of utilizing it as a libretto. This intention only presented itself to his mind [!] while we three were at breakfast on the following day. He was reading the notices in the Leipzig paper with customary variation, when, without any indication, he dropped the paper onto his knees, gazed into space, and seemed as though he were in a trance, nervously moving his lips. What did this portend? Minna had observed the movement, and was about to break the silence by addressing Wagner. Happily, she

and I must say the dog seemed to understand and appreciate it all. Numerous anecdotes of this kind he could tell, and he generally capped them with such a remark as "'Peps" has more sense than your wooden contrapuntists,' pointing his speech by naming the authors of some concocted Kappelmeister music who were specially objectionable to him" (*As*, 203-4). The reader may be trusted to do the needful winnowing for himself, after which he may compare the residue with one of its manifest sources, Pohl's *Allgemeine-Feuilleton* (*vide infra*).

caught my warning glance and the spell remained unbroken. We waited until Wagner should move. When he did, I said, 'I know what you have been doing.' 'No,' he answered, somewhat abruptly, 'how can you?' 'Yes; you have been composing the love-song we were speaking of yesterday, and the story is going to shape itself into a drama!' 'You are right as to the composition, but—the libretto—I will reflect.' Such is the history of the first promptings of that wondrous creation, 'Tristan and Isolde.'"

Save for the final sentence and a cognate "only"—unnecessary to controvert to-day—I consider that the best and truest page from end to end of Praeger's book. It lays no claim to anything beyond easily possible knowledge, and the experience quite chimes with Wagner's letter to Frau Ritter on the eve of P.'s arrival. Why the pretty little incident should have been disputed root and branch, perplexes me. The cavillers' chief weapon has been a postscript to the letter of June 28 to Liszt, "About **Tristan the most absolute silence!!!**" We must not forget, however, that a whole project for *presentation* of the work unborn had been unfolded to Liszt in the earlier part of that letter, and Wagner naturally did not want that project to leak at once to Brendel's journal;* there had been no embargo when he foreshadowed the work in 1854 and 56. Moreover, that project had since been discussed with E. Devrient, and the theme must so have occupied the forefront of its author's thoughts as to make it wellnigh impossible to avoid dropping such a guarded hint as the above. No: let us give our old friend his due, and accept a tale quite credibly and nicely told. For my own part, I should not be surprised if what Wagner read aloud was *not* Gottfried's "Tristan" at all, but his own earliest sketch from a year or two back, which he so soon was about to remodel. True, *Wie* makes the reading unmistakably of Gottfried's work, as we shall see; but that would be an impossible feat under two or three sittings.

It is a very different matter when we turn to 1884 and find the following Translator's Note in the English edition of Wolzogen's *Guide to Tristan*: "It is not generally known that

* Similarly to old Fischer next October: "What I have told you about 'Tristan' must remain between ourselves, of course; I do not want a word of it to come to public knowledge yet."

the subject of 'Tristan and Isolde' was suggested to Wagner as appropriate for musico-dramatic treatment by his lifelong [!] friend and staunch supporter, Ferdinand Praeger, himself a composer of striking originality." This preposterous claim can derive from nothing save the braggadocio of F. P. himself, imparted to a too confiding friend, for it is on all fours with many another fable wherewith the would-be oracle was wont to prime his private circle. But the two or three years of reflection that came between its publication and the writing of his chapter xxi have vastly toned it down, as seen; whilst the additional couple of years elapsing ere arrival at the corresponding spot in *Wie* inspired a recantation even of that "Such is the history of the first promptings," etc., which he here replaces by the following: "After what has been said above, it doubtless would be somewhat daring to conclude that the subject then kindled the spark of inspiration in him for the first time; but he admitted that the Leitmotiv of Isolde [not that—P. is a hopeless witness even when trying his best] then flashed upon him, though he was not yet clear, he said, regarding the libretto."

In reward for that recantation, which perhaps betrays an intervening dip into *Wagner-Liszt*, we will listen to what had been "said above," also largely an addition of *Wie's*: "A few days after [the "Strietzel" incident] he called me into his study, to read me a poem by Gottfried von Strassburg; it was 'Tristan.' Over this work we had a long debate. I brought Wieland's 'Combabus,' which handles the same theme, upon the tapis [a new 'suggestion']; but Wagner was much against the optimistic levity of that otherwise highly-gifted poet, his own high seriousness aiming far beyond. We discussed the 'Tristan' right and left, with reference to the drama; Wagner seemed to me, however, to have no fixed intention whatever in this regard as yet. And exactly here may be the proper place to cite in brief his declaration on the choice of a libretto. I had begged him to write me a suitable textbook [good heavens!], whereupon he replied somewhat hotly: 'You surely don't imagine I go dipping right and left, like your opera-composers, to find an operatic theme? When something comes my way that takes my fancy, it often lies fallow for long in my head, till one fine day a kindling spark drops in and lights the idea up for me; and then at last the details evolve one by one, coming to me as involuntary promptings, and of which

I had no inkling before. A drama ought to be a true spiritual birth !”

Terrible though its confusion of metaphors—*Wie* being even worse written than *As*—there is a distant ring of Wagner in that little speech, for once, harmonising with his own accounts of the growth of the *Sieger* idea, and more particularly of the gradual evolution of *Parsifal* (see *M.*). And if poor Praeger was absurd enough to suggest a *Combabus* in lieu of *Tristan*, I scarcely think one ought to go the length of wondering that Wagner did not “throw him out of the window” for it. One doesn’t throw guests out of the window simply for making fools of themselves, and if Wagner had been as impatient of folly as some of his followers, he would have had next to no followers at all. No doubt it was just these unique exhibitions of *närrisch*-ness that made Ferdinand such a relief to him, a never-failing source of quiet fun, when kept within due bounds. Think of the exquisite humour in that request for “ein passendes Textbuch” ! The qualifier is rich enough to keep one in good spirits for a week.

We are so soon to see our jester in a less engaging garb, that I must effect the transition by means of just one other episode from foundered *Wie*, not shipped by *As*: “Our Schaffhausen trip had left such a favourable impression behind [Sardanapalism and all?] that another excursion was projected, namely to the Lake of Lucerne ; but this time I absolutely refused to consent to it, for I saw very well that it collided with Wagner’s work and he might repent it later. I had made this quite clear to good Minna, and in spite of the enjoyment she lost thereby, for his sake she was ready at once to back me up in my refusal. I therefore decided to go alone, to give Wagner a couple of days’ rest, and at the same time I visited the Kulm ; for Wagner had carefully prescribed my ‘itinerarium,’ since he expected to hear from me a description of the impressions, which, as he said, ‘from one emancipated from the fog and smoke of London, could not be without its interest.’ I will pass over the latter point, but must mention that in the tumult of the famous supper on the Kulm I met a Frankfort musical critic* of my acquaintance, in answer to whom I remarked that I was on a visit to Wagner at Zurich. ‘Then we shall meet again,’ said he cocksure, ‘for I am bringing a friend to Zurich who wants to make Wagner’s personal acquaintance.’ ‘Do you

know him, then?' I asked, not without intending to suggest [*A Pilgrimage to Beethoven?*—] the difficulty of being admitted. 'Why, an opera-composer will never be so imprudent as to snub an operatic critic! it might turn out badly for him. You should see how Meyerbeer fêtes me when I call on him!' 'I can well believe it,' was my laconic reply, which was also accepted by the conceited scribe as conclusive. Of course I mentioned this insignificant-looking incident to Wagner, when from a full heart I told him the impressions of my journey. 'The fellow's to be ordered off,' said he to Minna, 'I'm receiving nobody; despatch him to Meyerbeer!' To round off this unpleasant episode, I must observe that the Frankfort critic, who naturally was not admitted, became one of the rabidest Anti-Wagnerians from that day forth, and further was impolitic enough not even to conceal the cause of his rage, but went about quite naively relating how, on a Swiss tour, he had taken a friend to Zurich and the composer of 'Tannhäuser' hadn't so much as received him." Who the "critic" was, does not appear—for Praeger can be silent enough when it suits him—but if there be a grain of truth in the story, it is a sequel to the watch-dog tactics pursued in London.

Of other callers at the Asyl P. saw little or nothing. He mentions Semper, as seen in vol. v, *Wie* adding, "who stood with Wagner at the head of the revolutionary movement in the Saxon insurrection," which is untrue in both cases. He also met Frau Pollert (*cf* 176 *sup.*), but "forgets her name" and declares she was merely "passing through Zurich" (*Wie*), prefacing his anecdote by a remark at total variance with his reminiscence of that Schaffhausen evening: "At Zurich Wagner had a sense of his growing power, and he cared not for references to his early youthful struggles. I remember an old [!] Magdeburg singer, with her two daughters, calling to see her old comrade. The mother and her daughters sang the music of the Rhine maidens, Wagner accompanying, and they acquitted themselves admirably. But when the old actress familiarly insisted on taking a pinch of snuff from Wagner's box, and told stories of the Magdeburg days [those eternal Magdeburg stories, none of which we ever hear], then did Wagner resent the familiarity in a marked manner ["and dismissed his visitors in a fashion that pained me," *Wie!*]. When they finished singing, Minna asked me: 'Is it really so beautiful as you say? It does not seem so to me, and I am afraid it would not sound

so to others.' Such observations as these show where Minna was unable to follow Wagner, and the estrangement arising from uncongeniality of artistic temperament" (*As*, 297).

Obviously as this was a rehearsal for the "Sulzer feast" of July 12, not a word has P. to tell us either of Sulzer or Herwegh, Keller, or in fact of any other guest besides the future neighbours. One might infer that he had missed the entertainment itself through branching off to the Kulm, were it not for an "incident" which he introduces in support of his fatuous contention that it was "perseverance, and not spontaneity," that governed Wagner's mode of composition (see iv, 185): "The Wesendoncks were at the chalet. Wagner was at the piano, anxious to shine, doubtless, in the presence of a lady who caused such unpleasantness in his career later on. He was improvising, when, in the midst of a flowing movement, he suddenly stopped, unable to finish. I laughed. Wagner became angry, but I jocularly said, 'Ah, you got into a *cul-de-sac* and finished *en queue de poisson*.' He could not be angry long, and joined in the laugh too, confessing to me that he was only at his best when reflecting." In itself that "anxious to shine" is offensive, but the turn *Wie* gives it really makes one clench one's fist: "suddenly he broke down in the middle of a phrase. It was warm indoors, and we two descended to the garden [leaving the others above!]. I laughed at what I called the 'Unterbrochene Opferfest' in allusion to the beautiful neighbour. At first he fired up, but then came apt judgment of himself, as usual, and he said 'I'm no great hand at extemporising,'" etc., etc. Is it cunning, or cannot the man see the point of his own alleged sneer, that he turns Wagner's wrath away from it? Had Praeger dared to say anything of the kind, "out of the window" in this case would have been his mode of descent to the garden.

We may confine our indignation to the decrepit pen that spread such tasteless jests and more serious slanders among the Wesendoncks' compatriots, absolutely reckless of the pain inflicted upon benefactors of Praeger's former host; in the flesh P. can have never indulged in them, while at the Asyl, or we should not find Wagner writing him some five months later in the strain he did. Similarly, we need lend no credence either to that "Mrs Grundy" innuendo in his apocrypha of "May, 1856," or to the final paragraph of his visit chapter: "During my stay I saw

Minna's jealousy of another," etc. Said a previous chapter (xvi) : "His wife, fortunately, was of a homely nature with a buoyancy of spirits, the value of which cannot be over-estimated, nor, must I add, was Wagner insensible to her worth." Seeing that Praeger had never met Minna before his Asyl visit, her "buoyancy of spirits"—quite credible in the early months of her change of surroundings—must have been witnessed by him *then*, if ever, and is wholly incompatible with what *Wie* magnifies into a "daily increasing jealousy" that filled Praeger with fears of an "outburst of passion" owing to "the almost daily visits of the friendly neighbours," so that he "left Zurich not without a sad foreboding that it was merely deferred." That can be nothing but wisdom long after the event, not recollection; for the Wesendoncks did not become actual neighbours till a month after his departure, whilst it is highly improbable that he saw the lady whose name he takes in vain on more than one occasion, that Sulzer-feast. Herself she informed me, as mentioned elsewhere, she had no remembrance of ever meeting him; in a roomful he might well escape attention, but not in "almost daily" intercourse. With a visit incontrovertibly reduced from his vaunted "two months" to Wagner's "couple of weeks," and with the whole daytime parcelled into work and "mountain rambles," there would be little other chance of Praeger's meeting Frau Mathilde.

But we need waste no more breath on his gossip at present, since he winds up that final paragraph with a statement I shall utterly demolish in my next chapter. Its tag may suffice for us here: "I can testify Wagner suffered severely from thoughtlessness." *This* Praeger has proved, though not quite in the sense he intended; for thoughtlessness in its severest degree can be the only charitable excuse for Praeger's dragging honoured private names through public mud.

To get him off the premises in a mood more like the "nährischer, seelensguter Hypochondrist" Wagner thought him at the time, P. shall be permitted to divert us with an innocuous interlude from *Wie's* last Asyl paragraph: "Of our parting I will not speak, for it calls to mind my friend [1] Grillparzer's anti-thesis, 'Warm were my feelings, cold their writing down!' Enough: all three of us wept at the station like the Babes in the Wood, and nothing but a solemn promise soon to come again could pacify my friends."

“Praeger and Röckel (from England)” —said Wagner’s partial list of summer guests, not necessarily implying that the two “from England” came together. Praeger’s silence on the point extends to an ignoring of friend Edward’s visit altogether; so that his negative testimony cannot be said to count for much. But Glasenapp informs us: “Soon after Praeger’s departure, another London visitor surprised the master, Eduard Röckel, and stayed four days.” Unfortunately no further details are forthcoming, for Mr Joseph L. Roeckel of Clifton, sole survivor of the three brothers, kindly wrote me the other day (Feb. 1907): “I fear I can give you little information with regard to Edward Roeckel’s visit to Wagner in ’57, as there are no letters from him bearing upon the subject. All I can say, is that Glasenapp’s statement is correct. I was with my brother in Bath at the time of his visit; it was early in July ’57, and I have a strong impression that it was a surprise-visit, and not the result of an invitation by W. I am very sorry I cannot give you any more definite information, but I can find no ‘notes’ to help me.”

Mr J. L. Roeckel’s “early in July” refers, of course, to Edward’s setting forth from England: to have reached Zurich after Praeger had left, Edward must therefore have first visited his father in Saxony, or August’s wife at Weimar, or possibly the prisoner himself at Waldheim. Either of these last two conjectures would easily account for a surprise-visit on Edward’s part, since Wagner had commenced his letter of July 9 to Liszt as follows:—

“I forgot to ask you something in my last [June 28]. When you were at Zurich, I told you how eagerly that poor devil *Röckel* was wishing for a sight of one of my new scores; * quite recently he has reminded me again. So I repeat my petition to lend him your score of the ‘Rheingold,’ perhaps for six to eight weeks. His wife—who is living at Weimar—no doubt will gladly undertake its getting to him. He really is a clever fellow, and I

* In the letter of August ’56 to A. Roeckel: “Only when the fair copy [of Klindworth’s pte score of *Rheingold*] is finished, will the partitur be at my disposal again, and I promise to send it you after Liszt’s visit. No duplicate of the Walküre has been made as yet . . . and I don’t care to let the originals leave my hands . . . not so much for fear of losing them, which certainly would be more than serious, as because I need them for going on with my work. So please excuse the delay.”—From the allusion to “your score,” in the letter to Liszt, it would appear that the latter (or the Fürstin?) had meanwhile claimed redemption of the offer of Spring ’56 (*cf* 108-9 *sup.*).

should like to feel that he is one of those in contact with my [later] works. It will be a great enlivenment to him, and from his last letter I see that he's growing down-hearted. You would add much to his pleasure, I'm sure, if you enclosed a copy of your—or some of your—symphonic poems with it. He has heard a deal about them from me, and consequently is very anxious to make their acquaintance. Of course you would only need to lend him them.—Now don't be vexed with me for bothering you."

If on the one hand that may have led to Edward's brief visit to Zurich, on the other it knocks the bottom out of Praeger's strictures on an alleged conversation at the Asyl between himself, Wagner and Semper: "We spoke of the sad May days, and poor August Roeckel. Again did Wagner evade the topic, or speak slightly of it"—P. tacking to this his odious comments on Beust's calumny (see v, 390). Far from "evading the topic," inasmuch as it concerned "poor August" at least, Wagner wrote that kind letter while Praeger himself was in the house,* and cannot have failed to discuss its contents sympathetically with an intimate of August's brother. But Praeger forgets all such evidence, in his avidity to build up a charge of desertion the superstructure whereof will concern us in a future volume.

Apart from that, there is nothing more to say about this visit of Edward Roeckel, whom we shall meet again some ten years hence in Wagner's company and that of August.

The next guest on our list was Robert Franz, who seems to have hovered about Zurich for the best part of a month. According to his scanty recollections, as given us by his friends, he "called upon Wagner repeatedly, spent very agreeable hours with him, and stayed a short time in the same house"—rather a queer way of expressing a few nights at the Asyl.

In vol. iii we saw Franz (Wagner's junior by two years) a potent advocate of *Lohengrin*, 1851-2; vol. iv found a Zurich

* The fact of his not being mentioned in this letter to Liszt is balanced by the letter's brevity, which points to its writer's hospitable duties leaving little leisure; so hurried is it, that its signature becomes "Rich. Wgn." With the Carlsruhe *Tristan* project itself so cursorily announced in it, we need not be surprised at its silence on a matter of mere domestic interest.

visit, contemplated for the summer of 1853,* abandoned through a paper feud meantime arisen between one of Franz's connections and Wagner's young adherents. Franz had accepted from Wagner, however, a copy of the *Lohengrin* score, and sent him in return a set of volumes of his *Lieder*, op. 20—six songs entitled "Abends"—being dedicated to Wagner himself. Many years after (Jan. 1882) Franz writes a special friend and mainstay: "I have had an epistle from Dr Schuster of Vienna, containing the following, 'I must repeat to you something told my cousin Helm by an intimus of Richard Wagner's. According to this gentleman's account, Richard Wagner very often gets people to sing him *Lieder* and preferably yours, which he declares to be the purest lyrics and ranks above them all.'—When I visited Wagner at Zurich in the fifties, he led me to his music-press, remarking: 'Here you see my whole musical library.' The press held nothing but Seb. Bach, Beethoven and my *Lieder*!!! At the time I took it for a mere compliment—but now it seems to have a background of reality." †

One rather wonders where the flattering host had concealed the remainder of his musical library—Liszt's new products, for instance, or Mozart, Weber, and the rest; but all these German recollectors seem to suffer from the same lack of visualising power. Innocent enough, this droll exaggeration is simply the fruit of constant re-telling of a story told by Franz in various forms, the most plausible being, "There you see what constitutes my present study." The substance of the latter version, in fact, is confirmed by Bülow's letters of the period: "Robert Franz is here, and a good deal pleasanter and politer than he had been represented to me of late"—he writes Pohl, Sept. 4, 57; to Brendel three days later: "Robert Franz is staying here at present [i.e. at Zurich—not the Asyl then]. He seems to have given his musical tenets a turn for the better again, at which I'm vastly

* He was to have come with Liszt, who afterwards contributed to the *Neue Zeitschrift* of November 1855 the best of all the Carolyszian essays, "Robert Franz" (reprinted with an 1871 postscript in vol. iv of the *Ges. Schr. von F. L.*), based on autobiographic material furnished him by Franz in a voluminous letter of two months previously (see *Briefe h. Z. an F. L.* II.). Early in 1873 Liszt gave, and *played at*, a concert in Pesth which yielded about £150 towards the fund then being organised by the ballad-singer von Senfft-Pilsach for Franz's benefit.

† See *Robert Franz und Arnold Freiherr von Senfft-Pilsach: ein Briefwechsel* (1861-1889), edited by Prof. W. Golther, pubd A. Duncker 1907.

pleased. For that matter, W. also has been singing his Lieder of late!" (may we trace any results in *Der Engel?*).

One memento of the early days of Franz's visit is preserved in the shape of a note addressed to "Herrn Gottfried Keller, Stadthexenmeister in Hottingen." Hottingen, as we have seen, was the quarter of Zurich whence Wagner had lately removed; the "Town-wizard" is an allusion to one of the characters in Keller's fanciful *Leute von Seldwyla*, the first volume whereof had appeared just eighteen months before. The note itself, merely dated "Sunday afternoon," but supposed to be of Aug. 16, runs thus: "Dear friend, Robert Franz from Halle—an eminent (*bedeutender*) composer—who bears you this greeting, is a great admirer of your poems, and wishes to make your acquaintance. I propose to you to look me up this evening—when we can have a cosy chat. Your Rich. Wagner." This introduction appears to have been a great success, possibly the cause of Franz's prolongation of his Zurich stay; for Keller declares that "the Halle song-composer made such a fuss of me, that it quite puffed me up."—A still briefer missive to Frau Wesendonck, "There you make acquaintance with a very amiable person. Good morning," perhaps is another introduction borne by Franz.

Our only other present trace of the great song-composer's Zurich visit is an anecdote related in quite a different spirit from our last raconteur's. Wagner having invited him to form one of a party for a mountain expedition, Franz declined, he says himself, on the plea of poverty. The master then "brought out a cashbox full of shining gold pieces"—presumably the harvest of his Berlin tantièmes in their last prolific quarter—and begged him to take what he wanted. At first Franz objected, but, Wagner insisting, he ended by accepting a modest sum, which his host refused to hear of his refunding. "It was a fine trait in him," adds Franz.*

First of the unnamed "others" on Wagner's summer list comes Richard Pohl, as to whom I must frankly admit a feeling of uneasiness since *Die Musik* † disclosed the fact that Pohl was

* The story is cited by Glasenapp from R. Wintzer's "Erinnerungen an Rob. Franz" in the *Neue Musikzeitung* of 1892, also from its quotation by Franz's biographer, Procházka.

† "Schumann-number," July 1906, apropos of a letter of Feb. 6, 1854, in

the "Richard" who protested in the *Signale* of 1848 against "the coquetry with which Wagner persistently conducts Beethoven's masterpieces without looking at the score. It is intended to be something choice (*Besonderes*), but means nothing more than that Herr Wagner is mighty proud of himself," etc., etc. (see ii, 218). The clue once furnished, there cannot be the smallest doubt, as in his own *Autobiographisches* (1881) Pohl acknowledges a connection with the *Signale* from 1846 onward, whilst in his *Allgemeine* feuilleton of 1883—to concern us very shortly—he mentions his having heard the Eighth and Ninth symphonies (the works in question) at Dresden under Wagner, adding, "I cannot say I saw him 'at the conductor's desk,' since he conducted by heart; which certainly impressed me (*mir zwar imponirte*), though on the other hand I thought it dubious (*bedenklich*) as Mendelssohn never did this at Leipzig." Most gingerly covered, the confession may now be plainly read between Pohl's lines, though he omits to explain how in 1848 he came to accuse Wagner of "simply following the leader of the violins." If Davison and Chorley are to be blamed for precisely similar remarks thereafter, it is scarcely fair that Pohl, so fond of strutting as "the oldest Wagnerian," should get off quite scot-free.

Indeed there is even a tinge of Praegerism, naturally of a much subtler strain, in the way in which the year of *his* conversion—through a Dresden revival of *Tannhäuser*, and faithful Uhlig's suasion (iii, 403-4)—is turned by Pohl into a Wagnerian hegira. Quoth his *Autobiographisches*: "The year 1852 forms one of the most important epochs in the history of the Wagner movement; from that year one may date the beginning of the formation of an actual Wagner-party"—or, as Pohl strangely miscalls it a little lower, "the Weimar School," thereby entirely confounding the issue. The passage is far too long to quote or summarise, but its autobiographic upshot comes to this: as soon as 26-year Pohl placed himself "at the unrestricted disposal of the *Neue Zeitschrift*," things Wagnerian at once began to hum. Yet we poor deluded ones imagined that an "actual Wagner party" came into being in 1842 at Dresden with the phenomenal success of

which Schumann expresses to Pohl his astonishment at finding that his depreciator "Hoplit" is one and the same as his friendly private correspondent.—Pohl died at the end of 1896, aged seventy.

Rienzi, and had been spreading, consolidating, and striking deeper root ever since, under the provocative *opposition* of such papers as the *Signale*; so that Pohl might date his propagandist influence back to 1846, as it pleased him.

No: there is no room anywhere for Pohl as epoch-maker, useful as were his yeoman-services to the comprehensive "Weimar School." In December 1856 von Bülow writes Liszt: "Je me sens devenir philistin . . . et j'en souffre cruellement, ne consentant pas à me réfugier dans la douce consolation de n'avoir rien d'autre à faire, d'être né improductif et ainsi me trouver en parallèle avec mon ami Pohl." Initiative can never proceed from a man "born unproductive."

Not long ago we found Pohl entrusted by Liszt with the editing of a certain Letter on the Symphonic Poems, but the last we saw of him personally was at the Karlsruhe festival of 1853 and its epilogue, the Basle rendezvous with Wagner (see iv, 163-9). In Spring of the succeeding year Liszt tells the latter: "I have asked Pohl to write you an account of our [last *Lohengrin*] performance; he is a very warm and zealous partisan of yours" (*cf* iv, 204-5). Not another mention of him is to be found in the *Correspondence* till June 1857, when Liszt writes on the 9th, "Richard Pohl begs me to ask if you will be remaining at Zurich in July, and if he may pay you a call then," and Wagner answers on the 28th, "I will receive R. Pohl with all the respect due to the Weimar art-historiographer; I shall be remaining in my 'Asyl,' and glad to see him." Not much endorsement of the 'oldest Wagnerian' claim as yet, nor any overwhelming effusiveness: a polite according of an interview, without even an invitation to sleep a night in the house—which, indeed, it is difficult to ascertain from Pohl's reminiscences whether he did or not.

Under the heading "Bei Richard Wagner: Im Schweizer Exil," these reminiscences, including another long account of the conversion and the Basle meeting—to adorn which latter, Pohl commits what he, and he alone, considers the "pardonable indiscretion" of printing two whole pages from the master's still unpublished memoirs!—were contributed to the Augsburg *Allgemeine Zeitung* of April 8 and 9, 1883, whence we have already culled his general description of the Asyl itself (239 *sup.*). Here we will make first for the following passage: "I came direct from Baden-Baden, where Hector Berlioz had been conducting a big

musical festival. Wagner had no affection for Berlioz (*Auf Berlioz war Wagner nicht gut zu sprechen*)—and Berlioz, I must add, still less for Wagner. It was not so much a case of personal, as of profound artistic dissensions which could never be healed, since these two artists' natures were radically different. Berlioz had no understanding for Wagner's music-dramas, the fundamental principles whereof he denied point-blank; whilst Wagner could feel no sympathy for Berlioz's individuality [?] and mode of composition, which seemed to him often illogical, whimsical, and too Frenchly external.* Only at one point did they meet—their adoration of Beethoven; yet even in their interpretation of Beethoven's works they parted company again. A fairly long personal intercourse with Berlioz [at Weimar and Baden] precisely at that time had brought me into closer touch with this master, else so difficult of access; still full of the impressions from several of his newer works, which Wagner did not know, I spoke about them to the latter with a warmth that did not particularly edify him, as I soon perceived. In after years he often reminded me of my having been so good a Berliozian then, though I knew how disparaging was Berlioz's attitude to Wagner. To stand between two masters of such sharp-stamped, iron individuality, is a thankless task for a third person; here mediation was impossible. And when Wagner came [i.e. went] to Paris in 1861 [!] the two minds ran full tilt at one another." A great deal of which, barely two months from his ostensible captain's death, an Oldest Wagnerian might with advantage have left unsaid. It may help us on, however, to a closer date for Pohl's arrival.

August 2, 57, von Bülow begs him to get a singer engaged for Berlioz' "chief concert on the 18th," and concludes his letter with a "hope to meet again soon, either at Baden or Zurich." The 17th, he invites Pohl to escort him and his bride from the station on their "arrival at Baden-Baden about 3 in the afternoon of Wednesday the 19th," adding, "We might go on together [Thursday evening] viâ Basle to Zurich. Railway almost the whole journey, only three hours' coach—arrival at the Wagner city 5.30

* "Französisch äusserlich"—does Pohl mean "objective," "superficial," or what? In any case it is a great pity that he should have fogged and exaggerated Wagner's blame, while saying no word about his praise—for which the narrator might have consulted an old acquaintance, the *Symphonic Poems* letter of this very period.

Friday morning . . . I think it probable, however, we may remain 48 hours at Baden." As we shall see ere long, the honeymooners' plans were changed to this extent, that they did not go to Zurich straight from Baden ; so Pohl went on alone, and left the second trysting-place before they reached it. But he clearly spent at least a day at Baden in their company, and therefore cannot possibly have reached Zurich before that "Friday morning," August 21, even if not a day or two later. Consequently, as Glasenapp has authority for stating that the 25th was Pohl's last evening at the Asyl, his Zurich visit must have been a mere matter of between three and five days. It is not of vital moment, but as we shall hap on the expressions "daily" and "almost every evening," it is as well to gauge the length of time referred to.

Back to our *Allgemeine* : "When, announced by Liszt, I looked Wagner up in August 1857, it was the first time I ever saw him in his own abode. Wagner's friend Wesendonck had just built himself a magnificent villa in a suburb of Zurich on the left bank of the lake, at the foot of the Albis chain, a moderate height above the lake, with a charming open view, and had offered a little garden-house on the adjoining plot, likewise bought by Wesendonck, for Wagner's habitation . . . [Description of house] . . . During his working hours, in the forenoon, nobody was permitted to disturb Wagner ; it was an exception even if he received anyone in his study [?] where he had set up various appliances for work, a writing-table at which he wrote his poetry and correspondence, and a standing-desk at which he composed. In the middle of the room stood a sofa, on which he was wont to repose [penny a line?]; during composition he often paced to and fro, sometimes going to the grand piano in the next room [?] to play single chords or phrases, which he then wrote down at his standing-desk"—entirely beyond Pohl's personal knowledge of the Zurich period, this last clause, as Wagner did no musical work at all in August 1857.

Skipping a few more sentences on Wagner's mode of work, for a similar reason, we at last reach Pohl's "exceptional" admittance to the sanctum : "When I paid my first call, about noon, he invited me into his study. Naturally I led the conversation to the 'Nibelungen,' and asked how far it had progressed. The composition was sketched to the end of the second act of

Siegfried, but on my expressing my delight thereat, Wagner answered in a serious tone: 'For the present I am leaving this work at rest; I cannot and will not give it up, but I must await better times for its continuation. I can see no end to it at present; and even when it is finished, some day, who can tell if I shall live to see it performed? And who will offer me the ways and means for that performance? Therefore I now have begun a new work to whose vivification (*Verlebendigung*) I may look forward with the greater certainty as it requires but few performers, and offers no scenic difficulties whatever, such as people fear with the Nibelungen; a work which may be executed by every good theatre that owns a decent company. I am engaged on its poem already [?], and shall soon be able to begin the composition.' At first he did not say what subject he had chosen; only step by step did I elicit that it was 'Tristan und Isolde.'"

The details of what Pohl elicited, exiguous enough, must be accepted with reserve. In the choicest Pohlese they appear at the extreme end of his narrative: "The exquisite conclusion of those unforgettably beautiful days in the historically memorable little villa on the lake of Zurich, where 'Tristan und Isolde' was written, was formed for me by a musical evening when Wagner played and sang to us the close of the second act from 'Siegfried'—the Waldweben and the birds' voices [!]. Then he spoke animatedly (*lebhaft*) about the poem of 'Tristan und Isolde,' which quite engrossed him; at that time he was occupied with the transition from the second to the third act, which he had not yet settled . . ." The dots, wise dots, are Richard Pohl's (or his *Allgemeine* editor's?), a mere bridge to the obligatory reflection that "a quarter of a century has not effaced from the soul the impressions I then received." That "quarter of a century" however, is just the point: what Pohl may mean by a "transition" (*Uebergang*) we must try to puzzle out for ourselves in cap. VII., but his reference to the "poem" (*Dichtung*) is rather a serious lapse of memory for an essayist aged 56,* since we now know

* Since writing the above, I have lit on the following in a letter of Bülow's to B. Ulmann of March 1874: "Pohl better qualified than Anybodyelsekoff to write my biography etc. Only, one would have to keep a sharp eye on his negligence—in other words *his unreliability*"—"Mais faut surveiller, contrôler sa fainéantise—disons *seine Unzuverlässigkeit*."

for certain that Wagner had not got beyond the final prose-draft when this guest departed.

Pohl is on safer ground with the sequel to his previous mention: "In spite of having had to lay aside the 'Nibelungen,' Wagner was in good spirits and full of bright hope. His exile did not weigh upon him much [just then]. He was fond of Switzerland, and returned there, in fact, even after his amnesty. Only when he reflected that he could do nothing in Germany for the spread [?] and worthy presentation of his works *—nay, had never even heard his 'Lohengrin,'—did he turn bitter. On several walks he took with me along the Albis ridge he expressed himself about this, also about the misunderstandings and distortions to which his writings were exposed—he never was partial to journalists, and quite right too. He liked getting about in the open country, regularly took a few hours' walk each afternoon, and led a very regular and wholesome life in all ways. At that time he was an adherent of the cold water cure, which he believed he had employed with good results. On the whole, however, his health was not so steady as in later years. He experimented with all sorts of remedies, and his nerves were always on the stretch."

Then comes the Berliozian bit already quoted, and after that: "At Zurich Wagner was fondest of the company of Semper and Herwegh; he also mixed with Köchly, whom he knew from Dresden days, and a few other professors [not by choice]. On the whole, however, he had not much personal intercourse in town, and least of all with native Switzers [Sulzer, Baumgartner, Keller !]. The more frequently did distinguished foreigners—so many of whom pass through Switzerland in summer—hunt him up, and find hospitable reception in his house. When I came to Wagner, † Robert Franz had just left him, Bülow with his newly-married wife, Cosima, was expected; later [next year] Tausig came for a longish stay, and so on. The evenings at Wagner's house were almost always lively, and of course stimulating in the highest degree.

* Pohl might have adduced the Vienna case in point, as Wagner had written an important letter to Hoffmann (252 & 254 *sup.*) on the last whole day of Pohl's visit.

† That personal association with the "distinguished foreigners" (*hervorragende Fremde*) is the nearest we get to a suggestion that Dr Pohl was lodged in the best bedroom after all.

“With the Wesendonck family Wagner associated daily; indeed they lived house to house. Frau Wesendonck, of beautiful appearance, womanly grace and poetically thoughtful nature, exercised a visibly arousing influence on Wagner. Compared with her, Wagner’s soon-faded (*schnell gealterte*) wife Minna, with her somewhat prosaic, kind, but homespun nature, was bound to stand much in the shade. In Wagner’s presence she mostly kept quiet (*verhielt sie sich meist still*); when one met her alone, she gave vent to her feelings (*machte sie ihrem Herz Luft*). She absolutely could not understand how her husband could busy himself for years with projects which had not the smallest chance of realisation. Of the ‘Nibelungen’ she had no hope at all; compositions that might find acceptance everywhere, and yield pecuniary results, would have been much more to her liking. At the first glance one saw that these two natures could never harmonise; that a conjugal separation—which even then was already preparing itself [!]¹—must follow sooner or later, was not difficult to prophesy.”

Here we must cry a moment’s halt. That “daily” intercourse with the Wesendoncks no doubt was just within the possibility of Pohl’s experience, since they moved into their Villa the 22nd of August, allowing him three clear days for observation (an immense advantage over Praeger). But what right had he to trumpet forth the name of living private friends of Wagner’s in a public journal? And with such a manifest suggestion! He deliberately contrasts Frau Wesendonck with “faded” Minna, and scarcely has he done it, than he talks of “separation already preparing itself.” There lay the inference, correct or not, for any dolt to draw, and I more than half suspect it was Pohl’s example that set F. Praeger’s pen a-wagging. F. P.’s conveyance of less harmful details from Pohl’s feuilleton is palpable, and, with his terribly bad memory for surnames, it is much more than an even chance he would have clean forgotten that of “Wesendonck” had it not been for this unpardonable indiscretion of the Oldest Wagnerian, who glibly turns into a “prophecy” the upshot of von Bülow’s letters to him of *next* summer. As for Minna’s “unburdening her heart” to such a comparative stranger—a tale also capped by the other and much older P.—if we are to believe it, we shall have to think rather worse not only of her, but also of the week-end guest who could record it in this suggestive fashion.

Our halt at end, Pohl becomes harmless again: "One common sympathy, however, united the childless pair—that for dumb animals. How Wagner loved and understood them, he has shewn us in 'Parsifal' [nowhere else?]; he fathomed their individuality, and often preferred their company to that of human beings—a trait he had in common with his great spiritual kinsman, Schopenhauer . . . Dogs, above all, were Wagner's constant companions . . . At Zurich a little Bologna dog, *Fips*, shared his room with him; a clever, affectionate creature Wagner was very fond of. Frau Wagner had a parrot, which distinguished itself by an ear for music. This parrot, when in good vein, surprised me no little by whistling the first four bars from the first movement of Beethoven's symphony in F, a favourite of Wagner's, quite correctly; *Fips* sat solemnly beside it on a stool, listening just as if he understood. It was charming, how Wagner prattled and sang with these two animals."

Pohl passes to *Fips*' death in Paris, with another piratical scrap from the unpublished memoirs. It therefore is not without some feeling of relief, that, having already heard the story of his final evening at the Asyl, we start this individual on his journey back to Weimar; where he will arrive in ample time for the all-Liszt concert of Sept. 5 in celebration of the Goethe-Schiller monument.

"I was immensely sorry not to find you here still; we might have passed some more splendid days together, such as yesterday, when Wagner was in magnificent vein . . . Best thanks for having left directions to transfer to him the expected telegraphic announcement of my arrival. It secured us quite charming apartments with a view of the lake, though we shall exchange them at the end of the week for better still, as Wagner insists on burdening himself with us"—Hans von Bülow to Pohl, Friday the 4th of September, with "my own and my wife's hearty greetings to yours, and in particular to yourself."

That involuntary "my arrival" is by no means the first sign of a radical lack in what Wagner hereafter will term "a tragic marriage." Three weeks before the knot was tied, Hans had written Pohl (July 29): "Yes, the dark numblings of rumour are true; in about a week [as then expected] I shall be your fellow, enrolled as member of that great corporation not to belong to which is said to be a pleasure one recognises too late. Never

mind, we two shall only be *quasi*-honorary members of the guild of husbands.* Your variations on this theme have much amused me, and your example is always a kind of comfort to me. You have retained that '*je ne sais quoi*' of the bachelor which constitutes his speciality; I likewise have hopes of not losing that undefinable it, particularly when I travel." Half in jest, no doubt; but ardent lovers do not jest upon the threshold. So Pohl himself seems to have felt, for, acknowledging his "cheering answer of 12 mugs long," Hans writes him the very day before the wedding: "As a matter of fact, I am lucky—if I think of the possibility of any other match than this, I get furious with myself for such bad taste! My fiancée is so complete a chum to me, that one could scarcely imagine a more ideal one. Perhaps you do not know her very well yet?" Serious at any rate this time, and still stronger proof that this was a marriage rather of the head than the heart, of admiration rather than of love. Indeed, for all his splendid other qualities, one seriously may question whether Hans was altogether of the connubial temperament.

At the end of November '55 we found him, then nearly 26, begging of Liszt the hand of his younger daughter, not quite 18 (p. 87*n sup.*). Liszt then appointed a year of probation, but next April, 1856, writes the Brussels Freundin: "Hans vient de m'écrire une lettre pleine de cœur pour me demander définitivement Cosima en mariage. Le mariage pourra encore avoir lieu cet automne." From the young man's letter to Mme Laussot of that June, however—in which he remarks of the two young ladies: "Any other than I would feel happy to be in their company; but their manifest superiority gênes me, and the impossibility of making myself sufficiently interesting to them prevents my valuing the charm of their society as I should like to"—it looks much as if the engagement had been broken off meantime; especially as in July the two Mlles Liszt leave his mother's charge for that of their grandmother, and afterwards of their mother the Ctsse d'Agoult, in Paris. At the end of September Liszt's younger daughter returns to Frau v. Bülow, but the engagement does not appear to have been formally renewed till the spring of 1857, Hans at last dropping the "Mlle"

* Cf. to Cornelius, Aug. 8: "It's sad to think of the sighs every call for a waiter will draw from me at each hotel I go to: 'Garçon' no more."

in a letter of April 19 to Liszt, and alluding next day to "my fiancée" in a letter to Bronsart.* July 16 Liszt writes Carolyne from Berlin: "Il y a, ce me semble, toutes les probabilités d'une union heureuse," whilst a month later Hans writes *him* a long epistle in which his gratitude for the gift of "cet ange de cœur et d'esprit, qui s'appelle Cosima" is blent with "les plus sincères sentiments de reconnaissance, de dévouement et d'admiration éternels" for his teacher himself, of "votre élève et esclave Hans de Bülow" (Aug. 15, 57).

"Cosima was married at the church of St Hedwig in Berlin the 18th of August"—Liszt tells the Freundin, Aug. 31—"and the same evening accompanied me as far as here with Hans. The young couple did not stop at Weymar, but continued their journey direct for Baden." There they picked up Pohl, as seen, who would probably accompany them a day or two later to Basle; whence they branched off to Berne and the Lake of Geneva, where—strange honeymooner this—Hans took another pair of friends in tow: "Our tour was magnificent. For three whole days we coasted the shore of the Geneva lake in constant rapture. Ritter † accompanied us, with his wife; he sends you his regards" (to Pohl, Sept. 4).

Meantime Ludmilla Assing, one of the marriage-witnesses, had written Gottfried Keller, Aug. 12: "Fräulein Cosima Liszt will wed the pianist Hans von Bülow a few days hence; they intend going away immediately after the wedding, and think of spending a little time at Zurich. Should they happen to meet you there, I recommend them to your kind attention," praising the "brightness and winningness" of the bride, who, "in my opinion, plays still more beautifully than Herr von Bülow" (her 'finishing' master). To which Keller replies, the 26th: "The Bülow couple have been expected at Richard Wagner's for some time. Should I be graciously invited to this little episode in the cult of the Future, I shall honourably endeavour to confirm your praise of Cosima"—as he does, in fact, soon after: "Your eulogy of Cosima has

* For the vicissitudes of this engagement see also Francisca v. Bülow to her daughter, March 6, May 18 and 27, 56 (extracts in *H. v. B.'s Briefe*); Liszt to the Brussels Freundin, May 12, July 31, Sept. 16, 56, and July 5, 57; Hans to the Fürstin, Sept. 27, 56, and to Liszt, Jan. 3 and Feb. 11, 57.

† Whom Bülow tried in vain, on this occasion, to wean from his unreasonable attitude toward Wagner.

brilliantly proved true, and this exceptional young lady has pleased me more unequivocally than any other for a long time past. One must really wish her all things good, and, in this crooked world of shams, may she only remain what she is !”

That 26th, as we saw, was the date of Pohl's departure ; in another day or two would come Hans' telegram, and on or about the 29th what Keller calls “the natty Bülow folk” themselves. “Our Zurich entrée was not altogether lucky”—Hans to Pohl, Sept. 4—“The most important trunk, containing money, had gone astray en route between Lausanne and Berne. After much telegraphing, and by dint of Ritter's efficacious aid, at last we recovered it yesterday. Moreover, a rheumatic fever forced me to cultivate bed for 48 hours—an imprisonment considerably mitigated, though, by perusal of the Walküre partitur. Robert Franz is here . . . [*vid. sup.*]. Gottfried Keller, Frau Herwegh (he is travelling *), and Franz Müller [of Weimar, or may Hans mean Alex. M. ?] fit quite well into the circle off and on, and I may safely say I haven't spent such pleasant moments for an inconceivable length of time. What a pity you are not here.” This is the letter that told us of a glimpse into the score of *Siegfried* the day before, and the coming transference to the Asyl the day after : “I cannot answer you quite precisely as to the length of my [!] stay here, but—till the 15th or 18th for certain—perhaps, I might say most likely, longer. Wagner has promised to read out a new poem he is working at now.” †

Monday, Sept. 7, to Brendel : “A mere hurried greeting from

* Georg Herwegh returned before they left, however, and wrote the following verses in the bride's own album :

“Auf jedes Menschen Angesicht liegt leise dämmernd ausgebreitet
Ein sanfter Abglanz von dem Licht des Sternes, der sein Schicksal leitet.
Der Genius der Harmonie wird Dich mit seinen Wundertönen
Umrauschen, und Du wirst Dich nie mit der verstimmten Welt versöhnen.”

Strange how, unawares, these poets sometimes dive into the future : “On every human face there rests a shimmer of the star that guides its fortunes. The Genius of Harmony will weave his wonder-sounds about thee, and never wilt thou reconcile thee with this jarring world.”

† Probably it is this last remark that formed the basis of Pohl's misrecollection in the *Allgemeine*. It is significant, that Bülow himself either had not been made acquainted with the actual subject yet, at the end of six days, or had been requested to say nothing about it. The promised “reading” of act i must have taken place either that afternoon or the next.

Zurich, where I have spent many a fine day already this week past, and hope to spend more. The day before yesterday I accepted Wagner's hospitable offer, and, lodged at his delightful villa, I feel just like a Pope at Avignon. For the first time since ever so long I breathe free again, unchoked by petty preoccupation with the scurvy canaille that sours one's Berlin life.—The real reason I am writing you to-day, is to answer an enquiry you addressed to me some time ago in the matter of 'Carl Freigedank.' Well, *Wagner* begs you to abstain from any reproduction of the Judaism article [of 1850], whether pseudonymous or signed (the latter, of course, would be the more correct). He fears renewal of a scandal which perhaps would do more harm than good just now. Moreover, he has the intention [unfulfilled for many years] of collecting his occasional essays—with earlier articles written in Paris—and publishing them later in a small volume systematically arranged. Against a reprint of his essay on the overture to *Iphigenia* he naturally has no objection."

