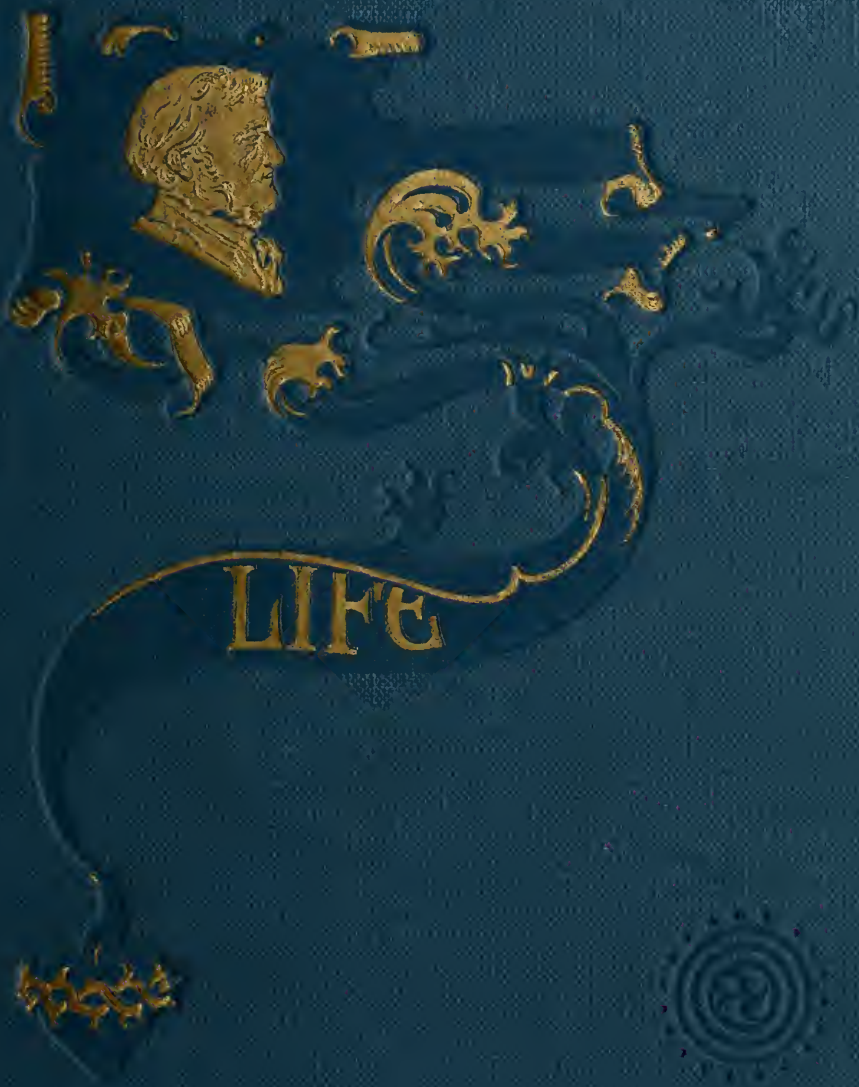


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PREFATORY NOTE.

I HAVE to offer an apology for the delay in this second volume's appearance. To tell the truth, that delay is entirely due to a too obstinate attempt to abide by the plan sketched out in my preface to Volume I.: had I come earlier to my recent decision, these chapters would have long since lain at the reader's mercy; for, with exception of the Supplemental Notes, they were ready for type by last July. But Herr Glasenapp's second volume had taken us down (in the German) to the beginning of 1853—private publication of the poem of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*—and I was doing my best to keep fairly in step with him. However, as from about the seventh of the present set of chapters I had allowed myself considerably greater freedom, alike of exposition and construction, the work ran away with me at last; so that, by the time the major portion of my manuscript was actually in the printer's hands, I made the embarrassing discovery that this volume threatened to extend to some 150 to 200 pages longer than its predecessor. Accordingly there was nothing for it, but to break off at an earlier epoch than that selected for the purpose by Herr Glasenapp. Luckily such an epoch presented itself quite naturally with Richard Wagner's removal

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from Dresden to Switzerland, i.e. with the remission of his sentence to 'Kapellmeistership for life' after not quite seven years thereof had been endured. Mindful of the text "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," I will venture no prophecy as to the exact boundaries of my third volume; but, for the above reason, it certainly cannot approach the limit originally intended for it.

WM. ASHTON ELLIS.

Horsted Keynes,
Christmas 1901.

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THE KAPPELLMEISTER.

(1843-1849.)

*Was Rechtes je ich rieth,
Andern dünkte es arg ;
was schlimm immer mir schien,
Andre gaben ihm Gunst.
In Fehde fiel ich, wo ich mich fand,
Zorn traf mich, wohin ich zog.*

(DIE WALKÜRE, act i, sc. 2.)

I.

DRESDEN SURROUNDINGS.

Entry upon office.—King Friedrich August II.—Freiherr von Lüttichau.—Frau Schröder-Devrient.—Berlioz at Dresden.—Gluck's "Armida."—Konzertmeister Lipinski.—Mendelssohn, and Beethoven's Symphony in F.—Mozart's "Don Juan" and the Dresden critics.—Occasional compositions; Das Liebesmahl der Apostel.

I believe there are no such muddle-headed people anywhere in the world, as in Dresden. . . . Here in Switzerland I feel like a dog that has got over a whipping; by which I mean the eternal aimless, useless, body-and-soul-destroying fight with the Impossible, that I had to wage for six long years in my relations with ignorance and insolence. In Dresden, as Kapellmeister "loci," I should have become thoroughly soured, because continually maligned, spitefully pulled to pieces, and therefore rendered powerless. . . . Were I amnestied to-day, and again appointed Kapellmeister to the Dresden Court, you would see how calmly I should remain in my Switzerland.

RICHARD WAGNER (*Letters to Uhlig &c.* 1851 et passim).

AT midday on the 2nd of February 1843 Richard Wagner was summoned to the conference-chamber of the Court-theatre Directorate to go through the usual ceremony of swearing-in as Royal Saxon Court-Kapellmeister "for life"—which, to our modern ears, sounds something like penal servitude. He himself scarcely knew how he had arrived at it. Certainly not through any personal ambition, for even the joy he felt on returning to his native soil had soon been dissipated by the state in which he found its institutions. "Paris, Dresden, or Schilda—it's all one to me, so far as I know my own mind," had he written just two months after his return, in full enjoyment of the

natural charms of Teplitz. As if presaging the change in his outward lot, he continues: "I shudder at the thought that perhaps a tedious banal *fortune* may be bestowed on me some day, when—instead of hens and goats—I shall have to take pleasure in Hofraths and asses." * His instinctive dread of fixed engagement at any Royal theatre had not been conquered by what had happened in the interval; merely it had been driven inwards. The "theatre-crew in whose hands his artistic future" lay, to which he refers even in the letter just-quoted, had presented itself in a less terrifying light through the glamour of *Rienzi*; and when everybody was congratulating him, it would have been strange if he himself had not at last been led away by the idea of his "good fortune." If anything could contribute to such self-deception, it would be consideration for his worried wife. She had suffered almost more than himself through his many buffetings and roamings, and looked upon this wellnigh despaired of "provision for life" as the longed-for haven, the goal of her most audacious wishes. We may imagine how she naturally had teased him to accept the post and put an end to their "vagabondage."

One thing was certain: if he was to venture on this new round of duties, it should be with all that thorough-going energy he had displayed even in his provincial conductorships some few years back. There was to be no doubt about it, as may be judged from the letter to von Lüttichau quoted in our first volume: "reform, reorganisation of the royal band" was to be the order of the day. It is the same proud feeling of what is due alike to artwork and to artist that we meet in his declaration to Fischer, from the midst of his Parisian straits, that to him it matters less how his *Rienzi* is received in Dresden, than how it is *given*; and ten years later, in a letter from Zurich to F. Heine: "I care absolutely nothing about my things *being given*, but only that they be *given in the way* I intended; whoever either will not or cannot do that, had best leave them alone."

* Fragment of a letter to Lehrs in Paris, dated June 12, 1842. There is an exactly-corresponding passage in one to Uhlig of Sept. or Oct. 1851: "My desires:—a cottage, with meadow and little garden! To work with zest and relish,—but not for now. When every German theatre shall tumble down [and so on]—Repose, repose!—Country, country! A cow, a goat etc. Then—health—cheerfulness—hope!—else all is lost!"

According to Robert Prölss,* "It seemed as though a new era were dawning for the Dresden Opera, with the acquisition of Richard Wagner." Quite in keeping with this comment is the letter addressed by Wagner to his friends in Paris: "People are expecting me to effect a thorough artistic reorganisation of musical matters here." In sooth, there was much to "reorganise," not only in the Kapelle, or band, but in the whole operatic establishment, which the apathy of Gottlieb Reissiger had allowed to run completely to seed. It needed all the fire of youth and strong conviction, to clear away the weeds: "Since Weber's death, and especially through dissolution of the Italian Opera, the artistic means have much increased; but the spirit of their application has fallen to the crassest Philistrism," says the young master himself. "Incited by that wealth of means, I have set myself the task of prosecuting Weber's noble work, i.e. of helping to emancipate Dresden, musically speaking, of dealing Philistrism a knock-down blow, of cultivating the public taste for what is worthy, and consequently making its voice heard."

Having followed our hero to his official installation, it will be as well to pause and take a glance at his surroundings. We will begin at the top, with his sovereign.

King Friedrich August II. had been a favourite with the Saxon people even before his appointment (when simply Prince Friedrich) to co-regency with King Anton at the time of the Leipzig émeute in 1830. He was not precisely a strong ruler, but full of human kindness and gifted with a fair amount of penetration. Beyond question, his avowed interest in Wagner's exceptional gifts had a beneficial influence on the relations of the General-Direction with the composer. He had been unable to attend that first performance of *Rienzi* which had promptly made the unknown artist the idol of the Dresden public; on the morning of the very day of production he had fallen with his horse, and sustained a trifling injury to the knee. Nevertheless he promptly announced his intention of being present at

* *Geschichte des Dresdener Hoftheaters* (Dresden 1878), a work abounding in the most carefully-recorded details, though Gutzkow has rightly twitted the author for his toadying to the authorities who had allowed him the run of their archives. This must be remembered, when we come to Prölss's references to von Lüttichau.

the next, and sitting it out; to Lüttichau's protestation that he would find the opera too long, he cheerily replied, "Never mind! A work like that must be properly heard. I shall sleep in town." The two Princesses, Augusta and Amalie, were also enthusiastic about the work; the former had been Weber's only friend at court, whilst Princess Amalie had earned some reputation as a poet—on this occasion, according to a letter of F. Heine's to E. Kietz dated Oct. 24, she declared that no composition had ever produced such an effect on her, and likened it to a costly silken fabric richly embroidered with gold and pearls, a simile we would gladly see reserved for royal poetasters.

As to Wagner's opinion of the King himself, he writes to Lehrs a few months later: "He really is humanly pleased with me," going on to describe him as a true and simple man, with an open mind for the beautiful, "straightforward—without any fuss, like the King of Prussia—meaning what he says about a thing." The only pity is, that throughout the whole duration of his Dresden engagement a buffer-state of courtiers and officials was interposed between artist and monarch; a wall the King himself was powerless to break through, because of Saxon etiquette. From his earliest youth, Richard Wagner had held this prince in high esteem; through all the political excitement of the time of revolution he preserved a personal affection for him; and there is very good reason to believe that Friedrich August both recognised and reciprocated it. Let one instance serve for many: when the formal cancellation of Wagner's engagement became a necessity owing to his flight from Dresden, and Lüttichau desired to base it on the warrant out against him as a "revolutionary," a hint was conveyed by the secretary of the Royal Household that recourse should rather be taken to the clause which treated any unpermitted absence from the city's precincts as a breach of contract.

Next to the King, so far as touches Wagner, comes the immediate chief, his Excellency late Master of Woods and Forests, Kammerherr and Geheimrath August Freiherr von Lüttichau, General Director of the Court-theatre for the last twenty years or so.* "We have been told of a twenty-two-year-old hunting-lord, who, simply because he knew nothing whatever about it,

* He replaced von Könneritz in 1824, and retained his position until 1862.

was made Intendant of a theatre, and presided over that art establishment for considerably beyond a quarter of a century. One day he candidly declared that nowadays, at anyrate, Schiller would never have been permitted to write a thing like *Tell*" (*P.** IV. 95); such is the silhouette that Wagner draws of him in 1867. In essence it is not at variance with the picture painted from quite another point of view by the obsequious Dresden chronicler R. Prölss: "Herr von Lüttichau did not belong to the category of profound or high-flying natures; but he was a man of clear, calm understanding, free from prejudices, swift and firm in decision, steadfast without being stubborn, with a deep sense of duty, and kindly-inclined. Two were his standards: the honour and glory of the institute entrusted to him, and the interests of his Royal master. An idealistic bent led him to a high conception of the former,—his monarch's sense of justice and general good-will preserved him on the whole, though not in every single instance, from a petty treatment of the latter. Seldom did he turn a deaf ear to reason, and never with conscious intent." From which extraordinary jumble it may be laboriously gathered that his Excellency was one of those dangerous persons who "mean well," but have an unfortunate knack of doing otherwise. He had a considerable sense of his own importance, and the eyes that looked out from under his bushy black eyebrows (referred to by Wagner in a letter to Fischer of July 1853) must have been no little astonished at the impulsive lieutenant with the massive skull who, for all his wearing of a uniform,† was not

* For the future, references to *Richard Wagner's Prose Works* will simply be indicated by a "*P*"; not out of deference to the humorous protestation of a critic that "*P.W.*" is the recognised abbreviation for *Pearson's Weekly*, but to economise space.—W. A. E.

† In the letter to Lehrs of April 7, 1843, we read: "I often have absurd expenses: now I've got to have a *court-uniform* made, which will cost me about a hundred thalers. Isn't it idiotic?" There are two or three ironical allusions to this uniform in the *Letters to Uhlig etc.* (written in exile). Strangely enough, Wagner would seem to have preserved the clothes as a memento of his bondage, for Frau Wille relates the following little scene as having taken place at Zurich in 1853: A few Saxon friends were at supper in his lodgings, when Wagner slipped away from table, to return in his Court Kapellmeister uniform, his back duly bent, his hands deferentially rubbing each other, his lips pursed to a sarcastic smile; with the choicest humour he greeted all present, then turned to his wife, "Eh! Minna, it was fine enough, and I pleased you then. The only pity is, poor wife, the uniform became too *tight*."

to be brow-beaten like the rest of his myrmidons,—for even Prölss records his bearing to the Dresden actors thus: “With one hand plunged in his bosom, and without a motion of the body, he poured on the culprit a flood of invectives in the politest of tones, till, carried away by rage at last, he clean forgot his never quite secure High-German, and came out with ‘Your name on the playbills spells ruin to the treasury; *Sie treiben mer die Leite ’naus.*’” Gutzkow, in his *Rückblicke auf mein Leben*, goes still farther, telling us that v. Lüttichau “would be good-natured enough at times, then suddenly become a demon.”

By many a token it would appear that von Lüttichau had a dim idea of his new “Kapellmeister’s” higher standing, from the very first. A substantial difference in age, intensified by dissimilarity of temperament, made it the easier for him to play the part of fatherly well-wisher; and the bungling manner in which he carried out his master’s favour toward the impetuous artist over whom his office gave him rule, may simply be attributed to the courtier’s utter incapacity to understand the latter’s aims, and feverish haste to assert his authority in face of a superior intellect. Little as Wagner intentionally let him feel that superiority, it was inevitable that conflicting views should soon begin to strain relations which had started by no means inauspiciously; especially from the moment that certain extra-official doings of the artist’s commenced to wound the *courtier* in him. His wife on the other hand (Ida von Knobelsdorf, by her maiden name) was a woman of exceptional refinement, who, ever since the time of Tieck, had formed a salon of the pick of Dresden’s literary and artistic lions, and exercised an indirect influence upon the control of the court-theatre by bringing her husband into much-needed contact with men of brains. Thus he was no total stranger to the notion that the stage required a leader of literary culture and æsthetic taste, and it is the more regrettable that the sense of dignity which did not prevent his being “cowed” in the sequel by the strutting conceit of an Emil Devrient, or led astray by the false counsels of a Davison, should have made him deafer and deafer to Wagner’s sound proposals for improvement, and obstinately opposed to any really radical reform.

Such dissensions did not, of course, arise at once; and Wagner refers in letters of this earliest period not only to the partiality of his sovereign lord, but also to the marked politeness shewn him

by the Intendant. Had not Lüttichau to live up to the reputation of having picked him out from a round dozen of proved conductors, and forced the post on him against his will? Indeed it would have taken a very dull eye, not to note the difference between this mercurial young man and his older colleague, Gottlob Reissiger, whose Kapellmeister-callousness had so increased in course of years that even his friends the local critics could not always pass it by in silence. Wagner himself had quite a fund of piquant anecdotes to tell, in after years, about his incompetent senior. Thus at nine o'clock one evening, when by all calculations Reissiger should have still been busy at the theatre, he met him on the bridge across the Elbe; surprised, Wagner asked him, "But, colleague mine, haven't you an opera to-night?"—receiving the self-congratulatory answer, "Have *had* it. *Stumme* over. How's that for smart conducting?" No wonder both public and directorate soon felt the difference between the two conductors; and also no wonder that the older hand, though jovial and kindly enough by nature, soon secretly assumed a hostile attitude towards the younger. Thus we hear that whatever good work Wagner did was either misrepresented or ignored by the Reissiger clique, who had nobbled the Dresden critics, including even Carl Banck.* Reissiger's friendship for Wagner was never more than skin-deep, and he found a highly useful ally in a certain Schladebach.† Although the animus of Schladebach's reports was sufficiently patent, the wideness of their circulation contributed no little to damage Wagner's credit as conductor, and, by way of contrast, to promote the interests of his stolid colleague. All the same, according to Gutzkow, Reissiger still "preserved the mien of indulgent father, affectionate friend, with every thought for others' weal, even for that of Richard Wagner if this or that *had but lain in his power*." The same authority goes on to say that "the Saxon art of dissembling" had become a positive virtuosity in this somewhat piously inclined

* Cf. Dr Hugo Dinger's article in the *Mus. Wochenblatt* 1890, p. 376.

† Dr Julius Schladebach, originator of the *Universalexikon der Tonkunst* (continued by Bernsdorf), author of several vocal compositions, died August 1872 at Kiel. From his pen came wellnigh all the outward-bound reports on musical affairs in Dresden for many years, contributed to the *Neue Zeitschrift*, the *Elegante*, the Dresden *Abendzeitung*, the *Teutonia* etc., etc., generally above the cypher "W. J. S. E."—in German type I and J are identical.

and outwardly amiable philistine: "In his heart of hearts he *hated* what he would have given the world not to—seem to. He had no desire to seem envious, and tried to conceal the fact that the *Schiffbruch der Medusa*, his latest opera, to him was the equal of *Tannhäuser*," and so on.

On the other hand the little group of Wagner's warm friends—Tichatschek, Fischer, F. Heine—had recently been increased by the appointment of August Roeckel to the subordinate post of "Musikdirektor." A son of the well-known tenor and impresario, Prof. Joseph Roeckel,* he was born Dec. 1, 1814, at Graz; accompanying his father on his artistic tours both at home and abroad, he had closely followed the politics of the age. In Paris, barely sixteen years old, he had been through the excitement of the July-revolution. Personal acquaintance with men of the people such as Lafayette, Laffitte and Marrast, had left an abiding impression on him, an enthusiasm for their ideals. "The next few years," as he says himself, "threw me into the company of Spanish and Portuguese refugees, whose accounts still more inflamed my hatred of hypocrisy and arbitrary rule,—a feeling not likely to be softened by the sight of multitudes of Poles driven forth from their fatherland after the most heroic struggle." In England, whither he followed his father in 1832 as chorus-master of his operatic enterprise, the spectacle of the great Reform movement was played out under his very eyes: "I learnt how the most radical changes in the State might easily and peacefully be carried through, when once the Government recognised its position as public servant and honestly fulfilled the duties thence arising." Thriven to manhood among the liberal institutions of this country, August Roeckel returned to Germany about the time of Wagner's engagement at Riga, going first to Weimar to complete his training as conductor and pianist under the guidance of his uncle J. N. Hummel. Here he obtained the post of Musikdirektor, and thereafter held a similar appointment at Bamberg, where he married the daughter of F. Lortzing (a cousin of the composer). He had now been summoned to Dresden in

* At the revival of Beethoven's *Fidelio* in March 1806 Joseph Roeckel sang the part of Florestan, and thus became intimate with the great master. In the years 1829 to 1835 he successfully introduced German Opera into Paris and London, with Schröder-Devrient, Wild, Haizinger et al. as singers, and his brother-in-law Hummel as conductor.

a like capacity, after sending in the score of his opera *Farinelli*. In our previous volume we have referred to the weight attached by the Saxon Court to the question of creed; in a letter of Wagner's to Löbmann (Riga) of Dec. 9, 1843, we read: "Even before I received my appointment as Kapellmeister, Röckel had already been proposed and as good as accepted as Musikdirektor, particularly on account of his being a *Catholic*—which was of importance because of the Church, where we have to work in common." A lively friendship soon sprang up between our hero and this bright young man, some eighteen months his junior; a friendship recalled by Wagner in later years, as follows: "After all, there was something in it, when we two were thus together. . . . To myself I often seem a ghost come back to earth, and still converse with you in thought quite *à la* Dresden rambles" (letters of April and June 1862 to A. R.). Nevertheless, as Mr H. S. Chamberlain justly remarks in his *Richard Wagner*, "Roeckel was quite incapable of understanding Wagner's views," and it was only the keen enthusiasm of early manhood, and "that breath of quickened life which stirred in Germany during the revolution-period, setting even humdrum natures in a state of exaltation," that masked their radical diversity of gifts and aspirations.

Of greater importance, so far as concerns his *art*, was Wagner's uninterrupted intercourse during this first Dresden winter with Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient. Even in his youth this incomparable artist had made a lasting impression on him: inspired by her, he had written and composed his *Liebesverbot*; and her study of the part of "Adriano," still more of "Senta," offered occasion for many an exchange of live ideas. As he says in 1851, "The remotest contact with this extraordinary woman electrified me; for many a year, even down to the present day, I saw, I heard, I felt her near me, whenever the creative impulse seized me." At his re-encounter, or rather, his first real acquaintance with her in Dresden she was already past her eight-and-thirtieth year, and verging on the decline of her splendid powers. Thirty years later, in his *Actors and Singers* (1872), he paints a picture that will serve for her monument to all time: "Upon the boards the character she represented, and that alone, in private life she was entirely herself. The possibility of pretending to a thing she was not, lay so unimaginably remote from her that its very absence stamped her with that gentility for which Nature had so markedly

predestined her. In dignity and ease of carriage she might have been the model for a queen. Her lightly won, but dearly tended education often shamed the beaux esprits of various nations who came to pay her homage; she would playfully introduce them to each other in their respective tongues, thereby plunging them at times into an embarrassment from which she alone could extricate them. Through her wit she could cloak her culture in the presence of uncultured sirs, for instance our Court-theatre Intendants; but she gave that wit free rein among her equals, as which she gladly looked upon her colleagues of the theatre, without a touch of pride" (*P. V. 227*). Alfred von Wolzogen has much the same to say in his Life of her: "Among comrades and colleagues she was as full of fun, as she was tactful and restrained in good society. . . . Unassuming in her intercourse with her own sex, she was a very queen to the men of every rank, up to crowned heads themselves, who lay at her feet; making them the playthings of her slightest whim, now proudly challenging, now coldly repelling, and anon attracting them by every feminine charm." As Wagner continues, "She was passionate, and therefore was she often duped; but she was incapable of taking vengeance for the meannesses put on her. She might be swept into unjustness of opinion, but never of action. Unsatisfied by a life of teeming change, her boundless heart was all compassion; charitable to the point of royal lavishness, to her the griefs of others were the only griefs unbearable." This we may substantiate by an extract from her private diary: "To-day I stood godmother to the child of journeyman Lorenz, and saw human misery in its most lamentable form. God! how is it possible for human beings to live like that? The most terrible lack of everything! How wickedly we sin, when we complain and feel dissatisfied—we have only to turn our eyes that way, to count ourselves quite happy. And yet, who knows if that poor woman on her truss of straw is not happier than I: she has a husband, to tend, support, and shelter her; she has her children—what is left to me?" (*A. v. Wolzogen's Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient*, p. 290). This is the sorrow to which Wagner refers as "running through her life. She never found the man completely worth her making happy. And yet she yearned for nothing so much as the tranquil pleasures of domestic life, which her perfect gift as manager and hostess would have made as home-

like as refined." Daughter of the great but notorious tragédienne Sophie Schröder, she had married an actor, Karl Devrient, by whom she had four children; but the marriage had proved infelicitous, and was dissolved in 1828. At the present time she was victim to a still worse fate, her passion for a good-for-nothing Saxon officer, von Döring by name: the infatuation had begun in 1842, and before long she sacrificed to this blood-sucker both health and property; for close upon seven years he dragged her from one starring engagement to another, only to squander her earnings on the gambling-table. This wretched mésalliance arose almost under Wagner's eyes, and it revolted him that the woman's splendid heart should imagine itself contented by such a union; yet the illusion was only half-complete, and "nothing but that matchless double-life upon the stage could make her forget what she often deemed a life's path missed." The whole problem was sadly instructive to him, and just as he himself has said that this artist "had the gift of teaching a composer how to compose, to be worth the pains of such a woman singing," we may surmise that she also taught the dramatist how to read the secrets of a woman's nature. May there not be echoes of the Schröder-Devrient even so late as in his *Kundry*?