The most personally interesting of Bülow's four letters from Enge is that to his mother, of Sept. 18. Here are excerpts: * "Things have gone pretty well with me, and capitally since I came to Zurich. Everything flung into the lake, that might heat my head or check my cat-like purr of comfort—plenty of sleep—a good walk each day—regular hours—good pianos (*Flügel*) and eke good poultry (*Geflügel*)—I feel healthy and brisk, so far as is or ever will be possible to me. All my troubles, things gênant or rubbing one's fur the wrong way, I regard as a dream, a complete unreality, and so am even looking calmly forward to my return to Berlin—hoping you may have no further worry with me, and determined to give you no cause for it. . . . Cosima's letter no doubt has told you our adventures, our entrancement with the Lake of Geneva, my first genuine impression of Natural beauty; it made me happy to think you had once enjoyed it too. We have made up our minds to renew this *impression de voyage* next year. . . . We shall leave here next Thursday [24th] at latest, viâ St Gallen, where Cosima wishes to look at, perhaps purchase, some lace; then by Ötlishausen, where I may pay a half-hour's call on Thode [then owner of Hans' late father's house]. To withdraw

* *This* letter contains no allusion to Wagner—Francisca von Bülow's long-standing antipathy.

but gradually from Paradise, and only gradually go through the opposite of what one calls convalescence—we mean to pass a day or two at Munich, naturally without giving ourselves an indigestion of plastic art, *à la* Wittgenstein. Then will come the appointed week at Weimar, about which I have my qualms, since I have been so disobedient to the Durchlaucht as to get her visiting-instructions regarding all the Zurich notabilities (Moleschott, Köchly etc.) complied with by my wife alone. . . . For the rest [after an editorial omission], I view myself so little as a married man, that I feel as free as my repose demands.”

To a mother, that is the confession of a confirmed bachelor, however young. It is emphasised next day to Stern: “My actual ‘wedding tour’ extended to the Lake of Geneva, where I had a fine time with my old friend Karl Ritter (almost the same age as myself); I recommend to your leisure attention his piano-sonatas and songs, just published by Breitkopf and Haertel. Now I am celebrating quite another than the usual honeymoon, and my wife is not jealous.” The signification of the last remark, of course, is the young man’s worship of a master he had not seen in the flesh for four years (iv, 169), a master in whose honour he sends up a perfect dithyramb to Stern: “For the last fortnight I and my wife have been staying at Wagner’s, and I really can imagine nothing that could have done me so much good, or given me such refreshment, as the society of this unique and glorious man, whom one must reverence as a god. I melt and emerge from all life’s misère in presence of this Great and Good.” Hans passes to the “Nibelungen” (262 *sup.*), then: “How I deplore you for your atheism; much as I admire what you do and fight for, how I could wish you the vision of a Supreme, a Living, for which your dead Sebastian will never, never compensate you!—The thought has naturally taken me, of settling down in Zurich or its neighbourhood for good, little as I propose to hurry with it. Unfortunately I’m still too young to dispense with the obligation to go through a practical purgatory [Berlin] ere I can yield myself to that enjoyment.”

A few lines of Liszt’s to the Freundin, Sept. 14: “Bülow and his wife will come to see me at Weimar in about ten days. Cosima found that her mother had left Switzerland, and Blandine has just written from Florence to ask me for news of her sister. For the moment the young couple are established at Zurich with

Wagner, who is shewing them the most amiable hospitality in his villa, which people say is charming."

And Wagner himself? October 8, a fortnight after their departure, he writes Frau Ritter (with a copy of the new poem): "The visit of the young Bülow pair was my pleasantest experience of this summer. They stayed in our cottage three weeks; seldom have I felt so agreeably and delightfully aroused, as by this intimate visit. Of a morning they had to keep quiet, as I was writing my *Tristan* then, a fresh act of which I read them every week. The rest of the day we nearly always made music, when Frau Wesendonck would loyally come across, and we thus had a most grateful little audience at our hand each time. Bülow's mastery of the instrument is prodigious; with his sureness of musical insight, his incredible memory, and all that wonderful facility of his, his indefatigable willingness stood me splendidly in stead. If you have any knowledge of Cosima,* you will probably agree with me in thinking the young couple as happily matched as is possible. With all their great intelligence and positive genius (*Genialität*), there is so much airiness and go in both young people that one can't help feeling very well with them. It was with deep regret I let them leave at last, and only on their unconditional promise to come again next year."

"Liszt never came, nor any of the promised singers,"† says that letter to Frau Ritter. Liszt never came—there was the drop of bitterness, a big, big drop, in this vintage season's brimming cup.

"And so you never came, dearest Franz! without another

* Herr Glasenapp informs us that Liszt had at first proposed to place his daughters in Frau Ritter's charge, two years ago, but she had been unable to oblige him.

† As for Tichatschek, "About Easter he wrote that he was leaving Dresden for some months and looking forward to seeing me again; so I was in constant expectation of his visit. . . . Next summer you and Heine *must* come and stay with me; if you don't, I'll never write you again in my lifetime," writes Wagner to Fischer at the end of October, adding that F. had given him hopes of a visit from Meser's successor, "who also did not come; whereas I keep hearing of great confusion and want of energy in his conduct of the business. The pft score of *Tannhäuser* without words (the most marketable of all) hasn't been issued even yet!" On the other hand, "our Prague enthusiast Apt has been, and absolutely wanted to buy a full score of *Rienzi*," etc.—a visit the reader may fit in at discretion.

word to me about it—just dumbly never came! In two letters you had given me repeated hopes of your visit, and finally I wrote to M[arie] that I had contrived a plan for lodging you [singular] under my own roof.* Was that message ever given you? Perhaps not. M[arie] was so kind as to write me a little while ago: my latest invitation was not even referred to. You wrote a few lines, but not a word in them whether you were coming or no."

Though without a formal date, the autograph beginning thus is fixed by internal evidence † as of the last week in September 1857. The "few lines" it mentions—perhaps in a letter from Liszt to his daughter—have not come down to us. Apart from them, Liszt's "dumbness" had continued since his letter of July 10 in answer to Wagner's announcement (June 28) of *Tristan's* substitution for the RING. Let us return to that:—

"I can but weep"—writes Liszt, July 10—"when I think of the interruption of your Nibelungen! Was the great *Ring* not really to free you, then, from all the little chains that cling to you?" Whatever way one reads its puzzling "Sollte," this Carolyne-like trope reverses the true position: those "little chains," of exile and impecuniosity, were heavy enough in all conscience, and Wagner needed *their* removal or ever he could "free" the RING itself. Merely noting an unfortunate habit, we will proceed with the letter: "You certainly have many causes for bitterness—and though I myself am more silent thereon, I feel none the less grieved. In several directions it is impossible for me to push things forwarder at present; yet it would be foolish to abandon all hope. A more propitious hour will come—but it must be waited for, and meanwhile I beg you to do your friend no wrong,‡ and not to despise the 'virtue of the mule,' as

* Evidently for the time of the Bülow's visit. Perhaps that was the reason of Wagner's engaging apartments for them in the first place.

† "B. is bringing a copy of the *Tristan* poem I wrote while he was here. During work and the visit it was impossible to make a copy myself and send it to M. May I be kindly excused." The copy "brought" to Weimar—where the Bülow's arrived Sept. 30—seems to have been taken by Hans for himself, as he writes the Fürstin five weeks after: "Me permettez-vous maintenant . . . vous demander de me faire parvenir le 'Tristan' de Wagner, duquel j'ai offert de faire une copie pour mademoiselle votre fille? Wagner a écrit à Mlle Frommann de me demander son poëme, afin qu'elle s'en enthousiasme."

‡ This is the letter that begins with that apt quotation from the Goethe-Schiller Correspondence as to its being "a kind of religion with me, to make

Byron calls patience."—A certain offendedness peeps out already, with little real occasion. It is brushed aside to-day, however :

"The *Tristan* seems to me an extremely happy thought. Beyond doubt you will make a glorious work of it—and then return to your *Nibelungen* refreshed. We shall all come to Strassburg, and form your *garde d'honneur*. I hope to see you first, however, the beginning of this autumn, though I am unable to form any definite plans yet. The Fürstin is still kept to her bed," and so on, with a programme of Liszt's own cure at Aachen and the Weimar festival the first week of September, ending with a jocular possibility of "my having to flee to you at Zurich, and perform my *Faust-symphony* . . . and last-completed symphonic poem, Schiller's *Ideale*, in your villa." Liszt even suggests a remote chance of the two princesses coming also ; in which case "of course I shall stay with them at the Hôtel Baur, whither your wife will not refuse the charity of sending me some first-rate coffee and a practical coffee-machine ; for the stuff the hotel serves as coffee is as insufferable to me as a *salon-piece* by Küken."

Now, we must remind ourselves that this letter crossed Wagner's of the 9th, informing Liszt of the contemplated change in *Tristan's* venue : no longer Strassburg, but Carlsruhe. That poaching of E. Devrient's on Liszt's preserves made all the difference. As Liszt had been the first to bring out *Lohengrin*, and the first to seek, however fruitlessly, to found a habitation for the RING, he may have felt he had a prescriptive right to be the first to bring out *Tristan*—unless its author himself should produce it on neutral ground. Further, there was the suggestion of a slackening of those "little chains" through intervention of the *other* Grand Duke. Altogether, it must have come as somewhat of a shock to Weimar amour propre, this sudden crossing of sage counsel to go on practising the virtue of the mule and "*wait* for the propitious hour." Had not Liszt's hand been forced in somewhat similar fashion over the Berlin *Tannhäuser* affair, with the result that poor Fräulein Frommann had fallen from Altenburg grace ? And now this tiresome Devrient must be interfering !

That some degree of resentment against the Carlsruhe Intendant was felt at the Altenburg this summer, may be deduced from

your cause my own . . . and thus, in a higher meaning of the word, to merit the name of your friend."

a singular passage in Liszt's letter to Carolyne of July 29, during his Aachen cure: "I went to *Hans Heiling* the day before yesterday. It would be curious to trace how Wagner has distilled some of the finest scenes and situations in *Tannhäuser* from the vulgarities, bombast and pinchbeck romanticism of this pitiful libretto of our friend Edward Devrient, who is essentially an 'homme sérieux' and worthy of esteem. One might commence with the first, between Venus and Tannhäuser, which has much analogy with the first scene of the *Hans Heiling* prologue, between Hans and his mother,* who is a Queen of the *Earth-spirits*—but degenerated into an *Earth-apple*- alias *Potato-queen*. Only, that which is dull, gauche, trite and heavy, with Devrient, becomes noble, inspired and of *haute allure* with Wagner. The one remains bourgeois, or better, *Spiessbürger*—a term as untranslatable as the thing it represents—for all his fantastic galimatias; the other is a born patrician of Venice or Rome. Instead of shewing flat and flabby, he soars and shines. Devrient's verses are rank prose devoid of sentiment and expression. Wagner, even when this or that expression may not be perfect, remains none the less unchangeably a poet. Between the [chief] personage and certain of its shadows in *Hans Heiling* and that of the *fliegenden Holländer* one might also note affinities, without that giving one the right, nevertheless, to accuse Wagner of theft. However, I will not weary you with parallels, but simply add that I love you," etc.—Decidedly "notre ami" Devrient is on the Altenburg's black book at present, whilst Wagner himself is more or less up for judgment on a surface count. A small straw, but, with a man so reticent as Liszt on some things, enough to shew the way the wind is blowing.

What indications Wagner may have reaped from other

* If there possibly could be an analogy between two such disparate relationships and motives, it still would stagger us that Liszt should quite forget the "scene between Venus and Tannhäuser" which forms the essence of the ancient legend. After such a "commencement" it is well that he pursued this point no farther, since his only other "analogy" must have been the "Potato-queen's" appearance at the end of *Heiling*, to make the mortal characters quite happy and call Hans back to his ancestral throne! As for the *Holländer*, the "affinities" reduce themselves to a bridal casket of jewels and a complete reversal of the position of the rival wooers. But the whole comparison is superficial in the last degree.

symptoms than Liszt's "dumbness," one cannot definitely say ; but alike Pohl and Hans had seen Liszt since his receipt of that letter of July 9, and it is highly probable that some hint of umbrage on account of Carlsruhe had thus reached Wagner's ears. It is the only way of solving the continuation of our late-September riddle : " My dearest Franz—from my heart, and for our friendship's sake, I beg you to forgive whatever in my conduct may have helped to put you out of humour with me ; just as I, for my part, am most willing to forgive whatever person may have fed your grudge against me." Quite certainly that points to more than a shrewd guess that the Carlsruhe scheme had seriously displeased the Fürstin. Neither is the customary greeting sent the Weimar ladies in this letter, which simply ends with : " Farewell, dearest Franz, and tell me soon you still think kindly of me. The success of your performance of the *Faust* delighted me uncommonly ; would I could have heard it ! Fare thee well ! "

Even that appeal did not draw forth the prompt response it should have. Not for another full month, not till the 3rd of November, when Liszt is *alone* at Dresden,* does he reply with a letter commencing : " How could I cease to think of you with love and sincerest devotion ? And in this city, this room, where we first drew closer to each other, when your genius flashed upon me !"—and concluding : " O how I wish I could live with you beside the Lake of Zurich, and quietly write on ! God be with you ! "

Once more their letters cross, for this is the time when Wagner sent his splendid heartening for the *Dante* first performance ; and so the personal reconciliation is complete. But, although Liszt's letter speaks about the *Tristan* poem (see next cap.), the peccant Carlsruhe scheme is not referred to by either side for another six months, when Liszt writes (May '58) : " They are very well disposed to you at Carlsruhe, and only the day before yesterday I discussed your mournful situation with the Grand Duchess of Baden, who (as also the Grand Duke) appears to take a lively interest in you. Do not neglect your *Tristan*. For its first performance I should advise you to choose between

* His letter itself says, " The Fürstin and her daughter will arrive this evening. The Child is in love with your *Tristan*," etc.—the mother implicitly not.

Carlsruhe and Prague. Weymar would naturally have to come next; for the moment, though, I consider it better for you that another stage should take precedence, as I told Thomé, in fact, at Prague. In any case I shall not fail to attend the first performance, and I beg you to send me on the score when you have finished it. Then I propose to shew the work to our Grand Duke, and again entreat him to procure you leave from Dresden to conduct the opera here. God grant this step may lead to a favourable result at last!"

This outward endorsement nevertheless conceals an inward soreness, as Liszt had written Carolyne from Prague itself, March 6 (58): "Wagner is in fairly active correspondence [?] with Thomé, who reckons on giving the initial performance of *Tristan* at Prague, under the direction of Wagner! I made him [Thomé] my compliments on it, promising in advance that I shall not enter into rivalry with him—natural as it would have seemed for Wagner to accord me the preference. Poor Tristan! Here it is traipsing already from Strassburg to Carlsruhe, and from Carlsruhe to Prague—perhaps to fall back on me at last at Weymar! These excesses of gaucherie on Wagner's part might be enough to annoy one—but do not let us accuse those who are in misfortune."

Yet if Liszt had only condescended to discuss the Carlsruhe scheme with Wagner at an earlier date, he would have discovered that the Prague director's hopes were based on nothing but a "vain misunderstanding" (see letter 260, *W.-L.*). Thomé appears to have visited Zurich early in '58, and doubtless heard about the *Tristan*; but what Wagner offered this "strange individual" by letter—to which he received *no* reply for months—was *Rienzi*. A little less of "the mule" at the Altenburg, a little recollection that "confidentialness is also good," would have vastly changed the future of a very noble bond.

VII.

“TRISTAN UND ISOLDE.”

Idea and experience. The poem's evolution. The experience.—Composition of act i and three of the Fünf Gedichte.—Paris episode: correspondence with Praeger; French copyrights; Rienzi and Tannhäuser traffic; Ollivier; the Erard.—Return: Tristan contract; full-scoring of act i.—Munich gives Lohengrin.—Stehe still! Villa concert. Good Friday and Parsifal.—Minna's scene and 'cure.'—Im Treibhaus. Composition of act ii. Relations with the Villa.—More Asyl guests. Minna's return; fresh scenes. Farewell.—At Geneva while Vienna gives Lohengrin.—Venice: instrumenting act ii; poem published; finance again.—Berlin gives Lohengrin.—Political persecution; act ii completed and Venice left.—Lucerne and Wiedersehen; act iii composed and finished.

“For my having written the Tristan I thank you from my deepest soul to all eternity.”

To Mathilde Wesendonck.

“WITH my ‘Tristan’ I confidently plunged into the depths of inner soul-events, and from out this mid arcanum of the world built up its outer form . . . Here life and death, the whole import and existence of the outer world, depend on nothing but the inner motion of the soul.”*

“The poet sees before experiencing, and sees what gives its sense to all experience itself . . . But what if the very essence of the poet's vision at last should pass into his own experience! Then his preconceived Idea will take great part in this Experience's shaping: the purer and the loftier that, the more unworldlike and incomparable this; it will refine his will, his æsthetic interest will become an ethical, and hand in hand with the highest poetic idea will go the highest moral consciousness.

* *Prose Works* III. 330-1, “Zukunftsmusik,” written a twelvemonth after completion of the *Tristan* score.

It will then be his task to prove it in the moral world . . . This I have most strikingly observed in my own case. With my poetic conceptions I have constantly been so in advance of my experiences, that I may consider my moral development as almost exclusively the fruit of those conceptions . . . You yourself must feel the singularity of the relation in which I now stand to the Tristan; for never has an idea so definitely passed into experience. How far the two had predetermined one another, is so subtle a regard that the ordinary mind will only be able to conceive it in the sorriest distortion." *

We must engrave these sayings on our mind, and more particularly the *purity* of that union of "the highest poetic idea with the highest moral consciousness." Then let us add to them the following illustration: †

TRISTAN UND ISOLDE.

a) Prelude (Liebestod)

TRISTAN as bridal envoy conducts Isolde to his uncle king. They love each other. From the most stifled moan of quenchless longing, from the faintest tremour to unpent avowal of a hopeless love, the heart goes through each phase of unvictorious battling with its inner fever, till, swooning back upon itself, it seems extinguished as in death.

b) Conclusion (Verklärung).

Yet, what fate divided for this life, in death revives transfigured: the gate of union opens. Above the corpse of Tristan, dying Isold sees transcendent consummation of their passionate desire (*des glühenden Sehnsens*), eternal union in unmeasured realms, nor bond nor barrier, indivisible!

There in the fewest possible words we have the essence of the *Tristan* "idea" as conceived by Wagner. In the light of his explicit declaration anent "the fleeting transports of my lovers'

* Condensed, and partly simplified, from the letter to Mathilde Wesendonck of Jan. 59, five months after leaving the Asyl.

† From a programme for a Vienna concert, Dec. 27, 63; see *Bayr. Bl.* 1902, where this explanatory note was first reprinted. It will be observed that it is the elixir of that much longer explanation originally intended for the Paris concerts of 1860 (see *M.* 198 and *Prose* VIII.) but then replaced by a mere "note" (*cf. M.* 209); as my next vol. will shew, however, it materially differs from the Paris "note." Of great interest is Wagner's use of the term *Liebestod*—"Love-death," i.e. death through stress of love—for the Prelude itself; *not* for the closing scene, which here is called "Transfiguration" (*Verklärung*).

first re-meeting,"* their tryst in act ii, we see that he has entirely recast the ancient legend, ridding it of its whole paraphernalia of adulterous intrigue. Consuming passion (*glühendes Sehnen*) is the keynote of his drama—else it could not be a *Tristan und Isolde* at all—but the very intensity of his lovers' passion keeps them chaste. As a French critic has well said: "Elle offre le philtre de mort. Tristan le sait, il l'accepte, parce que son acceptation, comme l'offre de l'amante, équivaut à un tacite aveu. Ils vont donc mourir, certains maintenant de leur passion réciproque, mais résolus à s'anéantir plutôt que de vivre séparés, ou unis dans le déshonneur."† And with tenfold force does that apply to the ecstasy of the second act; nothing save a union so complete that their "inner souls" are merged in one, beyond the grave, can satisfy this love of theirs.

Into the purely philological question of 'origins' the reader will scarcely expect me to go. Indeed it would be presumption to attempt to do so, when I can refer him to "*The Story of Tristan and Iseult*: rendered into English from the German of Gottfried von Strassburg by Jessie L. Weston" (pub. David Nutt, 1899), and to the same accomplished lady's *Legends of the Wagner Drama* (1896), from which I need merely quote one sentence here: "It is on the poem of Gottfried von Strassburg that Wagner has based his drama, in so far, that is, as he has followed any of the versions; for, as will be seen, he has treated the story with far more conciseness than any of his predecessors, and with a simplicity and directness of method especially suitable to a legend which can only lose through elaboration, and become distasteful by insistence on detail"—much as Wagner himself declared while still engaged on his work (see *M.* p. 142).

Instead of confronting it with origins, then, let us resurvey the intrinsic evolution of *Wagner's* drama, a masterpiece that dwarfs all origins to insignificance. In December 1854 he wrote to Liszt: "As never in my life have I tasted the real felicity of love

* "Die alte goldene Feder spann ihr letztes Gewebe über den zweiten Act des Tristan, und zeichnete eben mit zögerndem Verweilen die fliehenden Wonnen des ersten Wiedersehens meines liebendes Paares." This is the sentence in the letter of Jan. 59 to Mathilde that started the whole train of thought already cited; its "first" is of the greatest importance, settling a long-disputed question once for all.

† Gustave Robert, *La Musique à Paris*, "tomes v-vi," p. 52 (1901).

(*nie das eigentliche Glück der Liebe genossen habe*), to this fairest of all dreams I mean to raise a monument wherein that love shall sate itself for once from beginning to end. I have outlined in my head a *Tristan und Isolde*, the simplest but fullest-blooded musical conception; with the ‘black flag’ floating at its end I then shall shroud myself—to die.” Apart from vague references to “projects in my head,” no more is said of *Tristan* until summer 1856, when the subject recurs in letters to Liszt, Otto and Roeckel (see cap. III.). Here the vital factor is its denotation to Roeckel, “Love as terrible agony” (*die Liebe als furchtbare Qual*), coupled with the remark to Liszt, “Not until after digesting my *Tristan*, particularly its third act with the black flag and the white, would the drift of the ‘Sieger’ grow plainer to you:” the conception has become infinitely more tragic now, whilst *Die Sieger* appears as its “redemption.” How soon that “fairest of all dreams” was mentally transformed into a “terrible agony,” we cannot say, but here at least we have one definite landmark: by July 1856 an earliest scenario must already have been committed to paper, for Wagner to make so categoric an allusion to its “third act.” From extraneous sources one hears, indeed, of “sketches” made “in course of 1855”; but in the absence of preciser data it will be more reasonable to assign this earliest prose-draft—as to which we do not even yet know if it still exists—to that Mornex period, summer 1856, when *Tristan* is so clearly to the fore again.

Beyond its manifest adherence to the ancient legend’s termination—where, after receipt of false tidings that the ship sent to fetch her is bearing the black sail of despair, Tristan turns his face to the wall and dies ere Isolde can reach him—what more is there to say of this unknown earliest draft? For the past twenty years it has been an accepted tradition that in its third act Parzival arrived at Kareol in his quest of the Grail (!), and that “a definite melody of the wandering Parzival was to sound forth to the moribund Tristan as it were the mysteriously-echoing answer to his life-annulling question as to the ‘Why’ of existence.” Fortunately the tradition is so fenced about with “it is said” and “it appears,” that we can afford to be rather sceptical in its regard since this “definite melody” of the Grail-seeker has actually come to hand in the shape of an autograph dating from the spring or early summer of 1858, i.e. long after the Parzival-less poem of

Tristan stood finished for good (see *M.* p. 23). In all probability some confusion of a recollector's memory has been at work here, and for my own part I prefer to believe that Wagner would never have dreamt of introducing so heterogeneous an element, which would have needed far more elaboration than is suggested by a mere "geheimnissvoll verhallende Antwort."

Nevertheless, it is evident that the scenario of 1856 must have differed in important respects from the final form. For one thing, it is scarcely likely that Wagner would have troubled to write out a fresh prose-draft in 1857, as groundwork for his poem, if the draft of 1856 had satisfied him in its general outlines. Still more conclusive: in his announcement of June 57 to Liszt he says: "I have formed the plan of carrying *Tristan und Isolde* out forthwith *in moderate dimensions, to facilitate performance*"—the original of the words I now italicise being "in geringen, die Aufführung erleichternden Dimensionen"—adding that it is to *become* "a thoroughly practicable opus." Plainly it is no mere question of reducing length; "to facilitate performance," and make the work "ein durchaus praktibles Opus," can hardly mean anything less than a reduction in the number of set scenes, and therefore of the incidents portrayed. Any change of scene in course of the *third* act would be difficult to suppose, unless the legendary second *Isolde* also played a rôle; but it is not at all improbable that the original plan embraced incidents demanding two set scenes apiece for acts i and ii, with orchestral interludes, as in *Götterdämmerung* and *Parsifal* and the last acts of *Lohengrin*, *Siegfried* and *Die Meistersinger*. In this way there might have been a good deal more resemblance to Gottfried's epic, on the one hand, and on the other a good deal more necessity for spectacular display. Should such have really been the earlier plan—a pure conjecture—we may be boundlessly thankful that it was abandoned for the Greek simplicity of the final form; but a lingering survival from it may surely be traced in Brangäne's reference to Melot's spying, "Tückisch lauschend treff' ich ihn oft: der heimlich euch umgarnt." Wagner himself, as we saw, called the situation in act ii his "lovers' *first* tryst," and at the very time when he was instrumenting it; the whole conception of the scene, wording and all, makes it impossible for this assignation to have been preceded by any other: yet those disturbing words of Brangäne's are answered by *Isolde* with "Muss

mein Trauter mich meiden, dann weilt er bei Melot allein”! Distinctly, this passing incongruity—the only one in all the work—must be an involuntary memento from the plan of 1856.

A deeper problem is that presented by Tristan’s frenzied outburst in act iii. In the second act, in the only shape wherein we know it, both Tristan and Isolde already reach a height at which their love has leapt the mortal shell and found its own path to eternity: “the commencement of this scene shews the most overbrimming life in the greatest tumult of passion—its close the most consecrate longing for death” (*M.* p. 185); in fact, it is Tristan who at the end of this second act goes first on that path, tranquilly bidding Isolde to follow. Yet in the third we find him a prey to greater “torment of love” than ever, and—for the first time in Wagner’s drama is the love-drink treated as an active influence by either of the two chief characters.* The æsthetic effect is singular, for we seem taken back to a phase before that love-scene; or rather, it is as though we were witnessing a plastic, instead of a dramatic composition: the first and third acts—always excepting the final apotheosis—standing for right and left wings of a great central group, the second, to which they *both* lead up.

This probably means that the ground-plan of act ii is of later date than that of the main body of act iii, i.e. that it owes more, perhaps far more, to the 1857 remodelling, or, if I may so express it, re-gestation. And here Pohl’s testimony may prove of unexpected service, if we can fit it in with facts since ascertained:—

On the 4th of July 1857, as seen already, Wagner wrote Frau Ritter that the *Tristan* poem still was “slumbering” in him, and not before his thorough satisfaction with its “summoning to life” should he “deem the project meet for execution.” The rest of the month he devoted to the second act of *Siegfried*, but even after his laying that aside the *Tristan* slumbers three weeks more. It is trembling to final shape in the poet’s brain, however, for the 20th of August 1857 sees its definitive prose-draft commenced. I

* There can be no other than a literal interpretation for the words: “Der furchtbare Trank! Wie vom Herzen zum Hirn er wüthend mir drang!”—“The drink! The drink! With its fearful bane it festered my blood from heart to brain” (A. Forman)—notwithstanding that Tristan converts it soon thereafter into a symbol of the Will-to-life, with his “myself, myself I brewed it.”

say commenced, as Dr Golther—into whose hands this prose-draft lately passed awhile—has kindly informed me that the date is inscribed on its *first* page, and, albeit the whole draft is written fluently, without apparent effort, it covers far too many pages to have been completed at one sitting.

Now, assuming that it took about a week to write this final draft—which itself, as Dr Golther says, is in entire agreement with the finished work*—let us see what we can make of Pohl's enigmatic report of that conversation of August 25: "Dann sprach er lebhaft über die Dichtung von 'Tristan und Isolde,' die ihn ganz erfüllte; ihn beschäftigte damals der Uebergang vom zweiten zum dritten Act, den er noch nicht festgestellt hatte." If we can place any reliance on Pohl at all, after our discovery that he has confounded the prose-draft with a poem not commenced till after his departure, the singularity of that expression "Uebergang" may tell us something: it is the very word used by Wagner himself two years later—*die Kunst des Ueberganges*—when discussing his second act of *Tristan* in particular (see *M.*, 184-6). But, to have a "transition," you must first have *two* fixed points. Consequently, we have to suppose that the said temporary difficulty lay in the leading of Tristan from a state of calm "death-consecration," already attained in the new second act, to that "terrible agony of love" which clearly formed the third act's main conception in the *earlier* scenario. To effect this "transition" with such supreme art as is displayed in the whole disposition of the opening of act iii—which one might sum up in the hero's words, "Isolde lebt und wacht, sie rief mich aus der Nacht" ("Isolde lives, I know it: she called me back from Night")—may well have demanded a day or two's preparatory pause.†

The other end of the act, implicit in the new act ii, must have already been "settled" simultaneously therewith—hero and heroine becoming "one, one element; no longer two mortals, but one divine ur-substance of eternity" (*M.* p. 81). And so before that waning month ran out, the draft was finished, the paragon itself begun.‡

* I understand that the draft of August 1857 is to be printed in the next edition of the *Nachgelassene Schriften* (Posthuma); dare we hope that the earlier scenario, if still preserved, may also be included?

† It is the same point that arrests him for a full week in his composition of the music itself, as we shall learn toward the end of this chapter.

‡ We possess no actual date for its commencement, but may infer it from a

Completed **September 18**, the manuscript poem is said to be in close agreement with the form reprinted in vol. vii of the *Gesammelte Schriften*, the version followed by Mr Alfred Forman in his magnificent translation. This *Ges. Schr.* version (1873) I have carefully collated with the first edition of all (“1859,” really Dec. 58) and found but the tiniest variants, very few even of such; * so that we may treat these two as practically identical, distinguishing them as the Literary form.

Coming to the score, and the revised modern textbooks based thereon, † we find the stage-directions either fuller, or, where not fuller, couched in slightly different language; ‡ but, save for mere minutiae, the Vocal text itself departs in only two instances from the Literary form. Both of these occur in act ii, the finished score omitting two passages stated by Dr Golther to have been set to music in the composition-sketch of summer 1858:—

<p>(<i>Trist.</i>) Selbst um der Treu' und Freundschaft Wahn dem treu'sten Freunde ist's gethan, der in der Liebe Nacht geschaut, dem sie ihr tief Geheimniss vertraut.</p>	<p>The fancied faith to friend or kin to fade in his soul must soon begin, who into the Night of love can look, to whom she opens her secret book. [A. Forman.]</p>
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combination of Bülow's statement to Pohl of Sept. 4, “Wagner has promised to read out a new poem he is working at now,” with Wagner's own to Frau Ritter, “Of a morning they [the Bülows] had to keep quiet, as I was writing my Tristan, a fresh act of which I read them every week,” and finally his repeated reference to “the 18th of September” as date of completion. This would place the poem's commencement about the 28th or 29th of August, 1857, two to three days after Pohl's departure.

* Absolutely the only one that makes the smallest difference in the sense is the replacement of “ohne selig zu sterben” in Mark's speech, act ii,—an obvious printer's error, see later—by “ohne selig sich zu preisen.”

† The early ones were terrible affairs, without a single stage-direction.

‡ A couple of these alterations are of some moment. Before the duo, “O sink' hernieder, Nacht der Liebe,” the Literary stage-directions run thus, “Seating themselves on a bank of flowers, in closer and closer embraces,” and at its end, “A long silent embrace, the heads of both sunk back”; for which the score has substituted, “Tristan gently draws Isolde down to a bank of flowers at the side, sinks on his knee in front of her, and buries his head in her arm,” and “Tristan and Isolde sink as if into a complete trance, head to head leant back on the bank of flowers.”

This first omitted passage is clearly modelled on Gottfried's "However sweet love may be, a man must at whiles bethink him of his honour, and Tristan knew well that he owed both faith and honour to Mark, who had sent him to fetch his bride, and the twain fought hard with his love, and vexed heart and soul between them, yet was it of no avail, for since he had chosen Love, Honour and Faith alike must needs be put to the worse" (Miss Weston's transl.). It is easy to imagine Wagner's reason for dropping these lines from a work intended for public performance, though he retained them in his Literary editions.

The second passage, described by Dr Golther as "quite splendidly conceived in the musical sketch," probably was omitted for mere reason that it retarded the climax : *

Tristan. Soll der Tod
mit seinen Streichen
ewig uns
den Tag verscheuchen?
Isolde. Der uns vereint,
den ich dir bot,
lass ihm uns weih'n,
dem süssen Tod!
Musste er uns
das eine Thor
an dem wir standen, ver-
schliessen ;
zu der rechten Thür',
die uns Minne erkor,
hat sie den Weg nun ge-
wiesen.

With his threat
shall death not fright
the Day for ever
from our sight?
Who makes us one,
his let us be,
sweet Death's, whom once
I offered thee!
Though fast he held
the door that day
where rashly we dared to
wait,
by love now led
we find our way,
and stand at the lawful gate.
[A. Forman.]

How little this second and last omission affects the context, no *Tristan* devotee will need reminding. The immediately preceding words remain, "Lass den Tag dem Tode weichen!"—"Let Day yield place to Death"—whilst the whole succeeding Hymn

* Dr Golther further tells us that in the musical sketch for the opening of act i the Young Seaman had two additional bars to sing, to the words here italicised : "*dem englischen Gast auf ödem Mast, sind's deiner Seufzer Wehen, die ihm die Segel blähen?*" In this case, however, the additional words occur in *none* of the printed editions. On the other hand, in act iii the score gives Kurwenal the words "Wo du bist? In Frieden, sicher und frei!" (after Tristan's "Wo bin ich?"), which, unnoted by Dr Golther, can scarcely have existed in the MS. poem, as they do not occur in what I have termed the Literary form.

to Night* is one ardent invocation of “holder Tod” and “Liebes-Tod.” With the ecstatic passage through that “gate of union,” the last film of severing personality dissolved, “*unbewusst, höchste Lust*,” the poem ends. “Shall we call it death?”—asks the poet himself, “Or is it the wonder-world of Night?”

From that last transfiguration of the Idea let us pass to the momentous crisis which it brought about in the Experience.

“What since six years past supported, comforted, and above all fortified me to endure by Minna’s side despite the enormous differences in our character and disposition”—writes Wagner to his sister Clara, eleven months after—“is the affection of that young gentlewoman who at first and for long drew near me shyly, diffidently, hesitant and timid, then more and more decidedly and surely. As any union between us was quite out of the question, our deep attachment took that wistful character which holds all coarse and vulgar thoughts aloof, and discerns its only source of gladness in each other’s welfare. Since the very commencement of our acquaintance she had felt the most unflagging and refined solicitude for me, and most courageously obtained from her husband whatever might alleviate my life † . . . The most wonderful part of it, is that I absolutely never had a notion of the conflicts she was going through for me . . . This the unparalleled result of this purest, noblest woman’s splendid love.—And that love, which had still remained unuttered by a word between us, was finally to cast aside its veil when I penned the poem of my Tristan, just a year ago, and gave it to her. Then for the first time did she lose her self-control, and confess to me she now must die!—Reflect, dear sister, what this love must have meant to me, after a life of toil and sufferings, agitations and sacrifices, such as mine!—Yet we recognised forthwith that no union could ever be thought of between us, and were resigned; renouncing every selfish wish, we suffered patiently, but—loved each other!”

Whether the last act had just been read aloud to the “most grateful little audience” of three—scarcely four—we do not

* A remarkable parallelism with Novalis’ *Hymnen an die Nacht* (1800) has been set forth at length in the *Richard Wagner-Jahrbuch* for 1906 by Arthur Prüfer, who nevertheless admits that we have no direct evidence of Wagner’s acquaintance with that mystic’s works.

† For the full text see my Introduction to the *Mathilde* volume.

definitely learn, but the poet's eloquent recital of his Tristan's throes may well have wrung that declaration from Mathilde's trembling lips. With what inherent purity it was uttered and received, the world knows now; for is it not recorded on the next September 18 in the Venice Diary? "A year gone by, I finished the poem of Tristan and brought thee its last act"—one kiss of blessing, and "at that wondrous instant alone did I live. Thou knowest how I spent it? In no tumult of intoxication, but solemnly, profoundly penetrated by a gentle warmth, free as if gazing on eternity . . . A hallowed standstill had come over me. A gracious woman, shy and diffident, had taken heart to plunge into a sea of griefs and sorrows, to shape for me that precious instant when she said: I love thee!"

It was on the morning after that "solemn pause, whence my life gained fresh meaning," that another member of the *Tristan* audience, Hans von Bülow, wrote those lines: "I can imagine nothing that could have done me so much good, as the society of this unique and glorious man, whom one must reverence as a god." What better testimony to the ennobling influence, alike of the "idea" and the "experience," could one desire?

"The tie that bound him to Mathilde Wesendonck, whom he then called his 'Muse,' was of so high, pure, noble and ideal a nature that, alas, it will only be valued of those that in their own noble breast find the same elevation and selflessness of mind."*

"Oh, that fair time had to bloom for us once! It passed—but the flower fades not; that breathes its everlasting perfume in our soul" (Venice Diary).

Very peacefully did the next few weeks slip by. "A year ago to-day"—begins the Venice entry of Oct. 18, 58—"we had a beautiful day at the Willes'. It was the season of wonders; we were celebrating the 18th of September. As we returned from our walk and were mounting the hill [at Mariafeld], thy husband offered Frau Wille his arm; so I, too, might offer thee mine. We spoke of Calderon: how well he served! Indoors I went straight to the new grand piano; myself I did not understand how I could play so well."

* See a letter from Frau Wesendonck, of March 1892, facsimiled in the English edition of the *Mathilde* volume.

Frau Wille, in her turn, thus describes the life on the lake's opposite shore: “Wagner and his wife were living in a pleasant country-house outside the bounds of Zurich, in a quarter not then over-built into wellnigh a suburb. It was a time of almost transfigured existence for all who assembled in the beautiful Villa on the Green Hill, where Wagner's dwelling also stood. Wealth, taste and elegance, embellished life there. The master of the house was unstinted in giving, and in furthering whatever interested him, full of admiration for the extraordinary man whom fate had brought so near him. The lady of the house,* young and delicate, of idealistic temperament, was acquainted with the world and life no otherwise than as with the surface [?] of a peaceful-flowing stream: calm sea and prosperous voyage [she seemed to think?] were to bear her life's barque to the islands of the blest. Loved and admired by her husband, a young and happy mother, she lived in veneration of the Notable in art and life (*des Bedeutenden in Kunst und Leben*), which had never yet appeared to her with such a range and potency of genius. The equipment of the house, the wealth of its proprietor, gave scope for a sociality which everyone, who shared in it, will always recollect with pleasure. Thus, founded on good will and friendship amid varying moods and experiences, a graceful relation (*ein anmuthiges Verhältniss*) was formed, and unfolded as beneath a cloudless sky.”

While that sky is still unclouded, we will take breath with a little interlude which may or not belong to Green Hill days, but would work in very well with a house-warming there. Written for Mathilde's sister, Marie Luckemeyer, it is a simple dance-tune of 32 bars, 16 apiece for first and second subjects, with a “*Da capo*” repeat.† Here is its inscription: “*“Züricher Vielliebchen”*-Waltzer, Polka, or what you will. To the excellently brought up and at Dunkirk admirably finished Marie of

* It should be observed that, unlike Pohl, Frau Wille delicately withholds from the public the Wesendoncks' name; on the other hand, she has wrapped this whole passage in such a bewildering haze as almost to defy translation.—Written at the advanced age of 77, her recollections (*Fünfzehn Briefe, &c.*) originally appeared in the *Deutsche Rundschau* Feb.-March 1887, and were reprinted as a brochure in 1894, a few months after her death.

† See *Die Musik*, “Bayreuth number,” 1902.—Our only other reference to this young lady is Wagner's enquiry from London, “Is not Marie coming to you soon?” (*M.* 9).

Düsseldorf, dedicated by the best dancer out of Saxony, called Richerd the Waltz-maker. In conclusion, the composer gives his solemn assurance that he would have taken better paper had it been at hand; he therefore begs his patroness to copy God, of whom it is notorious that he regards the waltz and not the paper. Quite in conclusion, the composer also prays that everything too difficult to play may be omitted from his work. In finest conclusion he fain would crave indulgence for any errors in counterpoint" (of which there naturally is none). And here the treble of its first four bars :



Whether this bagatelle is of autumn 1857 or two to three years earlier, it is just the sort of playful thing Wagner was fond of throwing off to relieve his most serious moods. I rather think the idea may have been started by his recent waltz in *Siegfried*. A waltz in *Siegfried*!—you exclaim. Undoubtedly; what else is the following?—from Siegfried's impudence to Fafner :



Siegfried: Ei - ne zier - li - che Fres - se zeigst du mir da, etc.

To this autumn we may certainly assign a tiny dateless note addressed "To the highly-esteemed Family Wesendonck (Myrrha, Guido, Karl etc.). I don't want to leave it to fortune whether you look in on us this evening, but to make sure of that good fortune by begging it of you. I am expecting Semper and Herwegh. So—early please!—R. W. Lazarus." The signature is so apt as almost to be painful, were it not for the humorous inclusion of the children, one of them a mere infant in arms, in an invitation to what was probably a first reading of the *Tristan* poem to a slightly larger circle than its original audience. "Wagner was burning to display the new work to his friends, and written invitations went out for an evening at the Wesendoncks' villa"—says the perpetrator of that "Wagner-

Herwegh” article in the *Gegenwart* (1897) referred to in vol. iv—“Herwegh and wife, Professor Semper, Gottfried Keller and the Ettmüller couple, did not decline. After the text followed the Tristan prelude [?], rendered by Wagner on the piano. Perhaps because the preceding all-too-long recital had exhausted the [company’s] impressionability, the effect was not so transporting as Wagner expected. Only one admirer of the master beamed with enthusiasm, and she aimed her pistol dead at Herwegh with a request for his opinion. ‘Dear lady,’ replied the poet, ‘a single hearing is not enough for me to pronounce a verdict on such a work of art;’ whereon the lady, who had anticipated an answer more in harmony with her delight, took refuge in the pathetic platitude, ‘Of course it is one of those profound works!’ [remembered forty years!] There can be no manner of doubt that the over long and lyric [!] drama had irked and positively displeased its hearers. On the homeward path, released from consideration for Wagner and his hosts [?], the disillusionment found open vent. Frau Herwegh avowed it was as if she had been driving for hours on a corduroyed track, and her husband somewhat wearily chimed in with, ‘That’s just how I also felt to-night.’ Gottfried Keller suffered from the same depression, and grunted out assent the whole way home.”—So far as Frau Herwegh is concerned, we may credit the sentiment; let us hope the others have been slandered. In any case, this reading must have been an entertainment at the Asyl, not the Villa, and Wagner can never have played his prelude as a postlude, if at all.

The composition of that “not so transporting” prelude—so beautifully imaged thereafter: “A breath disturbs the heaven’s translucence; it swells, condenses, and at last the whole wide world stands forth in prisoning solidity” (*M.* p. 213)—was outlined the **first of October**, on the evidence of the manuscript.* Of the same date we have a couple of lines to Otto: “Thus, dear friend, you also receive your first rent from me. I hope in time to get the length of offering you the proper value. Perhaps it isn’t so very far off, and then you shall say,

* The composition-drafts of all three acts of *Tristan* were originally in pencil, but, presumably to save them from obliteration, Frau Wesendonck went piously over every note of them in ink.

‘Hei, unser Herr Tristan, wie der Zins zahlen kann!!’—And so for to-day, as ever, my heartiest thanks again for all the goodness and kindness you have shewn me.”

A first intimation of the delicate position in which Wagner now suddenly found himself. How he hoped to secure financial independence, is also intimated in the jocular allusion: it was to be through *Tristan's* agency itself. On the day before (Sept. 30) he had written Haertels, “excusing himself for not having named a definite date for the visit he had asked of them and to which they had also consented, but the singers expected had never come, whilst the time of the pianists’ visits had not been fixable; moreover, he had meanwhile laid aside his ‘Nibelungen’ in order to take up ‘Tristan,’ conceived some years before, the poem whereof he had just completed, as he would be able to give this either at Carlsruhe or Strassburg with an élite company—he even had a prospect of producing this work (further particulars) in the Italian tongue at Rio Janeiro; begging their advice how to secure his copyright in ‘Tristan’ for France, England and Italy, and asking for strict secrecy about his plan.”

One could wish Dr Altmann had been allowed to fill up that tantalising “(Näheres)” in his précis, as the whole context points to a first hint of an offer to the ultimate publishers. However that may be, Dr Haertel himself came to Zurich in further course of this autumn, and “entered with great readiness into my proposals regarding the publication of *Tristan u. Isolde*” (*vid. inf.*)—thus proving how little real “offence” he can have taken a year ago—though definitive negotiations appear to have been postponed till Wagner could report substantial progress with the actual composition, as we hear of no fixed written offer until after Christmas.

Here we may conveniently take Liszt’s opinion of the poem, from his Dresden letter of November 3: “The Child is in love with your *Tristan*; but, by all the gods, how do you propose to turn it into an opera for *Italian singers* (as B. tells me)? However, the incredible and impossible have become your native element, and perhaps you will even bring this, too, to pass. The subject is splendid, and your treatment of it marvellous. I have one little misgiving, though: to me the rôle of Brangäne seems somewhat over spun out, as I never can stand *confidants* in a drama. Forgive this silly comment, and pay no further heed to it. When the

work is completed, my misgiving is certain to vanish.” There we have direct confirmation of Wagner’s remark, in that *Epilogue* aforesaid, as to his Italian intention having been greeted by all his friends with “shouts of laughter . . . in which I myself was beguiled into joining at last, upon going through the finished score with them” (*P.* III. 269-70). Yet a footnote adds: “Quite recent experiences will probably have turned that laughter into the silence of astonishment. My ‘Lohengrin’—the reports on whose first performance at places such as Leipzig and Berlin might not prove uninteresting reading—has been so admirably performed at Bologna in this 1871, and received with such solid and enduring success, that my thoughts involuntarily fly back to *Tristan*, and after the fate of that work hitherto in our great land of sober earnest, I seriously ponder, ‘*What is German?*’” To-day he might have cited *Tristan’s* own triumph and influence in Latin lands.

And is not that “Italian” ideal—a transfiguration of the Italian *cantabile*—one of the main secrets of the matchless beauty of this work? However brilliant the instrumental execution, however eloquent the declamation and acting, no performance can ever do real justice to *Tristan* if that Melody which fills the vocal parts from end to end be not delivered with the purest intonation and utmost mastery of the art of *singing*. Take simply one thing, its unusually large proportion of minims, dotted minims and semibreves, and at once you see that this work was conceived for singers with perfect command of *sostenuto*; the smallest wobbling, and the effect is spoilt. It is this combination of the highest musical with the highest dramatic requirements, that makes a fine rendering of *Tristan* so rare, but so supreme a joy.—

Of external history during composition of “the most difficult first act” there is little to record. “‘Die Morold schlug, die Wunde, sie heilt’ ich, dass er gesunde,’ etc., has come off capitally to-day. I must play it to you presently”—says an undated billet to Mathilde, clearly of mid-October. Musical scene after scene we may imagine thus submitted to their inspiring Muse, at this period when “there fell on the common clay of my earthly existence a gentle quickening and refreshing dew” (*M.* 80). “For me the world has passed away,” he writes Liszt early in November, and to old Chorus-master Fischer Dec. 2: “It is

well with me ; I'm living in a solitude, working, reading, and making good music. You may take my word for it, my *Tristan* will please even yourself, though there's not much chorus in it."

That "reading's" subject reveals the inner history of these quiet autumn months. A letter to Frau Wesendonck of last July had already spoken of Calderon ; in October we heard of the great Spaniard again, as pivot of their conversation ; whilst a New Year's letter to Liszt says, "My present reading is confined to *Calderon*, who will end by tempting me to learn a little Spanish." Then another of some three weeks later (no. 255 to Liszt) sums up at length the fruits of that protracted study : "What a boon it is, in one's maturity to make the acquaintance of such a poet as Calderon . . . I almost feel inclined to place him on a pinnacle apart . . . The theme of his most moving pictures is the conflict between worldly 'honour' and profoundly human sympathy. 'Honour' dictates those actions which are approved and lauded by the world ; wounded sympathy takes refuge in a wellnigh unexpressed, but all the more enthralling, lofty melancholy, in which we recognise the nature of the world as terrible and void. It is this wonderfully appealing knowledge which gains such magic shape with Calderon, and herein no other poet is his equal." It is not precisely the same "conflict" as in *Tristan*, yet so closely resembles it as to shed considerable light on the intended sense of "*Tristan's Ehre*"—that "illusion which made his deed unfree" when he wooed Isolde for his uncle's bride (*P. III.*, 268).

This "lofty melancholy" is reflected also in the verses of those *Fünf Gedichte* which "Frau Calderon" penned and Wagner set at once to music, the first three of them during composition of act i of *Tristan*, beginning with "*Der Engel*," November 30 :

In the days of long ago
 Angel-feet sped to and fro,
 bartering joys of Paradise
 for the earth-sun's tearful eyes ;
 sighed a heart with sorrow riven,
 exiled, tortured, bound, unshriven—
 fading 'mid a flood of tears
 thro' the empty flowerless years—
 praying one insistent prayer
 for deliv'rance from life's snare—

Angel-feet drew swiftly nigh,
soothed it with death's lullaby.

O more divine than youth's imaginings
mine angel came, his shining wings
heavenward my spirit bore
safe from sorrow evermore ! *

It is unnecessary to expound the story told by words so innocent. As was to be expected, their musical setting does not attain the level of the succeeding songs ; still, the middle section anticipates not only the “Nimm mich auf” of act ii of *Tristan*, but also, in the accompaniment to “verborgen” and “fluthen,” the fundamental theme of *Träume*. Equally significant is the accompaniment to “es sanft gen Himmel hebt,” which recalls Wolfram's “zeigst du den Weg aus dem Thal” (*Abendstern*) and thus foreshadows Wagner's designation of Mathilde as “Elisabeth.”

Four days later came the setting of *Träume* itself ; without the sixteen introductory bars, however, which—their last twelve borrowed from the postlude—were added the ensuing day, Dec. 5. In its published form this song, as also the fifth, *Im Treibhaus*, bears the inscription “Study for Tristan und Isolde” ; an inscription added by the composer at that later date (1862), as Frau Wesendonck has placed on record, and generally considered to be borne out by what he wrote her in autumn '61 : “The pencilling of the song whence sprang the Night scene, I found that too. This song has pleased me better than the whole proud scene. Heavens, it is finer than anything I've done ! It thrills me to my deepest nerve, to hear it.” Its plainest connection, of course, is with the “O sink' hernieder” duet, the close whereof in particular, “Nie-wieder-erwachens wahnlos hold bewusster Wunsch,” is note for note the same as that of *Träume*. But of a later passage in the “Night scene” also, “Wen du umfangen” etc., Wagner remarks while instrumenting it, “A severe critic will find a touch of reminiscence in it : the ‘Träume’ flit close by” ; and that reminiscence is its very point of contact with *Der Engel*.

Of considerably higher poetic flight than *Der Engel*, the sentiment of *Träume*—with its “Eingedenken” and its “sanft

* Translated for these pages by “Evelyn Pyne.”

an deiner Brust verglühen"—already shews a shade more passion. By the time we reach the third song, *Schmerzen*, set twelve days later (Dec. 17), the gentle 'swallow' seems beating her breast against a cage:

Sun, all red thine eyes are dripping
every eve, and cold thy breath,
when, beneath the waters dipping,
thou art seiz'd by ruthless Death ;
yet of not one beauty shorn,
glory of this earthly gloom,
thou remount'st each gladsome morn,
radiant with a hero's bloom !

Ah ! my heart, why thy complaining,
why thy bitterness and woe ?
If the sun must have its waning,
e'en the sun must sink below,
if but Death can bear the living,
if but grief can bring forth glee :
Nature, thanks to thee for giving
anguish such as this to me !

The music of *Schmerzen* has not so obvious a connection with *Tristan* as that of *Träume*, yet its opening chord is the selfsame strident dissonance as starts the introduction to act ii, whilst the accompaniment to "und gebietet Tod nur Leben, geben Schmerzen Wonnen nur" appears to me to form the matrix of at least three of the love themes in that act :

In course of the next day or two this song was furnished with

a second, and again a third close, under the latter whereof (the only close yet published) stood written: “It must become finer and finer! After a beautiful, refreshing night, my first waking thought was this amended postlude: we’ll see whether it pleases Frau Calderon to-day if I let it sound up from below.” To let these strains float up from his study, it was only necessary to open the ‘big window’ commanding the Villa terrace; but a more elaborate aubade must already have been in preparation for the only birthday of Mathilde (her 29th) he was fated to celebrate on the Green Hill, when, having meantime scored *Träume* for a small orchestra, he conducted a performance of it by eighteen Zurich bandsmen beneath her bedroom window, December 23. Possibly it was with the manuscript of that birthday score he sent the lines, “Here is another winter-flower for the Christmas tree, full of sweet honey, without the smallest bane.”

In the last few days of December 57 must also have come that jubilation, “The great outburst-duet between Tristan and Isolde has just turned out immeasurably fine—in the flush of delight thereat”; for the 31st is the date of “Hochbeglückt” etc., “the dedicatory verses wherewith I sent you the finished pencil-sketches of the first act: how I rejoiced in these verses, they’re so pure and true!” (*M.* pp. 17 and 283). Liszt, too, is told on New Year’s day, “I finished the first act of Tristan yesterday, at last. I intend to be quite industrious with Tristan now, for I must be able to produce it somewhere the beginning of next winter season.” Strictly “finished” the act was not, only its backbone, the composition-draft; but the ‘orchestral sketch’ itself, commenced Nov. 5, was well advanced, since it also was completed the 13th of January 1858, leaving nothing but the actual partitur (full score) to take in hand.*

And now a change of scene was urgently required. Although the New Year’s letter tells Liszt “I’m tolerably well,” that of three weeks later says, “I now remember that for some time past I’ve eaten very little, in consequence of which I have become weak and very thin.” That “eating little” is a well-known symptom of the critical stage of the fever called Love, though met more often at a younger age than 44; but, with nerves like

* To what extent these ‘orchestral sketches’ of *Tristan* differ from the final partitur in detail, we have yet to learn, but in all probability they needed little more than the almost mechanical work of fair-copying.

Wagner's, the constant strain of "overcoming" must have been intensified by the very nature of the passionate theme on which he was engaged as artist. The only safety lay in temporary flight. So, the day after completing the orchestral sketch of act i, he sets out on a journey, alone: "Last January I went to Paris—thou knowest why?"—says the Venice Diary of next autumn.

At bottom of one of Praeger's most mischievous allegations lies a strange misrecollection of this Paris episode. Quoth *As*, at the end of its Zurich-visit chapter: "During my stay [July, remember] I saw Minna's jealousy of another. She refused to see in the sympathy of Madame Wesendonck for Wagner as a composer, that for the artist only. It eventually broke out into a public scandal [!], and filled the opposition papers [where?] with indignant reproaches about Wagner's ingratitude toward his friend. On leaving Zurich I went to Paris. There I wrote to Wagner an expostulatory letter, alluding to a couple of plays with which we were both familiar, viz. 'The Dangerous Neighbourhood'* and 'The Public Secret,' with a view of warning him privately in such a manner that Minna should not understand [P. rates her intelligence very low] should she chance to read my letter. The storm burst but too soon [no wonder, had this been true]. Wagner wrote to me while I was still in Paris: 'The Devil is loose. I shall leave Zurich at once and come to you in Paris. Meet me at the Strassburg station' . . . [the useful dots are P.'s]. But two days after, this was cancelled by another letter, an extract from which I give.

"Matters have been smoothed over, so that I am not compelled to leave here. I hope we [who?] shall be quite free from annoyance in a short time; but ach, the virulence, the cruel maliciousness of some of my enemies. . . . [*sic*]

"I can testify Wagner suffered severely from thoughtlessness" (the chapter's end).

That is *As*'s version, bogus "extracts" and all. *Wie*, evidently deeming the innuendo not pointed enough, despite its foretold a hundred pages earlier (*cf. M.* p. xlviii), recasts the paragraph:

* Plainly borrowed from a sentence in Wagner's letter of Sept. 64 to Frau Wille: "Was macht die 'verwünschte Gegend'?" (*Deutsche Rundschau*, March 87).

“Without the smallest intention of undertaking here a minute discussion of the profound philosophical question as to the narrow and perilous boundary which with a woman may lead high admiration of a masculine genius to a perhaps quite involuntary trespass into the so adjacent realm of love,* yet during my stay at Zurich I saw enough to make me fear an outbreak of the passionateness of a daily-growing jealousy on Minna’s part. Frau Wesendonk, an extremely charming person, had just that considerable artistic intelligence which Minna lacked, and shewed Wagner an admiration which I, and also her most excellent husband, found quite natural; but it was otherwise with Minna, to whom the almost daily visit [Pohl’s bad example] of the friendly neighbours became a source of daily increasing suspicion (*Verdacht*). I feared an outburst of jealousy every time [!] and left Zurich not without a gloomy presentiment that that outburst was merely postponed. I will be silent on my leave-taking . . . [“Babes in the Wood,” *vid.* 282 *sup.*] . . . During my whole journey the thought kept me awake that I perhaps might avert the catastrophe dreaded by me if I warned Wagner still more cogently; as soon as I arrived in Paris I wrote him”—as in *As*, save that “The Devil is loose here” etc. is advanced to the rank of “a telegram.” Then: “The results of this ‘domestic variance’ (*‘häuslichen Zwistes’*) were afterwards retailed by the hostile press to the sensation-craving section of the public in no homœopathic doses, and the most disgraceful calumnies made a place for themselves in public opinion; as counter-proof I merely adduce the fact that I later met Herr Wesendonk at Wagner’s in Paris when ‘Tannhäuser’ was being prepared there, for which purpose he had come from Zurich to attend the performance” (end of chapter).

And that was published in the lifetime of both “the friendly neighbours”—that, with its foundation of truth rendering impossible an immediate denial of its superstructure of falsehood.

* “Ohne den geringsten Vorsatz, hier eine genaue Erörterung einer tiefliegenden philosophischen Frage über die enge und gefährliche Grenze zu unternehmen, welche die hohe Verehrung eines männlichen Genies bei einem Weibe zu einem vielleicht ganz unwillkürlichen Übersteigen in das so naheliegende Gebiet der Liebe führen könne,” etc. I quote the German simply to shew the reader the impossibility of rendering such a tangle into fluent English if one endeavours to preserve its exact sense—save the mark!

Praeger glibly babbles of a "hostile press," but it is this unctuous pandering of his own to "the sensation-craving section of the public" which set those "disgraceful calumnies" on foot in "the opposition papers" of the Old world and the New—*after* the posthumous issue of his twin books, be it said—thus ultimately leading to publication of the dead master's wonderful epistles, first to Otto, and then to Otto's slandered wife. For out of evil good may come.

In that respect the passage is historic; wellnigh in that alone. Praeger—who has no word to say on Wagner's actual quitting of the Asyl, but incontinently jumps to Venice, as already shewn (270 *sup.*)—has drawn on his imagination for almost every detail of this story. There never was "a public scandal" till *he* screamed out what Pohl had vaguely hinted; whilst those "gloomy presentiments" which kept him awake on his return-journey are proved inventions by the simple fact that there were no "friendly neighbours" to prey on his solicitude till a month after he had left. His personal observation of "Minna's jealousy" must have occurred at a much later period, viz. during his visit to Paris in 1860 or 61; whereas the whole fable of his writing to "warn" Wagner is exploded by the contents of that genuine letter from Wagner himself which we are now about to read—a letter written *five months* after P.'s departure from Zurich.

This is the first of those two letters published in the *Musical Standard* of May 1894 from the often-mentioned Wooden Box collection, and there cannot be the smallest doubt that Praeger had mislaid it before he wrote his books and concocted the two "extracts" aforesaid, the second whereof is so clearly based on misremembrance of the opening of this document. It must have been preceded by a shorter letter (or telegram?) in reply to an announcement of Praeger's that *he* was just running over to Paris from London—an announcement which appears to have suggested to Wagner the idea of going there himself. Probably of about a week later than its conjectural predecessor, our letter, itself undated, was found by Praeger's widow in what we may assume to be its original envelope, bearing the postmark "Zurich, 27 Dec. 1857." Of manifold interest, here is a translation of the full text: *

* Acknowledging my general indebtedness to the English rendering in the *Musical Standard*, I have collated it with the German transcript also published

Liebster!—Do not be cross with me for having had to play you false [or “led you a dance” ?—*dass ich dich anführen musste*]; I cannot get away at present, so don't expect me any more. But I will also tell you why—*among other reasons*—I should have been glad to have met you in Paris. M. Leopold Amat (27 Rue le Pelletier)—directeur des fêtes de Wiesbaden, Ems, etc.—who lately brought about a Tannhäuser performance there to which he invited the Paris press*—has offered himself to me to undertake negotiations regarding Tannhäuser for the Paris Grand Opera. I have authorised him to do so on the main condition of the original being preserved intact, save only that it is to be faithfully translated; further, he is to obtain me as much profit as possible and fix his own share in due course. But it now becomes important to me to protect my copyright in this opera as far as I can; for which the following information supplied me seems auspicious. Since 1852 a Copyright treaty has been in force between France and Germany (explicitly Saxony); moreover, in a recent law-suit touching the piracy of certain works of Czerny's it transpired that works published in Germany even *prior to* that period may likewise be protected still, provided copyright is claimed before a reproduction has appeared; only, in the case of their having been piratically engraved already (before 1852) the right of the owner of the plates to use them until worn out cannot be questioned. Well, since this is not the case with Tannhäuser,

there: our only copy hitherto, but unfortunately bristling with palpable misprints.—N.B. The transcriber has noted a couple of words as “undecipherable,” and consequently may have misread a few others, thus obscuring the sense here and there.

* The Wiesbaden theatre was the scene of this representation, Tichatschek starring in the title-rôle. According to G. Servières (*Wagner jugé en France*) appreciative accounts were sent by Théophile Gautier and Ernest Reyer to the *Moniteur* and *Courrier de Paris*, respectively, of the 25th and 30th September, 57. To these Glasenapp adds the *Figaro* (Emile Solié), *Gazette musicale* (Léon Durocher), *Siccle* (Gustave Chadeuil), and the *Pays*, at least the third whereof is certain to have gone against the work, whereas the second accords it certain merits, chiefly of an “instrumentation claire, variée, brillante, richement colorée.” Not quite three months previously a Ctsse Agèna de Gasparin had contributed to the *Illustration française* of June 27 a most enthusiastic letter on the *Tannhäuser* overture, as heard by her “dans une petite ville d'Allemagne,” expostulating with the editor for having “plus d'une fois parlé du Tannhäuser avec quelque défiance,” and prophesying that “un jour, je ne sais lequel, Wagner régnera souverainement sur l'Allemagne et sur la France. Nous ne verrons cette aurore, ni vous ni moi, peut-être; qu'importe, si de loin nous l'avons saluée?” (*Bayreuther Festblätter* 1884).—The German *Neue Zeitschrift* must have been very badly catered for, as it has nothing to say of this Wiesbaden special performance, and gives no particulars of Berlioz's Baden “festival” (attended by its own Pohl) of the month before.

I ought to be able to protect my full rights in it still—as also in my other operas. So, as you happen to be in Paris, please take the matter up for me on the authorisation given you herewith. To begin with, however, you might as well place yourself en rapport with L. Amat ; for which purpose employ the note enclosed. For, if one succeeds in protecting the right of publication, I don't see why the performing-right, accordingly the full *droits d'auteur*, should not also be securable. I suppose I shall have to cede my *droits d'auteur* in the text—at least a great part of them—to the translator, as Amat wishes us to get a well-known name. But I shall thereby gain this author's fellow-interest in the establishment of my *droits d'auteur* in general—so that it will redound to my advantage after all.—Now, just find out what sort of man this Amat is ; for which you come in uncommonly pat, as I know I can rely on you splendidly.

I should have liked to arrange these things in loco with you personally, and the opportunity of a little friendly hobnobbing (*mit dir gemüthlich mich ein wenig auszubummeln*) was a great temptation : perhaps I might have had to pour you out my heart on much. But I'm in a stupid position just now, in which you may even be able to help me, perhaps. Härtel (the Dr) paid me a visit this autumn, and entered with great readiness into my proposals regarding the publication of *Tristan und Isolde*. With its composition I'm at the close of the most difficult first act ; Härtels are to engrave the full score right off, and I have stipulated for an advance of 1000 thalers as soon as I send them the score of the first act complete [see later]. Well, the bills for my furnishing are pouring in upon me now, I need any amount of money, and yet at no price can I bring myself to finish the first act off, i.e. to instrument it, since I absolutely must attack the composition of the second act at once. Moreover, to say nothing of seriously interrupting the flow of my work, in itself the instrumentation would be too long a job to let me put off payment of my debts till then ; as it is, I cannot deplete my wife's exchequer even by the amount which the Paris excursion would cost me. In similar situations before, my neighbour has helped me ; now there are profound reasons for my having to leave him entirely unresorted to.* Oddly enough, you pop up at the very nick of time, and it strikes me whether

* The German word in the *M. Standard* is “unbesucht,” which ordinarily would mean “unvisited,” as there translated ; but four days after the Villaterrace aubade, and four days before the dedication of the composition-draft of *Tristan* i, such a rupture is quite out of the question. What Wagner refuses any longer to “resort” to (which would also comport with a mis-read *unberührt*) is Otto's *pocket*.—The next sentence, “Sonderbarer Weise musst du mir gerade jetzt dich vorstellen,” etc., clearly shews that Praeger had only recently renewed correspondence.

—in your quality of bank-depositor—you perhaps might not be in the position to help me out for half a year with the sum I have named, or at least a good part of it; or if you can't manage it yourself, or not alone, whether [E.] *Röckel* perhaps could. I know you and your position well enough to ask nothing risky of you, and doubtless have no need to assure you that I know what I'm doing and shan't place you in any predicament. In half a year, at the latest, you shall have your money back—most likely even sooner. Owing to my peculiar and rather delicate position towards them, on no account should I like to beg *Härtels* for money themselves now, when they have absolutely nothing of mine in their hands yet. So think it over; it would be famous of you, and spare me a torment of worry. Well, there you are, with your hands full up of my affairs, so that the tobacco becomes a minor matter.

What you wrote us about *Léonie* has been a most agreeable surprise, and filled us with great hope: we had become *very uneasy*, since we had been left without tidings on this anxious point so long. Give her our heartiest greeting, and [say that] our sincerest wishes attend her expected confinement. As I shall have to write you again soon, I reserve all further news. For to-day I must swallow my disappointment that a passing fix prevents my seeing you, as I should uncommonly have liked to; it was with great reluctance I decided to remain at home. Now let me hear from you, and rest assured of my heartiest devotion.—Dein

R. WAGNER.

Deferring the *Tristan*-*Haertel* business till we can treat it en bloc, let us make straight for the seemingly most insignificant detail in the whole letter—that “tobacco.” It is proof positive that this letter's predecessor, be it note or telegram, was sent to *Praeger* before he left London this Christmas, and *not* despatched in any state of mind such as finds vent in “The Devil is loose”; one does not think of commissioning snuff to be brought one to Paris, when hell has got one in its grip. So much for the first bogus message. The apocryphal nature of the second, with its “Matters have been smoothed over, so that I am not compelled to leave here,” is even more conclusively exposed by the beginning and end of the genuine epistle: *Wagner* declares it was with great *reluctance* (“*ich entschied mich zum Bleiben nur schwer*”) and owing to lack of funds, that he had abandoned the notion of an “*Ausbummeln*” in Paris with *P.* Then, the alleged “warning” is completely disposed of by the mode of *Wagner's* reference to his neighbour: “*tiefe Gründe*,” not “reasons you may guess” or the like. But why labour the point? We have caught

our old friend in the very act of dressing up a legend with an "extract" flatly contradicted by the only authentic document whence it could possibly have been derived if true.

Did Praeger let himself be tempted to dip into his bank deposit? Oh no: he never claims to have, save in the London period (see v, 226). Simply, for his own sake we should like to know, and rejoice to learn he plunged no farther than a five-pound note, some three to four weeks later. His letters to Wagner have not been preserved—here a tear may be shed—but, if his late widow's list of the Wooden Box collection is chronologically arranged, an unpublished reply of the master's (beginning "Liebster, bester Freund") must have come between the long letter just read and the shorter one to follow, and we may assume that unpublished link to have dealt alike with Praeger's very natural refusal and with a report of his anent the Amat and the copyright affairs.* However, we need not vex our brains about the contents of that unknown intermediate, but proceed to the *M. Standard's* second disclosure, which shews that Praeger's curiosity about those "profound reasons" was not relieved just now at least:

Paris, 17. Jan. 58.

Liebster Freund!—I arrived here last evening, and to-day found your letter sent after me,† for which I thank you heartily, and which was of particular importance to me on account of the address.

I have undertaken this journey, in spite of the continuance of my most abominable financial crisis, for reasons that—to speak frankly

* Immediately below the two rediscovered letters published *in extenso* in the *M. Std*, Mme Praeger remarks: "They furthermore (and in conjunction with others I have) show Wagner did *first* commission Mr Praeger about the copyright of his operas, Ollivier figuring in a letter of Zurich, 1858:—'My new friend, Advocate and Deputy Ollivier,' etc." Quite an active correspondence on this business subject must therefore have passed between Wagner and Praeger in winter 1857-8, accounting for fully a third of the Wooden Box collection of fifteen derelicts.

† Apparently a second letter of P.'s from Paris, despatched on the point of leaving. It must have reached Zurich the day after Wagner started thence, and consequently been sent by P. about the 13th of January.—As for "the address," the key to that is furnished by the letter of Wagner's Dresden lawyer already adduced in vol. ii (p. 389), one passage therein referring to "Dr Levita in Paris, an address which somebody had given you" and Wagner had forwarded to Dr Pusinelli at Dresden this same 17th of January in connection with the French copyright business.

and in the strictest confidence—have nothing to do with my Paris affairs, which are monstrous indifferent to me and I merely made a pretext at home. Let that suffice you. How long I shall remain, I don't exactly know yet. My embarrassment is great, though, no money yet from anywhere; simply to get here, I had to borrow the bare travelling expenses from poor Müller (whom you met at my house). True, I have taken various steps toward getting money sent to Paris; but as I'm already nearly penniless, my suspense is becoming a torture. So, fearing lest I might be left on my beam-ends after all, (for friend Liszt himself has done that to me!),* or lest it should come too late, I beseech you to do your best to send me a couple of hundred francs here by return of post; it will relieve my mind, to get even that amount. In any event you shall have the loan returned you very shortly. Or could you refer me to somebody here?

Don't be vexed with me. And don't disturb your mind too much about my situation otherwise; it is not desperate, but extremely trying and exhausting (*äußerst angreifend und beklemmend*), and I had to get away a little while now, there was nothing else for it.†

As soon as you have answered me, I'll write you more; I'm terribly done up to-day. I am staying at the *Hôtel du Louvre*, au troisième, no. 364. It was the only place—looking on the inner courts—where I could find the needful quiet. As said, however, my wretched money pinch makes me perfectly deplorable for the moment.—Adieu for to-day.

Dein RICHARD WAGNER.

Grand Hôtel du Louvre (no. 364).

Praeger's response—an act of kindness not to be meted by arithmetic, considering his position—is deducible from what appears to be the next letter on his widow's list, thus catalogued: “7. No address. It begins: Schönsten Dank! (Best thanks)—

* The “schon” in this parenthesis, “(denn selbst Freund Liszt hat mir das schon gethan!),” is too idiomatic to be rendered “already,” as in the *M. Std* translation; here it simply intensifies the note of exclamation. As we shall see, Liszt had *not* left Wagner uncared for; but his letter, evidently expected by now, had clearly not arrived yet.

† In the *M. Std* this is given as “und forte musste ich jetzt auf ewige Zeit, es ging nicht anders.” Never mind the “forte,” instead of “fort,” which is a mere misprint; but the “ewige” is a palpable and lamentable misreading of the transcriber's, who translates the clause thus: “and if I should have to go away now for ever, there would be nothing else to do.” A little reflection might have shewn that it *must* be “einige”: had Wagner meant what he is represented as writing, he would have said “auf immer.” Moreover, the late Mme Praeger's friend's interpretation is contradicted by the first half of the same sentence itself.

and goes on to acknowledge receipt of £5." As that is all the information yet vouchsafed in its regard, there ends the Praeger contribution to our knowledge of an episode which the fortuitous circumstance of his own Paris trip had brought within his partial ken. Wagner *had* been warned, not by, but against F. Praeger; it is infinitely to be regretted that he did not lay that warning to heart, and thus save his transient "confidence" not only from being betrayed after his death, but also from being perverted.—

Any attempt to reconstruct the "situation" which Wagner himself has just described as "not desperate, but extremely trying and exhausting," can only be of negative kind. An outward "storm" of any sort is disproved by the mere fact of his being able to make his opera affairs "a pretext at home" for his journey to Paris. If we go back to the letter of December 27, we find Minna uniting with her husband in a homely message; we also find her forwarding his correspondence when he has started. Between those dates we have the New Year's letter to Liszt (largely quoted in cap. IV.) with this item of domestic information: "My wife has made me a present of a comforter (*cache-nez*) besides a superb carpet with swans—à la Lohengrin." No upset at the Asyl, then, though this selfsame letter says, "Nothing occurs to me to tell you about my personal self, excepting things I cannot put in writing." Is it not the equivalent of that expression "tiefe Gründe"? A crisis of too intimate a nature to relate even to Liszt on paper, a crisis seemingly connected with those two dateless notes to Mathilde about "the one thing weighing on my heart," was plainly in progress; but only Wagner, she, or Otto, could lift the veil thereon, and they have held it sacred. All *we* can do, is to refer to the letter to sister Clara (*M.*, p. viii) and that entry in the Venice Diary: "Hast forgotten how we wrote each other when I was in Paris, and that moan burst simultaneously from our hearts after we had told each other our resolves as if inspired?" It was a psychic crisis, and the best commentary on its outcome is supplied by the Calderon-letter to Liszt—"Now let me tell you I'm well pleased with myself"—where the writer's ideal of "redemption and world-overcoming" is set against the "flat concupiscence" (*seichteste Begehrlichkeit*) his eye sees stamped upon the physiognomy of the French; to which his friend replies: "Go on reading your Calderon; it will help you to endure with patience that brothel

of a Paris, which stands in such glaring contradiction not only with your genius, but also with your character.”

To get our more outward history into shape, we must return to the first of January 1858, the day after dedication of act i of the *Tristan* composition-draft to “the angel who has lifted me so high.” The New Year’s letter to Liszt begins: “Of all my wishes the uppermost is to see *yourself* once more, and be able to enjoy you to my heart’s content; and my worst of losses in the year gone by is that of your promised visit.” It refuses to speak of “business matters” on such a day, “for when I have to do with you, my heart grows *wide*, but those always wretchedly narrow it”; it also breathes no word about a contemplated journey.

Ten days later Wagner writes again: * “I am thinking of going to Paris for the present, where I have interests to protect. If Paris would be too far for you, or inconvenient in any other way, we might arrange a rendezvous at Strassburg. I should like to consult *with yourself* about my whole position, to gain the full assent of my only friend to the course I’m taking; meanwhile I may tell you that I am *not* acting without reflection.” No further hint is given as to this “was ich ergreife,” but the underlining of “*mit Dir*” shews that he does not wish his private business laid before the Fürstin. Then he proceeds to his money troubles—Vienna, to which we shall return, and “Berlin, where they gave Tannhäuser exactly *once* last quarter, whereas I have been accustomed to draw good pay from there in winter,” and so on:—“Under these circumstances, and as I’m absolutely without resources here . . . and cannot leave my wife without means for however short a time, I need 1000 fr. certain, to be able to get away.” Liszt is begged to procure this sum for him at once, to be repaid by Easter out of Haertels’ advance: “At the same time tell me *where* you mean to meet me—at Strassburg or in Paris. Farewell till a *very speedy meeting*.”

“Dearest Richard”—Liszt answers—“It is impossible for me to beat up ten thalers at Weymar—but I have written at once to Vienna, and in a week the sum mentioned (1000 fr.) shall be

* This letter (no. 251) is undated, but, knowing the day of its arrival (see Liszt’s answer), we may safely assign it to the 11th of January.

handed you by my son-in-law M. Emile Ollivier (*avocat au barreau et député de la ville de Paris*). So call on him the end of next week [address].—If it is of service to you to have a personal talk with me, I will come to Strassburg for a day, though I cannot easily leave Weymar now.—The Fürstin has a capital idea, of which you shall shortly hear more; as soon as she has had an answer about it, she will write you.*—God be with you. F. L.—Friday, 15 January 58.—Your telegram reached me a day before your letter (which arrived last evening). Let me know your address—as *poste restante* is too uncertain.”

In one sense Liszt's generous answer simply adds to our bewilderment, for we can neither gather from it whether he offers to meet his friend at Strassburg before or *after* Paris, nor for which of those cities he wants Wagner's address, nor, in fact, *where* his present letter is directed to. One thing it makes certain, however, viz. that on the same day on which the orchestral sketch of *Tristan* i was finished, Jan. 13, Wagner could restrain his impatience no longer, but telegraphed that he was about to start from Zurich, as he did in fact next day, without waiting for Liszt's loan. It is as if the creative completion of that “most difficult first act,” which itself had helped to strain the composer's ‘nerves’ to breaking-point, had suddenly removed a counterpoise.

From this point it is fairly plain sailing, so far as outward events are concerned. Having borrowed the “bare travelling expenses” from Alexander Müller, Wagner leaves Zurich the 14th of January, viâ Basle, and makes a halt at Strassburg on the 15th, perhaps expecting a message from Liszt there. At this earliest-projected home of *Tristan* a curious incident befalls him: “Strolling through the streets”—he writes Frau Ritter next May 11 (see Glasenapp)—“I read on a poster the announcement of a play, and beneath it in big letters, the Overture to ‘Tannhäuser’ to open the performance.† By chance I was allotted a seat

* We never hear the nature of the Fürstin's “idea,” but a letter from herself is acknowledged in the long Calderon epistle to Liszt, Wagner adding: “Please reassure the good Fürstin as to the employment of the money you sent me (for which I renew my heartiest thanks); I am sorry this, too, should have worried her!”

† The play was entitled *Le Fou par Amour*, according to the programme afterwards presented by Wagner to Frau Wesendonck (*M.* p. 19) apparently

quite close to the orchestra, whence I was recognised by several bandsmen who had been to Zurich, and they soon informed their colleagues and conductor of my presence. I waited for the execution in anxious suspense; it was to be my first hearing of an orchestra for a considerable time, and much more, of a composition of my own conducted by another. To my most agreeable surprise, however, it was very well played (some parts quite excellently), finely nuanced, and with plenty of swing; so that I was quite overcome by deep emotion. In particular, the solemn Pilgrims' Chant at the end had a profoundly inner meaning for me [quite in harmony with that Calderon letter]. Then, amid the applause at its close, the whole band with the conductor at its head stood up and turned towards me with loud cheers and demonstrations, which quickly made the audience guess who I might be; so that I saw myself exposed to a public ovation such as I had never experienced. Bursting into tears, I had to hurry from the house.—That's how things go with one, you see: down in the depths, and—when the moment comes—aloft again, on wondrous heights!"

Next day he resumed his journey, arriving in Paris that evening, Saturday, Jan. 16. Evidently on the Sunday* (most of his phrases being duplicated from the letter of this same 17th to Praeger) he writes Liszt half a dozen lines: "Dear Franz, exhausted and tired to death, to-day I merely tell you I've arrived in Paris, and beg you to address '*Grand Hôtel du Louvre* (no. 364).' Only here, in a modest room on the third floor, looking

about the same time as he wrote from "Zurich, le 12 février 1858" a letter of most cordial thanks to Joseph Hasselmans, the Strassburg conductor: "Dès les premières mesures de l'ouverture, vous aviez gagné mon cœur, et, dans un recueillement silencieux, je remerciais ma bonne étoile de m'avoir fait trouver, d'une manière inattendue, dans l'excellent directeur de cet orchestre, un chef aussi énergique et d'un goût aussi délicat. Je vous ai prié déjà, après l'exécution, d'exprimer mes remerciements et ma satisfaction aux dignes artistes que vous dirigez. Je vous renouvelle aujourd'hui cette prière, et j'ajoute que je désire bien vivement que vous puissiez réussir à conserver cette belle réunion de forces harmoniques dans cet état florissant. Elle fait honneur à l'art autant qu'à la ville à qui elle appartient, elle m'a fait grand honneur aussi par l'excellente exécution de mon ouverture. Si plus tard, vous le désirez, et si les circonstances me permettent, je m'empresserai de vous prêter mon concours pour ces belles exécutions" (for full text see E. Evenepoel's *le Wagnérisme hors d'Allemagne*, pp. 112-3).

on the inner courts, could I find the needful quiet lodging.— Well, I am expecting that you will help me. My embarrassment is great. In a few days I'll write you calmly. Dein R. W." How soon after this he received Liszt's letter of the 15th, one cannot say—it would depend upon whether Liszt addressed it to Zurich or not—but it is greeted with the following dateless pæan from the Louvre hotel: "You glorious dear fellow! And ought I to think myself unfortunate, when I have the supreme good fortune of calling such a friend my own, of sharing such affection?—O my Franz, could we but live together always!—Or is the song for ever to come true: 'In God's own court it stands decreed that from the dearest that man hath on earth he shall be parted'?—Farewell. On other things tomorrow."

Whether that promise for "tomorrow" was fulfilled by the Calderon letter—whose contents we have not by any means exhausted yet—or by some other still unpublished, we now must take up "business" cares and difficulties necessitating endless correspondence.

On the 17th, Dr Pusinelli of Dresden is written to, as a first step in pursuit of that Copyright affair which fills so many letters during the next two or three weeks, but into the details whereof we here need go no farther.* On the 18th an order on Dresden Fischer for a copy of the *Rienzi* full score is enclosed in a long letter to Director Rottmayer, with the object of inducing the Hanover court-theatre to acquire that opera at the same price it had already paid for *Tannhäuser* &c., viz. 50 Friedrichs d'or, "to be sent at once to my address in Paris, where I shall remain till the end of next week"—a clause of some importance, as shewing that from the first this Paris interlude was not intended to last any longer than in the event it did, i.e. about a fortnight. The letter to Rottmayer is of further interest through the following: "Before those of my operas which belong to my particular path (*besonderen Richtung*) had been made accessible to the public, I kept 'Rienzi' out of performance—as belonging in part to an earlier tendency. Those reasons having disappeared now, before I present myself to the public with a new work (which is to occur next winter) I want this older one to have obtained its place on the repertory of our theatres. *Rienzi* will be given alike at

* The inquirer into this highly technical subject may be referred to Dr Altmann's summaries in *Richard Wagner's Briefe &c.*

Dresden and Weimar in February, and as my other operas have won me such a number of good friends at Hanover, I turn my eyes there next . . . while you may easily ascertain from Dresden that, in point of brilliant effect and swift impression on the audience, I am offering you herewith my most popular work . . . and to Herr Niemann an extremely grateful rôle.” In other words, *Rienzi* is to pave the way for *Tristan*! Yes, in the sense of providing sustenance for the new work’s creator. But the gods willed otherwise. Hanover declined, till nearly the end of the year; Dresden, which was to set the ball rolling—though of course it had nothing to pay—deferred its *Rienzi* revival till late in August; whereas the new Weimar Intendant, F. Dingelstedt, gave nothing but trouble for another three years. And so on, with the rest of “our theatres.”

Other *Rienzi* appeals went forth from Paris, e.g. to Breslau and Frankfort, but the next business note on printed record is that to Vienna Hoffmann of Jan. 22, necessitating a hasty retrospect on our part (cf. cap. V.):—

Reports on the early performances of *Tannhäuser* at the Thalia theatre having been by no means roseate,* Wagner had refused to let Hoffmann have *Lohengrin*; whereupon Hoffmann had replied, Nov. 19, that twenty-six performances of *Tannhäuser* had been given already,† and on the 24th of that month Wagner named his terms for *Lohengrin*: “You to pay me 100 francs per representation, the same as for *Tannhäuser*, except that I only ask 1000 francs

* See a letter of Wagner’s to an unidentifiable correspondent (Zellner?) Oct. 57, reproduced in Prof. Nicolai’s article already cited. Originally I had drawn pretty largely on succeeding letters embodied in that article, but have had considerably to reduce my excerpts, not to overweight a chapter extra-long as it is.

† A curious commentary is supplied by a letter of R. Volkmann’s to Liszt, Nov. 10, 57: “What do you say to us Viennese! We positively have 2 *Tannhäuser*s now, an opera and a burlesque. Since the great success of the latter, the opera has begun to draw again, if only because the many enthusiasts for the burlesque wish to appreciate it better by making the opera’s acquaintance. So I advise you to have your Masses and Symphonies parodied here, when every philistine will go and hear them. O Publicus, Publici, Publico! . . . Did you ever hear of a 3rd *Tannhäuser* (by Levitschnigg), which was given at the Theater an der Wien some years ago? The Venus appeared in it naked, i.e. in fleshings—which makes small difference.” For an earlier rival, not intentionally farcical, see ii, 101.

advance from you on *this* tantième—i.e. prepayment for the first 10 performances. If you send me this 1000 fr. on the 1st of December together with my Tannhäuser tantièmes, you may consider the bargain clinched and at once procure yourself the score by sending the enclosed order to Leipzig.” Hoffmann neither replying to this nor to an intimation that Wagner has commissioned the Vienna music-publisher Haslinger to collect his royalties, Wagner writes again Jan. 8 (a week ere leaving Zurich): “I really should be very sorry if your unpunctuality in paying up should make us strangers, but I’m living from hand to mouth on my receipts. . . . You do not answer me at all, don’t even tell me, as common courtesy would dictate, whether you entertain my conditions for Lohengrin! Nevertheless I first learn—*perhaps* on false report—that you have begun rehearsing, and next am taken aback by recent disclosures in Austrian papers which could but lead me to believe you had ended by abandoning Lohengrin—presumably because of my demands—and wished to justify yourself, in face of your previous announcement thereof, by that extract from a letter of mine in which I dissuaded you from Lohengrin on a pretext meant to spare your feelings. Look you, dearest friend, this likes me not! . . . I entreat you not to place me in the disagreeable position of having to authorise my Vienna business-friend to take harsh steps against you; but just put yourself in my place, and tell me how I ought to behave to you,” etc. Then he hunts out Liszt’s cousin Eduard’s address “from 1856” (127 *sup.*) and begs *him* to wake up Haslinger as well as Hoffmann, evidently with the result that the latter whines out a belated apology—answered by our letter:

Paris, January 22, 58.

Dearest Friend,

On no account think I want to chicane you:—I’m in an utter fix, *voilà tout!* I had to come to Paris, and to draw the last farthing of my wife’s housekeeping money for it. As ill luck would have it, when you wrote me in November of the good receipts to be hoped for, I reckoned on them for certain and did not look ahead elsewhere.—

So, as I’ve already turned the matter over to Herr Haslinger, please hand him the money at once. If the 30th performance has not taken place yet, it cannot be very far off, and it would be nothing out of the way if you advanced for those few days the 100 fr. still wanting to make up 1000. I’m in perfect despair at my wife’s not having received any money yet; for it is to be sent direct to *her*, you see.

On other things [*Lohengrin* ?] I'll write you presently; my one care to-day, is to procure money for my wife.

So—no ill feeling! It pained me to be left without tidings so long, especially just now; but—more of that anon.

Best greetings from

Yours sincerely

RICH. WAGNER.

Two days after the above, he writes conductor Stolz a cordial letter of thanks “for the self-sacrificing toil whereby you have succeeded in obtaining so good a result with the representation of my ‘Tannhäuser’ at the Josephstädter theatre,* undoubtedly against heavy odds. Let me frankly confess, I had hitherto been left in some uncertainty as to the true character of this production . . . However, it is with genuine satisfaction I now can tell you that, calling on the family of the late French composer Herold yesterday, I received from the mistress of the house the first definite, and—in my opinion—trustworthy accounts of the value of your services as conductor of my opera. This lady, her daughter and her son-in-law, were enthusiastic about the performance they attended in Vienna at the beginning of October. . . Soon after this vivid impression, they witnessed a performance of the same opera at Berlin, and were horrified at its flabbiness and want of life and expression, notwithstanding its support by an extraordinarily brilliant and characteristic mise-en-scène.† This is a piece of news I cannot resist conveying you at once, since it has done me so much good myself . . . Begging you to let Herr Hoffmann also share in these my thanks, and to commend me to him with a cheerful heart, I remain,” etc., with a

* The work would naturally be transferred there from the Thalia at the summer season's end.

† Evidently of this performance [the only one in the last quarter of 1857—see 335 *sup.*] Bülow writes A. Ritter, Nov. 4, 57: “Your sister-in-law's voice is still quite rich (*klangvoll*). After the malicious evocations of Berlin criticism on alleged wear (*Passivtheit*) I was astonished to hear the Elisabeth in Tannhäuser so finely, not merely acted, but also sung.” On the 20th, however, speaking of the production of Taubert's *Macbeth*: “The representation was the best that has ever crossed these boards—if they had only taken half the pains with Tannhäuser!” Again, May 7, 58: “I could almost think Taubert the real uncle of your sister-in-law, she plays so keenly up to him; whereas she would not bring off *one* performance of Tannhäuser before her leave, though Wagner has been pining for another tantième.”

not unnoticeable addition to the signature, "(soon to be back at Zurich)."

To round the incident off, there only remains one other letter, written to Hoffmann the 2nd of February. After repeating the acknowledgments sent to Stolz, it broaches a fresh offer: "Henceforth no doubt shall come between us any more. If you want to go on presenting my operas to the Viennese, no further obstacle shall be raised on my side, and I am even prepared to reduce my terms . . . To the point. What can you afford me for *Lohengrin*? Hear what my position is. For certain purposes, of the utmost importance to me,* I need three thousand francs by return of post. If you find it possible to send this sum forthwith to my address at Zurich in a draft on Paris, I will make you a present of the remaining twenty performances of '*Tannhäuser*' (for which you would have had to pay me another 2000 francs), and the full performing-right of *Lohengrin* shall be yours, for your theatre, without any further payment . . . Ten-thousand francs in half a year would not have half the value to me of those 3000 at this instant," etc., etc.

Nothing came of this *Lohengrin* offer, Hoffmann having burnt his fingers with too many 'novelties' to be able to afford another, notwithstanding that *Tannhäuser* must have largely helped to heal the wounds. Though he retained the *Thalia* and *Josephstädter* till his death in 1865, he now vanishes from our ken for good, unless one of the "long expected and therefore already despaired of consignments of money, especially from Vienna," of January next year (*vid. inf.*) was in fact his payment for those additional seven performances of *Tannhäuser* which brought the total up to

* It needs no wizard to divine those special "purposes," viz. payment of pressing Zurich debts and provision for the next few months; also, perhaps, the chance of getting better terms for *Tristan* by holding Haertels off awhile, since their counter-offer, though received at least a fortnight back, as we shall see, was not accepted until five days after despatch of the above (time to get a refusal from Hoffmann). Just before writing, Wagner must have received Liszt's message of Jan. 30 that *Rienzi* was to be postponed both at Weimar and Dresden, thus blocking all immediate prospect of fees for it from other theatres—the Weimar fee being already pledged to Liszt in repayment of his recent loan—whilst as last straw, about Jan. 31 his borrowed money had been stolen from his room in the Hôtel du Louvre by a German waiter (see no. 257, *W.-L.*).

37 by the 1st of April, 1858. The Vienna opera-house ere long will step into his shuffling shoes.