The effect on Wagner, at the period of which we now are writing, was what the French term "troublant." There was a strange fascination, purely on the intellectual side, about this enigmatic being, and the genius she had exhibited in the embodiment of his *Adriano* and his *Senta* made him doubly anxious to write a work expressly for her, a piece that should emphasise the two aspects of her character. This is his avowed reason for harking back to his cast-off sketch of *Die Sarazenin*,—and this, we may note in passing, was the nearest approach he ever made to writing with a view to one particular impersonator. In hot haste he completed the full scenic draft,* but the Schröder-Devrient did not care about it: "One typical feature of my heroine may be thus expressed—The *prophetess* can never more become a *woman*; but this artist, without putting it in so many words, would not give up the woman. Only now can I rightly appreciate her instinctive judgment, now that the circumstances which brought that instinct into play have been obliterated; whereas their utter triviality so jarred upon me at the time that, looking

* See *Prose Works* VIII.

from them to the artist herself, I could not help regarding her as caught in the toils of an unworthy desire" (*P. I.* 321). Apart from this, her ten-years contract with the theatre was drawing to a close; it expired in fact on the first of April 1843, and neither side betrayed the smallest inclination to extend it. Herr von Lüttichau considered he had borne long enough with her "growing self-will and extravagances," whilst the artist herself was in no state of mind to bear meekly with any more lectures. It was not until almost another year had elapsed, that she returned to Dresden, where she had meantime been found irreplaceable.

Having given a general idea of the master's regular surroundings—his background, so to speak—we may proceed to the occasional, commencing with a visit paid to Dresden by Hector BERLIOZ for the purpose of conducting two vocal and orchestral concerts made up of his own compositions. In a feuilleton of the *Journal des Débats* the French musician says, "The ceremony of Wagner's swearing-in and official presentation to the band took place on the second day after my arrival, and the first exercise of his new authority consisted in the support of myself at rehearsals, which he fulfilled with zeal and great readiness." He describes the young Kapellmeister's condition at this entry on his new appointment as one of "intoxication with joy." For his part, in a letter to Lehrs, Wagner merely speaks of the *grief* he felt at the failure of this venture of the "unhappy man," to whom the undisputed success of *Rienzi* and the *Holländer* was plainly an abomination. In fact the keynote of his subsequent incomprehensible hostility toward Wagner is audible enough in Berlioz' utterances even of this date: he praises him as man of letters, to avoid acknowledging his genius as musician. Having attended one performance of the *Flying Dutchman* and one of the second portion of *Rienzi* (acts iii to v—see vol. i, 354), he says he was pleased with *Rienzi's* prayer and the Triumphal March, but characterises the latter as "a free and well-constructed imitation of the magnificent march in Spontini's *Olympia*."* After a

* As a fact, Wagner always was only too glad to declare his predilection for this work of Spontini's. One memorable evening at Wahnfried (July 5, 1878) he asked young Anton Seidl, then acting as his amanuensis, to play the Triumphal March from *Olympia* to the little company assembled; as Seidl displayed some reluctance, he fetched the pianoforte-score from the bookshelves himself, and rendered first the march and then the overture in his own instructive fashion, albeit joking constantly about the noisy sameness of their build.

single hearing of either work, he blames them for too frequent use of tremolo; its continual recurrence without any concomitant idea worth speaking of, according to him, betrays a certain mental *torpor* on the author's part! As to Wagner's conducting of both operas, he praises his unusual power and precision; but so little of the true dramatic instinct has Berlioz in him, that he can find nothing better to say of the Schröder-Devrient than that she was far more in her place as Senta than as Adriano Colonna, since the part of a youth "no longer fitted her already somewhat matronly figure." His antipathy to this great artist is so pronounced that even with regard to her embodiment of Senta he talks of little beyond her "artificial poses" and "constant *speaking*, instead of singing, the emotional passages" (a gross exaggeration of an occasional trick referred to by Wagner on pp. 136-7 of the *Prose Works*, Vol. III.) Oddly enough, he singles out for special honour that impersonator of the *Holländer* who himself confessed that the part did not suit him, attributing to him "a pure and perfect talent, that made a very deep impression on me." Nevertheless, though he repeatedly speaks of the *Holländer* as a work in *two* acts—he admits that both operas have merit, and extols the twofold gift of their creator; concluding by saying that the King of Saxony had felt the same, and, when he made the composer of *Rienzi* his Kapellmeister, art-judges might aptly have repeated to His Majesty the saying of that old sea-dog Jean Bart to Louis XIV. when he made him Admiral of his fleet, "Sire, you have done well."

The performance of the *Flying Dutchman* distinguished by the presence of the French composer must have been the fourth—in the first week of February—and consequently the last for many a year (see vol. i. p. 353). It was further attended by an eventual friend of the German master's, Fräulein Eliza Slomann, better known by her marriage name of Frau Wille, daughter of a Hamburg ship-owner. In later days Frau Wille tells us: "I made Wagner's acquaintance at Dresden in 1843 at an evening-party in the house of Major Serre, subsequently founder of the Schillerstiftung. It was a momentary encounter, but Wagner's image stamped itself upon my memory; the slender mobile figure, the head with its breadth of brow, its piercing eyes and lines of energy around the small closed mouth. A painter, who

sat beside me, drew my attention to the square projecting chin, as if chiselled of marble, which gave the face a quite peculiar character. The wife had a pleasing exterior; bright and talkative by nature, she seemed to enjoy being in company. The husband was of great vivacity, self-conscious, but winningly natural. I had seen the *Holländer* the day before; Frau Schröder-Devrient was in thorough harmony with that fabular realm the master's poem and music laid open to us. Hector Berlioz was in Dresden at the time, conducting his fantastically grand creations. *Rienzi*, too, I saw in all its glory on the stage; Tichatschek, with his splendid voice, was imposing as the Tribune: rich was it all, full of fire, and arousing" (*Deutsche Rundschau* 1887).

The first new production under Wagner's official control was that of Gluck's *Armide*, given with great circumstance on Sunday March the 5th, the name-day of the King.* He had applied himself with most painstaking enthusiasm to the rehearsing of this opera, and the result was a performance of rare perfection: "Whoever had the good fortune to be present," says an eye-witness,† "will never forget the effect of this wonderful music, unheard till then in Dresden. Seldom can this masterpiece have been put with such finish upon any stage." It was the first opportunity our hero had had of presenting a work of Gluck's, and the means at command were so excellent that he had the satisfaction of seeing his intentions carried out to the full. As he says in his letter to Lehrs of April 7, 1843: "Everybody was enraptured with my reading of this music, so distant from our age, with the nuances I got both orchestra and singers to observe." During the performance itself the King, an ardent devotee of Gluck's creations, sent him a message conveying his especial thanks in terms of warmest praise. In addition to the conductor's remarkable penetration into every detail, alike musical and dramatic, Frau Schröder-Devrient, the gifted representative of Armida, and Tichatschek, the knightly Rinaldo, were at their best. *Armide* became a favourite with the Dresdeners at

* A souvenir of this period exists in the shape of a sheet of paper bearing the words "Domenico li 19. Febrajo dirige Richard Wagner," referring to the music in the Catholic church, the conducting of which he shared with Reissiger and Roekkel.

† M. Fürstenau in his anonymously-published sketch of *Joseph Tichatschek* (Leipzig, S. Heinze, 1868).

once, and filled the house repeatedly—down to the Devrient's departure.

The new conductor's energy soon communicated itself to the members of his Kapelle, both young and old; under his imaginative lead the band began to take a keener interest in its work, replacing its traditional routine by life and individuality. On the other hand, all the courtesy shewn by Wagner to his older colleague could not hinder Reissiger from treating him and his successes with obvious jealousy. Even in the orchestra there gradually arose an opposition, on the part of persons who had acquired a more or less decisive dominance under the old remiss régime. Chief of these was Konzertmeister (in other words, first violin) Lipinski. During the first *Rienzi* rehearsals this eminent Polish virtuoso—whose intensity of tone, brilliance of execution, and eloquence of expression, formed a distinctive feature of the Dresden band—had declared himself a warm enthusiast for the new work and its author; as F. Heine writes to E. Kietz on Oct. 24, 1842, "Those to go farthest are Tichatschek and Lipinski, especially the latter, who can find no words strong enough to express his delight." Nevertheless, it would seem that he felt his virtuosity less shackled by the lazy beat of Reissiger, which permitted him to take both rendering and tempo completely out of the hands of his nominal chief, and we shall soon find him actively intriguing against the new conductor.*

Meanwhile we have to record a visit paid to Dresden in the Spring of 1843 by MENDELSSOHN. The occasion was that of the annual Palm Sunday concert for the benefit of the pension-fund of the Kapelle. The famous Gewandhaus conductor (recently distinguished by the King of Prussia with the title of "General-musikdirektor," in conjunction with Meyerbeer) had been invited

* In a letter of May 1841 the Bohemian composer W. H. Veit refers to his "very charming reception" in the house of the "Violin-prince Lipinsky, who lives in fact like a prince of the blood." The state of Dresden, only a year before Wagner's arrival, Veit characterises thus: "Everybody here is fair to the face, and intrigues behind the back; even the great Lipinsky a little, especially against violinist intruders, all of whom he snuffs out. Reissiger is said to be the most amiable of beings, but quite devoid of character; the others all dance, more or less, to the piping of this pair; and lastly, the lot of them dance to the pipe of the Court." Such was the snug little nest into which poor Wagner, with his straightforwardness and sincerity, had tumbled unawares.

by the committee of this fund to conduct his oratorio *Paulus*, and had graciously accepted. The concert appears to have been a distinct success, and, for all his antipathy to the class of work itself—"that sexless operatic embryo," as he calls it once—Wagner wrote an appreciative account of it.* To judge by this, he would seem to have been anxious to span the gulf that separated him from the Leipzig idol, whose aims and objects were so different from his own.† But this occasion itself must have proved to him how deep that gulf was, as witness a reference in his essay on *Conducting* (1869). It was a tradition of these concerts that the regulation oratorio should be followed by a symphony; the symphony to follow *Paulus* was Beethoven's in F, conducted by Reissiger. Now Wagner long had suffered from the dragging of the *Allegretto scherzando* of the second movement and "the unflagging obstinacy with which the *Tempo di Menuetto* of the third is turned into a re-enlivening Ländler, so that, when all is over, one hasn't the remotest notion what he has heard," and had expressed his views in this regard to Reissiger. So "I spoke to Mendelssohn about the said dilemma, telling him that I *believed* I had arranged for its setting right by my colleague of those days, since he had promised me to take

* The destination of this little article is not quite manifest, for it does not seem to have been printed at the time. In 1886 the manuscript emerged at an auction, but again was lost sight of; till finally in 1898 it was re-discovered at the Berlin Royal Library and a copy taken for the *Bayr. Blätter* of Jan. 1899. A translation of the full text will be found in *Prose Works* VIII. 279-80.

† Not that Wagner ever denied Mendelssohn's specific musical gifts: "He was a landscape painter of the very first class," as he once remarked in course of conversation (June 17, 1879). "The Hebrides-overture is his masterpiece: everything here is marvellously subtly *seen*, finely felt, and reproduced with the greatest art; the passage where the oboes soar through all the other instruments, like a cry of the wind over the waves of the sea, is of extraordinary beauty. *Calm sea and prosperous voyage* also is beautiful, and I'm very fond of the first movement of the Scotch symphony; no one can find fault with the composer for making use of national themes. His *second* themes, however, his Adagios, where the *human* element should step into the foreground, are certainly much weaker." Where Wagner considered that Mendelssohn had been hurtful to the spirit of German music, was that, instead of keeping to his speciality, he was made a type for every order, a type of prettification, "as though to give a modern soothing-syrup to Music scared by Beethoven" (H. v. Wolzogen, *Erinnerungen an Richard Wagner* pp. 31-2).

the Menuetto slower than of wont. Mendelssohn quite agreed with me. We listened. The third movement began, and I was horrified to hear the old familiar Ländler tempo once again. Before I could express my annoyance, however, Mendelssohn was rocking his head in approval, and smiled to me 'That's capital! Bravo!' So I fell from horror into stupefaction. Reissiger was not so much to blame for his relapse into the ancient tempo, for reasons I will presently explain [the necessity of thoroughly re-studying the movement, to find a *rendering* to suit the tempo]; but Mendelssohn's insensibility inspired me with the very natural doubt whether the thing presented any difference to him at all. I fancied I was peering into a veritable abyss of superficiality, an utter void" (*P. IV.* 310).

In spite of these dispiriting impressions, Mendelssohn's sojourn of several days in Dresden, for the rehearsals and performance of his work, afforded many an opportunity for continuance of the relations commenced during Wagner's brief visit to Leipzig last autumn. The composer of *Rienzi* now occupied a different position towards the generally-flattered man from that of eight years back, when he had tendered him the manuscript of his juvenile Symphony and felt himself "a very bungler" in comparison: "Merely four years younger, yet only just making a toilsome beginning; whereas the other was a finished musician already, and socially could put us all into his pocket."* Now he gained a closer insight into the peculiar nature of this social polish; it remained cold and glassy, never, so far as concerns himself, to be warmed into any kind of human or artistic comradeship. "In familiar intercourse Mendelssohn was charming; but in more general company it was astonishing with what vanity he strove to centre all attention on himself, positively huffed if anyone else came in for a share of it"—so says a warm admirer of his, J. Nordmann. Insofar as Wagner reaped a similar experience of him, even at this date, to his sincere regret he could not blink the actual cause. "I know on good authority," he writes soon afterwards to Lehrs, "that Mendelssohn—who also means to compose an opera—is more than jealous of me; and the Leipzig clique, unconditionally subservient to him, scarcely knows what sort of face to pull at me.—The asses! God

* H. v. Wolzogen, *Erinnerungen*, p. 32.

grant that Mendelssohn may soon bring out a clinking opera ; there'd be two of us then, and two could manage more than one !” Still was he hoping for co-operation, or rather, honourable rivalry, with his coy antagonist of Leipzig ; nothing would have pleased him better, than a whet to his own productivity in the shape of a competing dramatic musician. Most certainly that resurrected article—whatever its origin or aim—shews not the smallest “jealousy” on Wagner’s side, any more than does the wish expressed so heartily in the letter just-quoted : small-mindedness is the last thing to be found in a genius of his calibre.

Through a curious but characteristic economy of writing-material, that article on Mendelssohn’s *S. Paul* is connected with two other events in this first half-year of office, the one artistic, the other unpleasantly personal. On the back of its manuscript is to be found a syllabus of the *Liebesmahl* (here styled the “*Gastmahl*”) *der Apostel*, and further—turned the other way about—the tail end of the draft of a letter actually despatched to von Lüttichau on April 27 ; whilst the rest of the letter occupies another sheet of paper, on the back of which, again, is to be found the whole of the prose sketch for the *Liebesmahl*, dated “21. April 1843.” A strange combination, and a little difficult for the chronicler to disentangle. However, as the *Liebesmahl* was neither performed nor composed until two or three months later, we may give our next attention to the letter to von Lüttichau. It will be remembered that the production of Gluck’s *Armide* for the first time in Dresden had proved highly successful, and was followed by several repetitions. In the case of that opera Wagner naturally had no local “traditions” to contend with ; but when it came to *Don Giovanni*, towards the end of April, the case was very different. He seems to have been allowed but one rehearsal. Armed with the true traditions derived from Dionys Weber (see vol. i. 140), he did his best to rectify the reading of his predecessor ; but what else could be expected, than that the performance should fall rather flat in comparison with what he had effected in the earlier instance ? What he did *not* anticipate, however, was that his subordinate, the leader of the violins, should impugn his authority and take him to task in presence of the Intendant himself—a singular instance of that “lack of discipline” to which Wagner had alluded as one of his reasons for not submitting to a trial-

year (*ibid.* p. 356). The triangular interview appears to have been somewhat stormy, terminating in the abominably humbling stipulation that, for the present at least, the Kapellmeister should follow, not lead, his band! Our only wonder is, that Wagner did not at once send in his resignation. Instead of that he sends von Lüttichau the letter above referred to, which, as it throws a flood of light on the situation within three months of his official appointment, we shall quote in extenso :—

YOUR EXCELLENCY

was good enough yesterday to accept from me a promise to strive so to arrange my attitude towards the Königl. Kapelle, for the time being, that it should give no further occasion for complaints on its part, whether grounded or groundless ; moreover for the present, and particularly in your absence, to alter nothing in the locally-accepted tempi etc. of older operas, even though it should go against my own artistic convictions ; without that hindering me, however, from using my best endeavours in the study of new operas to obtain the utmost finish. To that promise—whose faithful fulfilment will in all probability remove the misunderstanding recently arisen—I deem needful, after calmer reflection, to add a few explanations ; alike to make Your Excellency better acquainted with the nature of most of the charges brought against me, and to vindicate myself as artist more thoroughly than was possible to me yesterday, when I must admit that I was stung by several of Herr Lipinski's insinuations into forgetting the outward decorum due to Your Excellency's presence, whereas his constant hasty interruptions prevented me from calmly and deliberately setting forth that needful vindication on the spot.

After a thoroughly harmonious and artistically enthusiastic co-operation in the rehearsals and performances of the opera *Armide*, what has chiefly embittered Herr Lipinski, in common with other members of the Königl. Kapelle, against me, was undisguisedly enough avowed by him before Your Excellency : namely, envy of the praise accorded me on all sides, notwithstanding that I have never accepted it without transferring the largest share to the extraordinary collaboration of all the forces in our Opera. I surely have no need to point out to Your Excellency how far this feeling of envy has worked, with Herr Lipinski and his following, to cloud and warp their judgment of me. Since the performances of *Armide* I have had nothing further to do with the Kapelle, beyond the rehearsal of *Don Juan* : but, whereas there was no hole to be picked in the result of my labours till then, the performance of this opera—characterisable as a failure, for reasons with which I have nothing whatever to do—has been seized as a con-

venient opportunity for attacking my control ; and a pretext has been sought in changes which I am said to have introduced to a far greater extent than is really the case. Herr Lipinski disputes my right and artistic authority to effect such changes, and takes his principal stand on the infallibility of previous readings of the older operas, without adducing any other argument than that of hallowed custom. To dispose of that assertion, I will merely advance one fact : when I was commissioned by Your Excellency to conduct Euryanthe [the "trial" performance of January last] the widow of the immortal creator of that opera invited me to an interview, at which she implored me to bring this music at last to the public's ear once more as Weber had desired, since distortions of tempo and so forth had gradually crept in, which, to those who still plainly remember how Weber had repeatedly taken it, very often gave a false idea of whole sections of the work. For exact information as to the tempi intended by Weber she referred me to Mad. Schr. Devr., who, as she knew, had retained a faithful recollection of the first performances under Weber ; Mad. Schr. Devr.'s accounts fully confirmed the views of Fr. v. Weber. By this Your Excellency will perceive how an opera, got-up at the same place with the same Kapelle under the composer himself, can materially depart in twenty years from the first true reading ; and I now ask, who shall be adequate guarantee for faithful preservation of the traditions of an opera that has been given here for the last 50 years, and never under the composer's lead ?

In presence of Your Excellency yesterday Hr. Lipinski further levelled at me the irreproachability of the work of the königl. Capelle. That this was but a phrase on his part, through whose employment he hoped the easiest to vanquish me in the eyes of Your Excellency, to me is beyond all doubt, as I have repeatedly learnt Hr. Lipinski's expressions and views with regard to the state of the band : on the contrary, he is at one with me that in certain regions of our orchestra, as in the second violins, the horns, the first trumpet, and many a second wind-instrument, the playing is not always what it should be, —the execution of the individual virtuosi in our Capelle I naturally except. Now, if Hr. Lipinski himself does not believe in this irreproachability, why does he fling it in my teeth on an occasion and before a personage where it might easily tend to my harm ?—As a fact, however much Hr. Lipinski gave himself the air of speaking solely in the interest of a good cause, I cannot but believe that he came forward merely in his personal interest, out of a feeling of wounded vanity, however cleverly he managed to confound it with the general. Therefore I charge Hr. Lipinski with disingenuousness, and, beyond many warnings I have received as to the falseness of his character, I mention here a proof of it that occurred to myself only the other day, and which might have sufficed completely to enlighten me in his

respect.—After Hr. Röckel had made his *début* in church with a Mass of Morlachi's, on my way home I spoke with Hr. Lipinski, who expressed himself about that Mass as follows: "What a miserable patchwork! We must set a cross against it, so that it may be laid on one side and never come out again. How can a man perform such stuff?"—Scarcely had I parted 50 yards from Hr. Lipinski, than I met Hr. Röckel, and upon my upbraiding him for having chosen this Mass for his *début*, he replied: "Why, my God! It was the very Mass Lipinski particularly recommended to me for my first appearance!" What does Your Excellency think of such a man?

Nevertheless I am aware that even people of such a character may be the ornament of an art-institute like the Königl. Capelle, owing to their other distinguished faculties, and on the other hand that it is very rare to find all excellences of character and mind united. I also, though I know myself free from such coarse defects, have to reproach myself with hastiness and a hot-blooded temperament, and therefore cannot complain if I have now received a lesson, which in any case has this advantage for me, that it snatches me out of an error, namely the error of taking people for my friends on their own profession. I know now, of a sudden, what road I must pursue, by little and little to reach a goal that, in the ardour of my zeal for the cause, I had imagined to be close at hand; and consequently I promise Your Excellency, more particularly in my future association with Hr. Lipinski, entirely to forget the disconcerting experiences I have had to make of his character as man, and simply to keep the artist before my eyes, as which I certainly can never deny him my highest admiration. Nevertheless, I venture to point out to Your Excellency the sense in which the complaints of Hr. Lipinski are to be understood, and humbly beg you by appreciation of my counter-plea to shew me that I am so happy as to have retained Your Excellency's esteem; for only in the consciousness of its priceless possession can I have the courage in time to come, when my position toward the Capelle shall be better established, to seek Your Excellency's most emphatic protection against individual attacks.