Of Paris itself there is not a great deal to tell: “I candidly confess”—says the Calderon letter, at the end of a week there—“I have scarcely raised my eyes yet to the building improvements [Hausmann’s], astounding as they are; it’s all so foreign to me, that, even when I do look up, it conveys nothing to my mind. Since I no longer feel tempted by a single illusion once aroused here [1840], the sure knowledge of my position towards these surroundings gives me a tranquillity in their regard which—I say it with ironic humour—will probably be advantageous for what I strove for here in days of old, and what it’s just possible I shall attain now that it has become indifferent to me. What that possible ‘attainment’ might consist in, I can do little more than suggest at present. As I am seeking nothing—beyond the protection of my rights in my operas (the object of my journey)—I naturally can only look to what presents *itself*, and this seems very definitely to be the Director of the *Théâtre lyrique*. I have seen his theatre; it pleased me quite passably: a new acquisition—a tenor—even pleased me very much. If this theatre makes unusual efforts, which must of course be firmly guaranteed me, I might let it have *Rienzi*, providing I succeeded in getting an opera *without* [*spoken*] *dialogue* permitted by way of exception there—perhaps through mediation of the Grand Duke of Baden with the Emperor of the French.—Ollivier whom I did not catch till yesterday, and with whom I am to dine to-day *en garçon*, received me with such amiable attention that I thought I had dropped into the Altenburg. He has offered me his unlimited services; among others, with the Director of the *Th. lyrique*, who is a personal friend of his. Well, we shall see what will come of it; but in any case I should have less scruple in yielding up *Rienzi*—as first *entrée*—naturally on the sole condition, though, of substantial pecuniary advantages being ensured me.”

In this letter’s continuation next day (Jan. 24) we hear of the Copyright affair again, also of Amat’s *Tannhäuser* project, but “the management of the Grand Opéra has not stirred a hand yet,*

* To Fischer, Jan. 27: “In the newspapers I read that my *Tannhäuser* has been accepted at the Grand Opéra here, and that I have come hither to start the rehearsals. Do contradict it. Not a word of truth in it as yet. I

whereas Mr Carvalho (*Th. lyrique*) appears in hot chase of me. If anything really comes off with him, I've made up my mind to accord him *Rienzi*, as I told you before: firstly, because this opera is no longer a heart's concern of mine, and may be murdered a bit for all I care; secondly, because I'm bound to consider its plot and music much nearer the Paris public's style than my other works. What's *your* opinion?—For my own part it would be a pure *affaire d'argent*, and certain not to turn out at all badly as such." *Rienzi* did come off at the Théâtre Lyrique, "not at all badly as an *affaire d'argent*" (26 performances), but—not for another eleven years, and then under Padeloup's management, though Carvalho fitfully pursues his chase till autumn 1859.

"I had got thus far yesterday, when Berlioz called on me. Then I had to go out," etc.—began the second half of the Calderon letter, devoting a couple more lines to Berlioz lower down. We will take them in a moment, but as this clearly was a *return* call by Berlioz, his letter of Feb. 20 to the Fürstin must first provide a link: "De Bülow had already informed me of his musical enterprise at Berlin, and spoken of the first concert he conducted; * only, he wrote me that the Prussian journals, very

am here to guard against other theatres taking it (without asking me); yet what is not, may be." Again, Jan. 29: "I have only come here to *prevent* the possible murdering of one of my operas at some minor theatre without my leave . . . True, everybody here believes that overtures will very soon be made me from the direction of the Grand Opéra; but I must calmly bide my time, since if *I* were to offer myself, I should be tying my hands in advance. I shall only let *Tannhäuser* be performed if it can be given entirely without mutilations. Possibly, nay, probably, it may come to that next winter. That's how matters stand." And they did not really move for over two years.

* Jan. 14, 58: *Cellini* ov., Liszt's 2nd concerto (Tausig), *Holländer* duo (the Mildes), Bülow's *Julius Cæsar* ov., two songs by Lassen (Herr von Milde), Scherzo and March by Liszt (Tausig), Berlioz' *Le jeune père Breton* (Frau v. Milde), Liszt's *Festklänge*.—Berlioz' reply of the 20th tells Bülow anent the approaching completion of *Les Troyens*: "What would be fatal to Sisyphus at this moment, would be an attack of discouragement from without. But no one can discourage me, [since] nobody hears a note of my score, and no refroidissement shall come to me from the impressions of others. Even to yourself, were you here, I should shew nothing. I'm too much afraid of fearing." As Wagner called an hour or two later, we may be certain that *he* was shewn nothing of a work which had this in common with his own, that its love-scene strove for "l'expression de ce bonheur de voir la

far from praising my overture, had endeavoured to put a spoke in its wheel. I promptly sent him a long letter in reply [Jan. 20]. Wagner came to see me the same day. His presence in Paris so soon after l'attentat [Orsini's bomb. Jan. 14] could not fail to be singularly interpreted [!]¹—nevertheless we passed a few hours together; he was to have introduced me to Liszt's son-in-law, M. Ollivier, but we were unable to arrange a meeting.” Frigidity itself. Back to Wagner's own letter to Liszt: “Besides yourself and Calderon, a glance at the finished first act of *Tristan*, which I brought here with me, has uplifted me wonderfully. It will be a remarkable piece of music. I feel a frantic need to give someone a taste of it, and am afraid it will shortly betray me into playing a morsel to Berlioz, regardless whether my beautiful strumming may fill him with horror or disgust. Lord, if I were only with yourself now!” That is all we hear of Berlioz this time, but it hits off their relations to a *t*.

Ollivier, on the other hand, was a real acquisition. Liszt had written Wagner last November: “My daughter Blandine married Emile Ollivier . . . on the 22nd of October at Florence. From all sides I hear the most exceptional praise of the character and talents of my new son-in-law, whose acquaintance I am first to make in course of this winter.”* After accompanying his bride on a New Year's visit to Weimar, Ollivier writes Liszt from Paris, Jan. 13, that he has left her at Berlin for a little longer with her sister; † which will account for his invitation to Wagner to dine

nuît, d'entendre le silence” (Bz to Carolyne). Himself he wrote Hans on the morrow, for Hans writes Liszt Jan. 30: “The other day I received a letter of eight pages from Berlioz . . . Oddly enough, next day I received a letter from Wagner—also from Paris!”—but unfortunately, whereas Berlioz' letter of the 20th is published in full (see *Bülów's Briefe*), we learn no more concerning Wagner's of the 21st.

* Through some oversight this second sentence is omitted in Dr Hueffer's translation.—Concerning the marriage of his elder daughter, two months after that of his younger, see Liszt's letters to the Brussels Freundin of Oct. 20, Nov. 2 and Dec. 2, 57, also Jan. 30, 58.

† “Je ne saurais vous dire combien j'ai été séduit par cette adorable nature. Je l'ai notamment entendue sur le piano, avec bonheur. Elle est bien plus votre élève [really Hans's] que la plupart de ceux qui vous entourent. Après avoir obtenu une femme aussi supérieure et d'un esprit à la fois aussi vaste et aussi délicat que Blandine, il ne me restait plus qu'avoir une sœur, comme Cosima. Je lui ai offert à deux battants et pour toujours les portes de mon cœur. J'ai été aussi enchanté de Hans, de son accueil cordial et de son

"*en garçon.*" At the last moment Wagner had to decline, for, immediately after Berlioz' visit "I had to go out"—presumably for that call on the Herolds—"and soon found I was unwell, probably in consequence of a chill, to which I am particularly susceptible as I have eaten very little for a goodish time, now I remember, and have grown weak and very thin in consequence; so I had to send my excuses to Ollivier and retire to bed. After this wise precaution I feel a little better [next morning] and am expecting Ollivier to come and fetch me about 2, for the Conservatoire concert." *

Three days later, old Fischer is begged to send Ollivier the pfe scores of the three Dresden operas, "if not already despatched" according to previous instructions; † and two days after that (Jan. 29): "This gentleman—Liszt's new son-in-law—is my

magnifique talent. J'attends avec intérêt des nouvelles de son concert du 14."

* As the Conservatoire concerts have always been held on a Sunday, this dates the second half of the Calderon letter Jan. 24 for certain, consequently the first half Jan. 23.—In none of his letters does Wagner mention another concert, actually held during this stay in Paris, at which the overture to *Tannhäuser* was played. Yet the *Gazette musicale* of Jan. 24, 58, announces the "arrival in Paris of the author of *Tannhäuser*," adding, "Arban is preparing to give us the overture of this opera"; the *Siècle* of the 27th advertises, "Friday next, a grand festival at the Concerts de Paris for the benefit of Demersseman," and of the 29th, "Aux Concerts de Paris, aujourd'hui Vendredi, grand spectacle au bénéfice de Demersseman"; whilst the *Gaz. mus.* of Feb. 7 remarks that the overture was played at the concert "donné au bénéfice de l'excellent flûtiste Demersseman"—consequently there can be no doubt whatever that this performance took place the 29th of January, not "early in February" (as Servières assumes). It is quite conceivable, however, that Wagner himself knew nothing about it, as these "Concerts de Paris," conducted by Arban, professor of the cornet at the Conservatoire, were nightly affairs (8 to 11 P.M.—1 f. admission) of the old Jullien Promenade order, only more so—the advertisements occasionally blossoming into "après le concert, bal masqué." Two Paris journals alone seem to have reported on this execution, viz. the *Gaz. mus.* of Feb. 7, Henri Blanchard, and the *Siècle* of Feb. 10, Gustave Chadeuil; neither of them flattering the work, and the *Siècle* observing that it was "coldly received," the *Gazette*: "The audience listened in religious silence to this strange work, and even applauded—which was very polite of it" (I am indebted to the kind research of M. Gustave Robert for the bulk of these particulars).

† According to which they were to have gone to Praeger's recommendee Levita, who in any case is henceforth superseded in this Copyright affair by "my new friend Ollivier" (see 332 *sup.*).

lawyer, attending to everything for me, and I have commissioned him to secure these copyrights in particular; which I am assigning, on the other hand, to my creditors [Pusinelli etc.] in such a way that I pledge myself to make over to them without rebate whatever fees Parisian publishers may pay me for the right to issue one or other of those three operas, until their claims on me are fully satisfied”—so that the only personal advantage possible to be reaped by Wagner from the pursuit of his copyrights in France, save in a far distant future, was that to accrue from stage-representations, should such ever take place.

Possibly Liszt's elder daughter returned to Paris ere Wagner left, but in any case the future French Premier made the last week of his stay far more agreeable socially than its forerunner; since, immediately on his return to Zurich, Wagner writes to thank Ollivier for all his kindnesses in “ce Paris, qui pour moi, artiste et homme, avait toujours quelque chose de si repoussant, que je n'y suis jamais rentré qu'avec une répugnance intime,” declaring that Ollivier has been the first to conquer his prejudices against the French, and that it is due to him and his friends alone if he now desires to present his works in Paris not merely for monetary, but also for artistic considerations.* To Frau Ritter, too (next May 11): “There was a good deal of talk about the Paris theatres being bound to occupy themselves with me shortly, though I could not quite discover the necessity. Whether they will seek me, I think very much open to question; the only thing I know for certain, is that I—cannot seek them. However, I made a few pleasant acquaintances this time, who reconciled me somewhat with the French spirit.”

Strangely enough, we hear nothing of the perennial E. Kietz; but an elderly acquaintance from the visit of four years back now immortalised herself by a gift which Liszt had not ventured to crave of her in 56 (p. 153 *sup.*) though he had obtained a minor favour for his friend in 55. “There's a world of meaning in the history of this instrument”—says the Venice Diary—“Thou know'st how long I wished for it in vain. Then last January, when I went to Paris—thou knowest why?—strange, how it struck me to sue so eagerly just for such a piano! Not one of my proposals did I take in earnest; all were indifferent to me,

* Summarised by Altmann from vol. v of Ollivier's *L'empire libéral*.

nothing did I pursue with even an atom of zeal. Yet it was different with my call on Madame Erard; talking to this quite ordinary person I was downright inspired, and transported her—as I learnt thereafter—to perfect enthusiasm: with the turn of a wrist I won the instrument, as if in jest. Odd instinct of Nature, how it shews in every individual, according to his character, as simply that of preservation of his life! The import of that acquisition was soon to grow yet clearer to me—with its arrival at Zurich in May, which we must not anticipate except to note the Venice entry's closing lines: "And now it's here at last, that cunning tool with its lovely timbre, which I won when I knew I should lose thy presence (*Nähe*). How symbolically plain my genie here speaks to me—my daimon! How unconsciously I hopped on the piano then, yet my sly vital spark knew what it wanted."

The three occasions are brought into so significant a connection by this passage, that the question with which we commenced the Paris interlude may be said to have found its answer. They were the three stages of a severance inevitable from the first, but not to be finally accepted without repeated struggles on both sides. When that Erard was won, "I knew I should lose thy presence"—not, *already* had lost it: it was the beginning of the end, not the end itself. The position, of course, is very difficult to realise—as Wagner writes his sister in the third stage, "Only the very fewest will really *understand* what is the case: for that one needs close knowledge of the persons concerned"—but subsequent events will prove that, just as there had been no fracas with Minna as yet, there existed no actual rupture with Otto when Wagner returned to the Asyl after an absence of barely three weeks.

Since his last letter to Hoffmann bears the date "Paris, den 2. Februar 1858" and ends with "Auf der Abreise nach Zürich zurück," whilst that to Ollivier was written at Zurich on the 4th, Wagner must have reached home again the evening of Feb. 3. On the 7th, evidently having just received Hoffmann's refusal of *Lohengrin* (p. 342 *sup.*), he writes two business letters dealing respectively with the two heterogeneous creations now claiming his care. First to Fischer, at considerable length, about a project for placing the German stage-rights of *Rienzi* in an agent's hands,

preferably at Dresden, “for every Dresdener knows what there is in Rienzi, and may be sure of his affair.” What he wanted was a man who should “advance 1000 to 1500 thalers at once (as I’m very short of funds!), for which I not only would pay him interest till the theatre fees came in, but, on condition of that advance, would also allow him 25 per cent discount off them all.” Needless to say, the enterprising agent (Meser’s successor is indicated) did not forthcome. But this letter presents two further points of interest:—“I may inform you that *I* possess my original score of Rienzi, so it hasn’t gone astray; but the Dresden theatre-library must still possess the first copy”; and again: “As regards Paris, I consider it possible that Rienzi may come out there next winter, at the *Théâtre lyrique*, though nothing is settled yet; as to Tannhäuser, I’m biding my time . . . But why have you people not revived Rienzi yet? It has thrown me quite out of gear, and is a hindrance to me even for Paris. Oh you dawdlers! But I suppose I must learn patience with this, as with so much besides: God, who would have believed that at the end of nine years there would be no amnesty to be thought of for me!”—a cry materialised twelve days after by the enclosure to Fischer of a “last effort for pardon” through the intercession of Prince Albert of Saxony, since, “Do as I will, without a near prospect of amnesty I shall be done for at last; I *must* have the refreshment of presenting my works—or throw up the sponge.”

“I want to coin Rienzi into money as soon as possible, before my newest work appears,” says this first letter of Feb. 7; the second is to Haertels about the coining of that newest work itself, for which we first must go a little back:—

Jan 11 to Liszt: “From Haertels, to whom I could not submit my conditions for Tristan till a few days since, I can ask no immediate advance—even supposing they accept—as I should be unable to send them any manuscript before the end of February.” We do not know the full extent of his terms then submitted, but the letter of Dec. 27 to Praeger (330 *sup.*) spoke of asking Haertels for an *advance* of 1000 thalers (£150) on their receipt of the score of act i: a mere fraction less than they eventually agreed to in all. Then the Calderon letter (Jan. 24) takes up the tale: “Haertels have replied [ten days since] to my offer of Tristan; it was really amusing! Do what I may, to the philistine it will always seem wholly or half impossible; but I’m used to that, and have to

trade on the successes of my previous impossible conceptions. In short, notwithstanding their terrible doubts, Haertels consent to undertake the publication, albeit with a reduction of my demand. Convinced that they are making a great sacrifice to me even so, they declare themselves prepared to engrave the full score &c. at once, and I fancy I shall be unable to do better than accept."

He revolves it in his mind another fortnight, however, ere sending Haertels our letter of Feb. 7, wherein he "accepts their publication-proposals of Jan. 14 *re* 'Tristan,' based on the rentability of Meyerbeer's operas, and will very soon be sending manuscript, each instalment whereof is to be put in the engraver's hands immediately on arrival" (Dr Altmann's summary). The Meyerbeer standard sounds particularly droll, applied to *Tristan*, but evidently was Haertels' beau ideal of magnificence. In this case we happen to know the strict figures, as Wagner quotes them in a subsequent letter to Liszt (July 2): "You may think it strange that I'm having the score engraved already, but it has a very simple explanation. I had absolutely no money—as of course you know!—and as *Rienzi* hung fire, I saw no other way out than to do 'business' with Haertels, for which I chose the *Tristan*, then scarcely begun, because I had nothing else. They offered to pay me half the honorarium (two hundred louis d'or)—thus a hundred louis d'or—upon receipt of the score of the first act; so I plunged head over heels into getting it done. There you have the reason of my mercantile haste with this poor work."

On their side, Haertels were better than their bond in respect of time, as shewn by the two following communications they received from Wagner. Feb. 27, "Together with some manuscript of 'Tristan' [first instalment] he transmits their contract countersigned, also the desired deed of transfer; means to deliver the whole of act i by the end of March, act ii by the end of June, act iii the end of September; praises Herr von Bülow, who will arrange p^{fte} scores with and without words, for two hands, and is to receive at Berlin for that purpose [proof-] sheets of the partitur as soon as engraved; for himself, he would like to have the honorarium for the first act at once, since he has been disappointed of various takings through the postponement of 'Rienzi' at Dresden." March 16: "Thanks them for despatch of the fee, sends further 'Tristan' manuscript, mentions his desires

concerning the engraving of the partitur [technically detailed in a letter of two days later] and the printing of the poem; wishes a certificate as to the deposition of 'Lohengrin' in Booksellers' Hall, Leipzig, to be forwarded to his friend Ollivier in Paris for protection of its copyright in France; informs them of the appearance of an English translation of 'Lohengrin,' and wishes to have copyright in this work, as also in 'Tristan,' secured in respect of England" (Dr A.'s summary).

After what we read in vol. v, it seems doubtful that these efforts to protect *Lohengrin* in England were crowned with the smallest success. However, that must be a mere aside, and I unblushingly seize the cue to introduce this opera's Munich première before proceeding farther with the history of *Tristan*:—

Two years since, though offered a prompt fee of 50 louis—absurdly small for such a work and such a city—Wagner had refused to let Munich have *Lohengrin* unless he could superintend its production there (pp. 101*n* and 120 *sup.*). But circumstances alter cases, and during the past autumn he must have consented at last, for the work was produced the 28th of February 1858 "by express command of the King" (see *N.Z.* June 11). A notable event in one respect, since this was the first big capital to venture it, just ten years after its completion and more than seven after Weimar's lead. The performance, though marred by the usual cuts, appears to have been tolerable, and according to the *Neue Zeitschrift* of March 12, "all the principal passages were loudly applauded, and the singers recalled at the end of each act." It is amusing to read how *Lohengrin* had been denounced in advance by "Wagner's opponents, some of whom, I know for certain, were unacquainted with a note of it . . . Nowhere a trace of melody, said they, but the most hair-bristling modulations and such a riot of utterly unpractical instrumentation, that persons with weak nerves would be well advised not to attend the opera. One professional compared the musical effect with that of having nails driven into the ear for four hours on end . . . The comical part of it is, that, to preserve a semblance of impartiality, such remarks were always garnished with strong praise of 'Tannhäuser,' so much decried before." Progress seems to have been rather slow at Munich, even after a successful production, unless the *N.Z.* really preferred to let its reports grow mouldy before printing them, for it is not till its issue for June 4 we hear, "Lohengrin

has been given four times to full houses, and the success on each occasion was so great that enemies have ascribed it to the machinations of a gigantic clique in the pay of—Weimar,” and so forth, at eulogistic length.

Probably Dionys Pruckner was responsible for both the above accounts, as Liszt thanks this former pupil the 9th of March for having “written me the good news all hot from the first performance. What the critics may expectorate after it, troubles me little—in our present circumstances their strength chiefly lies in the fear people have of them . . . Among other things that struck me as farcical, was the assumption of the reporter to the A[llgemeine] Z. that Wagner himself had never conducted his *Lohengrin* better, than Franz Lachner. All the world knows, Wagner has *never heard* this work, let alone conducted it!—Ignorance of this kind, however, is by no means the worst thing we have to contend with, where deliberate *lies* (not to shirk the right word) are constantly employed against us.” *Lohengrin* ever roused Liszt to enthusiasm, sometimes to fury against its detractors, but Lachner really seems to have done his best with it, if we may go by a letter of his intimus Moritz von Schwind to the Fürstin, March 30: “Your Highness will have read quite enough about the production of *Lohengrin*. As eye-witness I may nevertheless assure you that Herr Dr Liszt himself could not have bestowed more pains and diligence on the rehearsing than Lachner did, and the band played amazingly. The singers are as God made them, but your Highness would have taken no small delight in the impersonator of Ortrud.”*

One sequel to this production was Lachner's own visit to Zurich next July—according to a passing mention in Cornelius' letter of the 30th from Munich to the Fürstin, which unfortunately gives no particulars—followed by a grateful letter from Wagner anent *Rienzi* next October. A far more important sequel was the effect of the work on the young Crown Prince, Ludwig, when first allowed to hear it a year thereafter.

The ground a little cleared ahead of us, we may return to the setting of *Tristan*.

* Schwind now appears to have been the designer of that title-page to the Weimar textbook described in vol. iv, p. 479 (cf 482 *ibid.*).

The letter of Feb. 7 to Fischer began with, “I’m back here, and mean to work hard again.” That “work” was the full-scoring of act i, or rather, the fair-copying of a score already practically completed in the so-called orchestral sketch. This will occupy its composer till the beginning of April, blocking act ii from all possibility of commencement as yet. But one of the most beautiful of the *Fünf Gedichte*—to my mind a close rival of *Träume*—is created meanwhile, and although the first half of “Stehe still” with its restless rushing accompaniment may stand entirely outside the circle of the *Tristan* music, the whole conception of the second half (from “dass in seelig süßem Vergessen”) is a harbinger of act ii itself. Apart from the Fate theme introduced at the word “trinken,” in the setting of “Wesen in Wesen” there is a distinct anticipation of “Barg im Busen uns sich die Sonne”; whilst Isolde’s invocation of “Des kühnsten Muthes Königin,” and Tristan’s “Wunderreich der Nacht” and “wem die Nacht den Blick geweiht,” are all implicit in this melting melody and its exquisite harmonic changes. If *Träume* was a “study” for a portion of act ii, this second half of *Stehe still* might almost be called act ii in miniature, the moss-rose bud from which that splendid flower unfolded.* “Better than these songs I have never done, and very little in my works will bear placing beside them”—says the Venice Diary, following up with the last two lines of this poem. And Wagner’s comment on those lines should be remarked: “I had a strong mind to rechristen the ‘heil’ge Natur’—the thought is right, but not the expression; Nature is nowhere holy, saving where she revokes and denies herself—but for thy sake I have let it stand.” In those words is told the history of a love that resolutely “conquered every wish and longing,” just as it is told, in more ecstatic accents, by Mathilde’s poem itself:

Rushing and roaring, Time’s wheel sweeps by,
meteing the hours of eternity,
stringing like beads round earth’s dim ball
shining spheres of the Mighty All:
O for a pause in its cosmic toil,
and peace for a moment from life’s turmoil!

* It is by no means certain that the reference of autumn 1861 to “the song whence sprang the Night scene” (323 *sup.*) does not apply to *Stehe still*, instead of *Träume*, though the latter interpretation is the more obvious.

Rest, O rest, creative might—
 Thought that strove e'er the birth of light—
 stifle thy breath, and still thy throng :
 O be thou silent one moment long !
 Of fevered pulses fetter the beat—
 bring to an end the Will's deceit—
 that so, with sweet oblivion blest,
 all joys of mine might be soul-possess'd !

When eyes in eyes have rapture drunken,
 and soul in soul is whelmed and sunken—
 spirit in spirit hath awoken,
 and hope's deluding dream is broken—
 while lips grow silent, lost in marvelling peace,
 nor vainest wish can mar the soul's release—
 Man knows at last God's secret, and can trace
 the riddle writ in holy Nature's face.*

February 22, 1858, is the date assigned by Frau Wesendonck to the composition of this perfect song; three days previously, Wagner had made his fresh attempt to win the King of Saxony's pardon (349 *sup.*), which we may now interpret in the light of what he writes that lady next July: "My amnesty, expected soon, will reopen me Germany, whither I shall return periodically . . . Then I often shall not see you (*Euch*) for long. But then to come back to the refuge so endeared to me . . . and gain new zest for the old work for which Nature has chosen me,—this, if you grant it me, will ever be the point of mellow light that buoys me up there, the sweet relief that beckns me hither. And wouldst thou then have shewn my life no highest benefaction? Should I not owe to thee the only thing that yet can seem worth thanks upon this earth? And ought I not to seek to requite what thou hast won for me with sufferings and sacrifices so ineffable?"

If that could be written even after the acute crisis caused by Minna in April, we may conclude that after Wagner's return to Zurich in February, though his visits to the Villa may not have been so frequent as of yore, at least its doors had not been closed. Thus we find the question "Shall we see each other this evening?" (or "afternoon"—*Abend*) at the end of a note whose reference to "a present from Strassburg" dates it from the

* Translated for these pages by "Evelyn Pyne."

early days of the return, that present being the playbill of mid-January (see 336*n sup.*); and thus a billet promising to "read aloud quite beautifully this evening, if Herr Otto has nothing against it." "You won't be rid of me in a hurry, I'm burrowing so into your house"—says another billet, in connection with these familiar recitals. And so the winter calmly wore into the spring, with an intellectual communion fed chiefly on old Spanish authors—Lope de Vega, Cervantes, etc.—till we reach the famous Villa concert, itself the strongest proof of outward amity between the two men; perhaps even intended as such, in the face of irresponsible "chatter."

Our first intimation of this concert is a letter to the Zurich music-seller P. J. Fries, wont to figure as amateur oboist at the performances of the local Allg. Musikgesellschaft.* Reproduced by Herr A. Steiner, it runs: "Enge, 25 March 1858.—Dearest friend, there's no help for it: you must fish out your oboe and play a few nice movements from Beethoven's symphonies with us at the Wesendonck villa. I count, as of old, on your friendly assistance, and meanwhile beg you to honour me next Saturday [27th] at a rehearsal in the Musiksaal at 2 in the afternoon. You won't leave me stranded, will you? Best greetings from Yours sincerely Richard Wagner." Perhaps it is with this occasion that we may connect a dateless note to Frau Mathilde: † "The best of Good-mornings! Doing pretty well.—Sincerest thanks for all kindness.—I propose going proudly on foot to the rehearsal. If it must be, however, I accept the carriage for 1/4 to 2. In that case you would come soon after (*Sie kommen dann schnell nach*).—I meant to send the enclosed yesterday. Auf Wiedersehen!" Should that be so, "the enclosed" would probably be a draft of the Villa programme, eventually arranged as follows (according to a printed copy adduced by A. Heintz):

* Heisterhagen, violin, and Baer, horn, are also mentioned by Steiner as taking part in this Villa concert.

† In my translation of the *Mathilde* volume I tentatively placed this billet in an earlier group, but the hour mentioned seems to make it fit in better here; quite an immaterial point, save that the "Es geht so passabel" rather suggests that indisposition which dogs the whole concert episode. We may suppose that the Wesendoncks were about to shop and lunch in town, and had offered to send their carriage back to fetch Wagner to a rehearsal which one or both of them naturally meant to attend.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| I. 1) Menuet, 2) Scherzando : | 8th Symphony, in F. |
| 3) Adagio, 4) Scherzo : | 4th " " B. |
| II. 5) Andante, 6) Scherzo : | 7th " " A. |
| 7) Andante : | 5th " " C minor. |
| 8) Finale : | 3rd " " E flat. |
| III. 9) Scherzo, 10) Adagio : | 9th " " D minor. |

The printed date is March 31, 1858, the Wednesday in Passion week. But here we are faced with a singular dilemma, for a telegram despatched to Otto from "Luzern 8,55", *i.e.* A.M., and reaching "Zürich, 31. März 58, 9 Uhr 10," says: "The trusty Kapellmeister unfortunately cannot conduct the concert to-day; der heilige Gotthart has taken toll, and given him in exchange a violently orthodox catarrh. The concert shall still be conducted, though, if the bandsmen only keep in good tune [?]. Your Richard Wagner." The last sentence, "das Konzert soll aber doch noch dirigirt werden, die Musiker mögen nur immer noch gut einstimmen," simply intensifies the puzzle by its ambiguous "einstimmen"—which might also mean "agree"—and its indefinite double "noch"s. But what on earth had taken Wagner to Lucerne between March 27 and the eve of such an entertainment? I was about to give up the riddle in despair, when, on the point of passing this volume 'for press'; it suddenly occurred to me that a clerical error in the *year* date might explain the whole thing: if for "58" we read "59", the else so conflicting Lucerne and S. Gotthard allusions would fall into line (410-1 *inf.*) and the message mean a slight postponement of next year's *Wiedersehen*, expressed in playful terms suggested by the memory revived just six days previously (see opposite page). This conjecture I submitted to Dr Golther as soon as formed, and, while reaffirming the accuracy of his copy of the original telegram, he endorses my guess that a post-office clerk must have stumbled between the various eights and nines.

No assistance is to be derived from the two chief local newspapers, the *Eidgenössische* and *Neue Zürcher*; in vain have they been searched for me by Herr A. Steiner: they do not mention our concert at all. Yet that it did take place, and presumably without postponement, "in the acoustically well-proportioned vestibule of the Villa Wesendonck, in the presence of over 100 invited guests," is avouched by the hostess's own recollection (1896). We also have con-

temporary evidence. April 21, 58, Keller writes Ludmilla Assing that "a few weeks back" (*vor einigen Wochen*) he had met with an accident at a rough-and-tumble masked ball, and "had to stay at home for a week with my nose bound up in plaster. Consequently I missed an elegant concert given by a family Wesendonck in their villa here. Richard Wagner had got a number of musicians together, and schooled them so well at short notice (*in kurzer Zeit*) that they are said to have played a selection of Beethoven movements quite admirably. There were some thirty bandsmen, and about twice as many invited guests—quite an unheard-of event for Zurich private life, a string quartet having been the utmost yet attempted here."* That "few weeks back," impressed on Keller by his nasal contretemps, settles the concert's approximate date, whilst it is highly improbable that even a slight postponement—such as to the next day—with all its resulting social inconvenience, should have escaped the notice of this lover of ironic detail. And Herwegh's evidence, though of later record than Keller's, conclusively shews that Wagner himself conducted. In course of an article contributed to the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* of March 20, 61, concerning the Paris fiasco of *Tannhäuser*, says Herwegh: "Wagner is the finest living interpreter of Beethoven; the Paris Conservatoire with its colossal forces and virtuosi-soloists—which we have often had occasion to admire in Beethoven performances in particular—could not achieve what the little Zurich band did under Wagner. At a private house here we once attended a Beethoven concert such as the world-city had never offered. Wagner is unequalled as conductor!" Finally we have Wagner's own reference in his letter of March 25, 59, to the hostess: "Should you be giving a big party soon in memory of our house-concert, remember me a little too" (*cf* preceding paragraph *sup.*).

Upon this concert evening, one further hears—albeit from a tainted source (the initial is not P)—Frau Wesendonck presented Wagner with an ivory baton. At any rate the baton is a fact, whether presented then or not, for in a letter of May 62 Cornelius describes a chance meeting with a native whom he first questioned as to Semper and Keller: "Then I asked about the house where

* He adds the interesting item: "Clara Schumann played at several public concerts here last winter"; but that may easily have been during Wagner's absence.

Richard Wagner had lived—and the man grew *warm*. Just fancy—it was the turner who carved that baton which Frau Wesendonck got made for Wagner after a drawing by Semper—a certain Sieber . . . so the first human being I spoke to at Zurich was an enthusiastic devotee of Wagner's."—

Supposing the concert to have taken place on the appointed evening, the next day but one would be Good Friday, April 2. The morning of that Good Friday, according to my heterodox reckoning,* Wagner stepped on the verandah of his Asyl to drink in the charm of a landscape bathed in all the freshness of Spring sunshine, when, "as if with angel-tongues, there sounded to him from the solemn peace of Nature, 'Thou shalt bear no weapons on the day the Lord died upon the cross!'" Ere the month ran out, he had sketched the first scenario of *Parsifal*, or rather, as he then called it, "Parzival."†

Saturday in that Passion week, the 3rd of April, the superb first act of *Tristan* is finished to the smallest dot, and the last instalment of its partitur despatched to Haertels. For Wagner writes them April 5, that "he sent them the close of the first act the day before yesterday, and would like an intimation of receipt each time he sends them manuscript; he is in very good vein for continuing; unless they have a special reason, he would rather the text were not published ere completion of the music; and asks them, as once before [over five years ago], if they will not

* The story was first told in the *Bayr. Blätter* of 1885 (pp. 48-9) by Hans von Wolzogen, who speaks of "seines eben gewonnenen stillen Asyls," thus assigning it to 1857. But 1885 was before the publication of the Wagner-Liszt Correspondence, which conclusively proves that the *only* Good Friday Wagner can have passed in his Asyl was that of 1858, since he did not move in till the end of April 57, and that year Good Friday fell on the 10th; whereas the later supposition of another honoured friend, that the idea must have occurred to the master on a visit of inspection, strikes me as rather far-fetched and incongruous. I may be wrong, but until *documentary* evidence proves the contrary, I cannot but consider the oral tradition outweighed as to date by the entry of Oct. 1, 58, in the Venice Diary: "This meaning [the redemption of Nature by Man] will some day become clear to thee from the third act of Parzival, Good Friday morning," which more than suggests that Mathilde was still unacquainted with the sketch for that drama, as she could not have been if it really originated in April 57.

† Also assigned by Wolzogen (*B. Bl.* 1886, p. 75) to "the same Easter month of 1857," but with express rejection of the long-standing myth about the Charfreitag *music*, "which is younger by some 20 years."

publish a pfted score by Bülow of his [W.'s] revision of Gluck's 'Iphigenia in Aulis,' as it has had a success at Hanover and is to be given at Vienna also" (Altmann).

Easter Sunday is thus proved the date of a note to "Madame Mathilde Wesendonck" thanking her for "splendid flowers" from the greenhouse, and adding: "It is a good thing I finished the act yesterday and sent it off; I should have been unable to work to-day. The catarrh has increased, and I'm not free from a touch of fever. Otherwise things go well—and clear (*hell*); how go they in the neighbourland?" This is followed by, or perhaps comes midway in, a rapid succession of billets (see *M.*, nos. 45-49): one of them asking "the entire family Wesendonck" to come and see him in his temporary confinement; another thanking for a volume of Cervantes: "Thus I mean to tune myself little by little for work again; the second act is beckoning me. Are we to see one another to-day?" Whether the completely harmless series was brought to a sudden termination by the note I have numbered 49—"And my dear Muse still stays afar? In silence I awaited her visit," etc.—or by some other, destroyed in course of the subsequent catastrophe, Minna's smouldering suspicions now sprang afire, "and finally she so far lost her senses as to intercept a letter from myself, and—break it open."

That is the beginning of the second crisis, confined to Wagner's hearth at first. Hitherto, as he tells his sister, "Though often shewing signs of jealousy, Minna had tolerated our companionship—which on its side never violated morals, but simply aimed at consciousness that we were in each other's presence." What had the woman really lost? Absolutely nothing, compared with Otto; for no two people could have been worse-assorted than Minna and her husband, though she was "incapable of comprehending what an unhappy wedlock ours had ever been." And "that letter itself, had she been in anything like a position to understand it, might really have given her the completest reassurance she could wish; for our resignation formed *its* theme as well. But she went by nothing save the intimate [or "fond"—*vertrauten*] expressions, and lost her head. She came to me raving"—and the scene at the Asyl ended with a mutual resolution to part. "Next day, however, I felt sorry for her, and went to her and said, 'Minna, you are very ill; get well first, and let us have another talk then.

We settled the plan of a cure, and she seemed to quiet down again . . ." (to Clara Wolfram, next August).

In a material world even such plans as "a cure" cannot be carried out without money, and we have seen how terribly short of it Wagner had been of late, so that Haertels' advance on *Tristan* would probably be swallowed up by household bills as soon as cashed.* He accordingly turns to Ignaz Heim, April 9, begging for a loan of 2000 francs: "Your possible surprise at my appealing to you in particular I anticipate with a second petition, namely, that you will interpret this step as proceeding from none but the most delicate and honourable of motives."† Little able to afford it, Heim generously advanced the money, thus shewing his appreciation of the delicacy of the "motives."

From these few days of Minna's deceptive quiescence we also now possess a letter of her husband's to the Fürstin (*Glanzzeit*):

April 12, 1858.

Your letter, dear Kapellmeisterin, almost caused me pain this time; for, after your reminding me, you will hardly believe I should have written you to-day in any case. Yes, dear kind friend, you would have had a letter from me now in any case; not because I had a happening to tell you of, but simply to tell you that nothing more will happen in my life. So I may confine myself to its uneventfulness, in this communication. What takes place before the world, has no particular charm for me; whereas the intimate, which alone can matter to persons like ourselves, is vanishing more and more here. The more people I shew my real visage to, the less will it be understood: in public the mask alone has play; for even if one shewed oneself with a mask, the public, knowing naught but masks, would simply behold another. Great poets ever appeal to me more by what they leave unsaid, than what they utter; in fact I learn the veritable greatness of a poet almost more from his silences than his sayings: and that's why Calderon has become so great and dear to me. What makes me so unspeakably fond of music, is that it is tongue-tied on everything (*Alles verschweigt*) yet tells us things beyond all thought (*das Undenklische sagt*); thus it strictly is the sole true art, and the rest mere beginnings thereof.—

* Bülow had written A. Ritter, March 15, evidently apropos of a letter from Wagner just before his receipt of that advance: "Very cheerless news from Zurich. Wagner is in a ghastly fix for money, so it seems. I guess that something must have fallen out with Wesendonks"—a guess half right, half wrong, but simply a guess for the present.

† All the extract given us by Herr Steiner (*Neujahrsblatt* 1902).

Of late I again have thought much on my amnesty ; it alone could bring about a substantial easing of our situation.* Excursions to Germany, periodic artistic undertakings, would offer a worthy distraction, and a stilling of the worm that gnaws within. I tried for it again at Dresden lately, but, so far as yet appears, without success once more. I suppose the cup will have still to be drunk to its dregs. May Heaven only grant a seemly end ! Amen !—

My work is going forward slowly. I have made a contract with Haertels for publication of *Tristan* ; the score is to be engraved, and to let them start, I have instrumented the first act straight off. I meant to attack the second act the beginning of this month ; am hoping to be able soon. As for other things, best friend, they continue to go miserably with me : this by the way !—

I have been following Liszt's progress [Prague, Vienna, etc.] step by step, in the musical journals, and rejoice at it heartily.

And now a thousand hearty thanks for your generous unshaken friendship ! Never think me ungrateful, but simply unfortunate ; nor ever despairing, but simply resigned. And remember me to the Child from my whole soul.

Farewell, dear precious lady, and another thousand thanks for your affection ! Greet my Franz for me, and tell him I am doing well !

Your RICHARD WAGNER.

What “the poet leaves unsaid” is the most eloquent part of this stoical letter. Against all future “intimacy here” an invisible wall had been raised by Minna's act of interception, yet it still was possible to think of soon resuming work. Her next step was to drive the situation to its climax by a melodramatic scene at the Villa smacking of her old professional experience on the boards. “As the day of departure for the place of cure drew near”—continues the letter to Clara—“she insisted on speaking to the Wesendonck first. I firmly forbade her to. My whole concern was to make Minna gradually acquainted with the character of my relations to that lady, and thus convince her that there was nothing at all to fear for the continuance of our wedded life,† wherefore she had only to behave wisely,

* The “our,” i.e. the domestic “situation” at the Asyl, is a sufficient hint as to the meaning of the “innerlich nagenden Wurmes” in the next sentence.

† “Believe my word”—he writes Pusinelli next November—“it is not a matter, nor ever has been, of serious conjugal offence (*ernstliche eheliche Differenzen*). Rather, the actual torture to me was her putting this interpretation on many an inner process in me, because—to speak candidly—she is not in a position to comprehend what really was the case. It is this great

sensibly and nobly, abjure all foolish vengeance and avoid any sort of scandal; which she promised me at last. However, it left her no peace; behind my back she went across, and—doubtless without realising it herself—affronted the gentle soul most grossly. After she had told her, ‘Were I an ordinary woman, I should take this letter to your husband,’ there was nothing for the Wesendonck—conscious of never having kept a secret from her husband (which a woman like Minna, of course, can’t comprehend)—but to inform him at once of this scene and its cause. Herewith, then, the delicacy and purity of our relations had been invaded in a coarse and vulgar way, and many a thing must change.”*

Having enacted her not entirely successful scene with “this cold woman spoilt by happiness” (Minna’s own expression), half beside herself from a disordered heart and abuse of laudanum (see *M.* p. xv), Minna departed about April 15 for the sanatorium kept by Dr Erismann at Brestenberg, in Aargau, some league and a half away; whither her husband repeatedly walked out during the next three months, to “attend to her welfare,” and whither we may take it for granted he escorted her now.

She had left little welfare behind her, as he now had to bear Mathilde’s reproaches also (personally or by letter?), unreasoning reproaches that he had not made a confidante of Minna months ago! How *could* he have done so? It would have been perilous enough with any wife approaching 50, and “the very highness and unselfishness of such relations as subsisted between us made them forever impossible of explanation to a nature like my wife’s.” But there is no arguing even with the gentlest of women after such vilipending by one of her sex, and “no longer a victim to pain, but to passion, then wast thou to me as an angel abandoned by God” (Venice Diary). Or in the words of a brief note from this second half of April: † “The demon moves from out one heart into the other. How subjugate it? O we poor creatures! we are not our own. Demon, change to god!—

mental disparity, that constitutes the source of so many painful misunderstandings between us.”

* “It was the middle of April then”—concludes Wagner’s account of this incident—i.e. some three days later than his “resigned” letter to the Fürstin.

† Undated; but does it not date itself?

That letter has made me so mournful. Yesterday I wrote to our friend; she will be sure to come in before long. Demon, demon, change to god!” Whether “that letter” means the intercepted one, or written reproaches from Mathilde herself, “it made me inventive to convey thee balm and healing; I found the friend [Frau Wille] to bring thee solace and uplifting, relief and reconciliation. See, it was pity did that! Of a truth I could forget myself for that sake, will to renounce for aye the bliss of seeing thee, of being near thee, if I but knew thee calmed, restored to thine own self.”

A thick pall enshrouds the next fortnight, during which we have no positive sign of life whatever. Naturally act ii of *Tristan* was out of the question at such a juncture, and that is one of my reasons for believing the earliest draft of *Parsifal*—a subject more appropriate to a mood in which “Were death foretold me surely for this year, I should embrace it as the most fortunate and consecrate of all my life” (*M.* p. 23*)—to have been sketched this April, and not the last. Another very cogent reason is the production of that “Parzival” fragment of melody (herald alike of the *Reine Thor* and *Graal* themes) beneath which stands written, “Dear errant child, see, I was just about to write this down when I found thy lovely, noble verses.” Here the “irrendes” is difficult to render definitely, as it may either refer to the psychic estrangement aforesaid, or to the physical journey Mathilde was on the eve of taking; but the verses can be none other than her poem *Im Treibhaus*, last of the *Fünf Gedichte*, apostrophising the exotics in the Villa palm-house:

High o'erarching palm-crowns vairy
canopies of emerald sheen :
Children ye from lands of faëry,
tell me what your murmurings mean?—
Silently your branches beckon,
weaving runes in empty air;
while the sweetness who may reckon
breathing from bruised bosoms there !

* Whether I am right or not in conjecturing April 58 as date of this note, it cannot possibly belong to the Spring of 57. On the other hand, I now believe we ought to remove its successor on that page of the *Mathilde* volume (“Ah, the lovely pillow,” etc.) from the Zurich group entirely, and transfer it to the Lucerne, connecting it with his 1859 birthday (see *M.* pp. 134, 135).

Wide in uttermost endeavour
stretch your yearning arms afar,
yet, dream-prisoned, clasp for ever
emptiness where phantoms are.
Exiled sisters, one sad story
you and I must tell to-day,
garbed and crowned with light and glory,
heart's lost home looms far away.

And as glad the sun declineth
from the day's deluding shine,
so, in silence, whoso pineth
veils him in night's dusk divine.
Hushed the air :—mysterious breathing
fills with fear the darkling place :
heavy teardrops see I wreathing
each green leaflet's pallid face.*

On the first of May (Frau Wesendonck's dating) these touching lines were set to music. Subsequently entitled by the composer "a study for *Tristan und Isolde*," their music is a still closer anticipation of the instrumental introduction to act iii than *Träume* of a portion of act ii. Not only that; the principal theme—though immediately derived from the first to greet us in the Prelude to act i of *Tristan*—had been virtually anticipated in its author's earliest opera, *Die Feen*, a quarter of a century back :

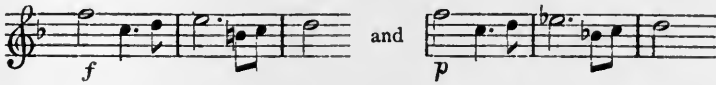


There it forms the refrain of Arindal's great aria, † act iii, and voices his lament, "ich kann Dich nicht umfassen, Du bist so

* Translated for these pages by "Evelyn Pyne."