With this the Lipinski episode may be said to have closed, so far as concerns complaints to head-quarters—at anyrate for a good long time to come; but it is surely more than a coincidence, that the first open declaration of war by Dresden Criticism should have been pinned to that same performance of *Don Giovanni*: strangely enough, in the very journal of Laube's that had published Wagner's *Autobiographic Sketch* so recently. In that spirit of "impartiality" which German papers interpreted for many years as an open door to personal malice, the *Elegante*

soon printed a spiteful anonymous article entitled "A letter on a performance of *Don Juan* at the Dresden Court-theatre." The tone adopted, to be sure, is scarcely that of violent hostility, but the "young Kapellmeister" is treated to a severely condescending lecture, on the strength of a remark that had slipped from his mouth at rehearsals anent the Paris orchestras. "For a long time since," begins the superfine critic, "I had not attended a performance of 'Don Juan'; painful experiences of the treatment dealt out to this and other of Mozart's works on most of our stages had deterred me. Yesterday, however, I was attracted by the hope that the young Kapellmeister would have aroused a better spirit. I have no doubt either of his good will or the earnestness of his endeavours; of both he has given honourable proof with Gluck's 'Armide,' each successive performance of which he conducted with even greater insight than its predecessor." Perhaps, then, Wagner cherished a special antipathy towards Mozart? * No; the critic declines to entertain that suspicion—it was enough to have advanced it—but finds the key to the fictive enigma in Wagner's prolonged residence in Paris. "In Paris it is a universal fault, when rendering German compositions, to take slow tempi much too slow, and quick ones much too quick; and this was the fault into which Herr Wagner fell, from beginning to end of the opera. . . . The tempi taken by him yesterday were the *French ones*," and so on. The acme of absurdity is reached when the anonymous wiseacre accuses Wagner of taking refuge in the apology: "In Paris one takes the tempi so-and-so." We cannot expect this travelled gentleman (and Lipinski had made a tour or two) to have read anything so insignificant as "The Virtuoso and the Artist"—which appeared in the *Gazette Musicale* of October 1840—with its scathing satire on the performance of *Don Giovanni* by the Italians in Paris (*P.* VII. 117-20); but at least he might have recollected Wagner's signed news-letter to the Dresden *Abendzeitung* of May 24-28, 1841, where he says, "I can't quite remember what the singers, dancers and machinists of the French Grand Opéra did with our 'Don Juan'; they sang, acted, danced,

* Of this, in fact, he was afterwards accused; so that, when in 1846 it came to an attack by a man of the standing of Carl Banck, he felt obliged to protest in an "open letter," the full text of which will be found in *Prose Works* VIII. pp. 204-14.

machined and sceneried with such enthusiasm, that at last I fell asleep, and in my dreams I saw the two accursed Black Knights" (*P.* VIII. 122). But the critic lets the cat out of the bag at last, with "I must add, however, that in many numbers the Kapellmeister could not what he would; he would take one tempo, the singers another, and there was no alternative for him but to give way." One would have thought that sufficient explanation of the blurred effect, without having recourse to the ridiculous fable of "Paris tempi" and the gossip of the footlights.—On this occasion the *Abendzeitung* had the pluck to stigmatise the lucubrations of its Leipzig contemporary as "very bitter, and for the most part only half true"; yet they became the starting-point of persistent efforts to lower Wagner's conducting in the estimation of the public, and force one who had commenced as a general favourite into the unenviable position of the leader of a coterie.

In the middle of May, Reissiger obtained leave of absence to mend his health, presumably affected by *Armide*, and left his colleague to shift as best he might. Wagner therefore had the whole of the musical duties in theatre and church to attend to, save for the solitary assistance of the deputy-conductor, Roeckel. In addition, he had lately taken on another arduous task: soon after entry on his Kapellmeistership he had yielded to the solicitations of Professor Dr Löwe, its energetic president, and become "first Liedermeister" to the foremost of the Dresden choral unions, the "Liedertafel" founded in 1839. This honorary engagement involved not only guidance of the regular vocal practice of the union, but also contribution as conductor and composer to its occasional festivities. For the summer of 1843 there was to be held in the capital a mass meeting of all the Saxon male-choral unions; last year's had been the first attempt at such a thing in Dresden, following the example of Switzerland, the Netherlands and Rhineland; this year Prof. Löwe was ambitious of making the affair still more distinguished. From this sort of performance, to use Wagner's own words, his predecessors had always "stood superiorly aloof": not only did he declare his readiness to undertake its control, in conjunction with Reissiger and Musikdirektor Müller (of the older Orpheus union, Dresden), but consented to write a special composition—that *Liebesmahl der Apostel*, the sketch for which we already have met on the back of the Lipinski-letter.

Meantime another festivity was under way, the unveiling of a bronze statue by Rietschel in memory of King Friedrich August I. One would scarcely have thought that this monarch merited immortalising, after his truckling to his fatherland's arch-enemy, Napoleon ; but the Court deemed otherwise, and Friedrich August II. commanded Wagner to write a festal hymn. A second composition was entrusted to Mendelssohn ; but in a national ceremony of this kind the arrangement of the whole performance very naturally fell to the "Royal Saxon" conductor. On the 7th of June 1815, not a fortnight before the battle of Waterloo, Friedrich August I. had returned to Dresden, after a compulsory absence of nearly two years ; the anniversary was chosen for his monument's unveiling. Facing the statue, for which a site had been chosen in the middle of the Zwinger enclosure, an ornate box was erected for the royal family, with raised seats to its right and left for the higher officials, members of the Diet, and other deputations ; the rest of the courtyard lay open to the public. Guilds and crafts marched on in solemn procession, with banners and insignia ; the monument was flanked by eight-and-fifty damseis clad in white and decked with oak-leaves, the number corresponding to the years of the "lamented" monarch's reign. Wagner had selected an imposing choir of 250 male singers from the pick of Dresden's choral unions. Firing of cannons, fanfares of trumpets, and cheers from the assembled crowd, greeted their highnesses on their arrival in the Zwinger ; then arose the strains of the unaccompanied Festival-hymn composed by Wagner to words supplied by advocate Hohlfeldt. An oration by Cabinet-minister von Nostitz und Jänkendorf preceded the act of unveiling ; whilst the ceremony was brought to a close with Mendelssohn's chorus. In a letter written soon afterwards to sister Cäcilie, Wagner refers with satisfaction to the circumstance that there had been only one opinion, namely, that his simple heartfelt composition had entirely eclipsed the complex artificialities of Mendelssohn ; he also mentions a gold snuffbox received from the King as a souvenir of the occasion. This royal present looked like a beginning of the fulfilment of the Devrient's prophecy at their first re-encounter in Dresden, when she jokingly consoled him for his loss from the gangway of the Dreadnought by predicting that, so soon as ever *Rienzi* became known, he would receive more gold and silver snuffboxes from the Princes of Germany

than he had pockets to hold them. Nevertheless, it was to remain the solitary representative of its class for many a year.

Scarcely was he through with the ceremony, than he had to bethink him in all seriousness of that composition he had promised for the Choral Festival. We have seen that the prose-sketch of the *Liebesmahl der Apostel* was dated April 21 *—since when, what with Reissiger's absence and the Zwinger function, its author appears to have not had a moment to spare. There was barely a month remaining, before the day fixed for performance; so the prose must be turned into verse (a matter of but little change) and the music composed in a fortnight, to leave a couple of weeks for copying out, study and rehearsals. Writing to Cäcilie, in that letter just-mentioned, he says his nerves have been so over-taxed that he has "often sat down and wept for a quarter of an hour at a stretch." And this was the Royal Kapellmeister whose wonderful "good fortune" was so envied by so many! Why, as yet he hadn't even been able to settle down in a home of his own, and was lodging just now in a modest furnished apartment at No. 9 Marienstrasse, first floor; not until the coming autumn did he propose to move into more commodious quarters, in the Ostra-Allee.† Even for the fitting-up of his future abode he saw himself obliged to count on Providence, despite his court-appointment; as he had enough experience of furnishing on the gradual-payment system, in his earlier engagements and latterly in Paris, Minna took it upon her herself, without consulting him, to obtain a substantial loan from a friendly actor by the name of Kriete—friendly even in times of greater trouble later on—whose "secret furniture-assistance" is joked about by Wagner in a letter of this

* A translation of this will be found in Vol. VIII. of the *Prose Works*. The *Liebesmahl* is not entitled an "oratorio," but a "biblical scene for male voices and grand orchestra"; its subject is the Pentecostal descent of the Holy Ghost.

† See No. 5730a in Oesterlein's catalogue of the Wagner-museum, an agreement entered into with the landlord Dr med. Flemming on March 23, 1843.—Wagner's first abode in Dresden, end of July 1842 to Spring of 1843, had been No 5 Waisenhausgasse, near the Seethor. Soon afterwards the ramshackle one-storeyed house, built in the rococo period and tumbling to pieces, was pulled down; three houses were erected on its site, 5a, 5b, 5c. In 5b dwelt Alexander Ritter later on, and there received a letter from Liszt with the jocular address "Herrn A. Ritter, Waisenhausstrasse *Des dur*," i.e. "D flat major."

selfsame summer. But all that had been a few weeks since, for at this time of slaving in the broiling heat Wagner was left a bachelor in Dresden; Minna had already departed for a holiday of at least three months at Teplitz, to which she had taken a great fancy. Joining forces with his mother, she had installed herself in the same house, *Zur Eiche*, the married pair had occupied last year—"less," as Wagner says in his letter to Lehrs of April 7, "for sake of an actual cure, than to enjoy in full independence the charming situation and the healthy air."

With the end of the month the days of festival approached. From the upper and the lower Elbe, the Lausitz, Erzgebirge and the valleys of the Mulde, cohorts of singers trooped into the Saxon capital, with colours flying and bands playing. Rehearsal followed rehearsal, and on the afternoon of July 6 the festival proper began with a sacred concert in the Frauenkirche, at which the *Liebesmahl der Apostel* formed the closing number. A chorus of 1200 men, upon a raised platform occupying almost the entire nave of the church; behind them a concealed orchestra of 100 instruments—such a thing had never been heard of in Dresden, or for that matter, in all Germany. With so large a mass of singers a gradual lowering of pitch is always to be looked for; Wagner had therefore taken the precaution at rehearsals to employ two harps to sound the keynote from time to time, an expedient he found so effectual that he retained it for the performance itself. To heighten the dramatic effect of the Voices from Above, "Be comforted, for I am near you, and my spirit is with you," he had this passage sung by about forty picked singers in the cupola of the dome: a daring stroke of genius much enhanced by sudden entry of the orchestra (invisible, and until then unheard) at the Disciples' words: "What rushing filleth all the air! What sounds! What voices!" Of course all the Schladebachs in the town stood aghast at what they called a barefaced piece of realism;* but wherever the young master looked, when the performance was over, he was greeted by his host of singers with rousing cries of *Vivat!* and *Hurrah!*

Even now he was not to be allowed at once a well-earned rest. Reissiger indeed had returned for the festival, yet Wagner's last ounce of strength was claimed for stage duties. On the 11th of July, after but one rehearsal, he had to direct a performance of

* See Appendix.

Lucrezia Borgia in Italian, for sake of a touring tenor ; as we may imagine, with no little attendant confusion. The 13th was the first day of a four-weeks leave of absence, and he devoted its morning to writing Cécilie that letter from which we have already borrowed various details. From it we learn that Minna had returned to Dresden about the time of the festival, but had been so prostrated by the loss of her brother, aged twenty-five, that all benefit from her Teplitz "cure" had been undone, and there was nothing for it but to pack her off again as speedily as possible. We also read of his shock at the sudden death of dear good Lehrs, his unwavering attachment to the friends still left behind in Paris, and his aspiration to see them gathered round him soon in Germany. Immediately after writing, he himself departed for the grateful quietude of Teplitz.

Thus ended the first half-year of Richard Wagner's Dresden office. We have followed it somewhat more closely than we propose with its successors, since it contains the seeds of all those thorns and thistles that hindered him so terribly in the pursuit of his creative work. True, the poem of his "Venusberg" (still the tentative title of *Tannhäuser*) lay already finished, as we read in that letter to Lehrs of April 7 so often quoted ; but, save for a few occasional jottings, its music was not to be definitely commenced before November. With regard to the *manner* of its composition, however, he had quite made up his mind : there was to be no more thought of Paris with *this* production, as once with *Rienzi*. Poor Lehrs, in the last letter he ever wrote him, still harped on the notion of a success at the Paris Grand Opéra, though Wagner had abandoned all such ideas long before quitting France : "Say nothing more of Paris," he replies, "I must turn my back on it to all eternity. We opera-composers can not be *European* : it must be either French *or* German. One sees what harm a harlequin like Meyerbeer is doing us,—half in Berlin, half in Paris, he turns out nothing good for either. Least of all in Berlin : how abominably things stand there, is past describing ; that's what comes of hanging out one's cloak to catch all winds, like friend Giacomo. Things will go slowly, but go they will and must : however, *not another word about Paris!*"

II.

REPRESENTATIONS WITHOUT.

Meyerbeer and Berlin.—*Spohr's kindness; the Holländer at Cassel and Riga.*—*Other theatres applying for the two operas.*—*Johann Kittl; Dr Pusinelli; Gustav Kietz and the parrot.*—*Reprise of Rienzi.*—*Consultations with the directorate.*—*Leipzig cross-currents, emanating from the Conservatorium.*—*The Holländer at Berlin: Berlin opposition.*—*Publication of the pair of operas at his private risk.*—*Rienzi at Hamburg.*

I was deceived at first by the not altogether unreasonable assumption of a speedy pecuniary success of my operas, through their extension over all the German theatres.

RICHARD WAGNER.

THE extraordinary initial success of *Rienzi* inspired Wagner's intimates with a peculiar anxiety. It finds naïve expression in a letter of Ferdinand Heine's to friend Kietz in Paris: "*Rienzi* has quite eclipsed the *Huguenots*. I'm afraid that Meyerbeer, whose influence alike in Paris and Berlin is of enormous importance for Wagner, will end by turning green with envy. He's a Jew, and what is more, a voracious Jew!!!!"

Since Wagner's settling down in Dresden, his relations with the doubtful patron of his Paris period had come to no open rupture. Meyerbeer's promise of a Berlin production of the *Dutchman* was still unfulfilled, but the almighty one still gave himself the air of a benevolent protector, and so recently as the 6th of April had written him that that opera would come out in Berlin within a month, i.e. in May. Wagner conveys the information to his Paris friends next day, qualifying it, however, with serious doubts. The latter, to be sure, were not so much directed to the reliability of the maestro himself, as to the competence of the Berlin Opera, over which the composer of the *Huguenots* had

now been presiding for a year as Royal Prussian General-Musikdirektor. Wagner's doubts were realised: the month of May, in fact the whole of 1843, passed by without another word about the *Holländer*.

Meanwhile he had won a far sincerer friend and favourer of his work in the person of Ludwig Spohr, who, much as Berlioz in Paris, in general held aloof from the musical world surrounding him. Last summer, some time before the actual rehearsals of *Rienzi*, the older master, then verging on his sixtieth year, had stood upon the Dresden stage at the same time as Richard Wagner; knowing his shyness toward every innovation in the province of his art—for Spohr had no sympathy even with the Beethoven of the second period—and humbly conscious of his own present “insignificance,” Wagner had purposely kept in the background. The greater his astonishment when barely half a year thereafter, without the faintest hint from his side, the management of the Court-theatre at Cassel sent him a request to hand in the score of his *Flying Dutchman* for immediate production. Spohr had attended a performance of the work at Dresden in the interval, and derived the most favourable impression: “I believe I know my mind sufficiently,” as he expressed himself in a letter soon afterwards, “to say that among the dramatic composers of our day I consider Wagner the most gifted; at least his endeavour in this work is addressed to what is noble; and that prepossesses nowadays, when all the world is bent on creating a stir and tickling the ears of the crowd.” With such exceptional zeal and affection did he apply himself to the rehearsing, that the Cassel public was prepared in advance for something quite out of the way. The mounting, especially of the third act, left nothing to be desired, and Wagner later on commended it to Weimar as a model; whilst the orchestra under Spohr's own lead excelled itself. So that the first Cassel performance, June 5, 1843—with Biberhofer in the title-rôle—enjoyed a well-earned triumph, notwithstanding the sarcasm of the Leipzig *Signale*: “Two imposing ships, steered with marvellous dexterity across the stage, roused great enthusiasm.” But Spohr was not content with having scored a marked success for his protégé; to Wagner's surprise and delight, he wrote him a letter expressing the great pleasure it had given him to light on a young artist who, as one might see in everything, meant *seriously* by his art. “The greybeard Spohr,”

writes Wagner ten years after, "remained the only German Kapellmeister to take me up with warm affection, promote my works according to his best ability, and keep true and friendly to me under every circumstance." In his reply of June 10, 1843, he pours forth all the gratitude of an overflowing heart: "I was distressed at having sent my wife already to the baths at Teplitz; not to be able to embrace her in my first joy at your letter, to me was almost a pain." With touching modesty in presence of an honoured senior, he continues: "Though the public here in Dresden had showered on me demonstrations of approval and esteem, I could not but remember that equal demonstrations had already been shared out to people and for doings to which I must unconditionally refuse my artistic regard. But two words from *you*—nay, the most active and eventful proof of your sympathy! that is a case where I must take good care to guard myself against becoming vain and losing my head entirely."

Another outside theatre had snatched precedence from the Cassel stage by just two days: that at far-away Riga, the control of which still rested in the hands of Johann Hoffmann. The first performance there took place on June the 3rd (May 22, Wagner's birthday, Russian calendar), Dorn conducting, Karl Günther playing "the Dutchman," and Dem. Köhler "Senta." A glowing account was despatched to the *Neue Zeitschrift*: "Our latest sensation has been the production of Richard Wagner's *Flying Dutchman*. Riga, so far as I am aware, is the first city [apart from Dresden] in which it has crossed the boards. During his stay here Wagner had lived in too unpretentious quiet to raise any special expectations, and perhaps no town has been more spoilt, or more effeminated by Bellinian and Donizettian music, than just this Riga; but—what a reception! Even in the first act a storm of applause burst forth at the first, and still more the second performance, difficult though it was to find a loophole for it in the close-knit numbers. Every number of the second and third acts was received with loud expressions of delight. . . . Such a reception, hardly to be awaited under the said conditions, can only be explained on the hypothesis that the public had intuitively divined what was clear as day to the musician, namely that it here had to do with a talent that meant to give it something different from Italian milk. . . . May the Flying Dutchman prove a signal that we soon shall be wholly redeemed from weary

wandering on the alien seas of foreign music, and find the happy German homeland." *

Something akin to the hope thus piously conveyed from Riga must have inspired the young composer when he wrote from Teplitz to F. Heine: "That this opera has won itself friends not only in Dresden, but even at Cassel and Riga, appears to me a weighty indicator that we have only to write as our inborn German sense dictates, making no sort of concessions to a foreign fashion, but simply choosing and treating our subjects as suits ourselves, to be surest of finding favour in the eyes of our countrymen even with such venturesome things. Thus we perhaps may gain once more a native German Opera; and all who despair of it, and hanker after foreign models, might take example by this Dutchman, which assuredly is so conceived as never a Frenchman or Italian would have dreamt of conceiving it." Yet another, and a less impersonal hope might well be fostered by these Cassel and Riga experiences: that of a rapid circulation of his works throughout the theatres of Germany. Wherever he looked, he could see how these stages at last had come to find their foreign wares discredited, with one French opera after another confessed a failure. Even to leave a feeling of patriotism in the breast of Directors out of the reckoning, might not the general aching void prove the very vacuum for his own productive energy to fill? With one eye on such an eventuality, amid all his other occupations in the last few weeks or months at Dresden he had undertaken the laborious task of so reducing and altering the score of *Rienzi* that it might be decently given in *one* evening, even at a second-rate theatre; since he felt justified in building more substantial hopes on this dazzling work than on the *Dutchman*. As to the latter, the harm he had suffered from a year's procrastination at Berlin was to be emphasised by an unforeseen fatality: during the night of August 18 to 19 the Royal Opera-house of that city was completely burnt out. On the other hand, he was taken aback by a request from the administration of the

* Nevertheless the Riga correspondent cannot dispense with the stock remarks about melody and instrumentation—the latter doubly strange to anyone who has examined the atrociously hacked and mutilated Riga score. Its subsequent reintegration was a matter of endless trouble, involving the writing out afresh of almost the entire work, to re-transform the Dornian *Holländer* into that of Wagner.

Imperial theatre "near the Kärthnerthor" in Vienna to write a new opera expressly for its coming season.* It resulted in nothing,—we are unable to discover why. Perhaps the offer was never very seriously meant; anyhow, Wagner dismisses the subject half a year later with the remark, "I declined it; I hate that Donizetti city."

Other towns seemed more in earnest. From Hamburg director Cornet had applied for *Rienzi*, with a view to a starring engagement of Tichatschek's; † and even Leipzig, in spite of its opposition clique, did not appear shut off as yet. Königsberg held out a promise, ‡ and whilst Prague and Dantzic were in treaty for the *Flying Dutchman*, § still smaller theatres desired to prove by example that *Rienzi* was by no means that "monstrous opera" on which the powers of their singers and bandsmen must necessarily shipwreck. Thus we find a contemporary paper saying that *Rienzi* has been accepted for the little theatre of Halle, and "is being squeezed together by the composer to suit its forces." || The last, most singular announcement is only to be accounted for by the fact that brother Albert was then engaged at Halle as actor and stage-manager, after having completely lost his singing voice; but he went away to Bernburg, and the Last of the Tribunes

* See *Neue Zt.* 1843, II. No. 2 (July): "R. W. is now working at a new opera; its subject is the Wartburgkrieg. The other day he was also invited to write an opera for the Kärthnerthortheater"; and the Dresden *Abendzeitung* of August 12: "R. W. has been commissioned by the Imperial Austrian Court-theatre Intendanz to compose an opera for the court-stage there." In Oesterlein's catalogue already-cited there is the draft of a letter of Wagner's to the management of the Viennese theatre, referring to this invitation (III.—No. 5613).

† "R. W.'s *Rienzi* will presently be given at Hamburg. The composer is busy shortening the opera, so that it may occupy no more than one evening," *Neue Zt. f. Mus.* 1843, I. No. 39 (mid-May).

‡ In a letter to Löbmann of Dec. 9, 1843, Wagner says: "The first theatre after Dresden will be Hamburg, where the opera is to be mounted at considerable expense next January. Then the new theatric undertaking at Leipzig is to be opened with it, and even Königsberg is nibbling." We shall see how matters went at Leipzig; as for Königsberg, its first performance tarried until March 1845.

§ *Ibidem*: "In course of this month [Dec. '43] the *Flying Dutchman* will be mounted simultaneously at Berlin and Prague; and several minor theatres, such as Dantzic, are after it."

|| *Ztg. f. d. eleg. Welt*, June 21, 1843.

was spared compression into the strait-waistcoat of this tiny stage. Unfortunately, however, the hopes aroused in other quarters hung fire for the most part; to some extent, because the difficulties of inscenation had been exaggerated; to a greater, because the title-rôle required a tenor of staying power beyond the ordinary.

At Dresden itself the enthusiasm of Tichatschek ensured the Tribune a splendid representative; yet, since the Devrient's departure, there lacked a fitting Adriano. How was *Rienzi* to be resumed in the coming season? This question worries Wagner on his holiday,* which he has scarcely begun than he writes to his former "Irene," Henriette Wüst, a flattering billet-doux inviting her to take the rôle of young Colonna in the autumn. "Dear Fräulein Jette," he begins, in that wheedling tone which always won him the hearts of his artists, "If you won't sing my Adriano, I shan't bring you anything;—but if you *will*, you not only shall have the music sent you very soon, but a charming wedding-present into the bargain." The note is signed in the same bantering manner, "Your Richard Wagner who is fond of *thee*." †

The weeks at Teplitz flew only too quickly by, and it is impossible to ascertain whether they bore with them any more definite commencement of the music to *Tannhäuser*. Just before resuming his duties, Wagner took his wife with him to Prague, on a flying visit to his old companion Johann Kittl, who in May had been appointed Director of the Prague Conservatorium, in succession to Dionys Weber and above the heads of numerous competitors, among them even Spohr and Molique. Prague had

* The Teplitz Visitors' List does not announce his arrival till the 29th of July,—at least a week or ten days after date. His lodgings were the same as last summer, "Zur Eiche, in Schönau."

† Dated "Teplitz-Schönau, July 25, 1843," this note further contains the reference aforesaid to the little business transaction between Minna and Fr. Wüst's fiancé, the actor Hans Kriete: "My wife sends her kindest regards to you, with an extraordinary message to the beloved of your heart; for she has just disclosed to me that in a certain secret matter of furnishing she allowed herself to receive money from your betrothed, and that the term of repayment is drawing near. I therefore beg the secret-furniture-purchase helper to wait till my return, when I will certainly reward him according to debt and desert." Kriete was also the librettist of Reissiger's opera *Der Schiffbruch der Medusa* (produced in 1846), a subject already employed by Flotow in France—see vol. i. p. 284.

long enough been held beneath the thumb of narrow Classicism, under the régime of a musician who refused to follow Beethoven any farther than his Second Symphony, and was just beginning to respond to the warmth of younger blood; yet the first months of Kittl's office-bearing were sufficiently trying, and he sometimes lost heart. It was Wagner's friendly task to restore him to self-confidence, and inspire him with fresh courage for the fray.

Returning to Dresden in the best of spirits himself, he found that the brief summer-season under Reissiger and Roeckel had been almost exclusively devoted to Italian Opera. On August 31 he resumed his baton with the *Schweizerfamilie*, but we have no intention of following him step by step through the monotonous repertory of those days. Already he was plunged heart and soul in his nascent *Tannhäuser*, and found the public clamouring for nothing but a revival of *Rienzi*—an impossibility during the absence of Tichatschek, who had just obtained his leave. To satisfy the general craving, he consented to conductor Hartung's arranging several pieces from the opera for his military band; thenceforth they became the main attraction of the garden-concerts on the Brühl Terrasse, and never failed of an electrifying effect. Nor was this the sole attempt at popularisation, engaged in less for sake of the master or his work, than because the middleman invariably finds such enterprises profitable. A member of the Dresden band selected a theme from the *Rienzi* ballet-music, to work it up into a 'morceau de salon'; as it was one of the least important in this episode—thrown off at Riga with no particular care—Wagner asked in amazement why this theme of all others had been chosen, and received the original reply, "Because it's the only one in 6/8 time."

At the end of September, 1843, Tichatschek returned from his starring tour, and joined with Wagner as "Brautführer" (bride-escort) at the marriage of "Fräulein Jette" to Hans Kriete. Since Henriette Wüst had consented to undertake the part of Adriano in the approaching renewal of *Rienzi*, the "charming wedding present" was now forthcoming—an artistic butter-boat of Bohemian crystal, from Prague or Teplitz. In days gone by the young bride had sung his earliest Scena and Aria at Leipzig (see vol. i. 132); old friendship therefore prompted him to deliver a speech, mingled of seriousness and "side-splitting humour," at the wedding-banquet. Indeed, the recollections of

his comrades of this period represent him as "Playful as a child, exuberant of spirits, prone to the wildest frolics. Up to every kind of mummery, he crept under the table, barked like a dog, and generally played the fool"—not on this particular occasion, let us hope.

Speaking broadly, in spite of many a care not yet disposed of, and many a sign of enmity beginning, this winter of 1843 to 1844 was the most hopeful, and consequently the happiest epoch of all his Dresden embroglio. Since his return from Teplitz he had moved into an unassuming but comfortable home in the Ostra-Allee (No. 6, second floor), for which he paid a yearly rent of 220 thalers, the equivalent of about £33 sterling. An advance-fee of 202 marks-banco for *Rienzi*, paid him by Hamburg in October, not only contributed to the furnishing of his new apartments, but seemed to him the foretaste of a regular income from his works. His first half-year's salary had been encroached upon by claims from former days of impecuniosity, but now it looked as if his luck had really changed. At no time did he express himself so positively satisfied with his situation; all the trials recently passed through seemed about to bear their due reward. As he writes to Löbmann, Dec. 9, "An honourable appointment for life, in the most charming of cities and under the most agreeable relations; distinguished by my King and all the public in every way—I can look calmly forward to the spread of my operas, and take time for new works." More he did not ask from the world, and at no time did this desirable state, both inner and outer, appear more surely grounded. True, he could already say with perfect truth, "No longer can I take a journal into my hands without the certainty of finding myself snarled at or torn to pieces"; yet the position of his works did not strike him as directly imperilled thereby, for he continues: "That will probably go on for a while, until my operas have made the round; these gentry will then be obliged to hold their tongues." But in Dr F. S. Gassner's *Zt. f. Deutschland's Musikvereine* of 1844 we read these words of J. P. Lyser's: "Wagner is in the heyday of young manhood; we may therefore hope that he will long be spared to work for our Opera with his present energy. That he should lack of neither covert enviers nor overt foes, is natural enough, with a character so determined. Yet the number of *friends* who honour in Wagner the gifted artist and the hearty

valiant man, is not small. He knows it, rejoices in it, and goes his way unmoved."

Among the closer friends who gathered round him, besides Tichatschek, Roeckel, Fischer and F. Heine, one of the earliest and truest was Dr med. Anton Pusinelli, a young physician who resided near him in 1843.* On the occasion of a serenade with which the artist had been honoured by the Dresden Liedertafel, Pusinelli had approached him for the first time, and acquainted him with his devotion. "It was a presage of Richard's greatness that drew me to him from the first; for I had not yet *understood* him," he wrote in one of his last letters, adding: "The epigoni have less trouble!" He soon entered into friendly intercourse with Wagner—beneficial to both sides,—became his careful medical attendant, and proved an ever ready counsellor in many of the outward difficulties of the artist's chequered life. Though their paths diverged ere long, the friendship of these two continued for close on five-and-thirty years, down to Geh. Hofrath Pusinelli's death at Dresden, April 1, 1878. Shortly before his decease the Hofrath became the Dresden representative of the Bayreuth Patronatverein, and it was a peculiar grief to him that, his bodily ailments increasing, he was unable to do as much for it as he would have liked; Wagner had sent him the manuscript of the *Parsifal* poem to read, and one of his latest messages to the master conveyed his hearty thanks for "this fresh achievement of the German Spirit's."

Another and still younger friend was Gustav Kietz, aged seventeen at the time of their first acquaintance, the talented brother of Wagner's old comrade in Paris. Gustav—whom we shall constantly meet during the next few years—was then attending the Dresden Academy, to learn sculpture under Prof. Rietschel. His first visit to Wagner had been paid in the Waisenhausgasse, just before the production of *Rienzi*; he was received with the heartiest welcome, and only blamed for not having introduced himself earlier. All Wagner's attachment to his Paris friend, all his gratitude for the latter's many proofs of faithful sympathy, were transferred to this young man, who soon became his special protégé, and whose letters to his elder brother

* On the point of sending the above to the printer, I hear that a selection from Wagner's letters to Pusinelli is soon to be published in the *Bayreuther Blätter*.—W. A. E.

(now in the possession of Frau Prof. Elisabeth Geisberg, Gustav's daughter) are filled with enthusiasm for Wagner's works, his person and his home. "I have seen and heard *Rienzi*," says an early one; "never has music so transported me, as this." Again, he relates his impressions of the *Flying Dutchman*, the music of which he "almost prefers to *Rienzi*"; the animation with which Wagner had conducted; and the tempestuous calls for the author. Another time he tells of his visits to the Wagners' apartments, "I like going there; they're glorious people. The other day Mme. Wagner told me they had sent you money, that you might come back at last. On the 8th of January [i.e. after the third performance of the *Dutchman*] Wagner had dreamed of you, and cried out in his sleep: 'Shame on you, Kietz! Keep faith with yourself, for mercy's sake, or nothing will come of you'—then she had woken him up." At first young Gustav was afraid of vexing the master by calling too often; but upon hearing his reason one day, after the removal to the Ostra-Allee, Wagner told him, "That's nothing, dear Herr Kietz. We must fix one day at least in the week, for you to come to dinner; if you're able to come oftener, especially of a Sunday, when we've always something good to eat, the better shall we be pleased." From that time forth—according to Kietz's reminiscences dictated to his daughter—he became a regular weekly guest at Wagner's table down to May 1849. As a typical instance of Wagner's disinterested kindness to young people (denied in blindly hostile quarters), and since this friendship formed a feature of the whole of the master's Dresden period, we will quote in his own words the account given by Gustav of his footing in the Wagner household:—

"I felt infinitely happy with him and his dear wife; they did everything in their power for me, a homeless orphan, to make me feel at home. He took me in particular under his educational wing, interested himself in my questions, roused me on every side, and lent me volumes from his library; in short, I owe him a lifelong debt for what he was to me in youth. The hours spent in his house are the brightest of my younger days; more cordial with every week of intercourse, he was ever stimulating, and full of bubbling humour. As to 'good-feeding,' too, both did their best for me. 'Kietz must grow fat, wife,' he would say and put the best and biggest pieces on my plate; and an occasional feeling of over-repletion was the only disagreeable I

ever experienced at their hands. Sometimes a sister of Frau Minna's (Natalie) and Wagner's niece Johanna were also table-guests; the latter always called me her Ganymede. Frau Wagner was a sympathetic soul, most amiable and kind at heart, though she later looked askance at her husband's regardlessness of sacrifice in the pursuit of his ideals. To her, after all their cares and want and struggles, the sure position of a Royal Kapellmeister was everything; *he*, on the other hand, was never so regardless of anyone, as of himself. — Their musical duets were very comical, when he would play the pianoforte while his wife supplied a clarinet accompaniment, which she was very clever at imitating with her mouth. Often, if I arrived before the dinner hour, Wagner was still busy shaving in his room, singing all sorts of snatches of light opera between the strokes, such as 'Wenn mir dein Auge strahlet' and so forth; or he would suddenly call through the open door, 'Kietz, we haven't any children yet!' Beloved domestic pets were *Peps*, a kind of spaniel, and *Papo*, a parrot who was allowed the freedom of an open perch, and whom I loved to tease till its feathers bristled. If Wagner wasn't ready when the soup came in, Frau Minna would order 'Papchen' to call its master, and the bird would cry 'Richard! Freiheit! Santo spirito!' to his perpetual amusement. During our meal, Papo would imitate the sound of a creaky door so accurately that I always fell into the trap and looked round for the intruder, to Wagner's huge delight. As soon as he came into the room he made straight for the bird, bent his head down, and the parrot would thrust its beak between his wide shirt-collar and his neck, caressing its master. But whenever *I* came near it, Papo would ruffle up its plumage, to no small surprise of Wagner, who knew nothing of my passion for teasing it."*—We shall return to

* In a Magazine for the Young, dating from the seventies, F. Flinzer gives further particulars of this pet of the master's: "The famous composer Richard Wagner once had a parrot that could speak an extraordinary number of words, in fact whole sentences, and very plainly too. Besides that, it whistled pieces of pretty good length from various operas and folk-songs, and did a lot of other clever things. When it saw people about to clink their glasses, it made the sound before them; if someone took out his pocket-handkerchief, it would sneeze and cough. When it had misbehaved itself, it would fly up to the curtain-pole and cry, 'Come, follow me up!' When its cage was being cleaned, it would pass remarks about it: 'Got a fine room now.' If people gave it sweetmeats, it would chuckle and say 'Nice goodies!'" and so on.

Gustav's reminiscences when we reach the performance of the Ninth Symphony in 1846, but must now get back to business.

At the beginning of November Wagner sent the score of the *Holländer* to Prague, to director Stöger, who had held out hopes of its speedy production there. At like time he writes to friend Kittl: "You'll keep an eye on the performance, won't you? If the *basso* is good, one of my main conditions is fulfilled; the Grosser will be all right; * only, on the part of the bass it needs much good will as well, for his rôle is exceedingly difficult—particularly in a purely musical respect. As for the mounting, I have referred Stöger to the machinist of the Cassel Court-theatre, who will give him the best and most practical suggestions. But you must also take the conductor, Herr Skraup, in hand †; he, too, must have a specially good will, and later on much patience, more particularly with his orchestra; the violins have devilish hard things to play. Give Skraup my compliments and kind regards. —The most sensible thing you could do—would be to compose an opera yourself as soon as possible, to give me the opportunity of repaying you in kind at *Dresden*. How are you off for a text?" We shall discover later how Kittl was off for a text (cf. vol. i. 345); but the production of the *Holländer*, originally contemplated for the month of December, was put off and off, until at last the score came back unused. The actual first performance at Prague did not take place till *thirteen years* thereafter (Sept. 1856). To be sure, it then was for the beginning of a "Wagner week,"—but too late to counteract the advantage gained in the interim by an established opposition.

On the 19th of November *Rienzi*, rehearsed anew, was once more set before the Dresden public. Frau Kriete played Adriano with her wonted ability, while her former rôle, that of Irene, was undertaken by a younger singer, Frl. Wächter. In its new setting—with the orchestration revised as already mentioned—the opera ran through another eleven performances in the twelvemonth, ‡ two of which were devoted to the first part, i.e.

* Henriette Grosser, see vol. i. p. 214.

† Skraup had been one of the rival candidates for the Dresden Kapellmeistership.

‡ Nov. 19, Nov. 22 (first part), Nov. 26 (omitting the dances on account of the Protestant Celebration of the Dead), Dec. 10, 1843, Jan. 5 (first part), Feb. 29, May 21, July 26, Sept. 20 (the *twentieth* representation), Oct. 22 and 27, 1844.

the unabbreviated first two acts, under the title of *Rienzi's Grösse*. The *Dutchman*, as observed before, had been laid on the Dresden shelf; in any case it would have been out of the question, so far as the composer was concerned, to revive it in the absence of Frau Schröder-Devrient while the other, or rather *the* principal character could be entrusted to no more satisfactory a representative than its first exponent. In general, however,—whatever under-currents may have been secretly at work—Wagner seems to have been sailing in smoother waters just now, as regards his official relations, and willingly took part in the numerous sittings of the managerial committee, only too anxious to help the theatre out of its chronic state of muddle. Among other measures, he was able to get a resolution passed, that “all singers who have touring-leave provided in their contracts shall henceforth take it at one and the same time.” This was to put an end to the absurdity of losing first one’s tenor, then one’s prima donna, and again one’s bass, in the height of the season, with the result that a work already rehearsed, and even definitely announced, had to be suddenly dropped, not unfrequently for ever. “Whether all our singers, especially Tichatschek and the Schröder-Devrient, will accommodate themselves to this necessary regulation, is certainly a question,” remarks J. P. Lyser in Gassner’s magazine (1844—cited *antea*), “but we shall hope that, to its own honour and in the interest of the whole institution, our Court-theatre Intendanz will suffer no rebellion here, but enforce obedience to Wagner’s arrangements.” A missive to Frau Kriete will shew how glad the Generaldirektion was, about this time, to throw its burden on his shoulders: “Most valued friend, would you do us (for I write in the name of a much-harassed Direktion and Regie) the great kindness to sing *Agathe* to-morrow, in order that the only opera feasible under present circumstances, the *Freischütz*, may be given? Since *Norma* cannot be, and the *Daughter of the Regiment* is also impossible through the Gentiluomo’s illness; * *Czar* and *Zimmermann*, the *Wildschütz* etc., are rendered impossible by gaps in the cast; moreover, since other operas, such as the *Dame blanche* would be declined by Tichatschek without a rehearsal—for the moment there remains

* The *Figlia del Regimento* had been in the Dresden repertory since Feb. 18, 1844, with Spatzer-Gentiluomo in the title-rôle, under Roeckel’s baton.—This note, undated, would be of March or April 1844.

nothing for us but to appeal to your obligingness, not to leave us entirely stranded. Or have *you* any other proposal to make? It would be very welcome. My God, when a Regisseur is ill, a Kappellmeister has terrific cares!"

Meantime Leipzig had been renewing inquiries about *Rienzi*. For months the question had often been raised, why Leipzig itself did not mount Wagner's operas, "each of which has more grit in it than a whole dozen French or Italian novelties." Somehow there had been no intelligible answer under Ringelhardt's rule; but with the approaching transference of his directorship to Karl Christian Schmidt it became more and more definitely noised about that *Rienzi* would be "one of the first operas to come out under the new management."* In the composer's own birthplace it was doubly natural that people should look for a performance of the most successful opera of recent days, a work that continued to be acclaimed in the sister-city with an enthusiasm at least equal to that of its original reception. Nevertheless the expectation proved illusory; in influential regions it found as little favour as formerly the *Feen* and the *Liebesverbot*, and not so long ago the *Holländer* despatched from Paris. Nor was it entirely the Director's fault. Under the undisputed sway of the Gewandhaus conductor and his satellites, a considerable counter-current had made itself felt among the musical bigwigs of the town. As Wagner says in the Appendix to *Judaism in Music* (1869), "Erewhile an actively distinguished factor in our German life through its university and important book-trade, Leipzig was learning even to forget the natural sympathies of local patriotism so willingly evinced by every other German city." In April 1843 the Leipzig Conservatorium, founded by Mendelssohn, had been opened with much ceremony, and the Hebrew master's flock espied in it another point of union; for his appointment as Royal Prussian General Music-Director, shortly before, had simply spun an extra aureole around his head, without necessitating any length of absence from Leipzig and the circle of his worshippers. Even Robert Schumann, who at first had followed a very different line from that of Mendelssohn, alike in his journal and his compositions, had been drawn more and more beneath the subtle influence, little

* *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 1843, II. No. 43 (end of October).

as his admiration for the general idol was rewarded by any deeper sympathy with his own creations. Schumann was enrolled as teacher at the Conservatorium, but could not stand it for more than a year. He did not give it up because he wanted to remove to Dresden, but removed to Dresden because Leipzig had become insufferable: in fact, after parting with his *Neue Zeitschrift*, there was no sure guarantee of his support in Dresden at the time he moved there (1844). At a charity-concert given by the Kapelle in the Dresden Court-theatre on the 23rd of December, 1843, he had conducted his *Paradise and the Peri**; but unfortunately it did not rouse sufficient interest, and he fell a victim to the truncheon-blows of Schladebach, who described it as the work of an amateur—oddly anticipating Schumann's own verdict on *Tannhäuser*—and complained, not without reason, of the composer's want of practical knowledge of instrumentation, whilst he accused his conducting of lacking fire, ability and soul.—While poor Schumann thus was prospering neither here nor there, the Leipzig production of *Rienzi*, announced so confidently in November, was making little headway. In fact it got no farther than the announcement for a whole quarter of a century, the first Leipzig performance taking place Sept. 15, 1869,—later than Paris itself, where the opera had just run through 25 performances in a very short time.†

“How the Leipzigers are disposed towards me, you may judge by their *Musikalische Zeitung*: this organ of Mendelssohn's has scarcely said a word as yet about my operas,”—thus had Wagner expressed himself to Lehrs in the early part of 1843, in a letter from which we have already extracted a passage, the reverse of envious, about his artistic opposite (p. 20 *antea*). Unquestionably a sign of the times; for in days gone by, under Fink and Rochlitz' management, this much-read paper had welcomed

* The first part of the concert was originally to have been occupied by Wagner's *Faust* overture: in a letter dated Dec. 17 he invites Kittl to come and hear Schumann's *Paradise and the Peri*, “a highly interesting novelty I am sure you will find it,” and “an overture of my own to the first part of Goethe's *Faust*.” Why, we know not, but instead of the *Faust* overture, that to *Oberon* was given under Reissiger.

† At the Théâtre Lyrique under Carvalho's direction; première April 6, 1869.

heartily the young man's early instrumental efforts.* Now things were changed, the editor being Moritz Hauptmann, successor to Weinlig in the post of Thomas-Cantor, and notoriously a red-hot Mendelssohnian. Clever, witty, sarcastic, of pronounced erudition, but exclusively intent on "symmetry and harmony" and detesting all live individualism in music, he had always looked coldly even on Weber's works,† and remained to his death (in 1868) an irreconcilable antagonist of Wagner and his aims.—It is further noteworthy that Wagner's dawning on the public horizon exactly coincided with a new arrival in Leipzig journalism. As though the two existing musical papers were not sufficient guarantee of safety, a third was started at the beginning of 1843, the heavy-flippant *Signale für die musikalische Welt*. In the forties it was an exclusive organ of the Mendelssohn set, and what kind of rockets and "signals" it sent up for the delectation of the "musical world" during decad after decad, is well enough known to the older generation of musicians. Its first squib let off at Wagner is contained in the following: "The second opera of Richard Wagner's, *Der fliegende Holländer*, has also made a furore at its representation; all the papers are at one on that. Someone writes to us, though, that it is the most tedious thing he ever sat out." Throughout the master's whole career it maintained the same depreciative attitude.

If the production of any opera had caused a sensation in Germany, it was that of *Rienzi*: the author himself received fresh proofs each day that this novelty had been discussed in every corner of the fatherland. Undoubtedly enthusiastic recognition on the one hand, and strenuous opposition on the other, had

* See vol. i. pp. 132 and 153.—The notice of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* on the Dresden production of the *Flying Dutchman* was couched as follows: "On Dec. 31, 1842, A. Lortzing's, on Jan. 2, 1843, Rich. Wagner's, latest operas were given; the one is called *Der Wildschütz*, the other *Der fliegende Holländer*. Both were applauded." That's what we may term news in a nutshell. During the whole remainder of its issue for the year this journal does not accord Wagner more than a few colourless paragraphs. Not one word is said as to the talents of the man, the promise contained in his works, or the fact that the journal itself had looked with favour on his first public appearance ten years before.

† See his letter to Spohr of Feb. 1822, after the first performances of *Frei-schütz*, published in Ferd. Hiller's collection of Hauptmann's Letters. Another, earlier collection is addressed to Franz Hauser, the *Feen* obstructionist.

their origin in one and the same feeling, that of the pre-eminent significance of the work and its still youthful creator. Fully to realise this, as Eichberg has admirably said, we must bear in mind that to those who knew no later Wagner than *Rienzi*, that opera must have appeared far more *Wagnerian*—in our modern acceptance of the term—than to anyone in the present day.* The remark applies equally to the admirers and the disparagers of the work. Instead of simply classing it in the category of “Grand Heroic” operas à la Spontini or Meyerbeer, as the fashion is to-day, contemporaries felt in it the impulse of a strong new spirit, which challenged one either to follow or oppose. The friendliest among the Saxon papers had been the Leipzig *Illustrierte Zeitung* (founded in the summer of 1843 by J. J. Weber, the publisher), which printed an article by Ferd. Heine containing the words, “It is the duty of everyone who has the musical welfare of the fatherland at heart to make the fatherland acquainted with so hopeful an arrival as that of Wagner,” and followed it up with detailed reports on *Rienzi* and the *Flying Dutchman*. Lengthy criticisms of both operas were also published by the *Neue Zeitschrift*, though of a less benevolent, and at times surprisingly malicious character (e.g. Albert Schiffner on *Rienzi*); by the various “Comets” and “Planets” of the Leipzig journalistic heavens; and by the “Roses” and thorns of the luxuriant flora cropping up around the Gewandhaus on the Pleisse.† In the *Wiener Allgemeine Musikzeitung* (ed. Aug.

* O. Eichberg, “Zum fünfzigjährigen Jubiläum des ‘Rienzi’” (*Bayr. Taschenbuch* 1892).

† In the *Comet*, by Braun von Braunthal; the *Planet*, by Ernst Keil, its editor; the *Rosen*, by A. Hitzschold; the *Dresdener Theaterdepeschen*, by Florentin; the *Allg. Theaterzeitung*, and whatever else they were called. Perhaps the unfriendliest and most prejudiced reviewer was the eventual founder of the *Gartenlaube*, Ernst Keil, at that time eight-and-twenty and editor for the past five years of *Unser Planet* (Weigand, Leipzig). For the benefit of his readers he went the length of denying point-blank the successes reaped by Wagner’s works in Dresden, saying that not through his music—which lacked both melody and harmony—but “through the *buttering up* of certain journals,” had the composer of *Rienzi* and the *Dutchman* attained celebrity, whereas the Dresdeners themselves knew nothing of the “enthusiastic applause” reported by papers in league with the composer! “Wagner has studied and learnt much,” so ends the article in No. 31 of the *Planet*, Feb. 1843, “but is nothing remotely approaching a genius. His operas will share the fate of the dramas of Young Germany, which are heard *once*, perhaps

Schmidt) a regular feud had arisen round a hostile review of the opera ("One step farther, and music ceases to exist"), against which a "music-master" Abendroth had ventured to break a lance in the work's defence. When another correspondent of this paper declared the author of *Rienzi* and the *Dutchman* an "enigma: as dramatist he might possibly have succeeded; as composer, I must doubt it," Wagner had experienced in the course of his first year of publicity in Germany what he afterwards summarised as the epitome of all the critical attacks on his artistic work during the whole of his Dresden period: "Musicians by profession ascribed to me poetic talent; poets by profession allowed currency to my musical powers; the public I often succeeded in arousing; critics by profession always tore me into rags" (*P. I.* 394).