† Which in turn derives its chief material, including this subject, from the pte Fantasia of two years earlier (see p. 105), as first pointed out by R. Sternfeld in *Die Musik* (IV, no. 22). In fact this subject's development in the Fantasia brings it into almost exact accord with the first or "Sehnsucht" motive of the *Tristan* Prelude, chromatics and all—see top line on page 8 of the Fantasia (2nd ed., 1905)—whilst page 9 of the Fantasia, top line again, presents us with a direct anticipation of "zu König Marke's Land."

fern, so fern!”—precisely the sentiment both of that *Tristan* entr’acte and *Im Treibhaus*. Moreover, it had also been used in act ii of *Die Feen* as a theme of love-lorn melancholy at Arindal’s entry and throughout the succeeding terzet, where it is contrasted with another future *Tristan* theme, so-called of “Day”:



Was the last of the *Fünf Gedichte* sent across to the Villa as soon as set? Though we may presume so, we do not know; but all personal commune had already been suspended for weeks to come, and Wagner himself has painted a picture of his peering from that ‘big window’ of his Asyl for a glimpse of the Beloved “so near and yet so far.” For, the day after composition of *Im Treibhaus* “the import of my winning of the Erard was to grow yet plainer to me. On the 2nd of May—just before thou also wast to start for ‘change of scene,’ and I must be left so utterly forlorn—the long-expected came. While it was being set up in my room it was bad weather outside, raw and cold; I had abandoned all hope of seeing thee that day upon the terrace. Then—of a sudden—thou appearest on the balcony, and, seating thyself, look’st my way. At last the piano was ready, I opened the window, and struck the first chords; but thou hadst no idea, as yet, it was the Erard.—For a month I saw thee no more, and it grew clearer and clearer to me that we must henceforth stay apart! Then I should really and truly have done with my life, but this wondrous soft, sweet melancholy instrument wooed me right back to music once more. So I called it the swan that had come to bear poor Lohengrin home. Thus did I begin the composition of the second act of *Tristan*. Life wove its dreamlike web around me once again.”

In much the same terms Frau Ritter also hears of the Erard at the time itself, May 11: “It has arrived as the Swan of the Grail, to bear me back into the only land in which I am to be at home; so I have resumed the composition of *Tristan*, long interrupted of late, with the second act. O, could I but be left in peace till completion of this work which has so compassed my heart, therein to plunge and feel naught of the common and appalling

griefs of my existence until then at least!"—the letter * having begun with, "You can have no idea what sorrows I have lived through again, how drear all looks around me, despite the laughing Spring." Bülow, too, had just received a similar message, possibly more circumstantial, as he writes Frau Ritter's son Alexander on the 7th: "Not at all enlivening things have taken place at Zurich, but I cannot confide them to paper. By mouth perhaps."

The Erard is also mentioned to the Fürstin on the 15th by Herwegh, who adds: "Je vois Wagner souvent—grâce au départ de sa femme, de son perroquet et même de son chien.† Il est parfaitement bon, doux, sympathique." Despite that letter of a month ago from Wagner himself, which might have opened her eyes and heart a little, the clever lady replies: "Cela m'a été une excellente nouvelle d'apprendre que Wagner devient bon enfant. Il y gagnera autant en sérénité intérieure que les autres en agrément." Tiny scraps reproduced by a spiteful pen, nevertheless they shew Herwegh the better psychologist. "Thanks to the departure of his wife": Wagner could bear his troubles in "serenity" if but allowed a respite from "this everlasting bickering" (*M.* p. xi). And the implacable had taken away with her, not only her parrot, but the dog her hated rival had presented him! Can she possibly have been still unaware whence it came, or could he not be left that minor solace?

Two days after the Erard's arrival the composition of act ii of *Tristan* is commenced, **May 4, 1858**, to be completed **July 1**. Dr Golther tells us that this sketch does not begin with the "Day-motive," but at the present ninth bar—the instrumental introduction, like the other purely orchestral passages in these composition-drafts, being simply roughed out as yet—also that in a few places the vocal treatment differs slightly from the final form, besides the two chief variants mentioned earlier in this chapter. Luckily those are all the dry facts to relate in respect of a composition in whose wondrous presence I always feel that the only fitting attitude is one of speechless reverence. The most eloquent pen in the world could never convey a thousandth part of the impression to be derived from a single hearing; but if the

* As yet available only in the extracts published by Herr Glasenapp; cf 241n.

† Surely this should be a comma, though the *Gegenwart* makes it a full stop.

reader is really so benighted as to need a commentator's help, I can do no better than advise him to get someone to translate for him the analysis by Heinrich Porges posthumously published in the *Bayreuther Blätter* of 1902 and 1903,* a work which earned the master's highest approbation when he perused the second part of its MS. in 1867: “‘Atonement without remorse’ (*Sühne ohne Reue*’); where did he get that from? Admirable!” Only one of Porges' musical comments, also with special reference to act ii, can I quote here: “In Wagner's employment of the chromatic system, for all its freedom, there rules such discipline (*Gesetzmässigkeit*) that from ‘Tristan’ alone one might derive a solid basis for the whole modern musical system.”

While act ii is progressing, act i begins to come in from the engraver, and on the 31st of May a letter goes to Haertels, “returning them the first 40 proof-pages of the ‘Tristan’ score, which have turned out greatly to his satisfaction; he apologises for sending no more manuscript, on the plea of his wife's distressing heart-trouble, which had broken out again, robbing him of repose and inclination for work; regrets that Bülow's work at the p^{fte} edition should also have thus been arrested; † is pleased to hear they will publish the ‘Iphigenia,’ sends them act i to go on with, and wishes a textbook specially printed for it.” Soon after (June 20) von Bülow writes Pohl: “My head is in a regular whirl, through work. I have had to turn Wagner's revision of Iphigenia in Aulis into a pianoforte edition for Haertels in double quick time, and have already deformed the first 50 [meaning 40] pages

* Reprinted in brochure form by Breitkopf & Haertel, 1906. For a more general appreciation, the best I have yet read in the English language, I strongly recommend pages 146 to 160 of vol. II. of Mr Finck's *Wagner and his Works* (London, H. Grevel & Co.).

† In the absence of the full text of this passage, one can only guess it to mean that Bülow had been unable to *commence* yet, owing to Wagner's having delayed his correction and return of the first batch of proofs.—As for the *Iphi-genie*, Wagner's next letter to Haertels, June 26, “hopes they have received the last two acts of the ‘Iphigenia’ score, together with the p^{fte} version [Bülow's]; wishes the score returned to him, as it is a present from Tichatschek [received Feb. '57], who had it copied for him from that belonging to the Dresden theatre [his own revision, see vol. ii]; sends them a receipt for the ‘Iphigenia’ honorarium”—which cannot have been very large in itself, though the publication soon helped him to a stray performing-fee from various theatres.

of the partitur of *Tristan* in similar fashion. . . . I shall bring a portion of the *Tristan* with me [to Baden], as I must keep at it. You'll be amazed, my dear man, at the novelty, boldness and many-sidedness of this work. Wagner the *musician* shoots higher and higher"; and a week later, to Draeseke: "You should just see Wagner's *Tristan*! The first 40 pages of the score (engraved already) have been arranged by me for Haertels—who are gulping the manuscript that way. In its instrumental prelude (a *little* akin to that of *Lohengrin*)—*horribile dictu, visu, auditu*, there's not a single pure triad to be found, not one [?]. What will Hauptmann say to that? Weitzmann, on the contrary, is most delighted, more fanatical from day to day.—Richard is a wonderful musician; always some fresh development in his works. The *Tristan* will delight you *far more* than *Lohengrin*, I'll swear to that!"

A much younger enthusiast now arrived at Enge with an introduction from Liszt dated May 18, and remained there till Wagner had left: Carl Tausig, still under seventeen, known as "Hidalgo" at Weimar, but just shewn the Altenburg door by an offended Fürstin. Arranging for his appearance at Bülow's concert last January, Liszt had impressed on Hans to "try and find him a piano strong enough to withstand his assaults"; he now tells Wagner: "I'm sending you a *prodigy*: Tausig is to work your Erard into trim, and play you all manner of stuff." It was an inspiration of Liszt's, as Wagner found the youth a godsend in this time of loneliness, for all his eccentricities: "At one moment I'm astounded by his remarkably developed intellect, at another by his dreadful ways. Something quite extraordinary must come of him, if anything comes at all. With his terrible amount of cigar-smoking and tea-drinking, though he hasn't a sign of a beard yet, he scares me just as if I were a hen who had hatched out ducklings and suddenly sees them take the water. How far he's going to carry it, I've no idea; but schnapps and rum he doesn't get from me. I should have taken him entirely into my house, were it not that we should have mutually annoyed each other by our piano-playing; so I have stowed him away in the immediate vicinity to sleep and work, letting him be on my hands for the rest of the day. But he does small credit to my board—quite enduringly spread in spite of my grass-widowhood; he sits down to table almost every day declaring he has no appetite whatever, which is the less to my liking as I know it all comes from a

quantity of cheese and sweet-stuff consumed before. In that respect he really is a constant terror to me, devouring all my biscuits, which my wife keeps even myself very short of. Walks are an abomination to him; though he professes readiness to come with me if I offer to leave him at home, after the first half hour he makes out he has walked 4. Thus my childless wedlock has been suddenly blessed with a full-blown catastrophe, and I'm tasting in rapid doses the quintessence of paternal cares. But it has done me a world of good just now; it has been a superb diversion, for which—as said—I thank you much. You knew what I needed. Moreover, the youngster is a great delight to me; if he behaves like an urchin, he mostly talks like a man of ripe years and keen wit," etc. (to Liszt, July 2).

This letter concludes, "You may imagine how much I am with you now, especially when Tausig is at the piano"—which we may supplement with a passage in one from the youth himself to Liszt of some three weeks earlier (undated, as most of his): "I see Wagner every day, and play Liszt-compositions to him every evening on his Erard. I also have hopes of making him a confirmed Lisztianer in time, which he is not enough for me as yet. My pianoforte arrangements [Sym. poems] have not displeased him, so it seems, and I am making him one of *Siegfried* now. The second act of *Tristan* is really becoming magnificent."

So a closer familiarity with Liszt's symphonic works is brought into the very period of the composition of at least the latter half of act ii, and there can be little doubt that a harmonic hint or two may have fallen on receptive ears, notwithstanding what Wagner said in later life, "Give Liszt white bread, he will sprinkle red pepper upon it."* Next Spring he writes Liszt himself, "In my new works *you* certainly have helped," and albeit this follows an ironic suggestion that "Reissiger must have helped me in *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*," it is unambiguously repeated in a letter of Oct. 59 to Bülow: "There are many things we gladly admit *entre nous*, e.g. that I have become quite a different chap as harmonist since my acquaintance with Liszt's compositions from what I was before." Yet the generous admission can never overcome the fact that, whereas with *Tristan* each chromatic nuance

* E. Dannreuther, *Oxford History of Music* VI. 154.

is subordinate to a great central scheme of harmony and dominated by a melodic design that never falters, "in lieu of a rational distribution of centres of harmony in accordance with some definite plan [Liszt] presents clever combinations of chords, and ingenious modulations from point to point : in lieu of musical logic and consistency of design, he is content with rhapsodical improvisation. The power of persistence seems wanting," etc.* Indeed Tausig's pathetic complaint that his host was not sufficient of "a Lisztianer" to please him—which has more than one comical side—is evidence enough of the radical divergence in their musical aims. Genius may pick up a hint from bizarre talent, but will always so transform it as to make the product all its own.

We could have wished for the date of that letter of Tausig's, as it also says : "Perhaps it will interest you to hear that Wagner has received an invitation to visit the Grand Duchess of Weimar, who is staying at Lucerne, and he means to go there next week." The visit, about mid-June, was really to the Grand Duke, and Wagner's letter aforesaid tells Liszt : "H.R.H. wished to know if, in the event of his procuring my return to Germany, I would go to Weimar or should prefer some other 'engagement' [jealousy of Baden?]. Whereon I explained that the only benefit I expected from my amnesty was that of being able to visit Germany periodically, for which purpose I had chosen your house as a resting-place, just because it was your house . . . which seemed to satisfy him." †

Soon after the Lucerne interview, which really led nowhere, Wagner passes a day or two at Minna's "place of cure," whence he had been medically "threatened for two whole months with tidings of her sudden death," and whither some of those walks which tired Tausig so were certainly directed. June 25 he writes Dr Pusinelli : "I am on a visit to my poor wife, who is under

* E. Dannreuther, *Oxford History of Music* VI. 155.

† The letter of June 26 to Haertels also speaks of this "recent journey to Lucerne at the request of the Grand Duke of Weimar, who then discussed with him his amnesty." A letter to the same firm, who in November had renewed their nibbling at the *Ring*, mentions his having "promised the Grand Duke of Weimar the first performance of the *Nibelungen*," apparently at this Lucerne interview. Thus was he dandled with delusive hopes by these "really not unamiable" princelets (cf *M.* p. 26).

treatment here at Brestenberg for a terrible complaint—dilatation of the heart and appalling nervous excitement. Your letter, sent here after me, has therefore refreshed us both, and I'm employing a free moment to tell you forthwith what great joy it has given me . . . For the rest, I'm passing through sad times; my outer world is vanishing more and more, and I'm living almost solely in an inner now, in the greatest retirement. My only uplifting is work, and if I should end by losing zest for that, as I recently did for a spell, I really don't know why I should go on living. I need great encouragement to hold out now, and such cordials as your letter are therefore of peculiar value.—To be sure, I've no doubt a favourable turn will come in my outward position at last; if only it doesn't come too late!”—followed soon afterwards by a detailed description of Minna's symptoms (paroxysmal tachycardia?) from which the Dresden physician rightly prognosed no instant danger, receiving from Wagner a brief note of thanks for his “cheering opinion” July 14 (see *B. Bl.* 1904 and *M.* p. xiii).

And what of the Green Hill meanwhile? For a month from the Erard's arrival “I saw thee no more”—not even from that window commanding the terrace—“and it grew clearer and clearer to me that henceforth we must stay apart.” Then, apparently in early June, “Thou returnedst; we did not speak with one another, but my Swan sang across to thee.” To this may be joined one sentence from a letter presumed to be of July 6: * “When a month since I announced to thy husband my resolve to break off all personal intercourse with your house, I had—given thee up; though I was not quite single-eyed in that, as yet.” The truth is, a promise had been extorted by Minna, granted to soothe her morbidly excited mind; but it adds the month of June to those of May and April as a period of desistence from all personal commune—the last two months of that period being those which saw the second act of *Tristan* composed.

Yet “my Swan sang across to thee,” and manifestly in June the unknown performer on that Swan is sent across with a billet addressed to “Madame Mathilde Wesendonck” saying, “Here is my little musical house-goblin; may he find a kind welcome!”

* *M.* pp. 24-28, as to which there will be more to say.

Tausig, whose "divinatory sympathy" is not only extolled in the said letter to Liszt, but also in Frau Wesendonck's own brief reminiscences—"he was quite touching in his endeavours to read the master's wishes from a glance"—thus becomes a living intermediary. We may imagine him passing from Asyl to Villa and back again, conveying words of comfort from one disconsolate to the other, till at last "the sense of the necessity of our severance was haunted by the possibility—present to the mind, if not to the will—of union. In that still lay a racking suspense which neither of us could bear. I went to thee, and clear as day it stood before us that that possibility involved a crime not even to be thought of." It was the heroic thing to do, despite all promises and "resolves"; their *final* struggle, from which they both emerged "victorious over every wish and longing."

A year hence, on the anniversary of the completion of the composition-draft of *Tristan* ii, Wagner writes her (July 1, 59): "On my walk the other day a sudden gush of rose-scent burst upon me; I was passing a garden where roses stood just in full bloom. That recalled my last enjoyment of the Asyl garden; never have I so concerned myself with roses, as then. Each morning I plucked one, and set it in a glass beside my work; I felt I was taking leave of the garden. With that feeling this odour has wholly inwoven: sultry air, summer sun, scent of roses, and—goodbye (*Abschied*). Thus did I sketch the music for my second act.—What surrounded me then with such all but intoxicant presence, now revives as if in dream:—summer, sun, rose-fragrance and—goodbye. Yet the stifling oppression (*die Beklemmung, die Bangigkeit*) has gone: all is transfigured."

In full harmony with that *Beklemmung* and *Bangigkeit* (really untranslatable without a periphrasis) are the lines accompanying the sending of this composition-draft: * "What a wondrous birth

* Its first page is superscribed "Noch im Asyl" ("Still at the Asyl"), whether now or upon its return to her—since the draft must naturally have been lent him after presentation, to elaborate the 'orchestral sketch' from: that is to say, if the composition-draft, and with it this undated note, was really sent at this epoch, and not on his return next spring from Venice. As for the draft itself, not only is it terminally dated "1. Juli," but Wagner writes Liszt July 2, "I have just sketched the second act of *Tristan*; how it will succeed with me, I shall see in the working-out." Three days later, July 5, that also was commenced, but from Venice he writes Liszt next October, "In the working out of the second act, which [act] I had only rough-sketches

of our grief-laden child! Had we to live, then, after all? From whom could it be asked that he should forsake his children?—God stand by us, poor creatures! Or are we too rich? Must we help ourselves unaided?” Probably they were directly followed by the meeting just referred to, the first for three months, and that in turn by the epistle simply dated “Tuesday morning” which we have assigned to July 6,* commencing: “Surely thou didst not expect me to leave thy marvellously beautiful letter unanswered?” Let us resume it where we laid it down, with the outcome of that meeting: “But thereby the necessity of our renunciation acquired another character of itself . . . and now my decision to revisit you [*plural*] was the triumph of purest humanity over the last stirring of selfish desire. . . . So I implore thee to be profoundly tranquil as regards myself. I shall not visit you often, as in future you must only see me when I’m sure of shewing you a calm and cheerful countenance. Of old, maybe, I have sought thy house in suffering and longing; thither, whence I wanted solace, I have brought unrest and sorrow. That shall be no more. Wherefore, if thou dost not see me for a length of time, then pray for me in silence!—for, then be sure that I am suffering. But when I come, be sure I’m bringing to your house a gracious gift of my being, a gift perhaps lent to me alone, who have endured so much and gladly.”

With that we enter the final phase on the Green Hill, the endeavour to establish a *modus vivendi*; since Minna’s embargo

(*nur leicht skizzirt*), I was interrupted by visitors. Now I have taken it up [again], and it is becoming very beautiful.”

* Again this date is not an absolute certainty, but there are several reasons for considering it more probable than a week before or after. On the other hand, I have recently convinced myself that the letter is *composite*, i.e. that when copying it for publication—it is one of those marked by Dr Golther “Urschrift fehlt”—Frau Wesendonck included by mistake a portion of a slightly later letter, just as she demonstrably has done in the case of no. 61 (see *M.* pp. 91 and 107). It is inconceivable that in one and the same letter Wagner should speak of having “had to make up my mind to raze our last hearth and home” and of returning thereto periodically. No, the main body of the letter does not contemplate “departing from Zurich altogether for a spell” till “the beginning of winter,” there is no immediate “going hence” in view; wherefore I should separate from it the part commencing at the bottom paragraph on p. 25 of the English edition (“So deeply and terribly,” etc.) and ending either at the foot of p. 26 or at the words “bless thee” on p. 27, and assign *that* to either the end of the month or early in August.

could not possibly be observed for ever, if the two families were to go on living side by side. Visitors were now expected or had already begun to arrive at the Asyl, and any woman of sense might have known that occasional social intercourse was the only way of saving the outward situation from total wreck. But the unhappy creature returned from her 'cure' within a fortnight of that innocent "decision," and not only did it become "a sheer impossibility to think of work," but "the most persistent efforts to preserve the disturbed relations proved absolutely fruitless."

For the six weeks beginning early this July it is one continual concourse of guests who mostly had failed to turn up at the Asyl last summer, when some of them would have been more welcome (cf *M.* 147).

First it is the rising tenor Niemann, who, having missed Wagner at the Zeltweg in '56 during the Mornex cure, now brings his fiancée on a couple of days' visit to Zurich (about the 10th or 11th, says Glasenapp). Then Tichatschek suddenly appears on the scene. Passing through Switzerland, his wife had called on Wagner about a month previously, and in his house received news of her husband's transient illness, subsequently magnified by newspaper gossip into grave doubts of his ever being able to sing again. The 20th of June, however, he had telegraphed Wagner an announcement of his appearance that night in the long-deferred revival of *Tannhäuser* at Dresden—where not one of the master's operas had been given since the abortive revival at the end of '52—and a few days later Wagner wrote him: "Waiting in the worst suspense for news from your good Frau Pauline, I suddenly receive your Sunday telegram. Before opening it and learning its whence, I fell into a fresh alarm, as I thought it a message from my wife's doctor, who naturally could also have none but very serious news to send me. Imagine my delight when I read your name and the jovial words atop! Had I had to burn my house down, I couldn't have resisted telegraphing back. I only hope my answer arrived in good time, *before* the performance."*

* Extract published by Glasenapp; whether from the letter of July 2 summarised by Altmann, or from a slightly earlier one, I cannot say at present (Herr Glasenapp having long been absent from his Riga home, mainly owing to the political disturbances there). The letter of July 2, besides

Whether Tichatschek arrived at Zurich before Minna's return, is not quite clear, but we find him installed at the Asyl by the 17th of July, when young Wendelin Weissheimer spends an evening there and drinks in the two veterans' joint reminiscences of old *Rienzi* days, duly committed by him in after years to his “*Erlebnisse*” (1898). But the chief value of Weissheimer's account of his interview resides in its dates, derived, so he says, from a letter he wrote on the 18th to relatives. Bearing an introduction from Schindelmeisser, on the 15th he found Wagner breakfasting alone in the garden, on the point of starting to fetch his wife back from “the baths”; which tallies with Wagner's own statement of July 2 to Liszt: “In a fortnight my wife is to have finished her cure (of a quarter of a year, by then) and return home. My anxiety about her has been awful . . . but latterly a decided improvement has set in; the great debility and loss of appetite has vanished . . . and her incessant agitation has begun to abate,” etc. The pair must have reached home the evening of that same 15th, for the next morning, after waiting in vain for exit of “a stylishly-dressed lady” (Comtesse d'Agoult?) who had just forestalled him, shy Weissheimer sends in his card and is given an appointment for the following afternoon, July 17, when he is received by Minna: “She sought to while away my time by pleasant chat, regretting that ‘Richard’ was so difficult to catch; if he wasn't working, he was walking for the sake of exercise, especially to-day, when he had spent the whole morning on business concerning ‘Tristan und Isolde’ with Herr Publisher Haertel from Leipzig, who had just taken the first act of that opera away with him [so utterly impossible that one may question Dr Haertel's present visit itself]. As the Awaited still did not appear, I

congratulating Tichatschek on his recovery, begs him to use his influence to hurry on *Rienzi* at Dresden also, and even entertains the possibility of producing *Lohengrin* in person there; greetings are sent, among others, to Kapellmeister Krebs—“much better than Reissiger, for ‘Tannhäuser’”—and, just as to Liszt the same date, Minna's return is announced “in 14 days.” The *Rienzi* revival came off with flying colours the latter part of August, for which Wagner thanks his old friend the 27th of the following month from Venice, jocularly adding: “I mean to leave directions in my will for setting up a monument to the pair of us in front of the Dresden theatre; and, pointing to our statues, folk shall say, ‘There they both are—particularly *Tichatschek!*’” This last is the letter commending Minna to the Tichatscheks' kindness at Dresden.

proposed to Frau Wagner that I should go and meet him on his usual walk in the Sihl valley, where it would be impossible to miss him. Sure enough, I soon found him coming toward me in light summer clothes, with an open sun-umbrella, and he invited me to accompany him home." So the young man passed his evening at the Asyl, where he not only met Tausig and Tichatschek, but was introduced to the parrot, "who whistled the Merry Swiss-boy and Leporello's 'Keine Ruh' bei Tag und Nacht' [rather apt] quite distinctly. With pride Frau Wagner turned to me and said, 'That's *my* work; *I* taught the bird all that,' and Wagner wittily added, 'My wife, you see, has also started a conservatoire.'" At the end of the evening, Wendelin took his emotional leave at the garden-gate—"At such moments one does not speak"—and left Zurich next day, having seen Minna on none but her best behaviour.

Bülow had quite a different experience. After playing in two concerts at Baden, July 1 and 8, and making a brief halt at Fribourg, Hans arrived with his wife about the same time as Minna, but had to put up at an hotel till Tichatschek vacated the guest-chamber. On the 24th, Hans tells Pohl of "the peculiarly complicated relations into the midst of which I fell here, so insufferably acute the first few days that I should have made straight for Lausanne, or anywhere, if my mother-in-law hadn't been on the spot and shewn herself so kind and amiable to me. Things and persons, however, have gradually become a little possible again; I and my wife have been installed here since Wednesday [21st], and among the hours passed I can already count a few quite interesting ones, though the atmosphere still is close and storm-charged. Don't tax me with un-comradelike reserve, if I can't undertake to solve the said riddles to-day for you; still unsolved to myself, perhaps they're insoluble whatever. By mouth on that, some day, and a good deal else which I've no time to communicate. The trundling to and fro between here and the Hôtel Baur au Lac (where the Comtesse d'Agoult is staying) consume much of the latter commodity, also of expense and diplomacy. Down to our ultimate exodus from the Hôtel Bilharz (*quondam* Bellevue, now very uncommendable) Tichatschek was here, at W.'s; he bothered our host by his childish hilarity, but unfortunately could not be induced to sing. Niemann and the Seebach [Marie S., N.'s fiancée, a

noted actress] had also been here, a little before us, and found favour (W. has become much more ‘difficile’ in company, to wit, though without its having harmed his essentially noble nature). Further, we are hourly expecting Klindworth, who has announced his visit, saying he would start from London the moment he received Wagner’s assent. I’m greatly looking forward to meeting him again, and cherish the best hopes of the new element he will import into a somewhat troubled circle.

“Tausig is staying a hundred yards away . . . [Tg doesn’t like Pohl] . . . On the one hand his great talent (e.g. he has arranged the Young Siegfried quite splendidly,* so far as the score exists), on the other his truly remarkable intellect—to my astonishment he has fairly digested Schopenhauer—and finally his humour, have won him Wagner’s liking in a high degree; which by no means excludes interruptions: on the one side fits of sulking, on the other, angry reprimands.”

Bülow goes on to describe a “Singers’ Festival,” which “from the musical standpoint simply inspired me with violent disgust; from the national, on the contrary, with great respect for the patriotic sacrifices, the sense of order and festivity, with which everything was done . . . On the Monday afternoon [19th], however, I breathed thanksgiving when I got away from the reek of bad cigars, stale victuals and sweat, into the open air and a temperature above 90, with my mamma-in-law on my arm . . . Daniel Stern [her *nom de guerre*] has made an unexpectedly great impression on me. Still wonderfully handsome and noble in form and feature, with her white hair, she particularly struck me by the undeniably strong resemblance to Liszt’s profile and expression, so that Siegmund and Sieglinde rose at once to my mind. And then this dignity and high breeding, without a trace of stiffness—this elegant, refined *laissez-aller*, which puts one at his mental ease at once, and brings out the most favourable side of one’s being—I avow I’m quite bewitched, and cannot check my thoughts from picturing the unspeakable satisfaction it would give me to see this lovely

* Purely for his own amusement, as Klindworth, pfe-arranger of the whole RING, is begged next February to return the orchestral sketch of *Siegfried* i, presumably taken back with him this summer.—Through Frau Wesendonck we also hear of Tausig’s playing dominoes an hour on end with Minna, to keep her from disturbing her husband’s after-dinner nap.

and distinguished woman . . . at the side of our Unique [Liszt], socially completing his Olympian nature. I dare not think of it—and how unjust it would be to side against the other lady, [Carolyne], who has so much claim to active championship by those who know her at all intimately. Well—it's just one's natural sense of outward beauty that cannot help protesting."

Yet another arrival, whether admitted to his whilom admirer's circle or not: "Feuerbach is coming here tomorrow, to make experiments with Moleschott"—says Hans; then, "There's a big christening at Herwegh's this evening, my wife and Semper standing godparents . . . Carvalho is corresponding with Wagner, who has arranged through Lüttichau that a decent performance of 'Tannhäuser' shall be given at Dresden the end of this month, for Carvalho to make the opera's acquaintance.—And now I must be off to lunch with my mamma-in-law."

Hans is so full of his new connection that he has nothing to say of another beautiful lady, or of Minna herself; but that was his bounden discretion, particularly as the "riddles" were still insoluble to him, and he has told us enough to shew that the triste tranquillity of Wagner's past three months had been turned into a literally howling wilderness by his wife's return—she "raised halloo," she says herself. After the first day or two's engrossment with her resumption of household affairs, she may have heard of that "decision to revisit you," or the mere fact of her own guests being on visiting terms with the Villa may have re-started the conflagration. Whichever way: "Careful only for her health, I tried every possible means of bringing her to reason and recognition of what beseemed her and her time of life; in vain! She abides by the vulgarest fancies,* declares herself injured, and, scarcely calmed a little, the old fury soon bursts forth afresh. Since a month ago, when Minna returned while we had guests in the house"—says the letter of Aug. 20 to Clara—"it had to come to a final decision. The two women so close together, was impossible any longer; for neither could the Wesendonck forget that, in return for her supreme self-sacrifice and tenderest regard for me, she had been met on

* "Sie beharrt in den trivialsten Vorstellungen." It is quite clear that Wagner uses the word "trivial" in much the same sense as other Germans use "frivol," i.e. unsavoury, or pertaining to the divorce court..

my side, through my wife, so coarsely and insultingly ; moreover, people* had begun to speak about it. Enough: the most unheard-of scenes and tortures never ceased for me, and out of consideration for the one as for the other, I finally had to make up my mind to give up the fair asylum once procured me with such delicate affection.”

To his youngest sister, Cécilie Avenarius, next January: “Your long-unanswered letter reached me at a terribly mournful time. The true source of my nameless griefs and havocs of last year resides in my wife’s sad state of health. However insensately and passionately she behaved in the most delicate situations, I cannot after all be really wroth with her. Everyone suffers in his own way, and she suffers—in hers ; but she suffers, and did suffer most acutely. Only think of a heart continually beating as never with an ordinary person save in instant terror of death ; and added to it, almost total sleeplessness for a whole year ! It is impossible to make anyone who suffers such agonies responsible for what is done in semi-mania. But it had at last become unbearable for us to be together. To be able to exist, I was obliged to draw a fresh supply of strength from solitude ; and Minna, too, I knew that change and possible diversion must do her good” (*Familienbriefe*).

To friend Sulzer, December: “In constant, close, immediate contact, without a jot of external distraction, it was not always possible for me to keep nothing but my regard for her ailing condition of body and mind in view, under every circumstance, with my own temper inflammable also. To my most penitent regret, conflicts arose again and again, and finally with daily aggravation ; conflicts in the vehemence whereof I could not stay without a part myself. Even for *her* health’s sake I must have thought about an alteration” ; whilst her tongue had led to “such unsettlement of our relations with our neighbours that, in spite of my honestest endeavours to stave it off, the resolve was bound to ripen in myself at last, my very self (*gerade in mir*), to give up our residence at Zurich. What I suffered through it on all sides, between unreason and passion, ought to absolve me from any share of blame for which I may have myself been accountable.

* Possibly he means “the servants” —“Auch war nun unter den Leuten davon gesprochen worden.”

When I formed my decision, and carried it through despite uncommon obstacles, I had to give up much that had grown very dear to me—among which I will merely name the pretty country-place so long desired, with its equipment” (see *M.* p. xvii).

The above extracts tell us as much of the final “catastrophe” as we are ever likely to hear at first-hand, and it is clear as day that the gossip so greedily printed toward the end of last century, about a humiliation inflicted by Otto, is absolutely void of truth. Had there been no Minna, or had she owned the smallest self-control, life on the Green Hill might have pursued its course of mutual resignation and strenuous creative work for many a year to come. But the sick woman had developed a passion for “scenes,” and must have dragged everyone thereinto at last, including poor Otto, to whom one’s sympathy goes largely forth. Commending her to the kindness of Frau Ritter at Dresden a few weeks later, says Wagner: “My wife’s state of mind became such a torture to herself and her surroundings, that a radical change in the situation had to be thought of, if we all did not mean to wear each other out”; and in his Venice Diary of Sept. 13: “By that terrible departure from Zurich I should have thought I had given final proof that I can—withdraw; consequently I have the right to resent any doubt of my resignative nicety as an unmerited and deep affront.” It was his own decision, carried out “despite uncommon obstacles” (*trotz ungemeynen Erschwerungen*); a decision not only reducing Minna to “deepest dismay” (*zu ihrer grössten Bestürzung*)—inconsequent creature that she was—but also drawing from Mathilde, when conveyed to *her* by letter,* some plaintive plea which he answers with those conclusive words, “*It must be so!*” Swift was its execution, but not precipitate, though he does head his Diary, “Tagebuch seit meiner Flucht aus dem Asyl 17. August 1858”; for Bülow’s two letters of the 9th prove that date to have been fixed at least a week beforehand:—

To Pohl: “(In great haste.) Unfortunately I have to write you that a week from to-day (*über acht Tage*) we shall have left Zurich. . . . Nothing but doleful news from here. Wagner is quitting his pretty villa within eight days, to seek quiet somewhere far away; in Venice or Florence at first.† Frau Wagner,

* *M.* pp. 25-27; see footnote to p. 373 *sup.*

† Berlioz writes Liszt, Sept. 28: “Wagner, dit-on [Pohl?], va se fixer à

after the [part?] sale and packing of the furniture, will go to Germany (Zwickau, Dresden, Berlin, Weimar). Karl Ritter, reconciled through me at last with W., was here last week. But all of us—Tausig, Klindworth (a splendid good fellow)—Ritter—my wife and myself, have been able to do little for W.'s cheering or distraction. A constant atmosphere of storm. Relieving points of light have been supplied from time to time by fine piano renderings of 'Rheingold' and 'Walküre.' Klindworth plays famously, entrancingly. Wagner sang all the parts with a colossal self-oblivion, putting forth his whole power. The second act of 'Tristan' is only sketched; W. has been unable to work for several months [strictly, weeks]. Of the first act the score is already engraved,"—goes on to advise press puffing of *Rienzi*, "that the composer may get hold of some money, which he needs to continue working, particularly at the present moment," etc.

Also Aug. 9, to J. Stern: "I'm compelled to ask for an extension of leave till the 24th . . . The true and sufficient reason is that my presence at Zurich is of real moment to Wagner just now, since very sad complications, scarcely right for me to touch on, have driven him to the determination to abandon Zurich and go to Italy, where he thinks of settling at Venice or Florence for the present. The execution of this resolve, as regards himself at least, will take place in the next few days, and I feel sure you will not blame me for wishing to make the most of the few hours still left me to pass with my beloved friend, in view of the difficulty of seeing him again for some years. May I further beg you not to let a word of what I have just told you leak out to any third person?"

Wagner's irrevocable decision must have been formed even a few days earlier, as Liszt writes him the 6th: "I cannot get away before the 18th inst. . . It had been my intention to rejoin you the beginning of September, but I will gladly hasten my journey by a couple of weeks. On your side, put off your departure for a fortnight, and write me by return whether I shall arrive the 20th." From an inspired article in the *B. Bl.* of 1900 (p. 86) we learn that this was in answer to "a telegram sent by

Florence; cela se conçoit. Je ne *connais pas* la Suisse, mais *j'aime mieux l'Italie*"—not the smallest friendly curiosity.

over-zealous intimates, asking Liszt to come alone"; but how could Liszt have really helped, in such a situation? Moreover, he was uninformed of its actual nature; since he asks Wagner on the 26th, "What is the true reason you did not care to stay at Zurich a few days longer, where I meant to visit you the 20th at latest?"* Possibly a temporary abatement of Minna's tantrums might have been effected by Liszt's imposing presence at the earlier date, but such a patching-up could never have endured, and Wagner himself was not so short-sighted as to have sought it.

So the decision to raze the cherished hearth at Enge, scarce founded sixteen months, is carried through without flinching, though "to go hence is tantamount for me to—going under. With wounds like these in my heart, I can try to found me no new home again" (*M.* p. 26). "For the present I leave Minna the prospect of my returning to her in Germany when the amnesty arrives—which also was the reason she was to take all our furniture and things with her; yet I mean to bind myself to nothing, but let everything depend on my future feeling . . . Whatever you can do to make her calm and reasonable, I beg you not to leave undone, for she really is unfortunate; she would have been happier with a lesser man. And so take pity on her, with myself; I shall thank you from my heart for it, dear sister!" (Aug. 20 to Clara, whom Minna was about to visit).

Here we see why Minna was the last to quit the Asyl; she was to make her own arrangements for removal of their household gods. The immediate fate of these latter, apparently transferred in their entirety to Paris a twelvemonth hence, is by no means so clear. Herr Steiner mentions (without directly quoting) a letter of Wagner's begging Heim to redeem "at least his Erard from the effects seized by his creditors" and send it after him to Venice; whilst Minna writes a feminine friend at end of the

* Oct. 9: "When I wrote you I would be with you the 20th of August, I assumed that, even in the event of your departure from Zurich earlier, you would appoint some other rendezvous—Lucerne or Geneva." Yet one can easily understand Wagner's desire to be left quite alone in the first stage of his exodus: "Even Karl Ritter I have written not to call upon me," says the Diary of Aug. 21, though Karl was either to accompany or follow him to Venice a few days later.

year, “I only wanted the necessary of our effects sent from Zurich [to Dresden], which I luckily did not afterwards need, as Frau Tichatschek had so nicely fitted up my little lodging from her superfluity.” Perhaps the brokers were actually put in the house within a few days of her husband’s departure; in which event it is extremely probable that, unknown to Wagner at the time, Heim arranged with Wesendonck himself to pay them off. In any case, though Wagner had written Sulzer in December that he had had to give up his “pretty country-place, with its equipment” (380 *sup.*), we find him writing Liszt next February, “Perhaps I shall leave my furniture etc. at Zurich; the dear little house is being kept for me, and I have hopes of being able to inhabit it in summer, later on—which certainly would offer me an agreeable change.”

He was never to inhabit the Asyl again—in Minna’s lifetime it would have been an impossibility, with or without her—but this last quotation shews that Mathilde had loyally observed his parting wish: “Farewell! Farewell, dear love! I’m leaving tranquilly. Where’er I be, I shall be entirely thine now. Try to keep the Asyl for me, auf Wiedersehen! Auf Wiedersehen! Dear soul of my soul, farewell—auf Wiedersehen!”

The Diary commences: “Geneva, August 21. The last night at the Asyl I laid myself in bed after 11 o’clock; I was to start at 5 next morning.” Not much more than an hour’s sleep, with “troubled dreams,” did he taste that night which joined the 16th to the day of parting: “Shame-flushed the sun crept up behind the hill; then I gazed across once more and long.—O Heaven, not a tear came to me, but it seemed as if every hair on my temples were turning grey!—I had taken leave; now all was set and cold within me.—I went downstairs. My wife was waiting for me there; she offered me tea. It was an awful, pitiable hour.—She accompanied me down the garden. It was a magnificent morning; I never turned my head.—At the last farewell my wife broke out in tears and lamentations; for the first time my eyes stayed dry. Once again I exhorted her to gentleness and nobleness and quest of Christian comfort; once more the old revengeful vehemence flared up in her. She is incorrigible—I could not help telling myself—yet I cannot venge myself on the unhappy soul; she must work out her own sentence herself . . . Thus I set forth, and lo!—I won’t deny it—it was

well with me ; I breathed free. I was faring into solitude, where I may love thee with every breath I draw !”

There must end our detailed history of this unique romance, for I cannot believe that any reader of the present *Life* will have failed to make close acquaintance with that Diary and those letters to *Mathilde Wesendonck* which breathe the spirit of the purest poetry throughout, and in that confidence I may limit myself to a mere outline of the biographic features of the next few months.

First it should be remarked, however, that less than three weeks from its commencement the Diary says, “Thou hopest to see me for a few hours in Rome this winter ?”—a message to that effect having been conveyed to Wagner through Frau Wille. *He* does not feel equal to such a meeting at present ; but the message itself is proof positive not only of that strait-laced confidante’s, but also of Otto’s own complete belief in the chastity of their past “relations.” It would almost be an insult to “Elisabeth’s” memory to accentuate this point, were there not still a few prurient-minded folk, both here and in America, who ghoulishly love to disseminate a contrary assumption. Let them gnash their teeth on that, then read in Wagner’s letter to Otto of the following November, “Your news profoundly stirred me. Accept the brimming tears of a friend as tribute of his love.” Otto *himself* had announced to him the death of the Wesendoncks’ eldest son ;* such evidence must uproot the tongue of calumny for ever ! And Wagner closes this brief but solemn letter of ‘Sühne ohne Reue’ with the words : “I am still under the immediate impression of your tidings. How gladly would I fly at once to comfort both of you (*Euch*). May my profoundest sympathy afford you the consolation that I sincerely suffer with you both ! And so—above the dear little fellow’s grave—my thanks !—and a heartfelt farewell !” A farewell exchanged in course of time for friendly Wiedersehen.

The evening of that dreary 17th of August, Wagner arrived at Geneva, putting up for the night at some hotel. “Ere going to

* See also the letter of next March to little Myrrha : “And when we also die, some day, let us be glad if each of us has such a face as Papa wrote me that dear Guido had.” Further, the messages sent to Otto in the letters to Mathilde of Jan. 19, Feb. 22, March 10 and 25 (*M. pp.* 103 etc.).

sleep I read thy diary [of “Spring” and early summer—a parting gift?], those fair, deep imprints of thy being! I slept well.—Next day I moved into a lodging, which I have taken by the week. Here I am quiet and undisturbed, collecting my thoughts and waiting till the heat is past, to let me go on to Italy. I keep the house the whole day long.” From here, “Maison Fazy, 3rd floor,” he writes Liszt two letters, of the 20th and 24th, begging him to obtain through the Weimar Grand Duke formal permission to make a protracted stay at Venice. We do not possess Liszt’s answer (presumably telegraphic) to the first, but from that to the second we gather that it likewise recommended “Genoa or Sardinia” (i.e. Piedmont) instead, as beyond the clutches of Germanic powers. Undeterred by Liszt’s fears, Wagner concludes his letter of the 24th “From Venice I shall write you again,” adding the direction, “*Venedig, poste-restante*”; for he had meantime received fairly satisfactory assurances from the Austrian minister at Berne, who had already signed his passport.

Ere leaving Geneva, he may or may not have received a telegram (sent to Zurich, of course) from the management of the Vienna opera-house, congratulating him on “the great success of the first performance of ‘Lohengrin.’” The issue of the *N.Z.* (Sept. 17) recording this “mark of attention” contradicts “the rumour of an intended journey of Wagner’s to Vienna to attend a performance of ‘Lohengrin’” to which it had lent credence a week previously—“it is even said that he has been permitted by the Austrian Government” etc.—now reproving the Berlin *Echo* for a feeble jokelet “that he had gone to Italy to purify the musical taste of the Italians.” This explains a passage in the Venice letter of Sept. 30 to Frau Wille: “You have read how people viewed my being here as a political move, to worm my way through Austria back to Germany. Even friend Liszt was of that opinion, warned me, but also counselled me to expect no success of my operas in Italy . . . which I found most hard to answer!—I was also supposed to be going to Vienna outright, as no doubt you know, but scarcely believed?”

It was a curious coincidence, nothing more, that such an important event as the opening of the doors of the Kärnthnerthor to his operas should at last take place at the very moment he had become a homeless wanderer again. Liszt had written him last May 7: “No doubt you are already in correspondence with

[Dir.] Eckert concerning the production of *Lohengrin* at Vienna, as he told me the work was to be mounted this autumn; please write me particulars [we do not possess them]. The principal rôles will be brilliantly cast there—Ander (*Lohengrin*), Meyer (*Elsa*), Csillagh (*Ortrud*), and if Eckert puts his heart in it, a great success is beyond question." After the event the *N.Z.* tells us (Sept. 17): "What care the management had bestowed on the preparation, is shewn by the fact of Kapellmeister Esser's having paid Wagner a personal visit, to discuss with him the execution of the opera," adding another to the *Asyl* guests of summer 1858—rather a reluctant one, if we may judge by a remark in a seemingly anterior letter of E.'s to Franz Schott, June 12: "In this fearful heat I'm doing nothing but what I must. To the latter unfortunately belongs my study of '*Lohengrin*,' which I have to get up for the next German season. '*Lohengrin*' contains many a beauty, but which one has to pay very dear for."*

The first Vienna performance was given to a crowded house the 19th of August (Wagner's third night at Geneva) and the conscientious Kapellmeister writes Schott the 23rd: "Herewith an account of the opening of the Court-operahouse and the first performance of '*Lohengrin*,' which was really brilliant and had quite a decidedly good reception. I am glad the indescribable pains I had had to devote to the study of this ridiculously difficult work at least have not been thrown away, and find general acknowledgment even from those whom Wagner's music does not please. To the latter I belong myself, but the big public here already dotes on Wagner, and in all probability we shall witness a long run of '*Lohengrin*' performances." Oct. 20: "'*Lohengrin*,' whose 10th representation we had yesterday, continues to draw the public, though there is very little and not very boisterous applause.† It is curiosity that makes the fortune of Wagner's

* See Dr Edgar Istel's brochure (*Richard Wagner, etc., etc.*) reprinted from *Die Musik* 1902. Born 1818, Esser had been Kapellmeister at the Vienna opera-house since 1847, which may partly account for its tardy conversion.

† The *N.Z.* of Sept. 17 remarks: "The greatest interest is shewn by the audience from beginning to end. Applause is usually loudest at the close of the second act, but a number of solos, choruses and orchestral passages in course of the action are also greeted therewith; e.g. the Swan-chorus," etc., etc.

operas”—in strange contrast with which stand E.’s announcements of Nov. 22, that the composer has written him “an extraordinarily kind letter of thanks,”* and Dec. 17: “It is still impossible to get a seat for love or money on a ‘Lohengrin’ night, the public makes such a rush for it.”

What Esser (one feels tempted to re-name him Essig) ascribes to mere “curiosity of the big public” is proved by a much bigger man to have reposed on something far more solid. The dramatic poet Friedrich Hebbel writes our Fürstin, August 24: “*Lohengrin* has had the most brilliant success at Vienna . . . knowing how to distinguish between the crackling of straw and true fire, I consider it a lasting one, and congratulate [you] from my heart. For my own part, bis dato I have only heard the first act,” etc. Again, the 31st: “I have now heard the whole of *Lohengrin*, and the effect on myself, as on my wife, has been supremely moving. The most pronounced success is assured above all doubt. Lucky Wagner, to have found such a friend in the noble Liszt, a true *cor cordis*,” etc.† Then to Liszt himself, Nov. 30: “There was a time when this event in the art-world [a notable expression from such a man] would have passed over me in pure objectivity like any other; now it has impassioned me, and you can scarcely have rejoiced at the success more than I. Further, what I wrote the Fürstin at the first is brilliantly confirmed; the effect does not diminish, but increase, and my entire circle—not the smallest in extent, and in culture one of the choicest in Vienna—has been won with a single *half*-exception. In his humorous way, Sectionsrath Hermannthal told me yesterday he had only heard the opera eight times; which will please you, as he is a man of taste and judgment.”