If such was already the position of the artist, the man had been pounced on by town-gossip from the very first, and from time to time some dainty morsel would find its way into the press. When Laube, as editor of the *Elegante*, had opened his columns to a public onslaught such as the "Letter on a performance of Don Juan," it might be construed as a token of impartiality: over the *Beiblatt*, or supplement, to his journal he had no direct control, and consequently the most fatuous witticisms—save the mark!—were printed in it with no colourable excuse, tending merely to bring the person of the unoffending victim (for instance, even Liszt) into popular disrepute. Thus we read in this precious supplement: "Richard Wagner composes with greatest inspiration when he has worked himself into a fury. A dispute that has made his blood boil, is the fountain of his best ideas, and his friends therefore cannot do him a greater service than to offer occasion for some rank unpleasant-

twice, then forgotten for ever." And this absolutely unmusical, but enterprising "Martyr for Freedom of the Press" (see *Prose Works* VI. 59) preserved the same malignity down to his death in March 1878. Only after his decease did his *Gartenlaube*, the home-companion of half a million subscribers, abandon that virulent hostility to everything connected with Wagner which it had maintained for a full quarter of a century. Consider what is implied in half a million subscribers, scattered over the whole face of the earth, from San Francisco to the Cape and Farther India, Japan and China! It means some millions of German readers wilfully deceived for years about the most decisive phenomenon in the art of their fatherland and the modern world itself.

ness. After a really exasperating theatre-intrigue Wagner may have invented many a fine chorus; and whenever he conducts his orchestra with more than wonted fire, the Dresden public may be sure that gall has entered into his blood during the previous rehearsal."* In this fashion was the German public dosed with Richard Wagner as early as 1843. Even the *Neue Zeitschrift*, the breviary of all young German musicians, already regarded him as a convenient stopgap, and, when it had nothing else to report about him, invented ridiculous fables: "In Dresden there will soon be produced the *Hecuba* of Sophocles with music by Kapellmeister Wagner." Really Schumann, or his acting editor, should have known that there exists no "Hecuba" of Sophocles. The unhappy contributor seems to have got into a tangle over the experiments under way at the Potsdam palace to resuscitate Euripides and Sophocles to the accompaniment of music by Mendelssohn and Taubert. Friedrich Wilhelm IV. —for whom, as Crown Prince, Gluck's *Iphigenia* had been performed in the Berlin opera-house to empty benches—had been moved by Tieck (summoned to Berlin at his accession) to command the performance of a real Greek tragedy according to scientific principles. *Antigone* was the first victim chosen, and the composition of its choruses had earned for Mendelssohn an order "pour le mérite" and the title of General-Music-Director. What *Wagner* thought of such attempts, stands recorded in *Opera and Drama* some eight years later: "In face of our life of to-day this Sophocleian Drama shewed itself a clumsy artistic fib; a fib trumped up by penury to cloak the falseness of our whole art-system; a fib that tried to lie away the actual need of our times under all sorts of artistic pretexts" (P. II. 150).

Toward the end of the year Berlin at last applied itself in earnest to its long-promised production of the *Holländer*. Herr von Küstner, who at Munich had rejected the work as "unsuited to Germany," seems to have changed his mind now that he had been installed Director of the Prussian Court-theatre and Richard Wagner was beginning to prove a name to conjure with elsewhere. Unfortunately, he could not possibly have selected a less propitious season. The opera-house, burnt out a few months

* The utter absurdity of this is proved by Wagner's own remark (*Beethoven*, 1870): "We should make a grave mistake, if we thought the artist could ever conceive save in a state of profound cheerfulness of soul" (P. V. 101).

since, was undergoing reconstruction; and the Royal Playhouse, though admirably adapted for such works as Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream*—just then in high favour,—was nothing like large enough for the richer instrumentation of the *Dutchman*. The prescribed number of 'strings' had to be reduced by almost a half, and thus to suffer from a constant overpowering by the 'wind,'—what that meant in this particular score, may be realised by anyone who remembers the frequent recurrence of that passage indicative of the souging of the storm-wind! The overture, of course, was the first to feel the detriment of this disproportion, and critics did not lose the golden opportunity of laying it at the composer's door.

In January 1844 Wagner went to Berlin to conduct the last rehearsals and first two performances. The mounting proved far more successful than he had anticipated, whilst the exponents of the principal rôles all gave of their best. Dlle. Marx was an excellent Senta, though by no means equalling the Schröder-Devrient; Bötticher, one of the first baritones of the day, sang and acted the part of the Dutchman with much expression; Zschiesche, a really capital bass, played Daland with rugged energy; only Mantius, the Erik, was a little poor. The first Berlin performance took place on Sunday the 7th, with a success that cannot but be termed considerable. The well-known Berlin chill, so prone to fault-finding, that prevailed throughout the first act, gave way in the second to the warmest emotion, and composer and singers had to appear before the curtain at its end. The same at the close of the whole work. Mendelssohn was present as General-Music-Director, and complimented the author in a rather curious fashion: The opera not having exactly failed, he might be well-satisfied with its reception. At a concert-rehearsal during this visit, Wagner heard him conduct a Beethoven symphony, the Eighth, in respect of which he had not forgotten the Palm Sunday incident of last year with the Menuet: "I remarked that he would pick out a detail here and there, almost at random, and polish it up with a certain obstination; which was of such excellent service to the detail that I only wondered why he did not pay the same attention to other nuances: for the rest, this incomparably buoyant symphony flowed down a vastly tame and chatty course" (*P.* IV. 306).

On Tuesday, January 9, the second Berlin performance of the

Holländer, likewise conducted by Wagner, was given to another crowded house.* In the interval the Berlin critics had begun their campaign, and dictated to the public the attitude it was to assume towards the novelty. Front rank was taken by Ludwig Rellstab, in the *Vossische Zeitung*: a journalist of the old school, who wrote on every conceivable topic, politics and all the sciences, art plastic, articulate and musical, and a hundred other things besides,—to say nothing of composing novels, tales, romances, humoresques and tragedies; a jack of all trades and master of none. Of Music, in particular, his effective knowledge was most exiguous; but that did not hinder him from posing in his newspaper as Sir Oracle. According to him, the creator of the *Flying Dutchman* was “a great talent with great aberrations”: the root-idea of the work was felicitous, not so its development, either in gross or in detail; not a single number of the music had a fresh, free character; continual rambling among harsh discords, etc., etc.; in fine, the tendency of Wagner’s music was to subvert all accepted laws of art and “make the licence of *exception* wellnigh its only *law*.” Rather more favourable is the report of an unnamed critic (Karl Philipp Samuel Schmidt) in Haude and Spener’s *Zeitung*, even going the length of expressing a desire to hear Wagner’s first “heroic” opera too, *Rienzi*; yet it finds in the music a predominance of strong-spiced harmonies and excessive use of the brass (the latter, in fact, was afterwards subdued by the composer). In a Berlin letter dated Jan. 11, to the *Elegante* of the 24th, Feodor Wehl indulged in pleasantries about the instrumentation being unable to keep step with the voice: “the one is always running after the other, and when

* Simultaneously with the *third* at Riga. Under friend Dorn the opera had only been given twice, namely on June 3 and 6, 1843. On the 9th of January (Dec. 28, Russian style) it was revived for the benefit of the basso Scheibler (see vol. i. 248 *n*), and in the first two months of 1844 the Riga and Berlin performances alternated as follows: Jan. 7, first Berlin perf.; Jan. 9, second Berlin and third Riga perf.; Jan. 14, Feb. 6 and 21, fourth, fifth and sixth at Riga; Feb. 23 and 25, third and fourth Berlin. After that comes an incomprehensibly protracted pause at both places: the seventh Riga performance does not occur until twenty years later, namely the 7th of November 1864, *half a year after Meyerbeer’s death*; the fifth Berlin performance not until December 1868. Remembering that the fifth Dresden performance did not take place till 1865, we here have surely something more than mere coincidence.

caught up, it tramples on its feet."* Another outward-bound effusion (*Abendzeitung*, Feb. 1) says, "Much has been fabled of the reception of the *Fliegender Holländer*, though it is nothing but fables; the vote of the *impartial* public was cast against it,"—one would be curious to know whence the artist could muster a prepossessed public in the Berlin of those days and on the occasion of his first appearance there!—"Rellstab has rightly criticised the opera, albeit he handled it this time with kid-gloves; and even the reporter of the *Preuss. Allg. Zeitung*, Herr Hofrath J. B. Rousseau, who considers it his province to write about everything, has not dared to join the blowers of the trumpet of praise." That "trumpet of praise" is distinctly good.

The *only* voice in all Berlin that dared to breathe a strong outspoken word in favour of the opera and its author, was that of the editor of a tiny budding music-journal. The name of this valiant one, appropriately enough, was Karl Gaillard. Humble part-owner of Challier's music-shop, in this January 1844 he had just started a modest weekly under the title *Berliner Musikalische Zeitung*, and saw no reason why he should not proclaim to the world the faith within him. The reason he had soon to discover; his unpatronised journal could not support itself, and in less than four years (Oct. 1847) was submerged in the *Neue Berliner*

* The witticisms of a nameless contributor to the *Berliner Modenspiegel in- und ausländischer Originale* (Jan. 20, 1844), a journal much affected at that time by so-called artistic circles on the Spree, are worth exhuming as a literary curiosity: "Set old Night to music, if you will, with her savage offsets, formless wastes and hideous monsters; compose Chaos, where shapes are oscillating twixt suppression and revolt; place hundred-armed Briareus [the gentleman had forgotten his proper name, though] in the orchestra, and let the Cyclops ply the kettle-drums; flog Cerberus, tread on the tail of two-headed dog Orthrus, and make it howl till Earth sighs in her inmost recesses for the fate of her children and meditates revenge; instead of music give us a stone in swaddling-clothes to swallow, and let the Corybantes prance between with spits and shields, instrumental and vocal music join in a sickening fight to the death, orchestra and singers rend and throttle one another" and so on. The poor man would seem to be suffering from an excess of lager, yet Cosmar allowed him to rave in this manner through page after page of his journal, in the effort to depict the "paralysing effect" the *Holländer* had had on him. A plank bed and a cold douche would have been more to the purpose, and perhaps had been administered by the time he arrived at the comparatively tame remark that "this is the most cheerless music ever composed; of the sea, the spectral element, it has nothing but the uniform fruitfulness, the empty fermentation of a shapeless surge of sound," and so forth.

Musikzeitung—exclusively devoted to Meyerbeer—, there, and there alone, to attain longevity; whilst he himself, for all his talent, fell into want and its resultant sickness, and died in January 1851. His literary championship of Wagner could not reach beyond his own paper and the brief period of 1844 to 1847; but his name will not easily be forgotten, for it stands inscribed upon a monument of letters addressed him by the master,* who rewarded his zeal and devotion with unaffected friendship. Personally, however, he came into contact with the artist only on the occasion of flying visits to Dresden; during Wagner's brief stay in Berlin he did not even see him eye to eye.

When Wagner left Berlin after the second performance of his work, the fate of the *Holländer* was still trembling in the balance; it needed but a little benevolent energy on the management's part, to dip the scale of victory. The public had pronounced rather in favour of the work, than against it; and it was in Berlin itself, where for that matter he was utterly unknown, that he received the first positive encouragement to hold the path he had struck with the *Holländer*. This came from a few individuals who, complete strangers until then, had begged to be introduced to him in consequence of the deep impression made upon them by his work. In his *Communication* (1851) he speaks of "two persons" in particular, "a gentleman and a lady," but does not give their names: endless conjectures have been raised as to their identity, but, as Wagner once declared to W. Tappert, they certainly were *not* Herr Gaillard and his wife. There really were a few other intelligent persons in Berlin at the time, and the enthusiasm displayed by a portion of the audience had not been due to a mere mesmeric effect. Nevertheless it was not until six weeks later that a third and a fourth performance were given, Feb. 23 and 25, for a starring engagement of Frau Schröder-Devrient's: at both the house was sold out, and applause most hearty. Then—the thread was snapped for a quarter of a century, a period only too familiar in this connection. To the place where it might have deployed its true powers, the lavishly-restored Royal Opera-house, there was no idea of transferring the

* In the possession of M. Alfred Bovet, of Valentigney, when the above was written; but that staunch friend of Wagner's cause has been claimed this year (1901) by death.—W. A. E.

work. It was shelved and forgotten, though no one could tell exactly why.*

The effect of this sudden silence at Berlin was to be far-reaching, not only on Wagner's artistic career, but also on his financial status. Just after the first pair of Berlin performances he seems to have taken a fatal plunge, as to which he had been doubtful only a month before,†—namely the publication of his two operas. At anyrate Gaillard prints a notice in his issue of the *Berliner Mus. Ztg* for Feb. 24, 1844, to the effect that "Richard Wagner's works are to be published by Meser of Dresden." Evidently he considered the production of his *Holländer* at three different theatres, in addition to that of the Saxon capital, sufficient warrant for the risk: the German public might shortly be expected to be inquiring for pianoforte editions of his operas, to be followed as soon as possible by selections, single pieces, vocal numbers, etc. (the real money-bringers), and ultimately by full scores. No publisher would venture to look so far ahead; but Wagner himself was full of hope and confidence, and now determined that the thing should be done. In his *Communication* he confesses to a not unnatural desire to reap immediate profit from his works, and speaks of a temporary "repudiation and abuse of his inner nature in the impatient quest of pleasure," a quest that led him "into sacrifices and undertakings destined, in the absence of success, to dislocate afresh his outward lot" (*P. I.* 319). After so complete an apparent change as had come over his fortunes since a year ago,

* L. Rellstab in the *Vossische* alludes to this neglect: "The Flying Dutchman has reposed for a longer season than seems fair to an art-work whose curious individuality, with its rugged forms, has first to break itself a pathway to more general understanding. . . The work itself becomes more accessible to us at every hearing; its riddles resolve more and more to the ear; though we must candidly confess that not all of them profit by solution. A high endeavour, an inspired artistic sense, however, remain the composer's indisputable possession; even though we must consider him to have strayed very far in his choice of forms and means," and the translator of French librettos (among others, those of Meyerbeer) cannot get over his repugnance to Wagner's having written his own text: "The gods do not doubly endow; and art-history can shew him no precedent for aiming at the laurels of both muses."—When even a Rellstab was beginning to find the work less problematic, it was high time, of course, to cut short its run.

† See the letter to Löbmann of Dec. 9, 1843.

he would have been more than human, or less than artist, had his head not been just a wee bit turned. Visions of approaching affluence would be encouraged by the incomes he had seen accruing from their works to men like Auber, Adam and Dumas, in Paris; and he may well be excused if he desired to taste his portion of the sweets of life, after so prolonged a draught of its bitters. Nor were his calculations as to the *means* at all erroneous: those early operas of his must long ago have brought a pretty penny to the lucky buyers of their copyright. Merely, he had forced the pace too much, and was providing for a supply in advance of demand—with the inevitable consequences. Not being a capitalist, he had to borrow for the purpose, and thus sowed the seed of financial troubles that clung to him, in this particular connection, for the next twelve years, as may be seen in the *Letters to Uhlig etc.* The money once found, a publisher was easily secured in the person of C. F. Meser, music-seller by appointment to the Saxon Court, who consented to print *Rienzi*, the *Dutchman*, and eventually *Tannhäuser*, for a handsome commission, but seems to have not had the remotest idea how to push the business. The direst factor in the situation, however, was the sudden and mysterious abstention of Berlin, on the one hand, and Leipzig on the other: at Berlin there can be little doubt but that Meyerbeer had something to say in the matter; at Leipzig—well, Mendelssohn said *nothing*. With the two chief musical centres in Germany either silent or hostile, or both, what chance could there be of minor theatres aspiring to mount the new composer's works? Rapidly as Wagner had leapt into celebrity, he seemed to have as rapidly fallen to the rank of a mere local hero.

To his local doings we must now return. His first official act in 1844 was of a highly unselfish nature. The score of Marschner's *Hans Heiling* had reposed for ten years in the dust of the Court-theatre archives, after being accepted by the Intendanz; Wagner dug it out.* Jan. 26, 1844, after careful

* It may be remembered that he himself had had a good deal to do with the rehearsing of this opera at Wurzburg in 1833. In the chapter entitled "Die Oper unter Richard Wagner" in his *Geschichte des Dresd. Hoftheaters* R. Prölss suggests that the present initiative proceeded from Ed. Devrient, the author of *Hans Heiling's* text, at the same time dating Devrient's entry upon office half a year too early ("Jan. 1, 1844"). The fact, however, as

rehearsal, this opera attained its first Dresden performance. Its repetition on Sunday the 28th coinciding with the fifth anniversary of the Liedertafel, Wagner was unable to take part in the concert of celebration, though he managed to be in time for the supper that regaled its members with toasts and speeches far into the night. On this occasion the zealous president, Professor Löwe, waxed eloquent about the importance of male-choral singing as an element in social life and culture; but he had yet another project in his head, for which he sought our hero's assistance—namely the home-bringing of Weber's earthly remains.

Some three years back a correspondent had written to the *Gazette Musicale* (Jan. 21, 1841) describing the neglected condition in which he had found the coffin of Karl Maria von Weber in the vaults of S. Mary's Chapel, Moorfields, London: "Le cercueil dans lequel sont renfermés les restes du grand compositeur ressemble exactement à une grande boîte de violon; il est là confondu avec tout le vulgaire des morts que chaque jour entasse autour de lui. Quand l'enceinte sera devenue trop petite, on s'en débarrassera d'une façon ou de l'autre. Peut-être si le hasard ne m'avait conduit en son dernier séjour, dans quelque temps d'ici ses restes auraient disparu pour toujours dans la fosse commune."* The cry from Paris found an echo in the German *Europa* (through Gambihler), and on March 21, 1841, the *Gazette* was able to announce that "the artists of the Dresden Royal Kapelle have resolved to transport the body of Weber from London. A portion of the expenses has already been covered by a subscription among the artists of the Kapelle and many persons in every class of society. To provide the balance, a

proved by a letter of Wagner's to Gaillard (June '45), is as stated above. How it had really happened that Marschner's work had slumbered so long, is explained by Gutzkow in his characterisation of Reissiger as "a type of the German Kapellmeister who has had a few operatic failures himself, and thenceforth vows enmity to all operas other than the classics. . . Whenever there was a question of Marschner's requests to have an opera brought out at last, that had been accepted years before, Reissiger would exclaim, as with tears in his voice, 'But, Excellency, we are short of a high alto,' or 'Excellency, without the Veltheim the opera is impossible; and nobody will listen to *her* any longer.' Thus operas, albeit accepted, did not come out" (Gutzkow's *Rückblicke*, p. 316).

* The church itself (Roman Catholic) has lately been demolished to make way for street-improvements—1901, W. A. E.

public concert will be given next month in the Catholic Church at Dresden." Instigated by Brauer, an intimate friend of the Webers, Prof. Löwe had got up a concert of the Liedertafel for the benefit of the undertaking—but how long since, we cannot ascertain, or whether it was the "concert" referred to in the *Gaz. Mus.* cited above. In any case the scheme was hanging fire, owing to the callousness of the Intendanz, which had informed the Committee constituted for the purpose that the King entertained religious scruples against disturbing a dead man's rest. Now that Wagner had established his footing in Dresden, however, Dr Löwe considered the prospect more hopeful, and proposed to him to join the said committee. He consented with great alacrity; a banker, and Herr Hofrath Schulz (Director of the Cabinet of Antiques) were added to its number; and the agitation commenced afresh. Appeals were issued in every direction, exhaustive plans drawn up, and, as goes without saying, innumerable sittings held. But still the main obstacle remained to overcome, the opposition of the Intendant; and that was the task in which Wagner's aid was most relied on. As he states himself, a quarter of a century later, "My chief would gladly have forbidden me to have anything to do with the affair, under pretext of the Royal Will, had not previous experiences taught him, as the people say—and with them Herr *von Lüttichau*—that there was a 'hair in that broth' when served to me. Since in any case the King's objection was not so seriously meant, and my chief could scarcely help seeing that this Royal Will could not prevent the scheme's proceeding on a private path, whilst it would bring the Court into bad odour if the Court-theatre to which Weber had once belonged were to play the sulking onlooker, Herr von Lüttichau rather sought to twit me out of my intervention—without which, as he was pleased to suppose, the thing would never come about. 'How invidious it would seem,' said he, 'to render such excessive homage to the memory of *Weber*, when the deceased Morlachi had really served the theatre much longer, yet nobody thought of fetching *his* ashes back from Italy. To what consequences might it not lead? Supposing Reissiger were presently to die on a trip to the baths; with just as much reason as Frau von Weber, his widow might demand that her husband's body should be brought home with song and drum'" (*P.* VII. 230-1). This *reductio ad absurdum*—perhaps a little coloured up by the narrator—had no

effect on Wagner: he stood to his guns, and somehow convinced his thick-headed superior that, with or without his approval, the project must now be fulfilled—especially as the Berlin Court-theatre (influenced by Weber's fellow-pupil Meyerbeer, who had been approached by the committee) had already announced a benefit performance of *Euryanthe* in its support.

The Weber project forms a contrapuntal accompaniment to Wagner's more immediate duties. On the 9th of February he conducted the first Dresden performance of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* with Mendelssohn's incidental music, which had been produced only lately at Berlin (Oct. '43). Repetitions were given on the 11th, 14th, 17th and 23d of February, March 16, May 29, and so on; so that Wagner was giving practical effect to his wish that there were "two of us" (see p. 20). With this music he was much better pleased than with that to *Antigone*; which, after frequent successes at Potsdam, Leipzig and Berlin, was presently mounted at Dresden (April 12) under Reissiger. Of the overture he remarked in later days: "We must not forget that it was written by a boy of seventeen; yet how finished in form is the whole thing. Nevertheless, by a long way less concisely framed and finely felt than the Hebrides: moreover the principal theme I deem mistaken; these are *gnats*, not elves" (H. v. Wolzogen, *Erinnerungen*, p. 32).

Toward the end of the month Franz Liszt arrived in Dresden, and gave two "musical academies" at the theatre, electrifying his hearers by his rendering of Beethoven's E flat Concerto. Much as Wagner himself was taken once more with the irresistible aplomb of these dazzling performances, as little did he feel moved to draw nearer, in person, to the admired virtuoso. We may recall what he says about their first meeting in Paris: he had thenceforth reckoned Liszt with those phenomena "one considers strange and hostile to one's nature."* What he had repeatedly expressed to others, in this sense, came at last to the ears of Liszt, just about the time when *Rienzi's* Dresden success had

* One circumstance that may explain Wagner's attitude, was Liszt's continued lenience toward the public's taste, or rather want thereof, in the choice of his programmes. In this respect Wagner's verdict of the Paris period completely harmonises with Liszt's own later condemnation of himself. In a letter to J. W. v. Wasiliewski of Jan. 9, 1857, Liszt explicitly upbraids himself for having "only in rare instances arranged the rapidly-successive programmes

brought Wagner's name into prominence ; and Liszt was seriously distressed at having been so hastily misjudged by a man whose acquaintance he had scarcely so much as made. As Wagner phrases it in 1851: "To me there is something uncommonly touching, in the patient efforts made by Liszt to bring me to another opinion of him. As yet he had not heard a note of my works, so that it could not have been from actual artistic sympathy. No, it was simply the purely-human wish to put an end to an accidental discord, coupled maybe with an infinitely delicate misgiving that, after all, he might really have wounded me. Whoever knows the bearing of modern artists to each other, the boundless self-seeking and loveless disregard of others' feelings, must be more than astonished, be enraptured out and out, when he hears of advances such as those with which I was importuned by that extraordinary man. But I was not yet in a position to appreciate the unusual charm and fascination of Liszt's pre-eminently lovable and loving nature: at first I regarded his overtures with a certain feeling of surprise, attributing them almost to idle curiosity" (*P. I.* 386-7). Not yet was the ice to be broken; but no words more honourable to both parties could possibly have been penned, and the whole passage in the *Communication* is one of those gems of character-painting in which no one has excelled the master.

Liszt remained for over a week in Dresden, giving a third concert on March the first, though not at the theatre this time. February 29 there was a performance of *Rienzi*, obviously the one to which Wagner alludes as having been "wellnigh extorted by Liszt"; for the opera was not on the programme just then, awaiting the return of Schröder-Devrient. This was the first time Liszt had heard any of Wagner's music, and the liveliness of his impressions was to be borne in upon the author in course of the next few years: "From all the ends of the earth, whithersoever his virtuoso journeys took him, I received evidence now through this person, and now through that, of Liszt's untiring

of his pianistic 'prime'—partly from want of leisure, partly from laziness and boredom—and left them to the random choice now of this person, then of that. . . . It was a fault I afterwards discovered and sincerely rued, when I learnt to recognise that for the artist, who would be worthy of the name, the danger of displeasing the public is a far lesser one than that of allowing himself to be guided by its whims" (*Liszt-Briefe I.* pp. 257-8).

eagerness to impart to others the joy he had experienced from my music, and thus, with no ulterior object, to make propaganda for me" (*ibid.*).