Unfortunately the author’s profit from this brilliant success had been considerably discounted beforehand, since one part of his

* Tenor Ander, who will prove such a drawback to *Tristan* some four years hence, is also effusively thanked about this date; but neither of these two letters has yet been made public.

† See *Glanzzeit* for both these letters, in the earlier whereof Hebbel finds exceptions to take to the poem, which he had “attentively read once again”; the full performance, however, seems to have swept his objections completely aside—not an unprecedented experience. Directly, of course, this production of *Lohengrin* was not due to Liszt, who had no influence at Vienna, but partly to Fr. Mayer, partly to the success of *Tannhäuser* at Hoffmann’s theatre.

fee (£200 in all,* not tantièmes) appears to have been received and swallowed up at Zurich in the early summer—the loan to be repaid to Heim, e.g., amounted to almost one half of the whole; whereas another part, perhaps contingent on the run, does not seem to have been received till next January. There may have still been something left of the advance on the Berlin *Lohengrin* tantièmes demanded in June (see later) but the immediate future is oppressed by the now too usual money-pinch. “As may be easily understood in my present circumstances, I need sums on sums of money”—he writes Schindelmeisser, Aug. 21—“so be good, and extract me a five-act fee for *Rienzi* [from the Darmstadt management] and send it to Geneva post-haste. You will be doing me an immensely friendly service, which, in my sudden almost catastrophic situation, will relieve me from a great embarrassment. For I have cares and obligations at this instant which I did not foresee a short time back.” The next day: “I have just determined to start for Italy the day after to-morrow. So, if you had that fee to send me, asked for yesterday, let it be addressed to *Venice, poste restante*, not to Geneva” (it arrived mid-October, probably 25 louis).

“Dr W[ille] and K[arl] R[itter] had given me the most attractive accounts of life in Venice; the latter will also spend the winter there”—says the letter of Aug. 24 to Liszt, and the Diary entry of that date: “Tomorrow I go direct to Venice. I am longing to get there, where I think of settling calmly down, though the journey is most distasteful to me in itself.—It is a week to-day since I saw thy terrace for the last time!” It is not quite clear if Ritter—who also was leaving his wife—started with, or followed after him, but apparently on the 25th Wagner set forth, viâ the Simplon. “At Milan merely a night’s halt; August 29, arrived in Venice after noon,” where he very soon takes fairly cheap apartments “in a mighty palace on the Grand Canal . . . I wrote for the Erard at once; it ought to sound wonderful in my vast high salon.”

* See a reference to “the fee of 5000 francs to which I have become accustomed from Vienna” in his letter of Jan. 27, 60, to Count Platen (G. Fischer’s *Musik in Hannover*, p. 189); also letter 282 (“Jan. 7, 1859”) to Liszt: “I’m no longer used to being told by any theatre, ‘Your honorarium will be paid you after the first performance.’”

Referring the reader to the *Mathilde* volume for the outwardly uneventful period of reflection that intervenes, we will pass to the Erard's arrival, Oct. 6: "While it was being tuned, I read thy Spring diary through again; there, too, it figures . . . [*vid. sup.*] . . . And now I've fared right forth from thee, the Alps lie piled up heaven-high between, it grows ever clearer to me that I shall live a life no more. Ah, if the Erard but came, it must help—had I told myself oft—for, when all's said, things *must* be!" Three days later, "I have begun" by transcribing the *Fünf Gedichte**—"that was my first task; my pinions are preened." And now the orchestration of act ii of *Tristan*, barely commenced at the Asyl, is taken up with a will, "there to let the deep art of sounding silence speak to thee from my dream-world turned to life here"; or as Liszt is told, Oct. 19: "I now regard my outward fate with perfect patience, and am looking tranquilly forward to years of serene productivity. My work has become dearer to me than ever; I resumed it a little while since, and it is flowing from my spirit in a placid stream."

Strange, that the musical setting of each act of *Tristan* should have *succeeded* the psychic phase most nearly corresponding to its subject! But partly to this fact is due its puissance of emotional expression, "the expression of the lonely man who felt himself made one with thee" thereby. "I'm still in the second act," says the Diary, December 8, "but—what music it's becoming! I could work my whole life at this music alone. O, it grows deep and fair, and the most sublime of harmonies come nestling to the sense; I've never done anything like it! But I also am merging into this music; I'll hear of no more when it's finished. Let me live therein for ever, and with me—!" and the letter of a few days after, "I'm composing at the *Tristan* as if I meant to work at nothing else the whole remainder of my life, and it will be finer than anything I've ever done; the smallest phrase has the importance of a whole act to me, with such care am I working it out."

And so the orchestration of this marvellous act, his sole creative

* "I had only the pencilled jottings, often entirely unworked up . . . So I first set to playing them over and calling every detail back to mind; then I wrote them carefully out. Now thou need'st not send me thine again"—which accounts for an occasional slight difference between the ultimately published songs and their originals preserved by Frau Wesendonck.

work at Venice, will go on till the approach of Spring, though not without grave interruptions near the outset. Profound grief at the news of his friends' bereavement, followed within a week by terrible alarm at a grossly exaggerated report from his wife's medical brother-in-law; a combination driving him to the verge of a midnight plunge from his balcony into the storm-lashed Canal. Then, partly in consequence of the unwholesome drinking-water,* partly of these mental shocks—for October 12 the Diary had said, "I'm mustering my sorely shattered vital forces in this great seclusion; already I enjoy of late the wellnigh unknown boon of deep and tranquil sleep at night"—his health breaks down for "the whole first half of November"; a "gastric-nervous fever," from which he has scarcely recovered ten days when "a neglected swelling on the leg" (carbuncle?) confines him to his chair for another fortnight: "In the middle of work at my music I sometimes yell with pain—which often has a very fine effect . . . A thousand greetings: ow! from Your R. W. (ow!!)"—as he grins it off to Liszt.

To Haertels he had written Oct. 5 that "he is about to resume work, begging them to excuse his silence on what had incapacitated him for any kind of work for more than a quarter of a year; hopes to have completed the 2nd act of 'Tristan' by the end of November, the 3rd by the end of February, and about Easter to produce it himself through the endeavours of the Grand Duke of Baden [all frustrated]; also wishes them to publish the poem quickly." The 19th, to Schindelmeisser: "The book of 'Tristan' will appear soon, and perhaps some folk won't quite know what to make of it, and in particular, how I'm to compose this and that.—For that matter, after having been shamefully interrupted in my work [at Enge], I'm only now resuming it, and it is impossible to think of its completion before the end of winter. Haertels' letter [possibly enclosed] amused me hugely; they were in a palpable fix, for I had left them stranded and completely in the dark for ever so long!"

Presumably the proofs of the poem arrived by the end of the month, as Haertels are told Nov. 7 that "not until now, in the first stage of recovery from severe illness, has he been able to attend to

* See the references to a filter, or the like, *M.* pp. 43 and 88; also a half-jesting remark in an undated letter to Louise Otto-Peters (a Dresden writer): "Shall I tell you what drove me from Venice so soon? It was the longing for fresh water to drink, of which there's none there."

the corrections.” The 16th, among other things—pfe-vocal scores of *Iphigenie* to be sent to Heim, to himself and to his wife, etc., etc.—he discusses the putting of the poem on the market (particulars not disclosed). Ten days after, he writes them as follows (for facsimile see *Mus. Wochenblatt*, 1906, no. 29):—

Venice, 26 Nov. 58.

Hochgeehrte Herren!

As I am returning you the final revise-sheets of the text-book to-day, I take this opportunity of laying my desires before you as regards the distribution of the copies reserved for myself, which I invite you to reckon at 50.

I accordingly beg you to despatch per book-post to the following places and persons:—

Leipzig, Prof. Herm. Brockhaus, 1 copy; *Dresden*, to my wife (Marienstrasse, no. 9), 10 [some smaller figure is scrawled through]; *Zurich*, Musikdir. I. Heim, 1, Regierungsrath J. J. Sulzer in Winterthur, 1, Professor G. Semper, 1, Georg Herwegh, 1, Gottfried Keller, 1, Musikdir. W. Baumgartner, 1, Dr Fr. Wille, Mariafeld bei Meilen, 1; *Karlsruhe*, Eduard Devrient, 2; *Hanover*, Hofchauspielerin Fr. Seebach, 1; *Weimar*, Fr. Liszt, 3; *Berlin*, H. von Bülow, 1, Fräulein Alwine Frommann (Linden, no. 10), 3; *Frankfurt a/M*, Herr Dr Arthur Schopenhauer (schöne Aussicht), 1. The remainder of the 50 copies you will then have the kindness to send me here at Venice.

Your packet of to-day I have been unable to recover as yet from the Censor; the slowness of this institution promises to be a great nuisance to me with my future manuscripts.

In expectation of a favourable answer to my last detailed communication,* I remain with all esteem

Yours very sincerely

RICHARD WAGNER.

In the list above, otherwise a catalogue of personal friends, it is of the greatest interest to note the name of Schopenhauer, to whom a letter on the Metaphysics of Love had been commenced about this date, as remarked p. 60; but we possess no indication of that sage's opinion of the *Tristan* poem. Absent from the list is the name of Wesendonck, for a very good reason; to his Muse, already guardian of its original manuscript, the book must be sent by himself: “Speaking of *Tristan*, I must tell you my delight at having just received a first copy of

* Of the 16th, chiefly devoted to fresh proposals for publication of the RING, which, ultimately falling through, we need not consider at present.

the printed poem in time to send it you as birthday present" (i.e. for Dec. 23). In that copy she symbolically inscribed Isolde's words, "Mir erkoren—mir verloren—Heil und hehr, kühn und feig—Todgeweihtes Haupt! Todgeweihtes Herz!"—very soon thereafter sending in return her "lovely fable" (*M.* pp. 95, 334).

This first edition of the *Tristan* poem bears on its title-page the date "1859," but its actual issue must have taken place before Christmas 1858. Its author will soon regret its appearance without the music (*M.* 121), and from that regret we may conclude that the generality of his friends were as dense in its regard as he had prophesied to Schindelmeisser. Still sooner he will complain of its insignificant get-up, etc.;* decidedly with justice. If Haertels at all realised what they were introducing to the world, they should have dressed it in something handsomer than this flimsy paper and poor ink.†

But Haertels behaved a thousand times better to him than another Leipzig publisher, whose astounding meanness forms chief topic of a letter to editor Brendel:—‡

Venice, Dec. 20, 58.

Most valued Friend,

Am I really not worth your obtaining me from your publisher a weekly copy of your musical paper? Even if my few articles were able to bring you nothing in their day, surely it would

* To sister Cäcilie, Jan. 28, 59: "The way in which Haertels regard and push a thing like this—as mere appendage to an article in their musical department—I can by no means approve of."

† Strange to say, until quite recently this original edition—small 8°, in a pale lavender paper cover bearing on its back an advertisement of the *Drei Operndichtungen* etc. ("Communication")—was still procurable from its publishers, my own copy having been bought from them at the end of 1902 for the ridiculous sum of 2s. Its distinctive mark is that "ohne selig zu sterben" on its page 72 (*cf.* 313*n sup.*), and as Wagner writes the firm Dec. 18, 58, "wishing a few misprints in the 'Tristan' poem to be emended," this must have been promptly corrected in a second impression; so that the 1859 copies *now* obtainable from Messrs B. & H. at the still inadequate price of 3s. (1907)—copies shorn of the original cover and much of the margin—present us with "ohne selig sich zu preisen," in correspondence with the score. The other original misprints can have merely been matters of punctuation.

‡ Now in the possession of my friend Mr Arthur E. Aarons.

have been quite a civil attention at least to shew some small regard for my good will. At Zurich for a length of time I actually paid for a copy per post ; everybody wondered at it, till at last I took to wondering myself. From Venice here I wanted to subscribe in October again for the current quarter ; from Leipzig came the edict that subscriptions were only accepted for the half-year. That vexed me afresh, and made me swear that if you don't extract a copy for me from the publisher, I'll never clap eyes on the *Neue Z. f. M.* again, and least of all send anything to it ; so that I should have to beg you to strike me off the official list of contributors.

Have folk in Germany, then, not learnt a mite of tact yet, since my absence? Please put that question to your publisher. If he only needs reminding what a certain decency towards myself demands from him, let him be so good as to send me the numbers by post ; should it incommode him, I will gladly pay the trifling carriage.

For the present I shall remain some time at Venice, where I am living by myself in great retirement. Unfortunately I have been much obstructed in my work by repeated, even though not dangerous attacks of illness, but I am not losing heart. Haertels will get the second act of *Tristan* soon, and in any event I think of producing *Tristan u. Isolde* the late summer of next year. Where, is still difficult to say exactly. If I'm not allowed to come to Germany by then, I think of giving the opera with a picked German company (perhaps under the protection of a court-theatre near by) at the Strassburg theatre, where I can count on good German attendance in summer. That is bound to decide itself ere long.

I haven't had a sight of your journal since August. Perhaps you could forward me the back numbers?

Don't be cross at my jumping upon you like this ; let us hope I shall soon be able to tell you something good in return !

Farewell, and rest assured of my constant attachment.

Your RICHARD WAGNER.

Canal' Grande, Palazzo Giustiniani. Campiello Squillini, no. 3228.
Venice.

So the Strassburg idea is not entirely abandoned yet, a year and a half after conception, though nothing ultimately came either of it or of the Carlsruhe project—for reasons to concern us next volume. But is not this about the *Neue Zeitschrift* quite typical of the way in which his countrymen behaved throughout to the greatest genius of his age? In that letter of August 9, von Bülow had begged Pohl : “Do get a notice into Brendel's paper, that Mad. Erard had honoured the composer of ‘Tannhäuser’ and ‘Lohengrin’ with a magnificent grand piano (*J.*

qualité), and tack to it an edifying comment on the enthusiasm of German princes and their subjects." Even after that, the *N.Z.* publisher—well, see above!

Two days later, Dec. 22, a letter goes off to the Director of the Hanover theatre, asking that 20 Friedrichsd'or (£17) of the fee of 50 due to him for *Rienzi*,* may be sent at once to Minna, the rest to himself. This payment did not reach him until early January, on the "7th" (?) of which month he tells Liszt: "By New Year's Eve my money had entirely run out; I had already pawned my watch, the Grand Duke's snuffbox [presented last summer], and the Fürstin's bonbonnière (my solitary valuables), and had only about a napoleon and a half of the proceeds left. † . . . These theatres have only one attraction for me, their money.—**Their money!** Yes—and you make that a reproach to me? What! you do not rather *pity* me? Don't you think I would gladly occupy *your* position towards performances of one's own works, and have no need to look to them for money?"

* The Hanover people had obtained the score in November 58, though their production did not come off till Dec. 11, 59. In this letter of Dec. 58, Wagner had begged for "a handsome addendum to the said sum, as a present from His Majesty the King"; either when the telegram arrives, announcing despatch of the fee according to his instructions, or more probably (as I consider) when his 30 Friedrichs of it reach him through "a Vienna banker," he encloses a singular document in a letter to Rottmayer dated Venice, Jan. 6—namely a receipt bearing the date "January 5, 1859," for *one hundred* Friedrichsd'or—with the explanation: "On the 1st of January I determined to force the star of this year's luck to a good omen for me; I wrote and dated the accompanying receipt. With the date I made a good shot, and your kind communication leaves me in agreeable uncertainty as to the possibility of seeing the figure also realised yet," etc. Needless to say, he was disillusioned thereafter on the latter point, and ultimately had to make out a receipt for the lower amount (*Musik in Hannover*, pp. 187-8).

† "I hope it will be a long time before I am again reduced to changing my last napoleon at a telegraph office," says another passage in this reply to an unpublished answer of Liszt's to that telegram of New Year's Eve and a letter of the same evening, both of them also unpublished and apparently destroyed. In the circumstances it is hopeless to attempt to get at the right and wrong of this rather serious misunderstanding; but, in addition to Wagner's words to Liszt himself in the letter of "Jan. 7," or more probably 9, "the incredible lines (*die unerhörten Zeilen*) which you have found it possible to write me now, must have sprung from some terrible inward irritation"—extremely likely, as a fortnight previously Liszt had made the got-up demonstration against Cornelius' *Barber of Bagdad* a pretext for breaking with the Weimar theatre—we have the following to Bülow of Jan. 23: "Liszt provided me a

Despite the modest Darmstadt fee received in the first half of October,* the pinch had been growing more and more acute throughout the whole last quarter, necessitating endless business correspondence with various theatres. Oct. 26 to Liszt: “Munich has just refused Rienzi for religious scruples.—I need money, much money, to behave honourably in my difficult position, and consequently look right and left for ‘a little business’ to do.” Then Nov. 21: “Outward affairs are going pretty miserably with me. Notwithstanding its continuous fresh Dresden success, Rienzi refuses to budge. The first shock came from Munich, whence I was simply awaiting my fee of 50 louis d’or, when they informed me the reading committee had objected to the subject on *religious* grounds. Fie on such precious religion! But its cropping up like this is partly your fault; why do you compose the priests such lovely masses? . . . Only Breslau is flippant enough, and—ventures . . . I’m accordingly reduced to my old capital of Tannhäuser and Lohengrin, and it won’t make both ends meet

sad commencement of the year (*Jahresantritt*). A whole letter of mine, simply levelled at Dingelstedt and couched in a certain humour which all my other friends already understand, he misconstrued and answered in a huff . . . [dots in the *Bayr. Bl.* 1900, p. 111]. It would grieve me if his pride should prevent his at once admitting that he has allowed a misunderstanding so surprisingly to warp his judgment of a friend. However, I haven’t a moment’s doubt that he will perceive this, and I feel sure of the continuance of his friendship; though I can’t help wishing for an improvement in the malady from which our friendship plainly suffers, namely, the lack of true personal knowledge and intercourse. For I recognise now, more than ever, that I cannot quite let myself go with him [on paper], and must observe a certain carefulness in my relations with him. My humour is altogether foreign to him.” The dateless message numbered 281, “Have you *nothing whatever* to say to me, then?” etc., should certainly be ranged *after* the above, and probably accompanied the “couple of fragments from my latest work” mentioned in no. 285 (Feb. 23). Those fragments from the second act of *Tristan* thaw the ice at last, and Liszt “forgets” on Feb. 17, adding a postscript, “You will presently receive from Vienna, through my cousin, a small parcel of *notes*”; which Wagner promptly answers with “For Heaven’s sake don’t send me *money* now; I couldn’t bear it. Send me your *Ideale*, and—if it has got so far—at last your *Dante*! For those I’m longing.”

* On the strength of which he treats Karl Ritter to “a dinner with oysters and champagne” in honour of Liszt’s birthday, Oct. 22, “while the military band on the Piazza played us the Rienzi overture quite capitally. We both drank your health, and so passed a splendid evening.” Karl had anticipated him with a congratulatory telegram, and will patch up his late quarrel in person by a few days’ visit to Weimar in December.

at all, in my present sorry plight.—D[ingelstedt] has sent me 5½ lines, asking what my fee was [for *Rienzi* at Weimar]. Better for the wretch to have sent money straight off. Lord, what people you all are, in your cosy cribs! Not one of you—it seems—can put himself in the place of a poor devil like me, who has to look on every taking as a lottery-prize”; and the 26th, “Good God, to think I should have to worry like this for a wretched dab of money! Really it’s too abominable.” Again, Dec. 5: “All that the world, or my ‘admirers and worshippers’—as I often have to hear them called—might do for me, would be to cast a serious sympathising glance on my whole situation, and then so exert themselves to ease my really difficult life that I might obtain untroubled leisure and relish for work . . . Enough. I can renounce the Weimar fee and *douceur* for *Rienzi*, especially as it would come too late to be of any help to me. Toward Easter of next year—and it would be certain to dawdle till then—I know how to help myself otherwise, though I shall have a very hard time in between.”

The enigmatic reference to Easter may be connected either with the American offer to which he replies Dec. 24 (see *M.* 128), with the Berlin *Lohengrin* (see later), or with hopes of performing-fees for *Tristan*; but we have no time left for guesses. Something similar is suggested by the extract obliquely quoted by Glasenapp from a letter of Nov. 19, where the master thanks Frau Ritter for her generous insistence on continuing the former stipend: “he accepts for this *one* year, but definitely waives it for all subsequent time, and hopes he may also not be needing that support beyond the year.” Presumably the first quarter’s instalment was to be brought back by Karl, who departs on a visit to his mother two days after this letter, leaving Wagner for six weeks to the sole companionship of Winterberger, who had arrived in Venice a month previously “with a Russian family, to pass the winter here; luckily he does not obtrude himself, as solitude is my only happiness now.” The last day of 1858, with all his “valuables” in pawn, accordingly found Wagner at his lowest ebb; notwithstanding that its evening brought a glowing congratulation from Liszt on act i, proofs of the score whereof he had just received from Haertels at its author’s request.*

* For sequel to the rest of Liszt’s letter see last long footnote.

With the dawn of 1859 things were somewhat to change for the better, commencing with Karl Ritter's return on New Year's Day—"he comes to see me now again at 8 each evening"—soon to be followed by "the sudden arrival of long-expected and therefore already despaired-of consignments of money, particularly from Vienna. My three valuables (may a lenient world forgive the luxury!) are now redeemed, and I'm set up again for a while" (to L., Jan. "7"). But it is not surprising that on the second day in it an attempt should have been made to guard against these constant fluctuations. "Believe me implicitly, when I tell you that the only true ground of my going on living now is the irresistible impulse to complete a whole series of artworks that still have life within me"—says the long letter of Jan. 2,* in which he unfolds to Liszt a scheme for acquisition of "an honourable and handsome pension, simply and solely to enable me to create my artworks entirely independent of outward successes. . . . At one time these receipts come pouring in, unexpected and scarce hoped for, suddenly reassuring me with a seductive sense of plenty; at another (being wholly incalculable) they just as unexpectedly hold off for long, reducing me to want and distress."

That was the mischief of it. Throughout his exile he had never known what income he could count upon, from one year's end to another. The considerable sums received in fees from time to time, of latter years, had been devoured by debts contracted previously; whilst the very fortuitousness of their receipt must tempt a man of the artistic temperament to regard them as a fresh excuse for contracting debts again. Moreover, the yield of *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, his principal stock in trade, was practically exhausted now, save in the sole case of Berlin, by sales effected once for all.

So he wants Liszt to try and bring about a "coalition of German princes" interested in his operas; since, "completely to fulfil its object, and meet my admittedly somewhat fastidious and not

* Written in the interval between that "paroxysmal" letter of New Year's Eve, which we do not possess, and receipt of Liszt's answer thereto; but completely outside the storm-centre.—As to the "Reihe von Kunstwerken," besides the uncompleted *RING* and *Tristan*, "the *Parzival* has occupied me once again," says the mid-December letter to Mathilde, and that of Jan. 19, "Sawitri [*Sieger*] and *Parzival* are filling my mind in advance."

quite ordinary needs, the pension to be granted would have to amount to at least two to three thousand thalers. I don't blush to name such a sum, on the one hand because experience has taught me that, constituted as I am (perhaps also—with the frame in which I set my works *), I can't conveniently do with less, and on the other I am well aware that artists such as Mendelssohn (though *he* was privately well off) have been allotted honorary salaries no smaller—and that from a single quarter." In return, he offers such contributories free stage-rights for their own court-theatres in "all my artistic works, completed or to come; and finally (as soon as I'm readmitted to Germany), to place myself at their disposal for the rehearsing and production of my operas, also—should they desire it—of other high-class works through presentment whereof I may hope to bring profit and honour to art." For how long? "I'm getting on for 46, and consequently speak of a probable future of 10 years at the utmost"—a computation luckily very much out, but it is singular that it should have been made within earshot of the spot whereon the amateur actuary expired a quarter of a century after.

The next letter to Liszt, Jan. "7," withdraws the Princely pension scheme: "Regard my letter of January 2 as neither written nor received," etc. But Liszt had already broached it to his own Grand Duke, and "as I was bound to anticipate from many similar conversations (which I never mention to you), various reasons were adduced for not entertaining it." So the only result is that *we* have some idea now of the rate at which the Wagner ménage, 'cures' and all, had been run for the last three to four years—between £300 and £450 per annum—let the philistines howl as they please.

Chief outer event of this winter was the Berlin production of *Lohengrin*. Last summer, von Bülow to Pohl: "*À propos*—

* "Wie ich nun einmal meine Werke ausstatte"—*Ausstattung* meaning the general 'get-up' of a book etc. For the psychological significance see the letter to Otto of June 5, 1860, "From next October I shall rent a smaller lodging, abandoning all idea of peace and comfort, as I shall have to bid good-bye to the Muse for a good long while . . . Only when I mean to woo and win the Muse, do I seriously think of equipping my abode with snugness"; and to Mathilde thereafter, "It is a smaller dwelling, and I hope not to have to write either poetry or music in it, as all it's fit for is a counting-house."

Lohengrin will be produced here next autumn for certain.* Hülßen wrote to Wagner not long since. Taubert will conduct (better than Dorn).” The same day, June 20, 58, Wagner had given Hülßen his consent and begged for “an advance of 100 Friedrichsd’or on the tantième.” Whether the advance was granted him, as with *Tannhäuser* three years before, we do not know. If not, so much the better for his “Easter” prospects, the first performance not actually taking place until the 23rd of January 59.

“*Jacta est alea*,” begins the *Neue Zeitschrift’s* report, signed by a Heinrich Emil who opines that “A far more poetical charm hovers over the whole representation, than ‘Tannhäuser’ has here had to boast of. In fact, not to be too exacting, we may declare ourselves thoroughly satisfied,” etc., etc. But the beautiful Berlin critics had fallen foul of the work, “with the solitary exception of Glasbrenner and Kossak,” says Emil, winding up with a promise of another article, “to bring forward some arguments for Wagner’s ‘Lohengrin’ from the musical-dramatic standpoint [most obliging], and at the same time exchange a few words with the critics anent an incident with Hr v. Bülow at the Singakademie in regard of which the non-partisan must emphatically take his side.”

The said “incident,” at once historic and characteristic, occurred at von Bülow’s own orchestral concert of Jan. 14 (anniversary of his first similar venture). Be it related in his mother’s words to her daughter: “The hall was fairly full. Hans’ playing [Beethoven’s concerto in G] was much applauded, the *Ideale* moderately, followed by loud hisses. To the horror of us all, Hans came to the edge of the platform, and said aloud, ‘I request the hisses to leave the room; it is not the custom here, to hiss!’ You may imagine the sensation. A few moments after, Hans was at his desk again, however, baton in hand, and conducted the next piece [prelude to *Lohengrin*, “much applauded”] as if nothing had happened . . . What Hans did, was unheard-of and inadmissible. Himself he is quite delighted . . . but the critics will repay him for it. *Kreuz, Volks* and

* Sept. 10: “Now that Sondershausen [March 26, 58] and Vienna have preceded it with *Lohengrin*, cautious Berlin has also decided on this opera, and is to mount it the end of November with great outward profusion—ward, alas, there is none here.”

National-Zeitung are said to be furious; the *Voss*, which I have just read, dismisses it mildly enough." The 17th: "To-morrow is the first night of Lohengrin [postponed at the last moment, then], and the critics' outcry will commence in earnest.—To think that human beings should attack each other so savagely, speak, write and act so *un-fairly*, in the name of the art of the *Fair* and *Harmonious!*" Dear lady, it was ever thus, and with your permission we now will listen to your son.

Hans v. Bülow to Alex. Ritter, Jan. 31: "Strictly, the production was quite bad, though far more tolerable than that of Tannhäuser. Taubert took nearly all the tempi too fast, but not too painfully askew. The cuts were partly murderous, besides being clumsy, yet not altogether indefensible in the interest of external success. Best as to singing were the Elsa—Frl. Wippern (splendid voice, in perfect tune)—and Formes as Lohengrin. The latter had had the great decency to come unbidden to my den, sing me his part, and crave my counsel. I made the fellow some remarks which he had the sense to write behind his ears and ultimately profit by. For the rest, he sings the rôle with unexpected affection, the narration in the third act, indeed, quite admirably. The Wagner superb as actress—I have never seen such virtuosity in the guise of genius. Every attitude so fine that one would like to see it eternalised in statuary! Per contra, the singing quite awful in part,* with exception of the first two scenes in the second act, in which one was startled by many good points. Outrageous was the Herald of Herr Pfister, who had transposed everything into the tenor register in such a way that the whole part was mangled out of recognition. Fricke quite good—Krause fair. Chorus less disgraceful than usual. Orchestra here and there quite slovenly or disreputable (*liederlich* oder *lüderlich*). As for the reception, it may be described as much

* Last Dec. 31 to Frau von Milde, who was to sing at his concert (and did, with great success): "With Elisabeth's Prayer you will give a good lesson to Frl. Johanna (to whom I shall therefore send tickets) and enlighten her a little as to the unsingableness of her uncle's music. The rehearsals of Lohengrin, to wit, are said to be not proceeding without dreadful complaints of that from her side." As to the Prayer, see P. III. 184, whilst even Minna writes from Dresden this January 59: "For the first time have I understood the Prayer in the third act. As candid aunt, I should not now advise Johanna Wagner to sing that part here; she would have a very hard task with it. She never could sing the Prayer; it always gave me pain."

better than that of Tannhäuser. Tumultuous calls after each act—the most religious attention during the acts, when any applause was silenced, as people evidently did not want to miss a note. Two sold-out nights already—every ticket taken for the next four. Next Friday the third, Monday the fourth [Feb. 4 and 7].—Criticism so contemptible that it has dealt itself a terrible blow in the eyes of the majority of the public. Herewith I forward you the second—that of Kossak, unfortunately, is not what I expected after having stood him a good dinner at Schott's with the Milde and Hildebrandt. The best is that in the *Börsenzeitung*—also forwarded herewith. This I regularly extorted, not by amiability, but by personal terrorism. I had sent a quasi-challenge to the editor of this paper, touching an infamy anent my concert; that's what the opening alludes to.—And now I must conclude, as I still have to write to your brother, who sent me a delightful letter [from Venice] to-day, to Wagner, Liszt, and smaller fry.”

From Bülow's next to A. R. (*ca* Feb. 8) we may gather that the Dresden management, which had never yet produced this work, now sent a deputation to take stock of it: Kapellmeister “Krebs called on me yesterday . . . Krebs had come here with Tichatschek and two other gentlemen, as I hear, for the Lohengrin performance announced. Elsa's hoarseness prevented it, and the Dresdeners were put off with Tancredi. Last time, Lohengrin was replaced by the Capuleti. Charming sister-in-law, yours!—It is perfectly abominable that no further performance of Lohengrin has been brought off since the second, Wednesday, January 26! And now if Ortrud is going to get married, of course it will be out of the question, and, tired of waiting, the public will lose all interest. Why didn't your dear papa-in-law [Wagner's brother Albert, stage-manager now] give Elsa to the Köster? The Wipern could easily have [re-]appeared later, and alternated with her. Enough—it disgusts me!”

How many performances followed in the next few months, I am unprepared to say; but next November the *N.Z.* speaks of a reprise “on the 7th inst., after a five-month armistice for lack of a ‘victorious Lohengrin.’” So *tantième*-paying Berlin fell far behind purchasing-outright Vienna.

This commercial view is fully justified by Wagner's letter of Jan. 28 to Cäcilie: “I had heard nothing yet of Lohengrin at

Berlin beyond what a telegram of Bülow's told me, [in which?] it is said to have turned out tolerably and been well received. The whole truth on the first point, and whether it would satisfy me, I leave in abeyance; as things stand with me now, the second matters most to me, for takings of this kind (I always have the best receipts from the worst productions!) alone can make out my further lease of life. My works are doomed to give me joy only for just so long as I'm working at them; once finished, they give me nothing but bother, with the sole redeeming feature, that they supply me the means for work again by making life possible."

"As to the future shaping of my outward life I can tell you nothing at present"—says another part of the above—"I can scarcely hope for a free pardon from the King of Saxony. Yet it is not impossible that a combination of German princes friendly to me may succeed in obtaining me the German Bund's occasional leave to stay in certain of its States—with exception of Saxony. That is bound to be decided this year. For the present it is settled that my new work, 'Tristan und Isolde,' is to come to its first performance in September, at Carlsruhe.*—I think of passing next winter with Minna.† Where—will much

* On the 19th to Mathilde: "The Grand Duke of Baden sends me word that I'm to reckon for certain on producing the Tristan at Carlsruhe under my personal control. They want it for the 6th of September, the Grand Duke's birthday. I should have nothing against it . . . so we'll see if he carries it through, and whether—I am ready." The 7th and 23rd, letters are sent to Devrient, naturally on this subject. Then Feb. 23 an enquiry of Liszt's is answered: "The G.D. counts on my personal presence. On this last point, which I of course have always had to make the chief condition, I received preciser news a short while back. The G.D. intends to let me come to Carlsruhe, for the needful time, entirely on his own responsibility; nothing is to leak out beforehand, and my presence is simply to be an accomplished fact . . . I think that very princely, and this young sovereign has my confidence." Eventually the risk was wisely not incurred.

† The experiences of Frau Minna during this fifteen-month separation I must reserve for next volume, meanwhile referring the reader to my preface to the *Mathilde* book. Here it need only be said that three days after the above (in text) Wagner begs Haertels to forward her an *Iphigenie* fee from the Mannheim theatre, and March 17 to send her an advance on *Tristan* fees to be expected from Hanover and Munich—which they do—whilst on the 7th of April he tells Clara Wolfram that he has "just provided her again with enough to lead a life of really elegant comfort the summer through."

depend on the state of her health ; in any case I shall have to try and find a particularly mild southern climate for her. But all that is quite uncertain. Paris I abominate. Venice suits me very well for the present. Here I live as if out of the world, between sky and sea, in great retirement. Unfortunately I have often been ill ; although not dangerously, yet very depressingly. I think of staying here till June.” To Klindworth also, four days later, Feb. 1 : “If all goes well, I shall finish the ‘Tristan’ in June, until when I remain here.” But now appears the irony of Fate.

At every single court-theatre of the German Bund one or other of the outlaw’s operas was now upon the active list, whilst Dresden itself was on the point of mounting *Lohengrin* at last ; yet—the Saxon Government could demand his expulsion from Venice, not strictly in league with that Bund ! After close upon ten years of exile, during which the victim had played no part in politics whatever, it was nothing less than infamous to pretend him a dangerous character. And at the same time to allow his name to grace the programmes and fill the coffers of Royal establishments ! But “no exception could be made”—so ran the Saxon ukase which kept a second genius also, Gottfried Semper, the weaver of Dresden’s finest public buildings, still ostracised.

“A suggestion has been made me [privately] from Dresden, to go there with a safe-conduct, surrender my person to the law, and let action be commenced against me ; in consideration whereof, even in the event of conviction, the King’s pardon would be a certainty . . . With that suggestion I have not fallen in”—Wagner had written Mathilde the 19th of January. The 9th of February he writes his former chief, von Lüttichau, a semi-confidential letter of exceptional interest,* but far too long to be more than gleaned from, here :—

To expose myself to months of examination, a long and painful

* This letter (*cf* 123 *sup.*) is an endeavour to get Lüttichau to intercede, “as my last possible mediator,” with the King himself. Lüttichau curtly replied, Feb. 16, that it was beyond his province and Wagner had better apply to the King direct. Thereupon, having already taken the latter course “three years ago,” Wagner sent the new Saxon Minister of Justice a petition (*vid. ibid.*) the substance whereof is summarised in his letter of Feb. 23 to Liszt. Again no success.

trial, concerning things which now are merely shadows in my memory ; to submit to confrontations with every loafer who pretended to have observed something suspicious about me in those bygone days ; and throughout it never to be free of apprehension lest some long-repented folly should plunge me into penalty and prison after all,—from the nature of things and the reaction on my ailing health I can only consider that path to pardon as non-existent. Whether I can yet complete and endow the world with a set of artworks the plans for which are alive within me, depends on husbanding my physical and mental powers ; this consideration, which, with any self-consciousness, after my artistic successes I now have to take, emphatically forbids my contemplating the attempt to sue for pardon on the path suggested.—Consequently I should have heartily to regret that, supposing I really had to commit such an indiscretion as in 1849, I had not done so as a Badian, Austrian, or even a Russian subject, in Baden, Austria, or Russia ; when I should have partaken of the same clemency which long since quashed all proceedings instituted against those in an exactly similar case with mine, and granted them a safe return to their fatherland.

The direct occasion of this half appeal, half protest, of Feb. 9? “That not the faintest clemency has begun for me, I have just had to learn once again, to my most mournful amazement, from the steps of the Royal [Saxon] Government to induce the Imp. Austrian Government to turn me out of Venice.” In the draft petition of some ten days later (see last footnote) he speaks of “the expulsion-order (*Ausweisungsmaßregel*) received, as I must assume, from the R. Saxon Government” ; to Liszt a couple of days after (Feb. 23) he definitely says, “on the reclamation of the Saxon Government.” From whom else could it possibly have emanated, than the vindictive Saxon Premier, Beust? It was none of Austria’s own initiative, since Frau Wille had been informed the end of last September : “The Austrian officers here often surprise me with delicate attentions [e.g. selections from his music by their bands] . . . I am on excellent terms with the police. True, my pass was demanded again after a while, so that I thought measures must be commencing ; but it was soon sent me back with all ceremony, and the assurance that there was absolutely no objection to my unmolested stay in Venice.” Moreover, the letter to Lüttichau proceeds : “I have hopes that the pressing intervention of my doctor here may succeed in moving H.I.H. the Governor-General, Archduke Ferdinand

Maximilian, to postpone my eviction till a warmer season of the year”; that of Feb. 22 to Mathilde: “Immediately on receipt of my memorial, the Archduke Max had the order for my expulsion stopped, so I’ll see if I can bring off the draft of the third act also here, in which case I should instrument it in Switzerland not far from you, presumably at Lucerne”; and to Liszt next day: “I was advised to submit unconditionally, but to send a medical certificate to the Governor-General, with the request to let me remain a few months longer for urgent considerations of health. That has borne fruit for the moment, and I may stay.”

Nevertheless this menace, thus shewn to have arrived in the first week of February,* was unsettling enough—particularly when combined with the warlike preparations at Turin—to make him decide a few weeks later “to begin the composition of my third act where I can finish it without interruption.” Consequently the tyrannous interference of the Saxon Government was the cause of the full score of act ii of *Tristan*, at which “I’m working very slowly, but writing down nothing save the very best that can occur to me” (to Klindworth, Feb. 1), being his sole but splendid harvest from the Adriatic.

A brief chronological record of this scoring:—

After a pause of three months, we saw it virtually commenced in the first half of October (389 *sup.*). Nov. 7 and 16 Wagner writes Haertels that he “hopes soon to be sending further ‘Tristan’ manuscript”; but that “soon” is not just yet, for he tells Liszt the 21st: “Haertels are treating me with great patience.

* Probably on the 3rd, as Bülow writes Liszt Feb. 4: “We were woken up last night, at two in the morning, by a telegram from Venice in which Wagner begs me to borrow him money and send it by telegraph ‘to a banker in Venice’ . . . Wagner’s telegram contained the words ‘*höchst wichtiger Vorfall. Brief mehr*’”—i.e. “Most momentous occurrence. Letter explaining.” We do not possess the said “letter,” alluded to also below, but the incident looks very much like a sudden preparation for flight. Bülow forwarded 150 thalers, half from himself, half from a friend, and on the 7th writes Liszt again: “Wagner will repay me for certain; he wrote me so this morning. And even if he doesn’t, I surely owe him a tiny sacrifice. Devil take it—I’m not depositing in the savings-bank! Moreover—he had the right to demand a pecuniary service from me; some time ago I had placed at his disposal the fees sent me by Haertel for the ‘Iphigenie’ arrangement—seventy thalers.”

At first, when I believed I should have done with the [whole] score by this autumn, I whipped them up terribly; but I have since had to leave them in a woful rut, and cannot think of sending them the second act before the end of December. I can only work at such a thing in the very most favourable mood." Then, after his second interruption by illness, says the Diary of Dec. 8, "I have been occupied with the Tristan again since yesterday; I'm in the second act still," etc.; whilst the entry of the 22nd finds him at "Wen du umfängen." We may therefore take it that the 'orchestral sketch' of the whole love-scene was completed by Christmas 1858.

There now remaining nothing but the final scene to orchestrate—less than a fifth of the act—and its 'sketch' being terminally dated "9. März 1859," at this point, i.e. the end of '58, he must have suspended creative work awhile, and taken up the fair-copying en bloc of what was already achieved in every respect save an occasional nuance. With an act so closely interwoven as this second, not till that love-scene was fully worked out in the rough would he be likely to commit the opening pages to the hands of the engraver; so we find him on the 7th of January still holding out to Haertels nothing but a "prospect of the despatch of manuscript." By the 18th, however, "the old gold pen was spinning its last web over the fleeting transports of my pair of lovers' first re-meeting" (*M.* 95), and on the 24th he sends Haertels "a portion of the second act [its first two-fifths?], hoping to be able to push on faster with the work now."

Feb. 22 to Mathilde, "If only my Tristan turns out well! And that it will, as never anything yet," marks another stage in the final scoring; for Haertels had been sent "further manuscript of 'Tristan'"—in all probability the second two-fifths of the act, down to the end of the love-scene—the day before. At this point we may assume that the working-out of the much shorter third scene was taken in hand, the orchestral 'sketch' and fair copy now proceeding almost *pari passu* (as with the close of act iii hereafter); until on March the 10th, as accompaniment to that charming letter to little Myrrha, "Mamma" is told: "Yesterday I completed my second act at last, the big (musical) problem which gave everyone pause, and know it solved as none before; it is the summit of my art till now. I still have a week to employ on the manuscript," etc. Then, **March 17** he writes Haertels

that he will send them “the remainder of the 2nd ‘Tristan’ act next day at latest,” winding up, however, with “To-day I am sending you the close of such an act as I have never yet composed.”

His second act despatched, within a week he will bid goodbye to “dreamy Venice,” leaving behind him “Karl, who quite dreads my departure” but will never see his face again, though the best of relations are preserved with the rest of the Ritter family. “Winterberger, who is going to Rome, took leave of me yesterday, weeping and sobbing convulsively,” said the letter of March 10, this young man having waited for the final chord. “Of evenings of late I’ve had Ritter and Winterberger to play me the chief parts bit by bit, and so it seems I’ve done a pretty thing: all my earlier works, poor creatures, were cast aside in favour of this single act! Thus am I continually reducing my children to one” (March 2, to M.). Let us hear the verdict of another and stauncher disciple, the first to conduct the *Tristan* prelude (at Prague, March 12, 59), who thus delivers himself after the proof-sheets of this second act have reached his hands:—

“Most remarkable in every respect, magnificent, colossal, but ‘gigantically’ difficult. Over many a bar I rack my brains for 30 minutes,” i.e. to find a pianoforte counterpart (Hans von Bülow to Hans von Bronsart, July 30, 59). “I am absorbed by a truly infernal labour, of difficulties to break one’s head: the arrangement of the second act of ‘Tristan’ for piano. I am curious about the impression this will give you. It is far more complex, far more *savamment* anti-classical than the first act. There have been days I’ve so despaired of my attempts that I thought of asking your advice and help . . . Dieu, how despotic this music is! It gleams and slices like the steel of a maiden guillotine. For the rest, it seems to me that in this work, even more than in the ‘*Nibelungen*,’ Wagner pushes music’s power of expression to its final limits, its last recesses; beyond, we should necessarily arrive at—*quarter-tones*” (to Liszt, Aug. 14). “Regarding this new opera of Wagner’s,* prepare yourself for the most unforeseen and revolutionary impressions,

* Don’t be shocked at the term “opera”; Wagner himself alludes to *Tristan* as such in a letter to Haertels of April 6, 1859.

alike artistic and theoretic (*wissenschaftlich*). Tristan is to Lohengrin as Fidelio to, let us say, the ancient Hiller's 'Lottchen am Hofe.' How it would delight me to have you with me in this labour, but how you also would be plagued with the choice between the different 'trial arrangements' I'm obliged to make of every page" (to L. Köhler, Aug. 17). "I'm sweating all day at the pianoforte edition of the second act of Wagner's Tristan. Most remarkable music—grand, but as anti-pianoforte* as anything of Berlioz's. How sorry I am, not to have you here, to seek your counsel in my work. Sometimes it really gives too much racking for one brain" (to Bronsart, *ca* Aug. 20). "I'm working like a galley-slave at the pft score of Wagner's Tristan; publisher and composer are putting enormous pressure on me, as the opera is to be mounted at Carlsruhe in October"—Aug. 24 to the same, with a few pages of the full-score proofs "on the sly" and citation of two or three motives, among them "the very characteristic bass which makes its first appearance in the Prelude," i.e. Fate or Death theme. "I have just finished the second act with my 110th page of music-paper, and say with Octavio, though in another sense, '*respiro.*' . . . The time devoted to *this* work has been by no means lost to me; many a hard nut has my head had to crack—which will have brought it a good step forward. Moreover, there will be a fee; I fancy about 120 to 150 thalers in all, for which sum Benazet [Baden Kursaal-king] and others, it's true, demand more moderate exertions" (to his mother, Aug. 31). "What you said this morning, as to the difficulties of Wagner's work, has made me fearful lest you innocently should drop a similar remark in presence of some ill-natured musician or theatrical who would immediately pass on the alarm to the bigwigs of dramatic music-institutes, and scare them off in advance . . . As to the special difficulty of my arrangement, I think you have involuntarily exaggerated it. When engraved, the thing will look much more engaging than in my bad handwriting with its many erasures. Further, it was my object to turn out a compressed score '*in nuce,*' to make the unaccustomed reading easier for the

* See Wagner's own remark of 1865: "Bülow once achieved the impossible, by bringing off a playable pianoforte edition of this score, and to this day no one understands how he did it" (*P.* VIII. 245).

lazy dog behind the prompter's box. It's all playable enough for those otherwise able to grasp this style of music" (to J. Stern, same date). Finally to Brendel, who prints this portion of a strictly private letter in the *Neue Zeitschrift* of Sept. 9, 59, with an acknowledgment of his "indiscretion" in doing so,* and to whom we may presumably ascribe a cobbling of its first two to four sentences:—

With the appearance [!] of 'Tristan und Isolde' the external situation of the New-German school [?+] enters an entirely new phase. As the 'Nibelungen' repose for the present in Wagner's desk, this one-night opera steps into their place. Here we have the realisation of Wagner's tendencies, and in a mode altogether undreamt. No one expected from Wagner such music as this. [Henceforward private Hans, for certain]. It links directly to the last Beethoven—no more analogy with Weber or Gluck. 'Tristan' is to 'Lohengrin' as 'Fidelio' to the 'Entführung,' the C sharp minor quartet to the first in F, op. 18. I confess to having fallen out of one transport of surprise into another. The musician who refuses to believe in progress, after this, has no ears. On each page of it Wagner strikes home by his immense purely-musical science; of this architectonic, this musical detail-work, you can form no conception too high. For invention, 'Tristan' is the most puissant of all his works; nothing is so sublime, e.g., as this second act. I have experimented with fragments of it on various musicians not strictly belonging to our party; one, for instance, was [almost] speechless with astonishment: 'I should never have expected such a thing from Wagner—it's by far the finest he has written—here he reaches the highest point of the Ideal conceivable by our age.'—

* The fragment was at once reprinted in Zellner's *Blätter für Musik*, Vienna, with a pious editorial hope that "Wagner might never have cause to complain more of the zeal of his friends, owing to similar effusions, than of that of his adversaries"—but without any reference to Brendel's explanation. And this Zellner had but lately puffed the *Graner Messe!* For Hans' crushing retort see *H. v. B.'s Briefe* vol. III.—humorously also entitled by Messrs B. & H. "Band IV." of his *Briefe und Schriften*.

† Of the adherents of this "school" in general, and their first official "Future-feast" at Leipzig (including the *Tristan* prelude, June 1) in particular, Wagner himself tells Mathilde, June 21, 59: "I almost wish to have no visitors from over there this summer; before the completion of *Tristan* such a noisy incursion could scarcely do aught but disturb me. Indeed they all mean something so totally other than I; one must open one's eyes to that, though without any bitterness." To tell the truth, this constant tacking of his inimitable genius to a "school" of ambitious mediocrities did him more harm, in the long run, than Liszt's practical advocacy had erewhile done him good.

After 'Tristan' there can only exist two parties: those people who have learnt something, and those who have learnt nothing. If this opera fails to convert a man, he has no music in his body. Such rich, clear and original polyphony is not to be found in too many earlier scores. You know me too well, to think I should fall into extravagant gush; you know that my heart always asks my head's authority before succumbing to enthusiasm. Well, in this instance my head has given its unconditional sanction. Popular, 'Tristan und Isolde' can hardly become, but no at all poetically gifted layman will avoid being seized by the sublimity and sweep of genius that reveal themselves in this work. Apart from everything else—I assure you, this opera is the pinnacle of the whole Art of Tone till now!

"I still have a week to employ on the manuscript, then to attend to my awful correspondence; after which I think of honouring Verona and Milan with a few days, and crossing my old Gotthardt viâ Como and Lugano. Rejoice me ere then with one more account of yourself . . . Kindest regards to Wesendonck, and thanks for his practical forethought"—said the letter of March 10. The 17th he writes Haertels that he intends leaving "Tuesday or Wednesday," i.e. the 22nd or 23rd; and as that Tuesday he telegraphs them an *enquiry* from Venice, anent their sending of money "to Dresden" (i.e. to Minna), he could scarcely leave in fact before the 23rd. Reaching Milan the 24th, he must have abandoned all thought of Verona: * a pity, not only for its immense architectural superiority to Milan—whose cathedral one is delighted to hear him describe as "imposing to tediousness"—but also for the great appropriateness of a visit from the creator of *Tristan* to the birthplace of Romeo and Juliet.

From Milan he writes two letters March 25, to Liszt and to Mathilde. That to Liszt (and still more the under-tone of its reply, Apr. 6) shews that the resentment of the beginning of the year is still rankling at Weimar: "From day to day I hoped to get a sign of life from you [in response to the long letter of Feb. 23], and in that vain hope I delayed informing you of my intended

* His sole excursion during the seven-month Venice stay had been to Treviso for a night and a day, "leaving nothing in my memory save the dust and poor tortured horses"; whilst Milan is "a new world" with its "hum of streets, a world of dust and dryness, and Venice seems a fairy dream already" (*M.*, 107, 111).

change of sojourn”—says the announcement to Liszt, “with a thousand hearty greetings,” also, “I have a deal of trouble with my health still; otherwise, things are going quite enduringly with me.” The last clause points to temporary freedom from financial pinch—Prague seems to have just sent 30 napoleons for *Rienzi* (prem. next Oct. 24), another quarter of the Ritter stipend and Berlin royalties would soon be coming in, whilst completion of *Tristan* would bring him the balance of Haertels’ fee (acknowledged Aug. 10)—but that “health” allusion shews how the ocular exertion of fair-copying had told upon his nervous system once again, though one could hardly expect him to diagnose the cause. To Mathilde: “I am tired, and had been much agitated of late, presumably from the suddenness of Spring, with thumping heart and boiling blood. When I took your violet in my hand, to wish myself something, the poor thing trembled so between my hot fingers that the wish came to me quick: Quiet blood! Quiet heart! And now I confide in the violet, for it has heard my wish . . . And though I shall have no more letters to Venice, I soon shall no longer be far from you. I’m looking forward to Lucerne with joy . . . friend Swan is already en route . . . Tomorrow ahead to the Alps!”

Lucerne would be reached ere the end of the month (*cf* 356 *sup.*), and at the beginning of the next the Green Hill is revisited. “The dream of Wiedersehen is dreamt . . . When I read on thine own face the traces of so great a suffering, when I pressed to my lips thy shrunk hand—a deep thrill shot through me, and called me to a finer duty. Our love’s miraculous power has helped till now * . . . Thou heavenly saint, have trust in me!—I shall be able” (last entry in the Diary, April 4, 59).

So begins the truly crowning period of their intercourse, the time when “the overcoming of grief yields strength, and pride, and—happiness.”

Between the Green Hill Villa and the Schweizerhof, visits and return visits, though limited in number by the distance, are frequent enough to preserve the feeling of an intimacy now restored to its original harmony. For it is obvious that when,

* *Cf* the first Diary entry (Aug. 21, 58): “Of a surety, we shall forget all our sorrows, and nothing but a higher feeling will remain: the consciousness that here a miracle has happened, the like whereof Dame Nature weaves but once in centuries, perhaps never succeeding so nobly before.”

within a fortnight of that Wiedersehen, Wagner can speak of telegraphing Otto "to send the coupé to the station at 9 P.M." to meet him, his relations with both the Wesendoncks had resumed the footing of præ-*Tristan* days—but with a confidence increased by knowledge of past dangers overcome. "Children, that we are *three* is incomparable, my and your greatest triumph," he writes them from Paris next November, and to Mathilde midway in this Lucerne halt, "The visit of you two did me good . . . I'm calm and fairly cheerful. Be so yourself!"

Thus the period of the composition of act iii of *Tristan* is one of psychic convalescence, characterised for the most part by serenity and genial humour: * "I always feel quite restored from pain, so soon as this smile steals through my spirit." True, there are intervals of "hypochondria," when the "vile weather endured for 3 months" forbade the exercise so necessary in relief of those astigmatic eyes which Nature herself had taught him "to close for a quarter of an hour after work"—horse-exercise now, for the first time, by doctor's orders. But its severest attack, in the first half of May, when "I gave vent to my temper in a long letter to Liszt" (*M.* 129), had other cause enough:—

Feb. 22 Wagner had entreated Liszt to send his *Ideale* and *Dante* scores, should the latter already be published. That letter, together with its lengthy sequel of the 23rd, remained unanswered for six weeks, namely till after Wagner's next, from Milan (410 *sup.*). Meanwhile both works had appeared, the *Dante* bearing its austere dedication "An Richard Wagner," and three copies of each, as evidenced by Liszt's letter of that date to Heinrich Porges, had been sent to Prague so early as *March* 10. Then Liszt answers Wagner's Milan letter with a somewhat laconic re-welcome to Switzerland, the 6th of April, but not a word about these scores! Put it that in the first instance he was uncertain how much longer his friend would stay at Venice, in the second he had been given no preciser address for Lucerne than "poste restante": still, in that letter of April 6—which

* Witness even those playful allusions to presents of "rusks," which the thick-skulled have treated so solemnly. "Zwieback," of course, soon advanced to the rank of a catchword for every other form of little gift or commission; so that when he writes from Paris, asking Frau Wesendonck to find him a servant, he says, "It's a case of providing a Zwieback once more, and a big one this time."

makes no enquiry, by the way, as to Wagner's exact present habitat—it would have been so easy to ask, “Where shall I send my two new works to?” Since he makes no reference whatever to them, Wagner at last reminds him on the 19th: “Tell me, dearest Franz, how would you feel in my place? I have repeatedly begged you to send me your new works as they appear. The *Ideale* appeared some time ago—yet you are silent about it. Now I read the publisher's advertisement of the—issued—*Dante*!!—How would you feel if that happened to yourself? Or—can you still be involved in some strange delusion about me? Impossible, surely!”

Alas, it was by no means impossible, after Tausig's letter of last summer.* Liszt sends the *Dante* score, “an ordinary copy, exactly as it came from Haertels”—thus removing any chance of excuse by bookbinder's delay, as Wagner tells Bülow next autumn—saving that he had added “some hyperbolic lines as reinforcement to the dedication”; those lines (see *W.-L.* no. 289) being dated “Easter 59,” i.e. April 24—over six weeks later than at least the three examples sent to relatively new acquaintances at Prague—and the copy “unaccompanied by a single word of friendly apology.” It was an almost unpardonable slight, a case unparalleled, and certainly Wagner is to be the reverse of blamed if he privately attributed it and other recent symptoms to a growing hostility of the Fürstin's. The highest-sounding compliments hand-added to a printed dedication must ring hollow indeed, when the dedicatee is the last to receive a complimentary copy. No wonder he “stormed” in his long reply of May 8, though his only direct reproach is contained in the words: “I have heard nothing from any of my friends for ever so long; presumably they all suppose me very happy in my darling Switzerland, in this glorious solitude, forgetting all the world in the joy of composing.—I bear them no grudge for so imagining. But if they only knew that I had had to point a pistol even at your breast, to get from you the *Dante* dedicated to myself, they would have some criterion for further matters. What say you?” Unless we choose

* See p. 369 above. Apropos—says a billet to Liszt of May 21, 59: “Do send me young Tausig. I hear he's available. My wife even writes me, he wanted to come to me.” We hear no more of it, and Tausig never came to Lucerne; neither did any other visitor from Germany till Liszt gave Felix Draeseke a letter of introduction in the latter half of July.

to treat as sarcasm the succeeding remark that they had better keep the private inscription "entirely to ourselves" as it had "made me positively blush for shame," that is the whole reproach, and a very natural one; apart from renewed praise of the *Dante*, and a reference to the *Sym. poems* essay already dealt with (210 *sup.*), the rest of the letter is mostly a tearing of the writer's self in pieces. Yet Liszt could begin his answer of the 14th with: "What an appalling storm—your letter, dearest Richard! How desperately it lashes and crashes everything down! What is to be heard amid this howling tempest? To what purpose more words, mere words!" (*cf* 81 *sup.*). Four "mere words" would have been greatly to the purpose: "Forgive my unaccountable omission." They are not uttered, and however it be patched from time to time, the rift in the lute is bound to grow wider and wider.

With this episode is connected a break, threatening awhile to be serious, in the progress of act iii; but we must first work up to that, and thus commence our final stage.

April 6, Haertels are informed that "his removal to Lucerne has proved very beneficial to him so far, and he hopes to be sending them the last act of 'Tristan' within three months" (only a month's miscalculation). The 7th, to Mathilde: "The piano has arrived . . . I hope to be at Tristan to-morrow." Apr. 10: "The third act is begun"—the day before, witness the MS. composition-draft—"It plainly shews me I shall invent nothing new any more [!]. That one supreme blossom-tide awoke within me such a wealth of germs, that I now have but to keep on dipping in my store, to rear the flower with easy tilth." Yet upon that day itself, or the next, he produces his immortal Herdsman's Ditty, with perhaps an echo in it from the Venice "chant of gondoliers" (*cf* *M.* 36 and *P. V.* 73). There is other new matter enough in this act, whether the fruit of those "buds and blossoms which a brief-lived season, like a fertilising thunder-storm, awoke in me," or not; but even though he adds, "at actual creation I can arrive with it no more" (Apr. 26), the marvel of act iii is its constantly *fresh* presentation and blending of themes one might have deemed exhausted in act ii. When all is finished: "Don Felix [Draeseke] declares the third act finer even than the second. I beg you to twist his head straight for him. Am I to

tolerate that sort of thing?” *Which* really is the finer? With three such peerless segments of one whole, as the acts of *Tristan*, it is a question as impossible as needless to decide; but it is on the third act that Wagner dwells so fondly in his threnody on its first exponent, Ludwig Schnorr, just six years later (*P. IV. 229-30, 234-6*).

“I do some work each day, but brief and little”—is the record of April 26,* though the net result was already the achievement of over a quarter of the composition-draft in little more than a fortnight. Then May the 1st, with two fifths accomplished (down to “vor Sehnsucht nicht zu sterben”), a temporary hitch occurs, a kink in the coil of inspiration, and he commences the ‘orchestral sketch’ instead; thus returning to the method pursued with act i, whereas act ii had been completed in the draft, however “slightly,” before the working-out began at all.

It is during this hitch that the “stormy” letter of May 8 discussed above is sent to Liszt, intimating *inter alia* that the callousness of German potentates may force “the most Germanic of all Germanic opera-composers” to accept an offer from America; in which case “the Carlsruhe *Tristan* project would be crossed to such an extent that I should have to give it up for the nonce, probably never to resume it. With the last act of this child of sorrows I now am standing on the extreme brink of ‘to be or not to be’—the slightest pressure on any of the springs of common Chance, to which I’m so remorselessly abandoned, may slay this child in the last throes of birth”—or in earlier words of the same letter: “It’s all very well to say, ‘Complete your *Tristan*, and then we’ll see’—but suppose I were not to complete my *Tristan* because I couldn’t? I feel as if I should break down at last, pumped out, in sight of the goal(?). I at least look at my book every day with good will enough; but my head remains waste, my heart empty, and I stare out into the clouds of mist and rain, which have blocked all chance of stirring up my sluggish blood by open-air excursions ever since I’ve been here.”

That was the day before arrival of the first present of *Zwieback*,

* For fuller details the reader will naturally consult the *Mathilde* volume, the Lucerne Letters in which are so largely concerned with this third act of *Tristan* that we can only wish Wagner had been intimately corresponding with Frau Wesendonck throughout his whole creative life. Here I can only offer the barest skeleton.

May 9, which restores him to good heart for composing through association with "*der fernen Aerztin*." "I observe it is a potent drug," he jests; but its virtue lasted none too long, at present—presumably till completion of the first half of the composition-draft with the end of Tristan's *Tränk* soliloquy, "the apex of the tragic pyramid" (*P.* IV. 230). At this point he must have returned to the orchestral sketch, laid aside on the 9th after eight days' work at it, and have been faced once more with the unspecified stumbling-block in *that*; for he writes Devrient a letter on the 12th the gist whereof is given us in that of the 15th to Liszt: "You may judge how things are going with me, alack, from my conscience having made me write Devrient a few days since to count on neither me nor Tristan any longer. It had to come to that at last—and for the present there's an end of it!"

It was not an end, of course, but apparently a total stoppage for about a week, quite explicable by the tremendous mental strain of that *Tränk* soliloquy and the temporary difficulty of refocussing attention on an earlier section of the act for the purpose of working this first half out. In this instance we are afforded no clue, as said, to the offending passage, but Mathilde is told, the 21st of May, that it "had so displeased me of late that I believed I must wholly recast it. Nothing better had occurred to me, however, and I was so wretched about it that I thought of throwing up, and so on. Finally—in my despair—I fair-copy the passage out to-day, leaving it exactly as in the [orchestral?] sketch, save for correction of a few small trifles here and there; I render it to myself, and—find it so good that I was unable to improve upon it for that very reason.—Isn't that laughable?"

Thus the three weeks' evil spell was broken at last the day before his birthday, and henceforth work progresses in a happier vein, with no serious interruption, though it seems restricted for the next four weeks to orchestral working-out, and subsequent fair-copying, of the part composed already. May 23, "I've worked a little to-day, and again it went off as the day before yesterday," i.e. well. Not very rapidly at first, as on the birthday he had had to commence a course of mineral waters, by medical advice: "I wanted to defer it for sake of my work, but finally had to give in"—he tells Otto, May 26*—"and now the hope

* Also, "I hear from Germany that they're in no hurry for my works . .

smiles on me, after obtaining the Lower House's concurrence, of effecting freer motion for the Upper House of my microcosmic parliament. At present I can only work as if to while away the time; minerals won't let one do otherwise." Though actual composition was suspended during treatment, that "whiling away the time" was fairly continuous; for Mathilde hears the 29th, "Work has gone enduringly—which helps," and the 30th its nature: "I'm busy with the working-out of the first half of my act now," characterised a few lines lower as "technische Ausführung."

By the 5th of June the "technical elaboration" of that section is completed: "I have just been playing through the finished worked-out first half of my act, and had to tell myself what dear God once told himself, when he found that All was good!" The same day, a Sunday, he writes Haertels that "the weather had influenced his work unfavourably, but at end of the week he will supply them with the manuscript of 'Tristan' needful for the engraver; at the same time asking for proofs of act ii." Then on the 17th, again to Frau Wesendonck: "I have just despatched the first manuscript of the 3rd act to Leipzig . . . Tomorrow, if the sun shines, I'll try and start composing again." In the brief interval he had evidently received and corrected the proofs of act ii in addition, as he begs for 'revises' thereof in his next letter to Haertels (July 4, with a second instalment of "manuscript").

Arrears cleared off (all but that second quarter of the fair copy), the latter half of act iii is begun in earnest June 19, Whitsunday. True, work is arrested for a couple of days by "this godforsaken weather," but on the 23rd we hear: "I'm in

time enough for them after the war." As Haertels were "worrying for manuscript" (see letter to *M.*, May 23), this clearly refers to Liszt's message of the 14th, "D. does not expect to give Tristan before December, on the Grand Duchess's birthday; so there is no particular hurry about your ending the work." On the 31st Wagner writes Devrient again, doubtless informing him that work is resumed, as Haertels are told July 4 that the Karlsruhe production is to take place in October and "Devrient wants a copy of the 3rd act soon." That production did not come off; too long a story, in every sense, for the present volume.—Another point in the letter to Otto: "To-day my long-lost box from Venice has suddenly turned up," etc. Containing the second act of *Siegfried* and other "sketches," the box had been detained in Italy by the Austrian (?) military, thus making "the war a nuisance to me" in more ways than one (see *M.* 122, 128, 136).

the vein, and have made up my mind—if God does not forsake me altogether—not to come and see you before I can hand you the red portfolio with contents complete . . . I flatter myself I shall be able to finish the composition of my act in one burst now; the whole vivid thing was revealed to me yesterday as by storm-light. I am sure you'll be pleased at this cause of my staying at home, and wish me luck on my courage in not complying with your invitation." An 'overcoming' indeed, for "I forgo your society most unwillingly, my child," says the letter of July 9; but "our last meeting at Lucerne bore noble fruit, as you now may gather from my imperturbable mood for work." He had just described his transference to less commodious quarters in the hotel, a week before, continuing: "But I take it all in good part, as my fellow-prisoners, Tristan and Isolde, are soon to feel quite free; and so I now renounce *with them*, together with them to get free. Mostly every other day I am at least happy in my work; in between I usually have a less good day, as the good day always makes me overweening, and then I overtax myself [the eyes again]. This time I haven't the old dread lest I should die before the last note; on the contrary, I'm so certain of finishing, that the day before yesterday I even made a folk-song of it on my ride. . . . It's nearly all over with Tristan, and Isolde too, I fancy, will have done with all trouble this month. Then I shall throw the pair of them and myself into Haertel's arms."

A very different tale, in every way, from that of two months back. And it is symptomatic of restoration to his normal self, that, just as his infinitely deep presentment of the Amfortas problem—"my Tristan of the third act with an inconceivable increase"—in the letter of May 30 wound up with a joke, so in this of July 9 we have an apostrophe to Buddhism—"one draught from that sacred well-spring of the Ganges, and the whole historic Present shrivels to the traffic of an ant-hill. Within there, deep within there, is the world; not there without, where madness only reigns"—immediately after a paragraph on the "preponderance of my relish for the gay." It is that redeeming "Humour, which helps me over abysses the wisest don't even espy," and it crops up again in the note of a few days later (undated): "Things can't have gone worse at Solferino, than in my work now; while those folk are putting a stop to the carnage [treaty of Villafranca, July 11] I am pushing it on. I'm

making a terrible clearance; to-day I've slain Melot and Kurwenal also. If you people wish for a sight of the battlefield, you'd best come before everyone's buried.”*

July 16 the composition is finished and signed, 19 the 'orchestral sketch,' leaving nothing but the fair copy to complete. The 24th we hear that Frau Wesendonck has meantime been sent “my sketches”—i.e. the composition-draft of act iii, duly filling that red portfolio—also: “I am obsessed by my work now, and regard it as a moral victory over myself if I dock off one page for the day. How ever shall I feel when I've quite ended? I still have some 35 pages of the partitur to do: I expect to finish them in 12 days; how ever shall I feel then? Somewhat fagged at first, I fancy; even to-day my head is swimming”—and no wonder, for the hundredth time, with his eyes. Next day he sends Haertels his third instalment of the third act's score, and on the 26th returns them the revises of act ii, received during the past week as additional eye-strainers. Then Thursday, Aug. 4, to Mathilde: “I must and will finish by Saturday, out of sheer curiosity to know how I feel then. Only, don't be cross if you find me a little run down; that really can't be helped. But I count on you people rewarding me on Saturday evening by arriving quite early. . . . Only three days, and—Tristan und Isolde will be done. What would one more!”

August 6,† just under two years from its actual inception, the immortal work stands finished. Detained for one night longer at the Schweizerhof, that Mathilde, and Otto too, may give a final blessing, the last instalment of its score is sent to Haertels August 7, as promised twelve days previously. There let me close this volume, or better with the message to the Green Hill of the following day: “It is quite in keeping with the amiable

* Arrived at the same spot with his pfe score, Bülow indulges in a similar pleasantry: “I'm stuck in Tristan still. To be sure, the hero is disposed of, Melot also has received his extinguishing chord of the second, and Kurwenal is to be expedited to-day—but Isolde still lives, to the ruin of a week” (to Draeseke, Nov. 3, 59). More seriously to Köhler next summer: “Once you've made acquaintance with the Tristan, you'll be a new-clad man throughout; it will revolutionise you from crown to sole.”

† By a strange coincidence, *Lohengrin* was at last produced that evening in the city of its birth, after reposing on the shelf there for more than eleven years.

character of the pair of you, to offer me shelter in your house once again. It is for me to be modest, though, and spare you the burden and bother that might arise from a longer stay . . . One good remembrance will abide with me, however, and that will ever take the form of most heart-felt, heart-stirred thanks! A thousand greetings!"

APPENDIX.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES.

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Wagner's "Gesichts-Rose" (p. 423).—Augustin Thierry on Wagner (p. 425).—Praegeriana: Milton Street (p. 426); "English Gentleman" (p. 429).—Johanna Wagner at Her Majesty's (p. 441).—"Sawitri" and "Usinar" (p. 445).—St Gallen concert (p. 448).

Pages 51*n* and 83. WAGNER'S "GESICHTS-ROSE."—Herr Glasenapp informs us that after the Mornex treatment in summer 1856 and down to "the end of 1879" Wagner had no recurrence of the skin eruption which had plagued him at intervals through more than the first half of his life and came to a crisis in winter 1855-6 (*Leben* III. 115). It is quite conceivable that the very severity of this particular attack, and the measures adopted against it, may have exhausted the tendency; for the routes open to 'ocular reflex' are legion, and as Dr Gould has said: "The effects are so infinitely various, so far removed from the eye, and so subtle, that the ordinary mind is incapable of realizing the truth. Any other organ may suffer instead of the eye. Bound up as is the eye with every psychic and physical function, the reflex vicarious suffering takes the line of least resistance and exhausts itself upon innocent cerebral, muscular, or nutritional organs elsewhere. 'Nervousness,' whether hyperesthetic or hypoeesthetic, is the almost constant symptom of all eye-strain sufferers" (*Bio. Clin.* ii, 340). Now, Dr Vaillant of Mornex had told Wagner that his eruption had its origin in nothing but "Nervosité"; a long course of nerve-tonics etc. may well have patched up his general health for a goodish time, and by the end of that the 'ocular reflex' might easily take some other route—the obstinate wound on his leg at Venice, for instance.

As for the *Gesichts-Rose* itself I will appeal to Dr Gould again. "Martin* and others have noticed that migraine often ends in a period of herpeticism. One is reminded of Wagner's life-long [?—*vid. sup.*] and inexplicable attacks of 'erysipelas,'" says vol. iii, p. 243, of *Biographic Clinics*, whilst a later page gives a most instructive account of a case of Gould's own:—"This patient is a woman, now 39 years of age, who for many years has done an enormous amount of reading

* "In 1888 Dr G. Martin (*Ann. d'oc.*, 1888, xcix, pp. 24 and 205), a French oculist, published an article [on Migraine] which some time will be recognized as truly epoch-making"—*ibid.*, p. 228.

and writing . . . Now began attacks of typical migraine, followed by intense dermatitis. These I did not at first dream were connected with eyestrain, because, like the rest of the profession, I had never known or had forgotten what the science of 100 years ago had clearly recognized. The old clinicians, of course, had no idea that migraine was due to eyestrain, but they saw that 'herpetisms' were not seldom the sequels of migraine. Wagner's was a clear case of eyestrain, and he had repeated attacks of a 'cutaneous malady' and 'continuous attacks of erysipelas,' which tormented him much of his life. My patient had most distressing attacks of 'hives' and various other eruptions, pronounced by the best dermatologists atypic, and which were puzzling to them and intractable. These attacks were sometimes called acute urticaria, psoriasis, generalized eczema, pityriasis rosacea, etc. In looking back over her life, this very intelligent patient now remembers that the eruptions were always connected with extreme use of the eyes, headache, and especially sick-headache. All of these symptoms in her case have since been repeatedly demonstrated to be due to eyestrain. They recur with leaving off the glasses, and are relieved at once by proper correction of the eye defect. A most carefully observed and excellently reported case of a similar nature has been called to my attention. It was in the practice of Dr Charles A. Oliver, and published in *The Philadelphia Medical Journal*. The repeated demonstration that the urticaria was absolutely caused by eyestrain is most convincing. Observations would doubtless prove the sequel more frequent than is supposed. Other cases which I had seen of these skin affections connected with migraine, and the growing conviction that migraine itself is entirely a product of eyestrain, finally landed me in the puzzle that here was a patient of 38 with an almost inconsiderable error of refraction, and yet with the most glaring diseases due to eyestrain. The solution of the mystery came with the thought of premature presbyopia, and the enormous amount of reading and writing done by the woman. A moderate amount of near-work left her free from attacks; with 10 or 15 hours a day of application there was the sick-headache and the terrible eruptions all over the body, which confined her to bed or the bath-tub for a week or two at a time . . . [Glasses ordered] . . . These gave complete relief except when they were forgotten for two days, followed by a typical attack of migraine and urticaria, subsiding in twenty-four hours after the reading-glasses were resumed. With a still stronger correction . . . this woman, now 39 years old, has had no attacks unless the glasses are broken or forgotten" (*Bio. Clin.* iii, 385-6).

Finally a case in illustration of Wagner's frequent "catarrhs," one, if not two of which occurred during Liszt's visit of autumn 1856, only a couple of months after the Mornex 'cure.' Compare his description of it (190 *sup.*) with this report of Dr Gould's: "A healthy clear-

headed intellectual man was given two pairs of spectacles for his myopic astigmatism, a stronger or higher correction for use at the theater, driving, etc., a weaker correction for reading and daily or constant use. For a year his wife and daughter observed, without telling him, that whenever he wore the strong, or accommodation-exciting glasses he 'caught cold' with coryza, hoarseness, etc., which at once disappeared when the weaker lenses were used. He used the stronger ones but few times a year. When certain of the strange coincidences, his wife told her husband. In the past ten years the cold has been produced in this way a hundred or more times. Now if his weaker glasses get 'crooked,' or maladjusted, miscorrecting his axis of astigmatism by a few degrees, his cold promptly appears, to vanish in an hour after a visit to the optician" (*ibid.* 481-2).

At this period of commencing presbyopia Wagner *could not*, of course, have obtained relief of his symptoms as a whole, even had their cause been suspected, since Astigmatism itself was not yet run to earth; but it is better for us to track that scientific cause than to catch up the parrot-cry of the pseudo-scientists and prate of "sexual erethism" (!!) or Degeneration.

Page 91*n*. AUGUSTIN THIERRY ON WAGNER.—The *Glanzzeit* vol. already-mentioned contains a solitary letter from the blind French historian to our Fürstin, dated January 5, 1856, with the following paragraph of interest for us:—

"Je vous remercie mille fois de m'avoir transmis des renseignements authentiques sur la réforme essayée par M. Wagner dans le drame musical. Je sais maintenant tout ce qu'on peut en apprendre de loin, c'est à dire qu'après avoir suivi cette lecture [*Carolysz's Lohengrin et Tannhäuser*] avec beaucoup d'attention et un vif intérêt, il me reste bien des doutes. M. Wagner est certainement un musicien de 1er ordre. Les petits fragments de son œuvre joints à la notice de M. Liszt suffisent à le prouver. Le motif d'entrée du Chevalier et la prière d'Elsa entremêlée de coups de trompettes lointaines qui annoncent le défenseur sont deux morceaux admirables. Il y a un accent dramatique vrai dans la défense du Lohengrin et dans la parole du roi ordonnant le jugement de Dieu. Enfin les deux motifs d'orchestre dont l'un exprime la sympathie populaire pour Elsa et l'autre les fureurs d'Ortrude sont pleins d'expression vraie et forte. Tout cela serait admiré dans un opéra fait selon le modèle ordinaire. Maintenant cela gagne-t-il quelque chose à se trouver plus ou moins répété comme symbole d'une situation ou d'un caractère? Voilà la question et pour y répondre, il faudrait être en Allemagne ou peut-être, comme vous le dites vous-même, Madame, être Allemand de naissance et d'esprit."

Thierry died, curiously enough, on Wagner's next birthday, aged 61.

Page 107. PRAEGERIANA: MILTON STREET.—A few weeks after the issue of vol. v of this *Life* the *Musical Times* for August 1906 pointed out that, besides the change of *name* first recorded p. 121 of that volume, the *number* of the London house where Wagner alighted in 1855 had also been altered, so that what was formerly “31 Milton Street” has now become “65 Balcombe Street.” The detail is of no great importance in itself, as I presume that one night slept and a few friendly meals partaken there would scarcely qualify a building for adornment with a memorial tablet, and indeed my footnote on the said page had contained a saving clause, “Unless the numbers have been changed.” When writing that note, such a change did “not seem likely” to me, for the following reason: The numbers on the doors of many (but not all) of the houses in this street are baked in black on small oval white china medallions, whilst the figures not only are of an old-fashioned type, but shew unmistakable signs of long years of exposure and friction, to say nothing of some of the medallions (evidently broken in course of time) having been replaced by numbers either painted on the woodwork or applied in skeleton relief. All this was indication enough that no re-numbering had taken place in recent years; a conclusion endorsed by the local turn-cock I happened to meet on his round, who perfectly remembered the *re-naming* (with humorous comments on its cause). With an “unless” I therefore stilled my languid curiosity, never dreaming that “a curious incident” (see *M. Times*) had grown up around our “31.”

Before examining that “curious incident,” rather instructive in its way, let us first make quite sure we have got the identity of Praeger’s 1855 abode correct at last, as his book did not deign to enlighten us with more than a passing reference to “Milton Street” (*As*, 255) sans number. His own letter to the *M. World* of March 25, 55, Papa Roeckel’s to Wagner of January, and Wagner’s to Liszt and to August Roeckel of February that year, leave us in no doubt that “31 Milton Street, Dorset Square” was the full address in those days; what we want to verify is the bald assertion of the writer in the *M. Times* Aug. 1906, “As a matter of fact the number of that house *has* been altered: it is now No. 65.” Fired at one like that, with a disdainful accompaniment which the editor perhaps has since regretted, a piece of information necessarily prompts the questions, How do you know? and, Are you absolutely certain of your “fact”? One is predisposed to believe it, owing to its unsigned appearance in a monthly of high standing; but, finding the first principle of critical correction—viz. disclosure of grounds—ignored, one is naturally impelled to test the statement’s accuracy. This I accordingly have done, at much personal inconvenience, and therefore now supply my readers with the missing link:—

Plodding *back* through year after year of Post Office Directories served up to me at the British Museum on relays of young goods-trucks, after finding "Balcombe Street" yield place to "Milton Street" in 1886 without a change of numbering, I began to fear the search was fruitless after all, as one would ordinarily expect such changes to take place together. However, the search once begun, it had better be continued. So back through the remaining eighties and the seventies I trudged—a little weary, since the day was hot that summer—but still no sign of alteration. Only fifteen years more, and I should arrive at Wagner's Philharmonic Break itself, whilst I had already travelled thirty-six. My unknown goal was nearly reached, though; the Directory for 1865 at last presented Milton Street arrayed in an entirely different suit of numbers from that for 1866. Anno Domini 1865, then—beyond the professional memory of my friend the turncock—thus proved itself the era of that revolution when all the odds of Milton Street were shifted to the East, the evens to the West, in lieu of the old consecutive numbering up and down.

That was not quite all I wished to know, though, not positive fixation of the special metamorphosis of whilom "31." Praeger himself had left the house in 1856—the P.O.D. for 1857 knows "Praeger, Ferdinand, professor of music" there no longer—and for all I knew, there might have been a 'general post' among the private tenants when this arbitrary change of numbering was forced upon them by a tyrant vestry. Anyhow, there was no officially-recorded occupant of "31," in 1865, to carry the tradition over. What landmark could I fly to? There was a Wesleyan Chapel in the street, but English chapels mostly stand superior to numbering, and this particular one formed no exception. Deserted by spiritual aid, I turned to seek the spirituous; and sure enough—a licensed house, *The Portland Arms*, had survived all cataclysmic changes. In Praeger's time (it was a good block and a half away from him) *The Portland Arms* bore the number "9," which it retained till 1865; in course of that year it suddenly took on the number "21," and still retains it: to which I can swear—please don't be shocked—for I slaked my thirst there. No reconstruction having occurred in the intervening portion of the street, the rest is simple: an easy caculation proves the "31" of '55 to have become "65" in '65 (quite pat for memoria technica) and, in harmony with the *dixi* of the *Musical Times*, to have remained so till to-day.* My former general descrip-

* To make assurance doubly sure, since writing the above I have called at the office of Mr Geo. Head, surveyor, who had kindly sent me an illustrated brochure of his on *Changing Marylebone*. There I was shewn a large-scale map of 1846, with each house in Milton Street distinctly numbered, and can thus attest the unequivocal identity of ancient "31" with present "65."

tion of the house thus needs a trifling modification : the present "65" not only lies about two minutes nearer the site of Wagner's lodgings, but also, as I can avouch from external inspection, has a frontage broader by one window than the present "31"; an advantage fully counterbalanced, to judge from a ground-plan of the district, by considerably less depth—so that I now might substitute "shallow" for "narrow," the house appearing to have no back rooms to speak of, and Praeger himself alluding to its "small back yard."

And now for the "curious incident" as related by the *Musical Times*: "A certain writer on musical subjects who had interested himself in the musical haunts of London, heard that Madame Wagner had asked a London friend to have photographs taken of all the houses at which the master had stayed during his three visits to London—in 1838 [a subsequently acknowledged slip of the pen, for which read "1839"], 1855 and 1877, a request that was willingly complied with. Duplicates of these were retained in London, and were shown a few years after, by a near relative of Wagner's London friend, to the writer above referred to. The photograph in question was handed to him with the remark: 'This was Praeger's house, at which Wagner stayed.' 'I think not,' was the reply. 'Oh! but it is No. 31, Milton Street.' 'True, but the numbers have been changed, and the house that was numbered 31 in 1855 is now numbered 65.' This information came almost as a shock, with the result that a new photograph was taken of the actual house and sent to Madame Wagner at Bayreuth."

In one particular, its "few years after," the above story needs amendment: for "few" we must read "a good many," as I now learn through Herr Glasenapp that the "London friend"—the late Julius Cyriax,* a beloved friend of so many of us till death cut him down in September 1892—caused the original photographs to be taken in the spring of 1879 for a collection destined by Frau Wagner as a birthday-gift to her husband, whilst the "writer on musical subjects" (I wish his modesty had not made him speak in parables) did not encounter the mis-taken photograph till after Wagner, Praeger, and the London friend of both, had all been gathered to their fathers. It is this circumstance that makes the tale instructive, especially to anyone who has personally submitted the fronts of the two confounded houses to ocular comparison. Above its ground-floor the present "31" has only two windows to each of its three storeys, whereas the present "65" has three—architecturally speaking, though the upper two middle ones are glazed but blind. Still more

* I have no hesitation in giving his honoured name, as it will be found in virtually the same connection in Dannreuther's monograph in *Grove*, quoted on pp. 265-6 of vol. i of this *Life*, and the historian ought to deal as little as possible with unknown quantities.

distinctive is the ground-floor itself, for the hall-door of the present "65" (the true Praegerian home) is flanked by a round-topped window on either side of it, not quite equal in size,* whereas the present "31" (the spurious home) has its entrance to the left of a solitary square-topped window. Of course the Writer on Musical Subjects was immediately struck by the contrast between the first photograph and the reality (which we must assume him to have previously discovered on some other path); but what about our Ferdinand?! Even supposing him not to have been consulted by Cyriax before the first photograph was taken—a supposition in itself absurd—it is clean impossible that on none of his visits to his London friend he should have been shewn a copy of this counterfeit presentment of the house which had "opened its hospitable doors" in 1855 to Richard Wagner. He *must* have been shewn one, probably also received another copy as a souvenir; yet, to have left both friends in darkness, himself he can never have recognised that this was totally unlike the threshold he had crossed a few thousand times! In truth it is a "curious incident" from beginning to end, and I am infinitely obliged to the *Musical Times* for furnishing me with the most convincing proof imaginable that alike F. Praeger's memory and powers of discrimination were wofully deficient several years ere he began to write his utterly misleading book.—

THE "ENGLISH GENTLEMAN."—The same issue of the *M. Times* had another discovery to impart. With special reference to "pages 72 to 74" of my vol. v, completely ignoring pp. 70-1, its reviewer remarks: "Without going into details, it may suffice to say that the *English Gentleman* of 1845-46 is at the British Museum (Newspaper Room), and that it has been on the shelves there for half-a-century! In the issue of November 15, 1845, p. 497, Mr. Ellis *will* find Praeger's letter describing the first performance of 'Tannhäuser,' upon the existence of which he (Mr. Ellis) casts 'the gravest suspicion': he will also find that it is signed 'From yours, F. P.' and that it is prefaced with an editorial endorsement: 'We have been favoured with the following extracts from a letter from Dresden.' Moreover, if Mr. Ellis had taken the ordinary precaution of consulting the issues of Mitchell's 'Newspaper Press Directory' for 1845 and 1846, he would have found that the *English Gentleman* was running its course in those years—No. 1 issued April 26, 1845—a discovery that should have led him to make further investigations before casting an imputation upon Praeger's veracity anent the production of Wagner's

* The hall-door standing open as I passed the house, I could see there was a room on *each* side of the ground-floor passage, i.e. a tiny study on the right, and a larger parlour on the left—the hall-door not being absolutely central.

'Tannhäuser' at Dresden in 1845. By the way, in the letter above referred to, 'Tannhäuser' is misprinted 'Tamhäuser' !” (here the review ends, or rather, peters out). Perhaps it was prudent of my adversary ('critic' is scarcely the word) not to “go into details,” for, as I observed at the close of a reply inserted by the editor in the next issue of the *M. Times* (Sept. 1906), “those further investigations, as really might have been foreseen, have left Praeger's veracity there-
 anent in still sorer case than before.” Here, however, I myself must go into a good many more details than I could venture to burden the *M.T.* Correspondence columns with.

First, then, as to the *English Gentleman* having “been on the shelves [at the Museum] for half-a-century !” and the innuendo conveyed by that “is” and “!” It may be needful to apprise anyone unacquainted with the customs of the British Museum that applicants are not turned loose among the “shelves”—except the ‘reference’ ones—to hunt for books themselves (I should pity them if they were) ; either by word of mouth, or more generally on regulation order-slips, they have to ask officials, and meekly take what they get served to them, whether books or information. That being the case, less than two months after the publication of the late F. Praeger's *Wagner as I knew him* my curiosity regarding a statement on his page 136—“Of the music and the performance of ‘Tannhäuser’ in October, 1845, at Dresden, I wrote a notice for a London periodical, called the ‘English Gentleman’”—led me to the big Reading Room at our Museum, where I consulted the encyclopedic catalogue of “Periodicals,” but without finding any entry more closely resembling the said title than *The Gentleman's Magazine*, which, on the chance of Praeger's having confused its designation, I wrote an order for, and diligently but bootlessly looked through. That was in April 1892 (I happen to have preserved the order-slip), and, having much more urgent matters to clear up concerning *As*, on p. 136 of my private copy of the latter I pencilled “Strange that this is not even named in the Brit. Mus.” and provisionally let the subject drop.

However, when Mr Chamberlain had proved (see vol. v, 71) that the clause in Wagner's letter to Praeger of Jan. 8, 55, “Your first espousal of my cause, ten years ago, when August read to me a vigorous article, from some English journal,* by you on the ‘Tannhäuser’ performance at Dresden,” was simply a gloss of P.'s own, I naturally felt a keener interest in that mysterious *English Gentleman's* account of a performance I by then knew Praeger could

* To which P. adds a footnote, “English Gentleman” (*As*, p. 222). It was quite clever of him not to put the specific title into Wagner's pen ; for a foreigner's allusion, “some English journal” reads far more naturally.

not possibly have witnessed ; so I resumed my search at the Museum, this time applying direct to the officials for information not derivable from the printed catalogue. That application's outcome I set forth in the *Musical Standard* of March 17, 1894, and reproduced on p. 73 of vol. v of this *Life*; but it will now be as well to relate its method, of which I have a vivid memory still.

It was thus :—In February 1894 I first applied at the central desk in the big Reading-room, and was there informed by word of mouth that the *English Gentleman*, not being technically classed as a “periodical,” was kept in the Newspaper-room ; thither I accordingly went, but the officials there referred me back to the Reading-room. Here I was again told that the Newspaper-room was the *English Gentleman's* chosen habitat, and, bearing a written message to that effect, I hied me back there—with the result already stated, viz. ultimate production of a few issues for 1835 and the assurance that those were the only ones possessed or known of. There was no possibility of going behind such a dictum, as until quite recently no catalogue of the Newspaper department's possessions was provided for the use of readers ; they had to take No for an answer. All that I could do, was to make an appeal to the public, in the aforesaid issue of the *M. Standard*, to take up the *Neue Zeitschrift* clue of 1845 (see v, 73) and help me find our hypothetic *English Gentleman*. But neither the public nor the parties most interested in such a discovery, the would-be defenders of the late F. Praeger—not even his widow in her many-faceted Reply of April to May '94—ever took up that challenge till my own last volume renewed it with the words, “Possibly a fresh journal crept into existence under the name of *English Gentleman* in 1845 . . . possibly Praeger himself administered ‘impartial criticisms’ to its pining columns . . . but in the absence of more reliable evidence [than that in his book] I must be pardoned if I view that same ‘vigorous article’ with the gravest suspicion” (v, 74). If the “precaution of consulting the issues of Mitchell” for wellnigh præhistoric data was something so “ordinary,” why was it not adopted by any of these good people during the twelve intervening years? And why did it not occur to the intelligent officials at our Newspaper Room in 1894?

To the latter question I can now supply an answer : There is and was no issue of *Mitchell* “for 1845,” as an attendant at the Newspaper Room smilingly demonstrated to me, on my latest inquiry, by pointing to the dedication of the earliest volume of that work, dated “March, 1846.” True, notwithstanding we were solely interested in the year before, it would have been wiser in the first instance to have consulted even an issue for 1846 ; for this earliest *Mitchell* does devote a paragraph to the “ENGLISH GENTLEMAN.—Saturday, Price 6d. Established 1845.—ADVOCACY. Liberal—Literature.—A paper in

which the piquant personality of the 'Age' and 'Argus' is sought to be preserved without their scurrility," etc., etc.

That "Age and Argus" reference explains the whole position. The *Age* was started May 15, 1825, and ran till October 7, 1843. It was continued weekly as the *Age and Argus* from Oct. 16, 1843, till April 19, 1845; when its publisher, William Wright Barth, 4 Brydges Street, Covent Garden—whose hand-written signature appears at the top of all the 1845 issues—again changed its title to the *English Gentleman* "with which the Age and Argus are incorporated," *vide* the printed heading. As the *English Gentleman* it ran a course of seventy-three numbers, from April 26, 1845, to September 12, 1846, after which latter date it suddenly ceased.

To-day the above-given facts are within easiest reach of anyone who takes the trouble to consult the excellent printed catalogue placed (within the last twelvemonth, I was told in Aug. 06) at the disposal of readers in the Newspaper Room; but prior to the recent general overhauling of that department for economy of space, readers had to depend, as said, on information supplied them by attendants, who in their turn were provided with nothing more elaborate than the old-fashioned 'card index.' The principal officer in that room therefore thinks it highly probable that our *English Gentleman* of 1845-46 was formerly indexed under "A" alone, the *Age* having enjoyed a run of eighteen years (just twenty, if one adds the *Age and Argus*), whereas its continuation as *English Gentleman*—whose numbers for 1845 are bound up with the *A. and A.*—lasted barely seventeen months. Hence, despite its actual presence on the labyrinthine "shelves," all that the attendants could find me thirteen years ago was its still briefer-lived but independent namesake of 1835.