The *Rienzi* performance of Feb. 29 had been attended by another guest, Director Cornet of Hamburg. Tichatschek having induced him in the previous year to accept the opera definitely, he had journeyed to Dresden expressly to take personal stock of the means required to mount it. He grew alarmed, indeed, when he compared the resources of this Royal Court-theatre with his own weak choir and not precisely first-rate orchestra; but he did not let that damp his courage. He invited Wagner to come over and conduct his work, and consoled himself with the prospect of a *Gastspiel* (starring-engagement) of Tichatschek's, who had contracted to sing the title-rôle six times at Hamburg during his leave-of-absence, stipulating that if the opera had not been mounted by then, the management was to pay him a fine of 2000 thalers—for Tichatschek was a friend of practical experience.

March 12, on the morning of his departure for a fortnight, Wagner writes a little note to Gaillard, who had kept him supplied during the past few weeks with the issues of his musical paper,* thus making his acquaintance. It shews him busied to the last moment with the publication of his two operas: "Honoured Sir, I am on the point of bidding farewell to my wife, to make a journey to Hamburg, where I am to conduct the first performance of my 'Rienzi.' All around me is worry and disturbance: my publisher jades me with proof-corrections, and the like—but your journal falls into my hands, with the latest news about my Holländer, and I am unmanned by a feeling towards you which I cannot possibly denominate mere gratitude. Your sympathy with me, won in so wholly simple a fashion, is to me a thing so elevating, that it gives me the impression of sudden acquaintance with a work of high art that warms and inspires me through and through! Feelings thus aroused must bear good fruit, for they are *productive!*—Let us wait and see what I shall have to owe you!"

* Nos. 5 and 7, for Feb. 24 and March 9, contain a paraphrase of Wagner's *Autobiographic Sketch* (from the *Elegante*) prefaced by a warm encomium; No. 6, March 2, has a very good account of the last two Berlin performances of the *Flying Dutchman* (Feb. 23 and 25) just given with the assistance of Frau Schröder-Devrient.

Less elevating were his impressions at Hamburg itself, where he was expected on the 15th of March, and duly arrived after a tiresome journey. This thriving seaport had scarcely recovered from the effects of the great fire in 1843, and, for all its commercial bustle, presented an uninviting spectacle of half-cleared debris. The theatre stood a long way outside the city, in a dreary wilderness. But what discouraged Wagner most, was not so much the insignificance of the orchestra when compared with that at Dresden, or the dearth of stage 'supers,' as the utter incapacity of the tenor to whom had been confided the embodiment of his Last of the Tribunes. Wenzel Wurda, whom he had seen before as Eleazar in Halévy's *Juive*, played Rienzi exactly as if he were Eleazar. It was evident at the first rehearsal, and no effort of the composer's could breathe one whiff of poetry into this production. To be sure, Director Cornet, the "never-resting Tyrolese," did not lose patience: mostly his own operatic stage-manager, he was accustomed to submitting his choristers and supers to a rigorous inspection before the curtain's rise, and would twitch the hero's purple mantle with his own deft hand if its folds were not quite to his liking. Unfortunately, he had formed his own ideas of the scenic requirements of this work, and nothing could dissuade him from eking out his military processions by girls and children dressed ballet-wise in gauze.* Neither Wagner's careful supervision of the rehearsals, nor all the pains devoted to the instrumental portion, could obviate the spiritlessness of the first performance on Thursday, March the 21st, 1844. "An utterly unsuitable singer played havoc with the title-rôle, and the director found his hopes deceived by inadequate success"—as Wagner says of it in 1851—"I then saw, to my astonishment, that even this 'Rienzi' was above people's heads. And yet, however coldly I may now look back upon that youthful work of mine, I cannot but credit it with one good quality: the young heroically-pitched enthusiasm that breathes throughout it. But, nourished on the masterworks of modern opera-manufacture, our public has accustomed itself to

* Told by the master July 4, 1878.—As an instance of his memory for faces, it may be mentioned that one of the members of the Hamburg company, a basso Brassin (father of the artist-generation of that name, Louis, Gerhard and Leopold, Brassin) was recognised at once by him years afterwards, on a chance meeting in Paris.

seeking stuff for stage-enthusiasm quite other-where than in the dominant mood of a dramatic work. In Dresden I was helped by something different, namely the purely physical *verve* of the whole thing, the brilliance of material and the personality of the chief singer, which carried the public away" (*P. I.* 324). In view of this, it was of small moment to the artist himself that the outward success not only of the first Hamburg performance, but also of the second on Sunday the 24th, was considerable, composers and singers being repeatedly called before the curtain, as contemporary reports inform us.* Directly afterwards he set out for home, leaving the further conduct of his work to the local Kapellmeister Krebs,†—little dreaming that he would be his successor at Dresden some five years later.

With this Hamburg excursion we may close the present chapter.

* In Koffka's *Theaterzeitung* we read: "Musicians by profession, with whom I have discussed *Rienzi*—and good ones too, most difficult to please—are delighted with this colossal tone-poem, and look on Wagner as a streak of dawn indubitably announcing a new era in German Opera. They maintain that, just as Gluck and Beethoven were not acknowledged in the full glory of their originality and merit till years had passed, so Wagner with his *Rienzi* will only find in future days his full due meed. For that matter, even the immediate success of the opera was very considerable; and the composer, who himself conducted the first performance of his work, was each time greeted with numerous salvoes of applause, almost always shared by Wurda as representant of *Rienzi*. Wurda, however, with his much enfeebled vocal means, is no longer the man to set in the most favourable light the beauties of an opera that demands such power and energy of rendering. Once, perhaps — — *tempi passati!* With Tichatschek's *Gastspiel* next month, *Rienzi* will at last appear in the full glory of its effective worth" (signed J. Mendelssohn). Quite another tone is to be found in the report of Theodor Hagen ("Joachim Fels") to the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*: "The composer has appropriated Meyerbeer's system, a system which reduces music to a mathematical sum; only, it comes out more offensively with Wagner than with Meyerbeer. . . . His music is like a piece of stage-scenery, or a play of Charlotte Birchpfeiffer's; here virtuosity is transplanted bodily to the stage. . . . An energetic protest was necessary, and I have thus fulfilled my duty" (*N. Z. f. M.* 1844, I. No. 32). Precious Stiggins!

† The Wagner Museum possesses a letter of Wagner's to Krebs (No. 5614 in Oesterlein's catalogue) dated June 17, 1844, thanking him for his services in connection with the Hamburg *Rienzi*: "Most valued Herr Colleague, In the first place my heartiest greetings, and the assurance that I ever think of you with great gratitude. I hope Herr Cornet has already given you my repeated messages of thanks. Grant Heaven that you may think of me with at least an equal friendship," etc., etc.

It was the last attempt at any outside theatre, for some time to come, to realise the hopes that lately seemed so flattering. Nevertheless, though the example of Berlin and Leipzig had set up a counter-current destined to engulf all his proximate plans, almost without his knowledge Wagner had meanwhile gained in Liszt the herald of his future world-fame.

III.

COMPOSITION OF TANNHÄUSER.

Keynote of Tannhäuser: the high tragedy of Renunciation.—Fresh outbreak of Criticism.—Anecdote of a plot.—Johanna Wagner.—“Gruss seiner Treuen an Friedrich den Geliebten.”—On Fischer’s Weinberg: work at Tannhäuser.—Spontini in Dresden.—Home-bringing of Weber’s remains.—Completion of the Tannhäuser score.

It is a property of the poet, to be riper in his inner intuition of the essence of the world, than in abstractly-conscious perception.

RICHARD WAGNER.

NOT long ago there fell to the hammer a sketch for the music of *Tannhäuser*, interlined with complete text and hints of the instrumentation. At numerous places it has notes recording when and where the various scenes were composed: thus on the first page occurs the date, “Dresden, November 1843.” As we already know, the scenic draft had been laid out at Teplitz in the summer of 1842, the poem written in the early Spring of 1843. What relation the riper composition bore to those preliminary outlines, the author himself has stated in a letter to Gaillard of Jan. 30, 1844: “With me it is not the case, that I choose a subject at random, put it into verse, and *then* deliberate how I am to fit it with suitable music. Before proceeding to write a verse, nay, even to jot down a scene, I am already drenched in the musical atmosphere of my creation; I have all the tones, all the characteristic motives in my head. So that, when the verses are ready and the scenes in order, for me the actual opera is finished, and the detailed musical treatment is more of a tranquil and deliberate working-out, which has already been preceded by the moment of true production.” This is in answer to the question how, as poet *and* musician, he gets over

the difficulty of having to warm himself to his subject twice over. But it is certain that even to these earlier works we may apply his exclamation with regard to *Siegfried*: "Marvellous! Only in the act of composing, are the secrets of my poem bared to me"; for in a subsequent letter to Gaillard (June 1845) he says: "With *Tannhäuser* I have been under a positive spell: wherever and whenever I touched my subject, I kindled into warmth and glow; however great the interruptions that kept me from my work, with one breath I was always back in the same peculiar atmosphere that had intoxicated me at its earliest inception."

It would be of great interest to follow this composition through its various stages (at hand of the autograph aforesaid) and connect them, as also its "interruptions," with the concurrent events in his everyday life. But that would belong rather to a special monograph on *Tannhäuser*: here we are busied rather with the predominant mood of the work. This the author has himself defined, in a letter to August Roeckel of 1856: "If there is one poetic theme expressed in *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, it is the high tragedy of renunciation, of well-motived and finally imperative, alone-redeeming abnegation of the will. It is this fundamental note that gave my poem, my music, that hallowing without which they could never have possessed any really moving power." Certainly, these lines were written *after* Wagner's acquaintance with Schopenhauer's system, and the writer confesses that to the artist himself his artwork, if it be indeed one, is a riddle "as to the meaning of which he may be as much deceived as any other person"; whilst in *Opera and Drama* he declares that the Action of a veritable drama is "a goal in itself," having no concern with any *moral*, for "its whole moral consists in its justification by instinctive human feeling" (*P.* II. 210). But the inner necessity of his *Tannhäuser's* renunciation—in opposition to the old legend, where the hero returns to the Hörselberg in the end, defying God and man—was a matter of Wagner's own experience, albeit on a different plane. For his *Communication* tells us: "Through the favourable change in my outward lot, the hopes I cherished of its still more favourable development, and finally my personal contact with a new and well-disposed surrounding, a longing for enjoyment had sprung up within me, that led my nature, formed amid the struggles of a suffering past, astray from

its peculiar path. An instinct that urges every man to take life as he finds it, now pointed me as artist to a line which [had it been pursued] must soon and bitterly disgust me. In Life this instinct could only have been obeyed, if as Artist I had sought renown by entire subordination of my better nature to the demands of public taste, submission to the Mode, and speculation on its weaknesses. Arrived at this point, it became clear to my heart that, with actual entry on that road, I should have foundered in my own disgust." Here we have the hint of a chapter in Wagner's artistic history that remains to be written, and the material for which is not as yet to hand. It looks very much as if he had transiently contemplated the manufacture of some flashy work to eclipse his own *Rienzi* in spectacular effect; under which category we could scarcely class *Die Sarazenin*, drafted early in 1843—perhaps the Vienna offer (p. 34). Something of the sort would account for the longish pause between completion of the *Dutchman* and serious work at *Tannhäuser*. But whatever it may have been, the mood soon passed, for he continues: "If at last I turned impatiently away, I owed the strength of my repugnance to nothing save the independence already developed in my nature, both as artist and man; and that double revolt, artistic alike and human, inevitably expressed itself as a yearning for appeasement in a higher, nobler element; an element which, in its contrast to the only enjoyability of life and art the modern Present displayed to me, could but appear as one of pure, chaste, virginal, unseizable and unapproachable Love. And what, in turn, could this love-yearning, the noblest sentiment my heart could feel, what else could it be but a longing for release from the Present, for absorption into an element of endless love, denied to earth and reachable through Death alone? . . . The above is an exact account of the mood in which I was, when the unlaidd ghost of Tannhäuser returned again, and warned me to complete his poem" (*P. I.* 322-3).

True, this refers more specifically to the *poem*, which, according to the letter to Lehrs already-quoted, was finished by the Spring of 1843—though its title of that date, "Der Venusberg," makes one suspect that its original termination may not have been quite in accordance with the form in which it took the stage. Yet music and poem were so intimately allied in Wagner's case, that he at once proceeds: "When I drafted and carried

out the music of *Tannhäuser*, it was in a state of consuming excitement that held my blood and every nerve in fevered throbbing. . . . With this work I penned my death-warrant: for at the forum of our modern art-world I now could hope no more for life. This I *felt*, though as yet I did not *know* it with full clearness—that knowledge I was yet to gain” (*ibid.*).

Here we must leave the composition of *Tannhäuser*, for the present, and return to the more mundane matters with which it was interwoven.

Returned from his fortnight's trip to Hamburg, Wagner found Dresden's literary lions increased in number by Karl Gutzkow, who had just reaped a brilliant success with a play called *Zopf und Schwert* (March 18). An arrival of far greater importance to him was that of Schröder-Devrient, who reverted on April 1 to her allegiance to the Saxon Court-stage. The day before, March 31, he had re-entered on his public functions by participating in the annual Palm Sunday concert for the benefit of the widows and orphans of members of the Royal Kapelle, in the vast enclosure of the “Old Operahouse,” whose former splendours had fallen into shabbiness through long neglect. As the control last year had vested in Mendelssohn and Reissiger, it was his first appearance at these concerts. For it he chose the Pastoral Symphony, a work he thus characterises in his *Beethoven* essay: “In it the world regains its childhood's innocence. ‘This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise’—who has not heard that Redeemer-word when listening to this symphony?” (*P. V.* 92). With what zeal and affection he went to his task, we may judge from a contemporary account in the *Leipzig Allg. Mus. Ztg.*: “Under Wagner's baton Beethoven's masterly tone-poem appeared in a new and quite peculiar light; though egoistic music-pedants will not be altogether pleased with the choice of tempi etc.”

As the Palm Sunday concert commenced the usual fortnight's holiday at the theatre, Wagner now found his first opportunity, since the distractions attendant on the Hamburg excursion, of resuming his long-neglected work at *Tannhäuser*. Then came the reappearance of the Devrient, April 14, in the same rôle of “Armida” with which she had said goodbye to the Dresden public a year before. Conductor and singers had done full justice to the noble work, so warmly received in 1843; yet

Armide was only once repeated this time, as the public's interest was absorbed in the novelty of Mendelssohn's *Antigone*, which, splendidly mounted according to Semper's antiquarian plans, was repeated five times under Reissiger within ten days, commencing April 12. For *Armide* Wagner had succeeded in introducing a novel disposition of the orchestra, especially of the badly-seated contrabassists. Of course he was rapped on the knuckles for it by the critics, who pretended that the violas were smothered by the basses, and had lost in acoustic effect. With such consistence was his almost every step toward rational improvement accompanied by purblind or malignant misconstruction. Particularly virulent outbursts of the kind were provoked by a performance of Mozart's *Titus* on May the 3rd, when Schröder-Devrient sang the "Sextus,"* and the twaddle talked the year before about *Don Juan* was crowned by a pre-eminently partisan article of Schladebach's in the *Neue Zeitschrift*, entitled "Herr Kapellmeister Richard Wagner and Mozart." It would be interesting to know precisely what this critic signified by "the spirit of Mozart," when he declared that Wagner was "totally unable to transfer himself" to it. Having regard to certain later utterances of Wagner's as to the rendering of Mozart, we may comfort ourselves with the assumption that the "spirit" invoked was nothing more redoubtable than that of the phlegmatic Reissiger, or the lamented Morlachi. Once more we find him taxed with "too high an opinion of himself," and all his modifications of brainless routine ascribed to a "perversity" which the reporter indignantly deprecates when applied to the works of an immortal master. The idiotic fable of Wagner's having championed the Parisian tempi at that earlier performance of *Don Juan* is again warmed up,† and opportunity seized to drag in a similar charge of

* According to A. v. Wolzogen's *Schröder-Devrient* (p. 314) this artist sang the great recitative before the first finale with "peculiar power"; yet Schladebach, referring to the same performance, calls her "a beautiful ruin, in sight of which one dwells with melancholy on a glorious past."

† "As though we ought to fetch our standard for the rhythmic gait of Mozart's music from Paris, forsooth! For *Gluck's* operas people there may have the true traditions, which we should do our best to follow; for Mozart, however, they surely are only to be found at the larger theatres of Germany, if such indeed are needed, and cultured taste, assiduous study of his works and penetration of their spirit, with a profound feeling for his clear and soulful music, do not suffice" (*N. Z. f. M.* 1844, I. No. 40, p. 159). So, in

“unjustifiable love of innovation” against a performance of *Euryanthe* that had taken place a few days previously (Apr. 28): “In this opera at least the Kapelle once led by Weber himself must surely have preserved the tempi firm and true.” Here the critic is careful not to appeal to his own memory of Weber’s conducting, whom he can scarcely have heard, but plainly makes himself a speaking-trumpet for the mere trivial or ill-willed carpings of a colleague’s jealousy. Luckily we have the master’s own recollections to fall back on, in this case: It is well known that Weber used to call his wife in jest his “gallery”; but she was always the first to whom he appealed in seriousness for judgment on his works, highly valuing her years-long practical experience of the stage—for instance (according to their son M. M. v. Weber) it was *she* to whom he owed the drastic opening scene of *Der Freischütz*, which was originally to have commenced with a dialogue between Agathe and the Hermit. Now, as we have seen in Wagner’s letter to von Lüttichau of April 1843, Weber’s widow had beseeched him to *restore* the true traditions of the rendering of Weber’s music, which had gone to rack and ruin under Reissiger; that he did so, is proved by the anecdote he relates in *Conducting* (1869): “Eighteen years after the master’s death I conducted the *Freischütz* for my first time at Dresden; recking nothing of the habits that had crept in under my elder colleague, I was taking the introduction to the overture according to my own idea of its tempo, when a veteran from Weber’s days, the aged ’cellist Dotzauer, turned solemnly to me, and said, ‘Eh! *that’s* how Weber took it; at last I hear it right again.’”

In the whole of Schladebach’s spiteful article, with its sweepingly general heading, there consequently is but one passage of historic import: his remark that part of the orchestra—and we may remember the attitude of the leader of the violins!—would fall back to its usual tempo despite the Kapellmeister’s beat, and thus give rise at moments to a lovely hurly-burly. Which reminds us of Wagner’s own complaint that, especially in the

contrast to Wagner’s long-standing conviction (see vol. i. 125 and 140), the critic upholds the position that German stages need *no* particular pains to revive the true traditions of rendering in the case of Mozart’s works, for which the routine of a Reissiger should be warranty enough! For the contrary view, see *Prose Works* V. 266 and 281.

case of Mozart's works, he often had to fill his colleague's place in operas which he *hadn't rehearsed*. And that brings us to an enlightening little anecdote in the "Souvenirs of a Dresden bandsman": One Sunday evening—it must have been May 5, just two days after the performance of *Titus*—this bandsman, standing at the wings of the Dresden Court-theatre, therefore separated from the plotters by nothing more substantial than a wall of canvas, was involuntary witness of a secret conversation between Reissiger, Lipinski and the clarinetist J. G. Kotte (died 1857). He was paying no particular heed to it, when of a sudden he heard Wagner's name pronounced and acrimoniously reiterated: the theme was his "odious popularity," with a pious wish, as coda, to the effect that "the public might for once be given the chance of discovering that he knew how to conduct his own operas, perhaps, but certainly not the classics; then there would soon be an end to his over-valuing." The "crafty Pole," supported by his colleague Kotte, waxed hotter and hotter in his disparagement of Wagner's powers, whilst Reissiger, for the most part preserving a diplomatic silence, just signified his friendly assent to so welcome a declaration. Encouraged by Reissiger's attitude, the two nice gentlemen proceeded to plain proposals: next Thursday, set down for Mozart's *Entführung*,* Reissiger had only to send word that he was ill, and Wagner would be obliged to undertake his duties *unprepared*, with an inevitable fiasco. "I heard no refusal on Reissiger's part," this witness continues, "but also no consent. The performance was about to begin, and I left without having learnt exactly what was settled on. As may be guessed, I looked forward to the coming Thursday (May 9) with no little anxiety. It arrived, without bringing any announcement of an alteration in the programme. Half an hour before commencement of the performance I found the Kapelle-servant posted at the entrance to the orchestra, telling every

* During Wagner's absence at Hamburg the *Entführung* had been mounted on Sunday the 17th of March, 'got up' afresh by Reissiger. It had been introduced to Dresden by Weber on June 17, 1818, but then had disappeared; as recently as 1842, J. P. Lyser had lamented, "Are Mozart's *Weibertreu*, *Entführung*, *Idomeneo*, to remain forbidden treasures to us much longer?" Three repetitions took place under Reissiger, on March 22, April 9 and 23; the fifth and sixth performances, May 9 and June 14, were conducted by Wagner.

fresh arrival that Herr Kapellmeister Wagner, who had undertaken the direction of the opera for that evening owing to Herr Reissiger's indisposition, requested the gentlemen of the band first to assemble in the tuning-room, where he had something to tell them. What Wagner had to say to them, was that he begged their particular attention in the second finale, among other things, which he should take exactly twice as fast as his colleague Reissiger; the singers were prepared for it, and he was confident that so excellent a band would make a success of this entirely different rendering even without a rehearsal. Inspired by Wagner's incomparably poetic understanding of Mozart, this performance presented quite another physiognomy to that of its predecessors; the audience shewed its appreciation, and grew more alert with every number; but when it came to the said finale, which had made no particular effect before, a perfect storm of applause was unchained . . . From that evening Reissiger's health grew more reliable, so that Wagner had no further occasion to take over an opera belonging to his colleague.*

About the middle of May, a few days before his one-and-thirtieth birthday, Wagner had the pleasure of welcoming to Dresden his brother Albert, with his daughter Johanna. His niece, whom he last had seen as a mere child, had come for a "guest" engagement at the Opera, and he was delighted to observe how she had developed into a beautiful damsel of sweet seventeen, tall and slender, with a fine voice and marked dramatic talent. Her main vocal register was mezzo-soprano, with a full high compass when put to it, and promising still greater flexibility under her father's careful tuition. She had first trod the boards at Ballenstedt as "Abigail" in Scribe's *Verre d'eau* (Germ. *Glas Wasser*), but after a successful appearance as "Catarina Cornaro" in Halévy's *Reine de Chypre* (Germ. *Königin von Cypern*), had relinquished Play for Opera, as a member of

* From "Denkwürdigkeiten eines verstorbenen Dresdener Musikers" in the *Allg. D. Musikzeitung* 1884, p. 371. In the interests of poor Reissiger, who does not cut an enviable figure in the story, Prof. Fürstenau of Dresden lodged a well-meant protest, which, however, convinced nobody. On the contrary, it led to the editor's repeating his asseveration that personal knowledge of the thoroughly trustworthy character of the narrator absolutely excluded any suspicion of his having either invented the tale or embellished the truth with frivolous additions" (*ibid.* pp. 387 and 397).

the Ducal company at Bernburg. "Never have I heard a finer voice," writes Wagner soon thereafter; "but what delights me most, is the feeling, the warmth and dramatic tact, that already distinguish her efforts. Lucky for her, that she is able to hear and see the *Devrient* here, to mould herself to her good qualities.' Her earliest opportunity of doing so was offered by this great artist's resumption of her old part of Adriano in *Rienzi*, on the eve of Wagner's birthday. Two days later, Thursday the 23rd, the Dresden playbills announced "Fräulein Wagner vom Herzogl. Hoftheater zu Bernburg, als Gast" in the rôle of Irma, for a performance of Auber's *Macon* (Germ. *Maurer und Schlosser*). Another two days later came her appearance as Agathe in *Freischütz*, immediately followed by her engagement,* on her uncle's recommendation. "When I secured her for this theatre," Wagner writes to Spohr on March 4, 1845, "it was purely out of regard for our Opera, not in the least from any spirit of nepotism. I was really glad to have found a young talent at last such as unfortunately are very rare now, but are needed by German opera-composers." The sequel proved his foresight; for his eye had been quick to recognise in her his future "Elisabeth." June the first she made her *début* proper, as Irma again, and on Sunday, June 9, appeared as Donna Elvira in a performance of *Don Juan* conducted by her uncle.†

* June 1, 1844, simultaneously with that of Eduard Devrient as actor and "Oberregisseur" (stage-manager in chief). Johanna Wagner's engagement was at first for no more than nine months, terminating March 1, 1845; then it was definitely prolonged.