Enough of that: personally I am delighted that the "vigorous article" has been unearthed at last, though it confirms my "suspicion" in a manner somewhat different from what I had anticipated. On page 74 of vol. v my last word on the subject was this: "Never having seen Wagner conduct,* and therefore having never attended a performance of *Tannhäuser* at Dresden, how could P. write of this music with personal knowledge unless one of its newly lithographed full scores, not then on sale, had been despatched to him? Had the latter been the case, we may trust him to have bragged about it; but he does not draw the bow that length. Wherefore—unless we are to accept his alternative reading, and call the work *Rienzi* (whose pfe score was published Sept. 1844)—all that Praeger could possibly have contributed on 'Tannhäuser at Dresden' to an *English Gentleman*

* "Obschon ich selbst Wagner nie dirigiren gesehen," Praeger's own preamble to the events of 1855 recited in his letter of November of that year to the *Neue Zeitschrift* (pubd Jan. 1856); see p. 56, vol. v, and p. 103 *sup.*

redivivus must have been a crib from the then anti-Wagnerian *N. Zeitschrift's* own two-number screed against that opera (see vol. ii, 385-7), for which poor Wagner could scarcely owe him 'heartiest thanks'" (the "heartiest thanks" being a preliminary part of P.'s interpolation aforesaid). The last two and a half lines of that paragraph I now must honourably cancel, as I already have done in the 'mould' for a future reprint; a "crib" of a sort the notice was—where not a fable—but it was all *in favour* of the unseen opera.

Now let us bring it on the table, merely omitting its middle third, devoted to a wholly incongruous subject—to wit, the earnings and finances of Beethoven. Under a headline "Music" it starts off thus, on the said p. 497 of the *English Gentleman* for Nov. 15, 1845:—

"The Opera at Dresden.—We have been favoured with the following extracts from a letter from Dresden* :—'Here I find myself in Dresden, not undeservedly called the Athens of Germany, the good inhabitants of which are all just now as excited as Irish Repealers; but whether it be most on account of the doings in their parliament, or about Wagner's new opera, is a difficult matter to determine. The speeches in the first were as bold, fearless, and temperate, as the laws of any free country on the globe would allow; † and it is also quite certain that a dissolution of the Chambers would have led to a public disturbance, fraught as all minds are with the present religious movements, the recollections of Leipsig, etc. The Saxons are not of the light and excitable temperament of the French, who, like their champagne, effervesce, bubble over, and almost as soon settle, and begin afresh. They think and weigh calmly, too long perhaps for the American 'Go-a-head' principle, but when once roused, they are firmness itself, and will stand any fire for the sake of maintaining their cherished rights. At the same time there is an enthusiasm for the arts among all classes that is not to be found with us matter-of-fact people, whose chief aim always seems to be money making, so much

* This is what the *M. T.* reviewer drolly terms "an editorial endorsement"—of what, I am at a loss to conceive. On the contrary, as Praeger appears to have been the regular musical critic himself (three pfe pieces of his are "impartially" puffed in the issue for Oct. 18), and as the 1½ column "letter" is directly followed by another half-column on the "Society of British Musicians," etc., the "we" is quite clearly his critical own. I have also to observe that the inverted commas before "Here" are matched by none at the so-called letter's end—possibly a mere printer's omission—and that there is not the smallest indication, by dots or otherwise, of the contribution's really consisting of "extracts."

† A delicate suggestion that "F. P." had been admitted to hear them. The unhappy position of "temperate" is equivalent in itself to our old friend's full signature.

so, that we often confound means and ends, and think Chesterfield's advice 'not to waste time with the study of the arts ourselves, but to engage in our leisure hours fiddlers to amuse us,' not so pitiable a deficiency of soul. Of the general and deep interest taken in works of art, I had ample proof on the evening of the first performance of Richard Wagner's new opera, 'Der Tamhäuser, or the Contest of the Minstrels at Wartburg.' There was a total absence of puffing the piece beforehand; the programmes contained no inviting descriptions of splendid scenery by moonlight, &c.; there was no cramming the house with friends and claqueurs, to call for the composer between each act,* all such things are considered here as below the dignity of art; and it would be well if a little of that spirit could be transported to our metropolis. The plot of the opera is founded on the historical fact of the Landgrave of Thuringen calling the great Klingsohr, (a man equally famed for his surpassing skill in verse and song, and feared and suspected as a magician) from Liebenburgen, to be arbitrator in the contest between his two ambitious minstrels, Eshenback, and Ofterdingen; this is interwoven with the legend of Der Tamhäuser, whose disappearance into the Venusberg, before which his trusty armour-bearer, Echart, holds watch, affords ample scope for imagination [evidently]; and right poetically has this wonderfully talented man conceived and worked out his subject; for, be it remembered, that Wagner always writes his own librettos, and they are works of sterling poetical merit. The music excels all expectations, and exhibits a total absence of that extravagance which detracts in some measure from the merits of his two former operas; the first, 'Rienzi,' written some years back [prudent "some"], and intended for the Academie Royale at Paris, is rather in the bombastic style than in vogue, and has too much of that noisy instrumentation, which covers many really beautiful ideas; nevertheless, it is a production of great merit, and, as the first work [!] of an opera composer, is, perhaps, unrivalled. It procured him the appointment of 'Kapell-Meister' to the King of Saxony. Before it appeared on the stage he wrote his second, 'The Flying Dutchman,' founded on the well-known nautical legend—a romantic opera, that stamps him one of the greatest masters of the age. It contains some of the most beautiful original melodies, which, once heard, cling to the memory like the strains of early youth; but his 'Tamhäuser' is his *chef-d'œuvre*, and forms an era in music, both as to invention and scoring. The performance was perfection itself; to give you an idea of the strength of the *personale*, I need only name

* Wagner was called "between each act," nevertheless, whilst the crammed house contained as many friends as he could muster. Small need to "puff the piece beforehand," when its preparation had been the talk of the district for weeks. Did "F. P." expect pictorial posters?

Madame Schroeder Devrient, the celebrated tenor, Mitterwurzer Tichatscheck, &c.,—they sang with inspiration. The orchestra, conducted by the composer, led by that most classical violinist, Lipinsky, and counting some of the greatest living virtuosi amongst its members, played *con amore*; the chorusses as usual with the Germans, were excellent; the scenes had been painted in Paris; everything was as perfect in its way as it is possible to conceive, and the treat of witnessing a performance in every respect so artistical, is never to be forgotten. I cannot, however, pass over one annoyance attendant upon my entrance into the Opera-house; I do not allude to the squeezing and elbowing so common at our theatres, for notwithstanding the great crowd, all was tranquility, and with it a great deal of politeness; but having arrived at the pay-office, I found the usual prices raised considerably. It appears that this is always done on the first production of a great new work, and it may be excusable in a provincial manager, but *here*, where the theatre is principally supported by the King, it is among the things that ought not to be. I forbear to enter into any detail of the opera, as it is *all* beautiful; and I am as anxious to witness the second performance as any of the Dresden-born burghers, who by the way are not a little proud of possessing Wagner—so more of this anon.* I have just heard that the King of Prussia has honoured Dr. Frederick Schneider, the celebrated oratorio composer, by conferring on him the order of the Red Eagle. Dr Schneider [Papa Praeger's predecessor at Leipzig—see v, 109] is Kapell-Meister to the Duke of Dessau, and has been similarly decorated by several Sovereigns. It certainly cannot be denied that artists enjoy a much higher standing here than in England, not only as regards titles and decorations, but in the sincere respect shown to them; so very different from the lion hunting and ostentatious display for which they are invited to the drawing-rooms of the 'haute volée.' They have here the maxim that 'nature takes her best clay and noblest mould to form a true artist.' I have met with a great many people who much ridiculed the comments made by some of our English journals on the occasion of the late Bonn Festival, about Beethoven having been neglected by his own countrymen [etc., etc., for about half a column]. . . .

"As one of the bubbles on the ocean of serious things, I may mention a newly-invented perfume called 'Eau de Saxe,' which begins successfully to rival the far-famed 'Eau de Cologne.' The sale of this article has increased enormously, the proprietors having shrewdly made use of the tendency of the times by not only giving Ronge's

* There is no "more of this anon," no later communication "from Dresden" in any issue of the *E.G.* down to the end of the year; an absence easily accounted for.

portrait, but also his celebrated letter to Bishop Arnold on the wrapper.

"J. Benedict's opera, 'The Brides of Venice,' is in rehearsal, and will soon be brought out.

"The performance of music director's, A. Ræckel's opera 'Farinelli,' of which report speaks most favourably, has been actually deferred in consequence of the supposed anti-jesuitical tendency of the plot.

"Soon more about musicians and painters of note (for whom Dresden seems the very cradle.)

From yours,

F. P."

A very singular document, affording much food for reflection. In the first place, was this "F. P." our Ferdinand Praeger, or was it not? If not, the latter's memory sadly deceived him when it came to that passage on page 136 of *As*: "Of the music and the performance of 'Tannhäuser' in October, 1845, at Dresden, I wrote a notice for a London periodical, called the 'English Gentleman.' This was the first time, I believe,* that Wagner's name was mentioned in England"—for the *E.G.* contains no other such notice. If on the other hand

* Even this belief was unjustified. Reserving awhile P.'s forestallers of autumn 1845, in the *Musical Times* of Sept. 1906 "F. G. E." cites various notices from English periodicals of considerably earlier date, beginning with a reference in the *Harmonicon* of May 1833 to the Leipzig Gewandhaus concert (Jan. 10) whereat was produced "a symphony by Richard Wagner, scarcely twenty years of age, which was much and deservedly applauded." There follows a notice from "DRESDEN. Oct. 24" in the *Musical World* (not yet Davison's) of Nov. 3, 1842: "A new opera, by Wagner, entitled 'Rienzi,' was produced at the Royal Theatre on the 20th, with most complete success. Wagner, who is also author of the libretto, was called for at the end of each of the five acts, and received with enthusiastic plaudits. Madame Schroeder Devrient and Herr Tichatschek were very great in the principal *solos*, and the *mise en scène* surpassed all previous productions in this part of the world." Similarly in the *Musical Examiner* ("a short-lived but entertaining journal edited by J. W. Davison") of Nov. 12: "'Rienzi,' a grand opera in five acts, the words and music by Herr Richard Wagner, has been produced with immense success at the Court Theatre in Dresden. Madame Schroeder Devrient and Herr Tichatschek (both well known in London) sustained the principal parts." Next month we have two notices in the *M. World*, Dec. 15 and 29: "DRESDEN. Nov. 20.—The new opera of Richard Wagner, entitled 'Cola Rienzi,' produced on the 20th of last month at the Royal Theatre, has been triumphantly successful. The poem is by the composer; and the work altogether is highly creditable to modern Germany. The getting up is on the most liberal scale, and in excellent taste; and nothing can exceed the splendid impersonation of the hero by Tichatschek, and Adrian by Schroeder Devrient;

this F. P. of "our metropolis" was really our old friend, he stands equally condemned out of his own mouth, since he "had never seen Wagner conduct" till over nine years later. There is no way out of the dilemma, as "F. P." keeps alleging his presence at the "Tannhäuser" première, though omitting to adumbrate its date (Oct. 19). But, a truce to riddles: this compost shews the Praeger brand all over, down to the negligence with which "Mitterwurzer" is plainly added as an after-thought, without a 'caret' to direct the printer to right insertion of the barytone's name.

What a transparent concoction it is, too, for all its facile praise! It would have been far wiser of my *Musical Times* reviewer to have followed the greybeard's example, and left this "vigorous article" under the safe shelter of a lost-property office. For, nobody within fifty miles of the Dresden court-theatre could have so successfully dodged every tangible proof of having actually "witnessed" the first performance of *Tannhäuser*. Not a word is risked about the work's reception by the audience, its duration or its number of acts, not a single feature noted of its mise-en-scène or music (the March, e.g.); whilst the dragging-in of "the historical" (!) Klingsor and Trusty Eckart as corner-stones of its foundation, without the faintest mention of its heroine or her exponent, Wagner's niece, is ample evidence that this contributor had not so much as seen a text-book. The very playbill posted on the house (see facsimile in Chamberlain's *Richard Wagner*) would have taught F. P. there never was a "Der" to Wagner's *Tannhäuser*—a mistake impossible to lay at the door of the English compositor, but committed by the *Athenæum* a fortnight previously—and at the same time have saved him from assumed "annoyance" at being bled "upon my entrance into the Opera-house," by acquainting him that the "pay-office" closed an hour before the auditorium doors were opened. He "forbears to go into any detail of the opera," for very good reasons, yet can squander two longish sentences on the notoriously usual surcharge for a seat!

the enthusiasm of the audiences has been immense"; and "DRESDEN. Dec. 12.—Wagner's 'Cola Rienzi' continues its brilliant success, the theatre being crowded nightly. The opera of 'The Flying Dutchman,' by the same composer, has been put into rehearsal, and will be performed, for the first time in this city, in the course of the present month." Finally, a Dresden paragraph in the *M. Wd* of Jan. 26, '43: "Joseph Rastrelli, Music-director, died here on the 15th of November . . . It is expected that Richard Wagner [*sic*], whose opera of 'Cola Rienzi' has excited so much sensation, will succeed him in his directorship"; and another in the *M. Ex.* of the following March 11: "Wagner's 'Rienzi' is played twice a week to crowded houses." Doubtless further early notices might be fished up, were it worth the trouble, but these suffice to prove that Praeger's solitary "first espousal" was far from the first in the field; Davison himself antedated him by exactly three years.

The last is a very fair specimen of Praeger's art in baking bricks with amazing little straw, quite worthy to set beside his divination of the opera's plot from the two constituents of its title. But whence did he derive the straw for this "searching, but impartial criticism of music," this "quickest and completest news about the musical life of the Continent" (his self-applause "from London" a fortnight later, see v, 73)? A stalk or two, no doubt, from preliminary gossip in German papers,* a stalk or two from "quicker" London rivals,† and finally another stalk or two from correspondence of the Roeckel family. Himself, he cannot yet have heard even the two earlier operas of Wagner, or *As* would certainly have told us something of it,‡ whilst page 219 observes of nine years after, "nor did I know him

* The *Neue Zeitschrift's* long report of Nov. 4 and 14, 45, I now perceive, would be just too late for use by its London correspondent.

† The *M. Times* of October 1906 supplements its September unearthings by the following:—*Musical World* (already Davison's) Sept. 11, 1845: "DRESDEN—The new opera, by Richard Wagner, Kapellmeister of the King of Saxony, and successor to Karl Maria von Weber, is founded upon the popular German legend 'Der Venusberg.' It is in active preparation, and will be shortly produced in this city. The connoisseurs speak with enthusiasm of its merits, and rank it amongst the masterpieces of the day. The libretto—a work of great poetical merit—is also written by Wagner, as were the books of his first two operas, *Rienzi* and *The Flying Dutchman*. It will be seen that he possesses the rare union of two talents—poetry and music"; *Athenaeum* Nov. 1, "There is promise at the Dresden Opera of a new musical drama by Wagner, called 'Der Tannenhäuser,' for which splendid scenery is being painted in Paris," and Nov. 8, '45: "M. Wagner's opera of the 'Tannenhäuser,' mentioned last week, was given, it seems, at Dresden, on the 21st ultimo [no, Mr Chorley, the 19th], with the most brilliant success. The composer was called for at the close of each act, and treated, on his arriving at home, with a torchlight procession and a serenade [?]. To avoid falling into the misleading tone of the foreign journals on such occasions, let us remind the reader that the tests of a musical success are permanence and circulation." The second *Athenaeum* issue may easily have appeared after F. P.'s "vigorous article" had already reached his editor's hands, but the source of several remarks of his, including "and they are works of sterling poetical merit," will be manifest in the other two quotations.

‡ A most significant omission, for an author who thus concludes the sentence above-quoted from his page 219: "as a composer, however, I had become so wholly his partisan as to regard him the genius of the age." His only chances of hearing either *Rienzi* or the *Dutchman* non-conducted by Wagner would have been a few performances of *Rienzi* at Hamburg in the spring and summer of 1844, two of the *Dutchman* at Berlin in February of that year, and about five to date at Cassel—distant Riga being out of the question; but the Berlin and Cassel productions are glanced at in his book without any personal note, whilst 1844 is dismissed with no mention of Hamburg at all. Of course

personally; I was but the reflection of August Roeckel." On the other hand, apart from the larger question of the *genuineness* of his 'letters from' August, he prints none of later date than 1844; neither is it to be imagined that such "an excellent correspondent," who retailed "the minutest incidents of work and details of their conversations" (*As* 131), would have left P. so deplorably short of particulars of this "era-forming" production. There remains Roeckel's father, who at least was in England, had only left London to settle in York, indeed, three months before; and Papa Roeckel was on friendly terms with Praeger, as we know. Papa Roeckel would naturally hear something about *Tannhäuser* through his Dresden son, and may very well have forwarded a mite of information to his London friend, together with a hint to work it up into a laudatory article. Thus we should have a "reflection of August Roeckel" at second hand, much blurred on the way, and the whole enigma would be solved.

For it is an enigma as it stands, this sudden "first espousal of my cause" (P.'s own interpolation, mind you) by a man who knew less than nothing of the work he undertook to trumpet. It clearly was done 'to oblige,' and we must therefore cast the fringe of the mantle of charity over its audacious "Here I find myself in Dresden" and the rest, though they add point to Davison's sarcasms of ten years later *re* Dreisterner's "ubiquity" (vol. v, 61, 216 and 274). It is instructive, however, as shewing that P. was not a particularly steadfast "partisan," but changed sides more than once; also, that his unique idea of 'letters from' was evolving forty years ere he began to write his book.—

The long note I had prepared on P.'s 'Augustine myth' (see v, 66, 121, etc.) is still crowded out, but will hardly lose by waiting, since its most important bearings are those on certain apocrypha our history has not yet caught up with. On the other hand, a quite recent experience has once more shewn me that my renewed exposure of the sins of Praeger's *As* and *Wie* was by no means that "flogging a dead horse" which some of the reviewers of vol. v of this *Life* too sanguinely had supposed. Behold the sorry steed now harnessed to the chariot of the mighty *Grove*!

In that volume v of mine, issued to press and public mid-June 1906, I remarked that *Grove* would have to rectify a sentence in its then standing half-column on Praeger: "He has always been an

he attended none of these, and if silence means anything, *As* makes his first audience of an opera of Wagner's the Paris *Tannhäuser* in '61! Prior to the Dresden production of *Tannhäuser*, P.'s sole bare possibility of making acquaintance with Wagner's compositions would be a loan from Papa Roeckel of the pftē scores of the *Liebesmahl*, *Rienzi* and the *Dutchman*, if we may assume that August sent his father examples of his handiwork.

enthusiast for Wagner, and it was partly owing to his endeavours that Wagner was engaged to conduct the Philharmonic Concerts in 1855." After all my incontrovertible proofs to the contrary, the new edition of *Grove*, 1907, actually replaces that "partly" by "mainly"! Evidently *Grove's* present editor had revised its Praeger notice at some date before the issue of my volume v, and the pressure of multitudinous corrections to be made in other columns must have caused him to neglect amendment of *this* unfortunate revision ere definitely printing it.

Only on such an hypothesis can I also account for an extraordinary addition to the end of that notice (1907 ed.): "The publication of his interesting book, *Wagner as I knew him*, in 1885, drew forth various categorical contradictions and very severe criticisms from the writer of the authorised life of the composer. (See Ashton Ellis's life, *passim*.) Praeger died in London, Sept. 2, 1891, and the book just mentioned was brought out again in the following year." Here the innocent student would naturally infer that my "various categorical contradictions" etc. had been discredited by a *re-issue* of Praeger's "interesting book" in 1892; but what faith would he retain in *Grove* if he turned to the first volume of "Ashton Ellis's life"* and found its title-page dated 1900? What if he went farther, and, consulting page 408 of vol. v of this *Life*, there read a statement made by Praeger's own widow in 1894: "Mr Ellis further asks, 'Was the English book in type before the author's death?' No, certainly not." He would come to the conclusion, of course, that the present editor of *Grove* was himself acquainted only "*passim*" with a work to which he refers his readers, and had not yet dipped into a volume (issued some three quarters of a year before his own) in which the whole facts concerning Praeger's "interesting book" are dealt with at exhaustive length.

No more convincing proof of the necessity for my "flogging that dead horse" could I desire, than this resuscitation of it by a standard work like *Grove*; but in *Grove's* own interest I now implore its editor to rectify the terrible confusion of his well-meant addition to its monograph on P. "The publication of *Wagner as I knew him*" did not take place "in 1885," though its dedication is so dated, but early in 1892, as witnessed even by the title-page; neither was "the book brought out again" in England—but its German form, appearing a few months later, was ultimately *withdrawn* by Messrs Breitkopf & Haertel "as soon as the untruthfulness of that publication had been proved to us" (see v, 414). Moreover, though one of the earliest and most active, I was in nowise the only writer from whom that publication "drew forth very severe criticisms"; in Germany it was greeted with derision from the first, by all except people

* Italics and a capital *L* might have spared him some perplexity.

like Hanslick. Nowadays to characterise it as "interesting," and inferentially to dispute the justice of those "criticisms," is a blot on *Grove's* escutcheon which I feel sure the cultured editor will instantly expunge if he kindly takes the trouble to peruse my lengthy Supplemental Note to volume v and certain of my exhibits in the present one.

Page 122*n*. JOHANNA WAGNER AT HER MAJESTY'S.—Wednesday, April 23, 56, Liszt writes his Brussels Freundin, from Weimar: "Johanna Wagner is to come here next Monday, and will sing Iphigenia (in Aulis*), Orpheus and Romeo, in course of the week." May 12, to the same correspondent: "Johanna Wagner made a *furor* at Weymar last week [presumably, the week before]—and completely merited her reception (very far beyond our local custom) in the rôles of Gluck's Orpheus and Clytemnestra. The true medium for the display of her talent, both as tragedian and singer, is that lyric declamation of which Gluck's works have left us the accomplished model. Her register un- luckily restricts her to a very small number of rôles, for she cannot attack the notes indispensable to almost every other without preliminary caution. From time to time she succeeds in parading a fugitive *a* or *b* flat, but as a rule cannot easily go above *f*, and her register is that of the contralto, two octaves from *e* to *e*. In the octave and a half from *a* to *e* her voice is of an admirable timbre and volume. Her finest rôles are Orpheus, Clytemnestra (in Iphigenia in Aulis), Tancredi and Romeo—which I no longer can endure, this music giving me the nauseating effect of stale pomade. At the commencement of June she will make her London début in Orpheus at Her Majesty's Theatre, which Lumley is re-opening this season"—leading very nicely up to a redemption of the half-promise I made in vol. iv (p. 465):—

In his *Reminiscences of the Opera* (pubd 1864) Benjamin Lumley first tells us all about the contretemps of 1852, precluding it thus: "I published my list of engagements, and my programme of performances for the season. At the head of the list appeared Madame Sontag, then in the zenith of her popularity, and Mademoiselle Johanna Wagner, a German *prima donna*, whose fame in her own country rivalled that of the once popular idol of all Northern Europe, Jenny Lind. On so high a pedestal, indeed, had Mademoiselle Wagner been placed, that the announcement of her appearance at Her Majesty's Theatre excited universal interest and curiosity among musical circles, absorbing operatic minds almost as much as had done the advent of the fame-heralded 'Swedish Nightingale.' A

* As he tells Köhler, May 24, "in Wagner's arrangement"—*cf* ii, 180 *et seq.*, also 359 & 367 *sup.*

magnificent voice, a broad and grand school of vocalization, and a marvellous dramatic power, joined to a comely person, were confidently asserted to form the almost unequalled attractions of this young lady, on whose co-operation the future fortunes of the establishment were now considered in a great measure to depend." Lumley then passes to an account of his serious disappointment and the legal proceedings detailed in vol. iv. Presently we arrive at the year 1856:—

"Indirect assurances had been given to me that Mademoiselle Wagner was anxious to come to terms, and appear at Her Majesty's Theatre, provided she could be released from the penalties of the infraction of her engagement on the previous occasion. On the basis of these assurances I resolved to make overtures of 'peace and good will' to my former deserter. There was no time for long negotiations. Principally through the mediation of Paul Taglioni, then professionally engaged at Berlin, and by telegraphic dispatches, the affair was brought to a conclusion. Some doubt still lingered in the lady's mind, arising not from any suspicion of the entire sincerity of my offers of reconciliation and engagement, but, as it afterwards appeared, from her own fears as to the disposition of a British public towards her, after the insolent (but oft-repenting) letter of her father, with the ignorant phrase, 'England is only to be valued for her gold.' The risk, however, was worth encountering, and Mademoiselle Wagner's engagement at Her Majesty's Theatre for the season of 1856 was concluded." Here Lumley branches off to other matters, but adds a footnote: "In her correspondence she made constant reference to the wretched affair of 1852. '*Croyez moi, je serai fidèle à ma parole et à vous jusqu'au dernier moment*'; and again, '*J'espère qu'il*' (the new contract) '*effacera avec ses conséquences tout le passé pour toujours. Quant à moi, je ferai mon possible pour obtenir ce résultat; et quant à vous, je suis persuadée, que vous ferez tout pour me soutenir, et me faire aimer votre belle Angleterre.*' The last words again reveal her doubts as to her reception. The lady was very anxious to sing the '*Orphée*' of Glück. '*Mon plus beau rôle*' she says, '*mon plus grand succès.*'"

A few pages lower, Lumley resumes his tale: "At this juncture came to England the German celebrity already announced, to the general astonishment. Old feuds had been forgiven and well-nigh forgotten; * and when Mademoiselle Johanna Wagner appeared upon

* Lumley's note: "A few hisses, it is true, on her first night, testified that all recollection of the outrage of the past had not been wholly swept away. That these expressions of disapprobation arose from popular feeling, and not from any critical judgment of her merits as a singer, was obvious enough.—Her first words to me, when I entered her room after her performance on her

the stage of Her Majesty's Theatre a generous public eased her mind at once, and, by receiving her with acclamation, showed that it had wiped from its memory the bitter rancour occasioned by her father's stupid and insolent phrase.

"It was a singular scene when Mademoiselle Wagner stepped forward as the *Romeo* of Bellino's [*sic*] 'Montecchi e Capuletti,' on Saturday, the 14th June. The operatic world had felt its curiosity strained to the very highest powers of tension. Since the advent of Jenny Lind there had not existed a reputation of any celebrity respecting which so many horoscopes had been cast, and so much divination hazarded. Although still young [4 months short of 28], she already enjoyed a world-wide fame. Her achievements as a great lyrical artist had been long blazoned abroad. To the curiosity excited by the first appearance of such a prize, once seemingly within the grasp of the frequenters of the old Opera-house and yet so unauspiciously snatched from them, there was added another species of curiosity, as strong, if not in some minds stronger, to witness the reception of an artist whose delinquencies had created so great a sensation. She appeared: tall, stately, self-possessed, clothed in glittering gilded mail, with her fine fair hair flung in masses upon her neck: a superb air that seemed to give full earnest of victory, and a step revealing innate majesty and grandeur in every movement. Was it possible to gaze upon so grand an apparition, and murmur other tones than those of approbation? She sang! The sonorous voice, which heralded the mission of the young warrior to his enemies, rang through the house as penetrating and as awakening as the summons of a clarion. Was it possible to listen and not feel every hostile feeling crushed? Gifted with a voice combining the resources of *soprano* and *contralto* in one—or rather with *two* voices' (wrote one able critic on the occasion)—a well-accented style of declamation—endowed with a grace which made every attitude a pictorial study, no wonder that Mademoiselle Johanna Wagner 'took the house by storm.' The union of such striking elements of lyrical art in one and the same person seemed to have suspended all power of cooler reflection in her audience, for it commanded burst after burst of admiration and applause. The *Romeo* of Mademoiselle Wagner may thus fairly take rank among the great successes witnessed within those walls.

"The evening on which Mademoiselle Wagner absorbed the powers of every ear and every eye, was marked by two other first appearances;

début, were, 'Quel dommage que je ne suis pas venue quatre ans plutôt.' There was doubtless some truth in the lady's observation. Her voice had naturally lost much of that exquisite freshness which had characterized it five years previously" (when Lumley signed his first contract with her).

that of Herr Reichart, a pleasant tenor, as *Tebaldo*; and Mademoiselle Jenny Bauer, a useful *soprano* of the florid school as *Giulietta*.* Both were successful. But the excitement of the evening was all for the one great luminary, which for the time bedimmed all else around it.

"In the next part in which she appeared Mademoiselle Wagner was not equally fortunate, although her rendering of the character of 'Lucrezia Borgia' was a creditable effort.

"Mademoiselle Wagner was probably correct in the judgment that urged her to propose the 'Orphée' of Glück as her second part. In that opera she felt sure of her success. She had faith now in the acceptance of the music '*quasi classique*' (as she writes), by a public which she found to be far more enlightened than she had been taught to believe it. But at this late period of the season it was impracticable to set this work on the stage.

"A great portion of her *prestige* was regained by her assumption of one of the grand parts of Madame Pasta, viz., 'Tancredi.' In this rôle (once conceived the greatest of all the characters in the operas of Rossini), the songstress was not compelled to contend against the partisanship of the admirers of other modern artists; and in this opera she was accordingly triumphant. Perhaps in no part could she have shone more conspicuously as an 'heroic' actress, little scope as the dull drama of 'Tancredi' afforded for diversity of tragic feeling and passion; and there could have been few operas, in any immediately available *répertoire*, in which all the magnificence of her peculiar voice could have been heard to greater advantage. Declamatory vigour, largeness of style and expression of sentiment, were made effective in her rendering of this part. Younger opera-goers had an opportunity of witnessing a display of vocal style and histrionic power of which, till now, they had only heard in connexion with the once great Pasta. These memories Johanna Wagner was able in some measure to revive before them; nevertheless, the opera itself, though once so popular, had but little share in the triumph of the performance, † so great had been the change in public taste.

* Lumley's note: "It was remarkable that the three principal personages of this eminently Italian opera were filled on this occasion by three German artists."—Herr Reichart will be remembered from vol. v.

† Lumley's note: "In losing opportunities of appearing as a delineator of strong dramatic feelings, Mdlle. Wagner doubtless lost a great portion of her lawful *prestige*. As a concert-singer she never obtained any great popularity in England. At private concerts she felt the inferiority of the position awarded to her as compared with that of other artists, such as Madame Bosio for instance; and she retired of her own accord from almost every invitation to sing on such occasions."

"Was this transcendent artist, however, fortunate enough to establish, as she should have done, one of those extraordinary successes which mark an epoch in the memory of opera-goers? It cannot be said that she did. She flashed across the arena of Her Majesty's Theatre rather as a splendid meteor than as a sun to warm, to vivify, to remain a great and permanent glory. She came, like others of her predecessors, at a time unfortunate for her fame. Marietta Piccolomini had already insinuated herself into every heart. High art, alas! paled before popular *engouement*. The performances of Mademoiselle Wagner had the honour of bringing Her Majesty the Queen to the 'old house' for the first time during the season. But they never fully penetrated, as they ought to have done, the general public."—Finally, speaking of 1857, Lumley remarks: "I had also entertained the intention of re-engaging Mademoiselle Johanna Wagner as an additional attraction for the coming season. But this intention was doomed never to be fulfilled"—perhaps because of those financial difficulties which compelled him to give up operatic management in '58.

As postscript, I may add the testimony of the great von Helmholtz, who writes home from Königsberg in 1854: "I have heard greater vocalists and finer voices, and the Schröder-Devrient may have acted still more powerfully, just as there may also have been more imposing beauties on the boards; but I never have seen such a union of so much of all these qualities as in the Wagner, and the youthful freshness, fulness and natural flow of her representation makes a truly delightful effect" (see *Die Musik* III., 7, p. 19). The pity of it is, she was so chary of placing these rich talents at service of her "uncle's" works.

Page 142. "SAWITRI" AND "USINAR."—As I have just turned up the book in question, let me repeat the full allusion thereto in Wagner's letter of April 1855 to Mathilde Wesendonck (*cf* v, 254): "Otto must at once procure you 'Indische Sagen, bearbeitet von Adolf Holtzmann, Stuttgart.' I brought them to London with me; their reading has been my sole delight here. All are beautiful; but—*Sawitri* is divine, and if you wish to find out *my* religion, read *Usinar*. How shamed stands our whole Culture by these purest revelations of noblest humanity in the ancient Orient!"

Since the copy in our British Museum bears the imprimatur "Karlsruhe, 1845," it was clearly the second edition (Stuttgart, 1854) that Wagner had lit on, but is extremely unlikely to have differed from the first in more than an occasional nuance of style. Merely premising that Holtzmann's poetic product is a 'golden treasury' of "legends" from the huge Ramayana and Mahabharata epics, I will straightway summarise the two which Wagner chose for special mention:—

That of SAWITRI, one of the longest in Holtzmann's collection, is indeed "divine," as Wagner called it; one can see in it the makings of another music-drama, had he pursued the idea. Here a king of Madras, Aswapati, "advanced in years and childless," had bound himself by a vow at the shrine of *Sawitri** to eat on every sixth day only, and then but little: "Thus lived the king for eighteen years in penance strict; but when the eighteenth year had passed, *Sawitri* was appeased." A child then was born to Aswapati, a daughter whom he gave the goddess' name. But when she grew to nuptial age, the beauty of this mortal Sawitri so blinded every suitor's eyes that none durst crave her hand. Desirous to prolong his line, one of the first of a Brahman's duties, Aswapati therefore bids the maiden go and choose herself a husband. In a rich chariot, surrounded with attendants, she journeys to and fro, till she comes to a desert place where dwell the exiled king Dyumat (spelt "Djumatsen" by Holtzmann), exiled for blindness, and his only son Satyavan (spelt "Satjawat" by H.), leading the simple life of hermits. Her heart at once goes out to the handsome and devout young prince, and she returns to tell her father of her choice. With Aswapati is seated at that moment a seer Narada, "friend of the gods," who declares that Satyavan is admirable in every way save one: "One only fault, O prince, hath virtuous Satyavan; one only fault, but one past mending. That fault is, that on this day year Prince Satyavan must lose his youthful life." The king is aghast, but Sawitri insisting that she will wed none other, he finally consents and bears his daughter to her future home. The exiled Dyumat represents to her that, after all the pomp of palace life, she will ne'er take well to circumstance so humble; once more she is not to be shaken.

No sooner had the wedding been celebrated and her father departed, than Sawitri "laid aside all gaud, and donned the coarse red garment of a penitent." United to her soul's affinity, with each setting of the sun her heart in secret counted one day less for him to live; and so it fell that, on the dawning of the fourth day ere that foretokened by the seer, she told the exiles she had vowed to stand for three whole days and nights without stirring foot or hand or mouth. Good blind

* Holtzmann adds a footnote, "Sawitri or Uma, wife of Siwa"; but J. Dowson, in his *Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology &c.* (1879), gives the first two significations of "SĀVITRĪ" as "1. The holy verse of the Veda, commonly called Gāyatrī. 2. A name of Sata-rūpā, the daughter and wife of Brahmā, who is sometimes regarded as a personification of the holy verse"—the relationship having its parallels in Adam and Eve, Jocaste and Œdipus. Dowson's third and last signification is the same as our story, in brief.—N.B. To distinguish the goddess from the mortal, I have had the name of the former printed in italics above.

King Dyumat prayed her to forgo so sore a test—yet, if vow she had taken, so must it even be.

Day dawns on the expiry of Sawitri's vow, the day of Prince Satyavan's doom. All ignorant of his fate, Satyavan bids his wife farewell, as he must hie him to the forest to hew wood for a sacrifice. She refuses to be parted from him on this day, and heedless of the warnings both of son and father against the perils of a trackless waste, hand in hand she sets forth with her husband. Praising the beauties of the unaccustomed path, a basketful of flowers and fruit they cull, and set it underneath a tree for their siesta; then Satyavan begins his pious task, Sawitri watching.

High stands the sun; the hour has come for rest. Satyavan lays aside his axe, and both seek shadow of their friendly tree. Scarce have they seated themselves beneath it, than Satyavan complains of strange oppression; resting his head on Sawitri's lap, he swoons away.

Bloodred-clad Yama, grim god of the dead, approaches, a rope in his right hand, and tells Sawitri he has come to claim her husband. She asks why he should come himself, not send a messenger as wanted? Yama replies that none of lesser rank were meet to bear away so rare a prize. With no further parley, he makes a slip-knot in his rope, draws the soul of Satyavan from its mortal vesture, and starts with it for the under-world. But, swift of foot, Sawitri overtakes and enters into discourse with him.

So moved is Yama by her first wise saying, that he promises whatever boon her wish may choose, "only not the life of Satyavan"; she begs for restoration of King Dyumat's sight. Granting it, he bids her go her way in peace, but still she paces on beside him, and once again her virtuous wisdom wins a promise from him, with the same reserve; she begs for Dyumat's restoration to his kingdom. Her third and fourth wise speeches are rewarded with the grant of heirs to her own father, then also to herself. At that she tells god Yama he has pledged her Satyavan's soul already, since without her husband she could have no heirs. He yields it to her.

Close-guarding her most precious boon, at twilight she returns to where Satyavan's body still is lying, and breathes the soul into it. Satyavan awakes, wondering that he has slept so long, but knowing naught of the adventure. Night has now fallen, the jungle is pitch-dark; Satyavan cuts a pine-branch to light their footsteps home, and one arm round each other's waist, the other bearing torch and basket, they safely thread their gladsome way—to find King Dyumat's sight restored, with envoys come to beg him re-ascend his throne. Half guessed by Dyumat, Sawitri's secret now is fully told, and thus are both royal houses saved from lapse.—

USINAR is a much shorter tale, so short as to merit the name of

parable. Properly the incident belongs to Sivi, Usinara's *son*, renowned for his great charity and devotion (see Dowson), but we must abide by Holtzmann's version as that which Wagner read. Here "Usinar the King was sacrificing to the Jumna, when a pigeon, hotly pursued by a hawk, flew into the king's bosom and prayed for rescue." The hawk demands its prey, averring that "from all eternity it stands decreed that hawks shall feed on pigeons." Usinar replies that, on his side, it is a duty to protect all who seek sanctuary. The hawk: "I have my duty, too, to mate and nestlings who would starve, brought I no food." Usinar still refusing, the hawk proposes to exchange the pigeon for an equal weight of the king's own flesh.* From his thigh the king unblenching cuts a piece of flesh, and lays it in the balance: the bird outweighs it. Again he cuts, and yet again, but still the bird weighs heavier; till finally he gets into the scale himself, and the pigeon flies aloft. Then the hawk reveals itself as Indra, god of the atmosphere, and the pigeon as Agni, god of fire. For his great compassion (degraded by Holtzmann into "devotion to duty"—*pflichtgetreu*) Usinar is raised at his death to the shining abode of the gods.

"If you wish to find out *my* religion, read *Usinar*."

Page 195. ST GALLEN CONCERT.—At the last moment, and through the personal intervention of my friend Mr David Irvine, I have succeeded in procuring a copy of Herr G. R. Kruse's feuilleton in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* for August 30, 1899, enabling me to fill up some gaps in my account of this episode.

At his Subscription concert of Jan. 18, 56, Heinrich Sczadrowsky had conducted the "Friedensmarsch" from *Rienzi*, the first scrap of Wagner's music ever heard at St Gallen in public. Encouraged by its success, and mindful of the Zurich Wagner-concerts of 1853, in which St Gallen bandsmen had taken part (iv, 105), he appears to have written Wagner a few days later, begging a loan of the *Tannhäuser* overture for a similar purpose, and, obtaining no answer, to have renewed his request a fortnight after. To this second note Wagner replies:—

Gehrtester Herr!

I was ill when you wrote first [*cf* 104 *sup.*]; moreover, I had lent out the score of those concert-pieces—among them the *Tannhäuser* overture—and have not received them back yet. To oblige you, I therefore am sending you my own score of the opera; with the particular request, however, that you will return

* May this not be the origin of the *Merchant of Venice* inversion?

it in good condition directly after, and also notify me of its receipt.

For the rest, it is impossible for me to expound the rendering etc. by letter—so best luck and thanks!

Yours faithfully

RICH. WAGNER.

Zurich, 5. Febr. 56.

Sczadrowsky then gave the *Tannhäuser* overture at the St Gallen concert of Feb. 17, repeating it and the *Rienzi* march at his benefit-concert (date?); he also commenced the last concert of that winter season, March 21, 56, with Wagner's revise of Gluck's overture to *Iphigenia in Aulis*. So we arrive at the autumn with another letter from Zurich, which makes it just possible that the instigation to our own particular concert really emanated from the Hôtel Baur:

Geehrter Freund!

I am delighted that you will be happy to receive us at St Gallen.* Only have a care that nothing is lacking on your side to keep us in good temper. We assume that you will make it convenient to raise your prices for the concert in which Liszt and I take part, to place you in the position to meet our various requirements for a full orchestra. I therefore definitely count on your at least engaging the extra musicians on my list,† and in any case increasing the strings to 18 good violins, 6 violas, 6 violoncelli and 4 double basses. Regarding the wind instruments, I tell you frankly that goodness only of the *first* desks will not suffice me, and I commend this point to your very close attention; if you find any weaklings, assistance must be thought of. For instance, you praise your first oboist; if your second, on the contrary, isn't altogether to be trusted, I would beg you to secure Herr Fries of Zurich (upon whom I can rely) for the first oboe, and try to get your own most kindly to take up the second. The same with the horn; we need 3, and 4 horns:—is the 3rd also beyond reproach? If not, I beg for Herr Bär from Zurich; and

* "Es freut mich, dass Sie uns gern in St. Gallen empfangen wollen."

† The expression "die bei mir verzeichneten Musiker" is not without obscurity; unless the "bei" is a misreading of "von" (?), it would suggest that Sczadrowsky had already conferred with the Zurich party "at" Wagner's rooms.

so forth.—In short, do your best to put us in thoroughly good humour!—

As for the programme, I should deem the concert amply filled if you arranged it thus:—

1. *Orpheus*—Liszt.
2. Vocal piece.
3. *Symphony*—Beethoven.
4. Vocal piece.
5. *Préludes*—Liszt.

I shouldn't quite know where to place the Iphigenie overture; perhaps, though, as

“Introductory”—without number.

Touching the Flying Dutchman Ballad, I must think it over; but there would have to be a *female choir*.—In that case, perhaps it might form no. 2 on the programme. Then, to keep to one subject, the *Sailors' chorus* from the same opera could be taken for no. 4; that is, if you could answer for a sound selection of 50 to 60 good singers.—

Well, then—I shall expect you Sunday; a talk is still needed.

At any rate please book decent quarters for 7 to 8 persons at the Hecht.

Adieu!

Your

[undated]

R. W.

From this “7 to 8 persons” clause, it looks as if at the time the above was written, apparently late in October, there had been a chance of the Wesendoncks staying on. As for the Hecht—“still the best hotel at St Gallen,” says Kruse—Wagner had put up there a couple of days in April '51, on a visit to young Bülow and Ritter (iii, 78).

Nov. 12, 56, the committee announced in terms too florid to oppress these pages with, that, on the special invitation of their conductor, “Herren Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner, who, as all know, have entirely withdrawn from the platform, simply for Art's sake have consented to co-operate in our second Subscription concert, the 16th inst.” Two days after that, however, another proclamation had to be issued: “We unfortunately have to make it known that, owing to the continued indisposition of Herr Dr Franz Liszt, our Subscription concert announced for next Sunday must be postponed for a week, viz. to Sunday the 23rd of November.—We append a copy of the telegraphic despatch:

Zurich, Thursday the 13th November, 2.45. Hrn Musik-direktor Sczadrowsky, St Gallen.

If you still want to have Liszt and myself, the concert must be put off for a week ; Liszt mayn't come earlier. Hope it can be arranged. Greetings and apologies, please, to the Committee.

Richard Wagner."

According to Herr Kruse, a concert nevertheless was given Nov. 16, with the *Iphigenie* overture as opening, but of course without the features first intended. On the 18th came :

Best Herr Sczadrowski,

We thank you for your good news, and are both looking forward to our visit to you ; which, as Liszt's health is no longer an obstacle, shall take place punctually.

We approve the *programme* ; only, in the interest of us all I would beg for Gluck's, in place of the unfortunate clarinet aria by Mozart.* *Gluck*, then. Further, we should like a carriage at the station 10.30 Saturday [morning], and rooms warmed at the hotel. Herr and Mad. Wesendonck are not coming, though ; so, simply Liszt (3 pers.) and myself (2 pers.).—Moreover, Liszt asks that, in case there be any kind intention of *entertaining* us one evening, † neither Saturday nor Sunday (such as after the concert) may be chosen, as he fears being greatly fatigued, and—like myself—will need a rest.

On the other hand, we shall remain at St Gallen Monday, and hope to have leisure then to see and compliment yourself and the Messrs Protectors of Music.

So—best thanks for all trouble, and sincere regret, once more, for the derangement.

To our meeting on Saturday !

Your

RICH. WAGNER.

Of the enthusiasm aroused by the concert, and its materialising "in verse and prose," we have heard already, also of the toasts at the Hecht banquet ; in fact Wagner told Otto, "Against my previous obstinate

* That of Sextus, from *Tito*.

† Didn't I guess, the idea of that banquet had its cradle in Altenburg minds?—*cf* 197 *sup*.

resistance, I was brought to speech myself at last" (p. 198 *sup.*). The substance of that speech is given by Kruse: "He warmly recommended the St Gallen concert-institute to support the town-theatre then in course of erection, and spoke at some length on the benefit and harm the *Stage* was capable of exerting on the taste, and the intellectual and moral stamina of a town. '*Better no theatre at all, than a bad one,*' he constantly repeated, giving many a memorable hint which, gladly as it was received, does not seem to have been much heeded after."

"Auf Wiedersehen next autumn!"—were Liszt's parting words, unfulfilled, as seen. Were I to re-echo them in my own case, I fear they might be falsified again; but perhaps the following spring.

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