† Contrary to his former tactics, great Schladebach this time declared himself in complete agreement with Wagner's reading of Mozart's tempi. How little store was to be set by this seeming conversion, however, is shewn by his criticism of the sixth performance of the *Entführung* (Friday, June 14,—the *second* under Wagner): "Herr Kapellmeister Wagner now made up for all the serious blemishes on the earlier performance, as also on that of *Titus* under the same conductor, thus affording honourable evidence that he both will and can abjure a momentary aberration." It may amuse the reader to learn that this sixth performance (in which a Frau Hasselt-Barth took part as guest) was a thoroughly tame one, owing to general prostration caused by the summer heat, and even Wagner's energy was unequal to putting any life into it. As to the "momentary aberration," we may interpret that in the light of the "perfect storm of applause" which had greeted the finale of the second act at the *fifth* performance, when the audience was completely taken by surprise.

Towards the end of this month of June his efforts in the interest of Weber's re-interment had met with such success that the committee was able to deposit with its banker a sum sufficient to cover the expenses of transport and the preparation of a seemingly vault and tombstone, with a surplus toward erection of a statue later on. So Max Maria von Weber, elder of the two surviving sons, was sent to London to claim his father's coffin and escort it home.

As regards his personal comfort, Wagner was unable to follow the precedent of last summer and take a few weeks' holiday at Teplitz; the theatric season kept him busy right into the middle of August. On July 14 Weber's *Oberon*, which had lain idle for a longish time, was revived with Schröder-Devrient as "Rezia" and Tichatschek as "Adolar"; though the prices were raised, as usual on special occasions, the audience was a large one, and before the end of the month the work had been given six times, interrupted only by a performance of *Rienzi* on the 26th. Yet another event claims our record: the first performance of the *Faust*-overture on July 22, 1844, at one of the annual charity-concerts in the pavilion of the Grosser Garten. It is surprising how little real impression seems to have been made by this work on the Dresden public: a prey to the misunderstandings that have so often been attached to it in later days, specific situations from Goethe's *Faust* were arbitrarily read into it, despite its very definite motto. This matchless tone-poem, which van Santen-Kolff has justly termed a "psychological drama in tones,"* and von Bülow characterised as having its every note imprinted with a poet's blood, was foolishly dubbed "Berliozian programme-music": the taunts of Mephistopheles, Gretchen's atoning apparition, with other nonsense of the kind, already played antics in the ardent imagination of local critics. On the

* See "Der Faust-Ouverture Werden und Wachsen. Geschichtliches—Biographisches—Ästhetisches" (*Bayr. Blätter* 1894) by J. van Santen-Kolff, who pursues the work through its various phases, from exposition to catastrophe and epilogue, in a masterly review of this "most moving of musical tragedies." See also the exhaustive analysis, where the *Faust*-overture is triumphantly vindicated as a model of Form, in *Bülow's Ausgewählte Schriften* (Breitkopf und Härtel, 1896—reprinted from the *Neue Zeitschrift* of August 1856).

19th of August the overture was repeated at the same place, with no better fate.*

Between these two performances fell a simple little patriotic fête, to celebrate the return of King Friedrich August from his journey to England (—had he, too, gone to look for Weber's ashes? We fear not). For this the young master threw off a spirited hymn of greeting, "*Gruss seiner Treuen an Friedrich August den Geliebten*," in the simple lilt of which is prefigured

Sei uns ge-grüsst in Deiner Lie-ben Mit-te, an

Deiner Theuren Brust, &c.

the melody of the Arrival of the Guests in *Tannhäuser* (commonly called the "March"). Headed by Reissiger and Wagner early on the morning of August 12, over 200 singers and 106 instrumentalists proceeded to the beautiful gardens of the King's summer-palace at Pillnitz, to welcome back their monarch with the "fatherland-song composed by Wagner," contemporary reports adding that "the King expressed himself very appreciatively about this excellent piece of music."

At end of the month, having finally got through the endless proof-corrections of the pianoforte-editions of *Rienzi* and the

* As a curiosity we may refer to a contemporary notice in the *Berlin Figaro*, where some inspired idiot, after hearing this overture, recommends the composer to follow it up with an opera "to be based neither on Goethe's nor on Klingemann's *Faust*, but on the sombre old Gothic folk-saga with all its excrescences, in the manner of *Der Freischütz*." Cf. *Berl. Mus. Zeitung* No. 34 (Sept. 14, 1844).

Holländer,* their author was able to take refuge awhile in the quiet of one of the vine-clad slopes overhanging the Elbe, not far from the city. Here at last his new great work could thrive apace; the early part of every morning being devoted to the music of *Tannhäuser*. According to his nieces Johanna and Franziska, by the time his fellow-inmates had risen from their beds he had spent several hours on the work, which left him in such good spirits for their morning rambles over the hills and through the wooded valley that their few weeks on "Fischer's Weinberg" became an era never to forget. Of the mood in which he buckled to his work at *Tannhäuser* Wagner gives a highly characteristic account himself: remembering the profound impression his *Flying Dutchman* had made on *individuals*, in his artistic labours he henceforth lost the so-called Public more and more from view. "The estimation of particular persons replaced the never plainly-ascertainable opinion of the mass, which had hitherto floated before me as the object to which to address myself as poet. *Understanding* of my purpose became more clearly every day the chief thing to be aimed at; and to ensure myself that understanding I involuntarily turned no longer to the stranger mass, but to individual personages whose moods and ways of thought were known to me. This better-defined position, toward those whom I meant to address, henceforward exercised a very weighty influence on my artistic modelling. If the impulse to impart his aim *intelligibly* be the true constructive factor in the artist, its exercise will necessarily be governed by the character of those *by whom* he wishes that aim to be understood. If he picture them as an indefinite mass, whose tastes are never to be nicely gauged, and whose character is never to be truly understood *by him*—such as we find in our modern theatrical audience—in his efforts to expound his aim the artist must inevitably be driven to a hazy mode of treatment, nay, to a choice of subject suitable for none but such a general sketchiness. The defects resulting from such a position now grew apparent to my feeling, upon reviewing my earlier operas. As compared with the products of modern stage-art, to be sure, I recognised the more substantial contents of my

* *Rienzi* appeared the beginning of September, *Der fliegende Holländer* in October, "im Verlage der Kgl. Sächsischen Hofmusikalienhandlung von C. F. Meser in Dresden"; also the *overtures* and single vocal pieces from both works, simultaneously with the *Gruss seiner Treuen*.

own creations, but at like time the indefiniteness, often the indistinctness of the fashioning applied to those contents, which consequently lacked as yet that necessary sharply-chiselled Individuality. Now, by thenceforth addressing myself to the receptive powers of definite individuals, allied to me by community of feeling, I won alike the faculty of surer and distincter moulding. Without setting to work with any deliberate reflection, I gradually rid myself of the wonted mode of shaping in the gross; I sundered the surroundings from the subject, which before had often been entirely swamped by them; I raised it into bolder relief, and thus attained the power of condensing these surroundings themselves from their operative diffuseness into plastic shapes. It was thus that I worked away at my 'Tannhäuser'" (*P. I.* 327-8)—and no one who takes the trouble to compare this work with the *Holländer* can dispute the justice of the author's criticism.

It was only from time to time, that he had to break the present spell of creative work to attend to duties in town. Thus for the *twentieth* performance of *Rienzi*, given Sept. 20, 1844, to an overflowing house, with Tichatschek newly-returned from his "Rienzi" successes at Hamburg. In the audience were SPONTINI, on his way from Franzensbrunn to Berlin, MEYERBEER, and the Russian General Alexis LWOFF. The latter high-placed amateur—composer of the Russian national anthem still in use, and arranger of a version of Pergolese's *Stabat Mater* reviewed by Wagner in his days of Paris drudgery—had just had an opera *Bianca und Gualterio* accepted for the Royal Court-theatre.* The *Rienzi* performance, which had been made a gala event of, went off most brilliantly, and it was a peculiar satisfaction to the author that his ambiguous Paris "patron" should be witness with his own eyes and ears of the public's lasting enthusiasm for this work, after so many a repetition. After each of the five acts the singers were tumultuously called, and after the fourth the composer also. Meyerbeer, whom he had not seen for ever so long, and with whom he had ceased to correspond by letter, swore to him this time by all that is holy that he would have *Rienzi* set before the Berliners at the earliest opportunity. Of the *Flying*

* It actually came to production this same autumn (Oct. 13, 1844) under Reissiger, with Schröder-Devrient in the title-rôle, but flickered through two repetitions (Oct. 15 and Nov. 8) into unlamented death.

Dutchman, already shelved, there was no more question; in fact the young master had long regretted not having made his début in Berlin with the earlier work, which, fortune favouring, might then have paved the way for its successor. All's well that ends well, however; and he would appear to have taken Meyerbeer's excuses for sterling metal; for he presently writes: "I have no doubt of the honesty of his sentiments towards me; but the still-existing reason for the impossibility of a performance of my opera, the want of a heroic tenor, is enough to make me despair."

Wagner was not without visitors in his suburban retreat; among them his mysterious Berlin friend Carl Gaillard, whose personal acquaintance he now first made. Unfortunately, Gaillard did not come empty-handed; he at last revealed the dreadful fact that he was father to several tragedies, and left the manuscript of one of them, a "*Rienzi*" too, for Wagner's kind perusal. Nor was that all: for another offspring of his muse he was at that instant seeking a publisher,* and begged Wagner's mediation with his brother-in-law F. Brockhaus, also his personal advocacy of its acceptance and production at the Dresden theatre. However, Gaillard was really a good fellow, and his visit had been paid far less in his own than in Wagner's interest. His journal soon came out with an article describing it: † "The gifted poet-composer of *Rienzi* is of short and somewhat slender stature, with a true Napoleonic face and an agreeable winning exterior. Just now he is residing on a vine-slope with a charming view across the Elbe to the hills, an amiable wife by his side, and completing his *Tannhäuser* in these surroundings. At my request he has shewn me his new textbook, and I must avow that I know none more beautiful, or more in keeping with the true nature of Opera, which has been much deranged by the lucky flukes of clever Frenchmen. It is rich in truly poetic moments, and leaves me with the firm conviction that, had Wagner applied the powers of his amply-gifted mind to poetry pure and simple, he would have turned out something great in this department too. Little occasional asperities of form and expression, that

* "*Ottavio Galfagna, oder: die Rose von Santa Croce. Trauerspiel von Carl Gaillard,*" eventually published by Challier's of Berlin, i.e. his own musical dépôt.

† "Bericht eines Reisenden, der sich nur einen Tag in Dresden aufhielt," *Berliner musikalische Zeitung* No. 37, Oct. 5, 1844.

struck me in his poem here and there, though rarely, can very probably be yet planed down.”*

As Gaillard wished to spend the evening of this one day's holiday (or perhaps a second visit) at the Dresden theatre, † he made an appointment to meet again in town. Wagner was unable to keep it, however, and writes soon afterwards: “At 5 o'clock in the afternoon of the day in question I was in the act of saying adieu to my wife, to go direct to you on the Brühl'sche Terrasse, when a visitor arrived from Königsberg. From one quarter of an hour to another I believed I should get rid of him; the man however—no doubt, from a feeling of ancient friendship—took such possession not only of myself, but of my Weinberg abode, and finally my spare bedroom, that I had to give up all idea not only of you, but also of a sitting of the Weber Committee, who expected me at 8. That you should have postponed your departure from Dresden, as you give me to understand, expressly to have another chat with me at the appointed hour, has really quite distressed me.” Considering that this was addressed to an almost total stranger, it is another evidence of the master's constant kindness to the humblest aspirant to his friendship.

By the middle of October the composition of the second act of *Tannhäuser*, with its gigantic finale, was finished, save for the instrumentation. In the second half of the month we find

* How little ‘stuck up’ was Wagner in these matters, is proved by a remark he addressed to Gaillard soon afterwards: “I have filed away a little at the book, according to your advice; among other things, the ‘schwärzliche Gefieder’ in Wolfram's song on p. 40, has disappeared. The ‘Gott’ and ‘Spott,’ however, I have retained, as I do not see in this ‘Spott’ a mere obligato rhyme, but the most distinctive poetical word for the caricature of divine compassion by a stony-hearted priesthood” (June 5, 1845).

† He happened upon a performance of *Don Juan* conducted by Reissiger with the basso Günther from Riga as ‘guest.’ Günther is said to have made a capital “Holländer,” at Riga; in *Don Juan* at Dresden he had no success, and Schladebach politely calls him a gawk and a ranter. Apropos of this eminent critic, an old acquaintance of his, Carl Gaillard remarks in that “Bericht eines Reisenden” already quoted, “Dresden has but two newspapers of any standing: the admirably edited *Vaterlandsblätter*, which occupies itself exclusively with internal politics, and the *Abendzeitung*, which deals with art. Musikdirektor Schladebach has undertaken the musical criticisms in the latter, and his articles are distinguished by technical knowledge, but often also by animosity.”

its composer back in town and up to his eyes in official work ; by Oct. 31 there had been given *Der Freischütz*, *Oberon* and *Euryanthe*, intersected by two consecutive performances of *Rienzi*. Meanwhile the ship originally intended to convey Weber's ashes direct to Dresden had arrived at Hamburg, on the 25th. At the very moment that a solemn ceremony was being prepared to greet the arrival of the master's remains at that stage of their journey, his younger son Alexander, already shewing great promise as a painter, was suddenly snatched from life ere full completion of his twentieth year. The widowed mother was so terribly prostrated by this latest blow that, as Wagner tells us, she interpreted it as the voice of Heaven indignant at the vanity of wishing to disturb a dead man's bones. "As the public was exhibiting symptoms of a like belief," he continues, "I held it my especial duty to place this side of our endeavour in its proper light, and succeeded so far that, after my vindication, not a word of that was heard again." In a note of Nov. 3 he begs the chairman of the committee, Director Schulz, to hasten forward the text he had promised him for composition : "I have laid all other work aside, and am sorrowfully waiting to be able to begin this instant task." It would appear, however, that Schulz' verses either arrived too late, or proved unsuitable ; for in the end Wagner himself wrote the words for the hymn to be sung by the grave-side. An untimely frost, however, delayed the progress of the ship ; at Wittenberg it remained ice-bound. The reception of a living master intervened.

For the autumn of 1844 a careful revival of the *Vestalin* had been decided on, the only regret being that Spontini was unable to prolong his flying visit (p. 75) so as to be present. The diplomatic compliment paid by the Saxon Court to General Lwoff, in mounting his feeble opera, had thrown the scheme a little out. Nevertheless, as one might reckon on a really excellent reproduction of Spontini's work at a theatre which numbered the Schröder-Devrient once more among its artists, Wagner urged the Dresden Intendant to invite the aged master to come over and direct his work in person, as a small solatium for the great indignities he had recently suffered in Berlin—on which city he now was turning his back for ever, to go to Paris. Chorus-master Fischer, Wagner's good old friend, enthusiastically

backed him up ; and Wagner, who had been entrusted with the conduct of this opera, received special permission to open negotiations with the maëstro. The majestic answer, however, contained such exorbitant requirements for the choruses and ballets, the size of the orchestra ("le tout garni de douze bonnes contre-basses") etc., that Wagner at once rushed off to von Lüttichau, to prepare him for breakers ahead. The Intendant was horrified ; some means must be devised for cancelling the invitation. Frau Schröder-Devrient, who knew Spontini's little ways, laughed like a goblin at her comrades' imprudence, but came to the rescue ; as Spontini had averred that he was most impatiently awaited in Paris, they must say she was suddenly taken ill, necessitating a postponement of the performance until after the date he had fixed for departure. So Wagner had to spin a harmless web to trap the maëstro into not accepting. Everybody breathed again ; the danger they had rashly risked seemed done with. Rehearsals went comfortably on—until the day before the dress one ; when, to Wagner's alarm, a carriage drew up before his house in the Ostra-Allee. A stately old gentleman, dressed in a long blue travelling-coat of frieze, flew up the steps into Wagner's study, without so much as waiting to be announced. Spontini, great heavens ! Forgetting his habitual dignity of a Spanish grandee, he flourished their correspondence in Wagner's face, and insisted that nothing had been farther from his meaning, than to decline the proffered invitation. His energy and eagerness quite took the younger man by storm ; in his joy at the prospect of hearing the grand old gentleman conduct his masterpiece, Wagner forgot all looming inconveniences, and warmly undertook to do his best to see the matter through.

It was no small task, however ; for the visitor's demands were of the most extensive, from things of weight to bagatelles. On one point he laid especial stress : he *must* be provided with a baton after his own heart ; his particular fancy being a long stout stick of ebony, with a big knob of ivory at either end, since he grasped his baton in the middle as a marshal's staff. That was a small matter : the grand disclosure proved that Spontini hadn't the remotest intention of regarding the rehearsals as practically finished. Everything was to begin over again. Not that Wagner had much objection to such a course, as it would

wake up the authorities alike and the company; only, it very much upset the others. But things soon got in train. Eduard Devrient, who had been stage-manager at Berlin for a number of years, knew perfectly how Spontini liked his supers drilled, and the sort of cheerful scene with rose-crowned priestesses that he insisted on as a grand finale, instead of the usual German termination at the great duet of Licinius and Julia. As for the chief singers, Tichatschek and Schröder-Devrient, the maëstro held their rank in too high honour to interfere with *them*, save in one or two trifling details; but the minor soloists and chorus had many a lecture to endure, and the supers to perform their evolutions with military precision. For the orchestra, he demanded and eventually obtained an entire re-arrangement of the seating—already partially reformed by Wagner (see p. 67); and in this respect his visit was of permanent benefit, as Wagner had only to rectify a few personal fads, after the old gentleman's departure, to obtain a most effective disposition. Apropos of the band, Wagner asked why he had omitted trombones from the Triumphal March in the first act, of all places, and received the characteristic answer, "Est-ce que je n'y ai pas de trombones?" together with a request that he would introduce them into the score at once, and get the parts written out for the next rehearsal. But the most exquisite touch of all, was the wily way in which he broached another proposal: "J'ai entendu dans votre 'Rienzi' un instrument, que vous appelez 'Bass-tuba'; *je ne veux pas bannir* cet instrument de l'orchestre: faites m'en une partie pour la Vestale." And so the fine old man preserved his dignity throughout, exercising a magnetic influence on all concerned.

At last came the evening of performance, Friday the 29th of November. The public had willingly paid double prices for the curiosity of seeing Spontini conduct; but, although the opera was given with wonderful fire and precision, on the whole, the Devrient somewhat spoilt her part through injudicious rivalry with her junior, Johanna Wagner, who played the rôle of the High Priestess; and the general style of the work being rather out of date, the reception accorded to the maëstro, when he appeared before the curtain laden with orders, was painfully cold—much to Wagner's distress. Nor were matters improved by a repetition on the following Sunday, Dec. 1.

To put a better face on the affair, Spontini offered his services for yet another repetition, to be given that day week ; an extension of his visit affording many an opportunity for familiar intercourse. Thus Schröder-Devrient gave an informal little dinner-party on the Wednesday, inviting some of her fellow-artists to meet the master and his wife (a daughter of the famous pianoforte-maker, Sebastian Erard), who invariably accompanied him on his travels. After dinner the old gentleman waxed talkative and declared that he had conceived a special fondness for Wagner, and would prove it by saving him from the misfortune of continuing his career of dramatic composer ; a rescue apparently to be accomplished by the deterrent effect of a six-months' course of Spontinian reproductions at Dresden—which he unblushingly suggested. “Quand j'ai entendu votre *Rienzi*,” he said, “j'ai dit, c'est un homme de génie, mais déjà il a plus fait qu'il ne peut faire.” Why ! he, Spontini himself, could not transcend his operas ; how, then, could anybody else expect to ? Wagner mildly insinuated that, perhaps, if a dramatic text of some new poetic import were laid before him, even Spontini might derive a stimulus to further musical invention. The grand old autocrat replied : “Dans la *Vestale* j'ai composé un sujet romain, dans *Fernand Cortez* un sujet espagnol-mexicain, dans *Olympie* un sujet grec-macédonien, enfin dans *Agnès de Hohenstaufen* un sujet allemand : tout le reste ne vaut rien.” Having thus worked himself into a communicative vein, he proceeded to divulge his opinion of the people at Berlin : “Oh, croyez moi, il y avait de l'espoir pour l'Allemagne lorsque j'étais empereur de la musique à Berlin ; mais depuis que le roi de Prusse a livré sa musique au désordre occasioné par les deux juifs errants qu'il a attirés, tout espoir est perdu.” As the hostess feared the consequences of allowing her chief visitor to excite himself much farther in this way, she proposed to one of her other guests to inveigle him to the theatre, close by, where a performance of *Antigone* was then taking place : she was sure he would be interested in Semper's antique stage-effects ; Spontini felt sure he would not, but politely consented to go. He came back pretty sharp, though, and his companion passed the word round that the impenitent old ruffian had scarcely entered the dim and almost empty omnibus-box in the amphitheatre than he turned to him at the beginning of the *Bacchus-chorus*, with “C'est de la Berliner

Sing-Académie ; allons-nous en” : a ray of light fell through the open door on a figure ensconced behind a pillar, unnoticed before—it was Mendelssohn himself (who had left Berlin Nov. 30).

Nobody but Spontini being very anxious for a third performance of the *Vestale*, the management commissioned Wagner to acquaint the maëstro that a considerable postponement was proposed. A rather delicate task, for which Wagner begged the assistance of his friend and colleague Roeckel, whose French was much more fluent than his own. Instead of the expected storm, however, they found the old gentleman in the most obliging humour: he had just been granted by the Pope the title of “Count of San Andrea” in virtue of certain property in the States of the Church, and the narrow round of Dresden functions had suddenly become too small to hold him—from that time forth he never signed a letter but with his full new title, nor sealed it without his papal coat of arms. Wagner blessed the Pope with all his heart, and took affectionate leave of this strange old master, in whom he recognised at least the virtue of belief in himself and his art, though that belief had now degenerated to a ghostly superstition: “What had driven him to so immoderate a self-appraisal, namely comparison with those art-magnates who had ousted him, could only serve to justify him in my eyes when I drew it myself; for, in his contempt of those magnates I felt more intimately allied to him than I cared at that time to confess aloud.”*

Almost immediately after Spontini's departure, came the accomplishment of the long-frustrated transference of Weber's ashes to his native soil; a solemn and affecting event, a relief after the distractions of the past few weeks, and an incentive to the mood required for finishing the music of *Tannhäuser*. The committee had at last resolved to wait no more for the belated ship, but have the coffin brought by rail, and on the evening of December 14 it was ceremoniously received at the station. Max von Weber, in his biography of his father, describes the imposing procession of pall-bearers and mourners, friends and singers: amid a sea of torches, to the strains of a Funeral March compiled by Wagner of motives from *Euryanthe*, and accompanied by a swarming multitude, the coffin was borne to the little burial

* P. III. 125-43, of which the above account is an abridgement.

chapel of the Catholic graveyard in the Friedrichstadt, where it was silently welcomed by Schröder-Devrient with a wreath, and left till the morrow. The March had been orchestrated by Wagner for eighty picked wind-instruments; to ensure its perfect execution en route, he had had the stage of the theatre entirely cleared for its rehearsals, making the musicians march round him as they played.

The day following, Sunday the 15th of December 1844, the coffin was lowered into its vault in presence of the greater part of Dresden's population. Director Schulz, as chairman of the committee, delivered an oration in which he lauded Weber as a *Folk's* composer in the noblest sense of the term. Then followed Wagner's simple, heartfelt speech, one of the most beautiful passages in all German literature: "Here rest thee then! Here be the unassuming spot that holds for us thy dear-loved relics! . . . Where'er thy genius bore thee, to whatever distant lands, it stayed forever linked by thousand tendrils to the German people's heart; that heart with which it wept and laughed, a child believing in the tales and legends of its country. . . . And lo! the Briton may yield thee justice, the Frenchman [admiration; but the German alone can *love* thee. His thou art; a beauteous day amid his life, a warm drop of his own blood, a morsel of his heart—and who shall blame us if we wished thine ashes, too, should mingle with his earth, should form a portion of dear German soil?" (*P.* VII. 235-7). Quite at the beginning of his speech, which he had carefully prepared and learnt by rote—contrary to his subsequent custom—, Wagner had a strange experience: Carried away by the emotions of the scene, he was spell-bound by the tones of his own voice, and for some moments paused in eager expectation of what he was next to hear, as though it were not *he* that was the speaker; so far had he 'detached' himself. But the momentary trance soon passed, and his eloquence made a profound effect on all present, even von Lüttichau declaring himself convinced at last of the rightness of the undertaking.—The ceremony concluded with a chant composed and written by Wagner for male voices, very difficult, but admirably rendered by the best singers from the theatre.

"The whole issue of my labours," he says, "was comforting to my inmost heart; and had anything been lacking to it, the sincerest thanks of Weber's widow, whom I visited on my return

from the cemetery, contributed to scatter every cloud. For me it had a deep significance, that I whom Weber's living presence had won so passionately for music in my earliest childhood, and who had later been so sorely stricken by the tidings of his death, in man's estate should have entered as if into immediate personal contact with him through this second burial. From the upshot of my intercourse with living composers, and the experiences I made of them, one may judge at what a fount my yearning for familiar commune with the Masters had to brace itself. It was not consoling, to look from Weber's grave towards his living followers; yet the hopelessness of that outlook was only in time to come to my full consciousness" (*P.* VII. 234).

With the end of 1844 came the termination of Tichatschek's first seven-years contract with the Dresden opera, and Wagner never forgot how Lüttichau demurred about entering on a fresh one for another ten. Years afterwards he reminds his old friend of what Roeckel then had said: "So long as Tichatschek lives, he'll keep his voice; that's how he's built"—and certainly this splendid tenor was singing at the same Court-theatre a quarter of a century later. With him and Anton Mitterwurzer the master was already conferring about their share in the representation of his latest work, the last act of which he finished composing December 29. There was still the lengthy task of instrumenting, all three acts, to be gone through; but he had commenced betimes to sound the management as to a proper inscenation. The authorities appear to have entertained great hopes of this work, and proved their confidence by agreeing to substantial pecuniary risks; the necessary decorations were ordered of no less a firm than the scene-painters Desplechin & Co. of Paris, and nothing was to be spared for the other accessories.* As for the orchestration itself, that occupied the composer well into the coming Spring, amid various distractions.

On the first of January 1845, according to R. Prölss, "Gutzkow suddenly became an authority, the coming man," through the "unprecedented success" of his play *Das Urbild des Tartüffe*. Four days afterwards, fell—in a twofold sense—the first per-

* Nevertheless the cost of the Dresden production did not amount to more than seven to eight thousand thalers, not a fifth of the sum spent on *Tannhäuser* at Bayreuth in 1891.

formance of Marschner's *Adolf von Nassau*, in the presence of its composer ; who had journeyed expressly to hear it, and was made much of in Dresden art-circles. The initiative had come direct from Wagner, just as with the resurrection of *Hans Heiling* before : on the first news of Marschner's having completed a new work, he had insisted on Dresden's being the first to bring it out, thereby surprising the author not a little ; who, in view of the habitual coyness of German stages, would have "expected the Dresden theatre to tumble in, ere it formed a like resolve." But Wagner's disappointment was to the full as great as Marschner's surprise ; from the composer of the *Templer* and *Hans Heiling* he had looked for something better than a vapid Germanising of Donizetti.* Still clinging to a belief in the ability of many of his musical colleagues, to him it was the earliest sign of an irreparable downfall.

January 17, 1845, came a performance (only *once* repeated, Feb. 14) of Gluck's *Iphigenia in Tauris*, got up afresh by Reisinger, with Schröder-Devrient in the title-rôle. To Wagner it was characterised by his colleague's ineptitude in preluding it with the absolutely incongruous overture to *Iphigenia in Aulis*. For his own part, among other things he gave in February two repetitions of *Armide* ; in March, Winter's *Unterbrochenes Opferfest*, very favourably received, and ultimately attaining numerous repetitions ; † and at the Palm Sunday concert, on the 16th of that month, Haydn's *Creation*. *Rienzi* also was given twice during this same half year (Apr. 16 and May 25), with all the old enthusiasm in the audience ; but owing in part to the ominous suffocation of the *Dutchman* at Berlin, the latter work was not resumed at Dresden either. Yet the management would have consulted its own interest far better by reviving that unjustly neglected opera, than by mounting Ferdinand Hiller's *Traum in der Christnacht* : a stillborn product, given for the first time on Sunday the 6th of April under its pushing author's own control, but condemned at once for "measureless longwindedness" by audience and critics alike ; a second performance, on the 9th, found the house all but empty, whilst a third attempt on the

* See *Prose Works* V. 42.

† March 5, 9 ; June 4, 8 ; July 15 ; Sept. 7 ; Oct. 2 ; Nov. 29, and so on.

10th of May shipwrecked on the impossibility of galvanising this opera into life by trimming its four acts into three.

It would be to misunderstand Wagner's lament about the "upshot of his intercourse with living composers, and the experiences he made of them," were we to confine its meaning to the peculiar attitude of the two Berlin General Music-Directors, instead of extending it to experiences such as he had recently made in quick succession with operas by Marschner and Hiller. At this period his "yearning for familiar commune with Masters" found one sole channel open to it: occasional correspondence with the sympathetic Ludwig Spohr. The elder master had just finished the score of his *Kreuzfahrer* and sent it to the Dresden theatre; the only thing Wagner regretted, was that his honoured friend should have thereby anticipated an invitation from the management itself, to which he already had represented the high desirability of such a step. From a letter to Spohr dated March the 4th, 1845,* we learn that this work was allotted to *Reissiger*, by right of seniority; to the astonishing fact that it *never* came to performance in Dresden, we shall have to return. For the moment we are merely concerned with the lively regret expressed by Wagner at not having been able as yet to examine the score, "since the present distribution of our functions has quite overwhelmed me with business, at the very time I should so like to be absolutely free to complete the instrumenting of my new opera. I must therefore defer this great pleasure—if such a word be not too trivial!—until after Easter, when I can devote a few evenings to it in peace."

Such were the main external circumstances—to say nothing of "constant victimage to a feeble stomach"—in which the instrumentation of *Tannhäuser* was accomplished: the last page of the autograph score bears the author's name with the date, "Dresden, 13. April 1845." As he says in his *Communication*, "My whole being had been so consumed with ardour for my task, that the nearer I approached its completion the more I was haunted by the notion that a sudden death would stay my hand; so that when at last I wrote its closing chord, I felt as joyful as if I had escaped some mortal danger." In a letter already-cited,†

* Now in the possession of M. Alfred Bovet of Valentigney.

† Of June 5, 1845; the full text will be found in *The Meister* 1895, pages 119-25.

he tells Gaillard some seven weeks later, "I have become so much of an egoist as to employ the few free minutes left me in the day on lonely walks, i.e. on consultations with myself. Indeed I have now arrived at a crisis in which I am unable to lift myself, as yet, far out of myself! After one lucky stroke, which swiftly won me notoriety and an appointment, of a sudden my angel of luck lets its wings drop; since my first appearance in Dresden, it has not again been possible to take one forward step. I need a great, indeed the largest city of Germany, to fortify my Dresden success. Yet Berlin seems destined for its weakening."* Nevertheless, the King of Prussia attended the twenty-fifth performance of *Rienzi* at Dresden (end of May) and "shewed surprising interest in it"—a fact, of course, kept dark by the papers; so Wagner sends a copy of the score of *Tannhäuser* at the earliest moment to the Berlin Intendant, with the request that, should *Rienzi* still be found impossible there, this new work may be mounted in its stead. Fallacious hope! There were other interests to be studied at the Berlin theatre, than those of the King—or of Wagner.

We have just said that, so early as this, Wagner sent off a copy of the score. That needs two words of explanation. Though his finances were already beginning to feel the pinch of having published pianoforte editions of *Rienzi* and the *Dutchman*, he was still so confident of the future of his works as to arrange in advance for publication of the full score of *Tannhäuser* at his own expense, to be ready for any amount of German stages crying out for it. Unwarrantable extravagance!—no doubt, was the comment of all the parochials who heard about it at the time; for that has been their constant exclamation *almost* to the present day. But Wagner was positive of the durability of this work of his; so he wrote his score in such a manner that a hundred copies could be taken direct from the manuscript, pre-

* The fatal deadlock in the circulation of his works had long set in; for the inscenation of *Rienzi* at Königsberg early in March, after endless delays, can scarcely be reckoned to the contrary. The larger theatres all sent him back his works, not always politely declined, and often with their packages unbroken. Thus at the opening of this very year he had received the score of *Rienzi* from the Coburg theatre—where Tichatschek was booked to 'star' in the coming summer—with the remark, that its forces were unequal to casting this "monstrous opera."

sumably by some sort of lithographic process.* A fair number of these copies he presented to friends, or acquaintances in whom he might assume a certain interest in his latest product: Spohr would probably have been the first to receive one; Schumann certainly had one, with the inscription "An Robert Schumann zum Andenken von Richard Wagner," but how soon we cannot say—how little he valued the gift, may be judged from his correspondence of this period (see pp. 110-2 *infra*). The faithful Gaillard received one almost immediately: "Herewith I make you a present of my 'Tannhäuser,' as large as life, a German from top to toe. May he be able to win me the hearts of my German fellow-countrymen in larger measure than my earlier works as yet have done! This work *must* be good, or there is no good in me." Lest Gaillard should think it was sent him for sake of advertisement, Wagner significantly adds: "I send you the score *for no other purpose* than a friendly acquaintance with my work, and beg you to shew it for the present to none but your very closest friends. After the first performance of the opera at Dresden—in September of this year—the score itself will be issued through the book-trade; till then I wish it to be withheld from publicity. In this connection I also beg you, for the love of God, to regard nothing in this letter as matter for journalistic comment; nowadays there's such an excessive amount of *puffing*, and I am so fully convinced that almost all the newspaper articles in favour of so-and-so are inspired by the parties most concerned, that I have an absolute horror of every mention of myself that sports this colour."

* See Letter 30 to Uhlig (summer of 1851) for fuller information as to these autograph scores.

IV.

PRODUCTION OF "TANNHÄUSER.

"German Opera." — *Marienbad*: Die Meistersinger and Lohengrin sketched out.—"Papo" protests against student Hanslick.—Rehearsals and first night of Tannhäuser; disappointment of the public.—Hiller and Schumann.—Semper and the Dresden circle of plastic artists.—The Lohengrin poem read at the Angel's Club; critical objections.—Tannhäuser overture at the Gewandhaus.

An artwork can be said to exist, only when it comes to appearance: for the Drama that moment is its presentation on the stage.

RICHARD WAGNER.

ONE characteristic feature of Wagner's Dresden Kapellmeistership is the pains he took to promote the cause of contemporary "German Opera," or rather of what styled itself by that name. Not yet had he arrived at discovering that, as a *class of art*, the thing did not exist; that what he felt within his breast had little in common with the aims of his compeers; and that, when once it came to full eclosion, it would neither be "Opera" nor narrowly "German," but a new form of Drama and "something universal for the world." For the present he is simply hammering away at a reform of German Opera as such, and a "Court-theatre" appears to him a handy implement enough, if it will only keep faith with its national mission, and not shew favouritism to such works as *Lucrezia Borgia*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and—to crown it all—that *Favorite* to which he had been accurst in Paris. So he still feels *himself* a "German opera-composer," one of a family of like endeavour, whom he coaxes on to emulation from time to time. Thus he considers it a point of honour that Dresden, where his tent is pitched, shall be the first to mount an opera of

Marschner's or of Spohr's. And thus, with his own new work but just completed, and the matter for a *Lohengrin* fermenting in his brain, we find him toiling through a score sent in by a certain Otto Claudius, *Der Gang nach dem Eisenhammer*, as lovingly as if it were his own. Unfortunately, this opera had a lamentably weak libretto that gave no chance to the merits of its music, which latter Wagner characterises, in the kindest of letters to the composer, as follows: "Certain numbers, such as the introduction to Act I. and the scene before the foundry, I rate higher than whole operas and oratorios of nowadays; both in conception and execution they bear the stamp of the noblest romanticism," etc. He goes on at great length, covering several quarto sheets of paper, to sketch a detailed plan of how the opera "may be transformed from its present condition into a more concentrated, i.e. more telling musical *drama*." Certainly the consideration of operas sent in for acceptance was a regular part of the duties of a Royal Kapellmeister; but such friendly and meticulous advice to a comparative stranger* would be somewhat hard to parallel, and affords another proof how little jealous is true genius.—That was the morning's work of June 29, 1845; in the evening, owing to Reissiger's absence, the writer had to conduct the first Dresden performance of Donizetti's hated *Favorite!*

That was the last sop to Cerberus for the present. Immediately afterwards he went to Marienbad on leave of absence, to recuperate, with his wife and the two domestic pets—clever little dog "Peps," and the parrot "Papo" (a present to his wife, but more particularly attached to him, and master of quite a number of his melodies). His programme for the next twelve months, according to that letter to Gaillard much-quoted in our last

* Otto Claudius, born 1793, was a humble Cantor and musical conductor at Naumburg, where he died in 1877. Wagner's addressing him as "Verehrtester Freund" points to some slight previous acquaintance, which can only have occurred during the master's phase of Magdeburg conductor, perhaps on that visit to Laube at Kösen (see vol. i. 198). In a letter written many years thereafter, namely Feb. 12, 1869, Wagner reiterates his opinion: "If a theatre after my own heart stood under my control, I would at once bring off a performance of your opera, for sake of its music." Seven years after Claudius' death his opera was performed at Naumburg and Halle (1884), and in 1887 at Weimar: to judge by the existing textbook, Wagner's suggestions for its improvement had been carried out. (See W. Tappert's "Richard Wagner und Otto Claudius," *Allg. Mus. Ztg.* 1887, p. 194.)

chapter, was to "dawdle and devour his library, without turning anything out." To which he adds the typical remark, "I'm already very much taken with a new subject. But I'll keep myself from it by force, firstly because I should like to learn a good deal more first, and secondly because I have grown convinced that, if a dramatic work is to have concentrated meaning and originality, it must be the outcome of a certain higher step in life, a certain weighty period in the artist's evolution; and that does not come round with each six months."—At Marienbad he took a modest lodging in the upper storey of a two-floored house yclept "Zum Kleeblatt," where he devoted some five weeks from July 3 to humouring his health as well as his unresting brain would let him.* That "Trefoil" must have been a veritable four-leaved shamrock; for, despite all resolutions to the contrary, it housed the germs of *two* new works, unequalled in their present popularity. Let their author tell us how this came to pass:—

"Here, as whenever I could withdraw from the footlights and my 'duties' in their murky atmosphere, I soon felt light of heart and gay; and for the first time in my life † the strain of gaiety inherent in my nature took visible shape in an artistic draft. Of late I had resolved to write a *comic* opera so soon as I could set about it, and I remember that this determination had been assisted by the well-meant advice of certain good friends who believed that a work of 'lighter genre' would open me the doors of German theatres, and thus effect a salutary change in my outward circumstances, which had certainly begun to wear a threatening aspect in the obstinate default of such success. Just as a merry Satyr-play was wont to follow the Tragedy at Athens, so upon that pleasure-trip there suddenly occurred to me the vision of a comic piece that well might serve as pendant to my 'Minstrels' Contest' [i.e. *Tannhäuser*]. It was *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, with Hans Sachs at their head. Hans Sachs I took as representant of the art-productive spirit of the Folk, and

* See Alois John's *Richard Wagner in den deutsch-böhmischen Bädern* (Teplitz 1890). In 1889 the little house "Zum Kleeblatt" was adorned with a memorial tablet.

† Not quite; for he had already told us of his textbook for a *Bärenfamilie* (see vol. i. 238): perhaps, though, he would scarcely call *that* an "artistic" draft.

set him in contrast to the petty-fogging bombast of the other Mastersingers; to whose ridiculous pedantry of *tabulatur* and prosody I gave concrete expression in the figure of the 'Marker.'* . . . But scarcely had I jotted down my sketch, than peace forsook me till I had drafted the far more detailed plan of *Lohengrin*, despite the doctor's warnings against my engaging in any such occupation. There is something peculiar in the fact that, at the very time I made that refreshing little excursion into the realms of mirth, I was driven back so quickly to this earnest yearning mood. . . . My whole nature reacted at once against the incomplete attempt to vent my mirth in irony; and now [1851] I can but consider the attempt itself as the last expression of that craving for enjoyment which fain would reconcile itself with an entourage of triviality, from which I already had wrenched myself in *Tannhäuser*. On the other hand the peculiarity of the 'Lohengrin' subject itself makes plain to me why it was *it*, of all others, that so enthralled me; so that at the time of completing my *Tannhäuser* this myth of 'Lohengrin,' in its simpler traits as a genuine poem of the Folk, a noble picture of man's yearning and longing, became to me a dominating need, an influence quelling every effort to escape from its despotic sway" (condensed from *Prose Works* I. 328-33).

Among Wagner's personal encounters at Marienbad there was none of particular moment. Beyond his conscientious physician Dr Schneider, to whom he sends his thanks from Dresden afterwards, we hear of a Prince Lubomirsky who brings him news of Spohr, also Theodor Krüttner conductor of the local band, as to whose compositions he is said to have expressed himself favourably, and to whom, after repeated petitions, he sends a corrected score of *Rienzi* next year.† A letter of Spohr's invited Wagner to visit him at neighbouring Carlsbad, and thus effect his bodily acquaintance at last; but the doctor's orders were so

* For the original sketch, dated "Marienbad, July 16, 1845," see Appendix.

† With a letter dated Feb. 16, 1846. After Krüttner's death this score passed into the possession of the Eger museum, and is now the property of the Wagner-Museum at Eisenach (see Oesterlein's catalogue, IV., No. 9526). The corrections, in Wagner's own hand, consist of some thousands of marks of expression, musical notes, text-words and scenic directions, written in with red ink; unfortunately the first act and a few pages of the third and fourth are missing.

emphatic against any interruption of his present cure, that Wagner was obliged to abandon the hastily projected outing. In his reply of July 16 (the same date as the *Meistersinger* draft) he informs Spohr of the compulsory reason for declining, namely that a determination of blood to the brain, brought on by his exertions of the past season, has not yet left him, but he hopes to greet the honoured master in person at Dresden in course of the autumn, at the first performance of the *Kreuzfahrer*.

We have said that Wagner had no encounter of any particular moment, at Marienbad; perhaps we ought to except his meeting with a young man destined to become his bitterest journalistic enemy not many years later. At the Kurhaus table d'hôte there moved up to the seat next him—through a "happy chance"—a law-student from the Vienna University, Eduard HANSLICK by name, aged barely twenty, who introduced himself as a devotee of music and enthusiastic admirer of *Rienzi* and the *Dutchman*, which he had studied at the pianoforte at home in Prague. Wagner made him acquainted with his brother-in-law F. Brockhaus, who also was mending his health at the baths, and further granted him permission to call upon himself. The student lost no time in availing himself of the latter, and, in his own words, was honoured with "a graciously communicative reception." Unfortunately, however, he had not as yet commenced his journalistic career, and would appear to have been the merest novice in the art of 'interviewing'; for the "communications" he records are of the very baldest—nor even accurate, at that. Perhaps we must blame Papo for young Hanslick's meagre harvest: that prescient bird seems to have kept on screeching with all its might whenever the conversation made the smallest approach to a confidence, and thus has robbed us of the right half of the poor little story. "How can you stand that noise?" exclaimed the startled youth at last—as he puts it, long afterwards: "Oh! I'm used to it," laughed Wagner back, "it's a good little beast, and I take it with me everywhere. It *does* become too loud at times; but I'm compensated by having a wife who doesn't play the piano." At this moment Minna enters the room—how could she help it, after such a cue?—but leaves it instantly, giving the caller an opportunity of edging in a compliment upon her beauty, which Wagner parries with the showman-like remark: "Ah! she's scarcely recognisable now;

you ought to have seen her a few years back! The poor thing had to go through much trouble and want with me in Paris; without Meyerbeer's help we might have starved"—a tarradiddle at which the parrot must have screamed itself hoarse. The threadbare reminiscence ends as follows: "As Wagner was pleased at my interest in his operas, he animated me [*sic*] to come to Dresden for the first performance of his *Tannhäuser* in October; with which tempting invitation I could not comply until the following summer." Seeing that the production of *Tannhäuser* was then set down for the middle of *September*, this harmless little date upsets the apple-cart, since it proves that no record of the interview can have been made until some time after.

Of the last week of Wagner's stay at Marienbad we have a much more valuable memento, in the form of a letter addressed to Liszt at Bonn, August 5, in furtherance of the proposed monument to Weber at Dresden. Here Wagner speaks of himself as "a poor German opera-composer, who will have enough to do if he gets his works a little way across the frontiers of his province," and begs Liszt, with his far wider influence, to take the lead in the memorial affair. Nor was it the first or only step of the kind he had ventured, for in a letter to Benedict of May 19 of this year Mendelssohn refers to an appeal he had received from Wagner to institute a concert for the same purpose.

With the finished draft of the poem of *Lohengrin* in his bag, Wagner returned to Dresden the second week in August, to look after the preparations for staging his *Tannhäuser*. The following was to be the cast: "Tannhäuser," Tichatschek; "Wolfram," Anton Mitterwurzer; "Venus," Frau Schröder-Devrient; "Elisabeth," Johanna Wagner; "Landgraf Hermann," Wilh. Dettmer; "Walther von der Vogelweide," Schloss; "Biterolf," Wächter; "Heinrich der Schreiber," Curti; "Reimar von Zweter," Risse; the "Goatherd" (act i), Anna Thiele. A goodly company of singers, some of them of the very highest order; yet, if the *Holländer* itself had proved that something more than opera-singers was needed for the line the author had half-consciously struck, with *Tannhäuser* he had gone far beyond the limit of their tether. Though he still dubbed himself "a poor German opera-

composer," in this work he had already fashioned a consummate drama with quite original demands on Style, to which the merely well-trained "singer" could not conform without a thorough inner revolution. Take Tichatschek, whose voice he describes more than twenty years later as "a wonder of manly beauty," whose artist self, on another occasion, he calls "a veritable genius of rhythmic song," and who, moreover, was devoted to him hand and foot since ever his *Rienzi* came upon the scene. As Alexander Ritter tells us: "If he was not free from the usual little tenor-caprices at other times, when it concerned the master they vanished entirely. Then he was nothing but the self-oblivious and devoted friend. This came out quite touchingly in many a trifle: for instance, whenever the Pilgrims' Chorus in the third act of *Tannhäuser* began, he would be on the alert in his dressing-room for the least uncertainty of intonation, when he would rush among the choristers and sing at the top of his voice, tho' often scarcely finished dressing" (*Bayr. Bl.* 1892, p. 121). And yet this rhythmic genius, this wonder of a tenor, this model of a friend, was the very man to whose inadequacy for the title-rôle was largely due the Dresden public's misunderstanding of the work. "In spite of his voice," writes Wagner to Liszt in May 1852, "Tichatschek didn't bring out many points that have not proved beyond the reach of far less gifted singers. He has only brilliance or suavity in his voice, not one single true *accent of grief*." For his sake Wagner had to effect several cuts and minor omissions, still further increased after the first performance: "The first representative of *Tannhäuser*, unable as yet, in his capacity of highly-gifted singer, to grasp anything beyond the requirements of 'Opera'"—as Wagner relates in 1852—"could not succeed in fathoming a claim addressed more to his acting powers, than to his vocal talent" (*P.* III. 179).

Then we have the Schröder-Devrient. With her the case was somewhat different. So early as the Spring of 1844, when Wagner had first laid his poem before her upon her return to Dresden, she had shewn the greatest interest in the work as a whole, but declared repugnance to the rôle assigned her. Only out of personal attachment to the author did she finally consent to undertake the part of Venus, but with the remark that she didn't know what to make of it—unless she were to appear in fleshings from top to toe: "And that," she added with mock

seriousness, "you could scarcely expect of a woman like me."* The jest stood cover to a very solid reason: the miseries of her private life had made this rôle a peculiarly trying one for Schröder-Devrient. For all the assurances of contemporary admirers, that she was the only singer who could fitly have embodied the magical Frau Venus of German Saga, the master's verdict stands unshaken: "The exceptional demands of this rôle were doomed to non-fulfilment, because irreparable circumstances deprived her of the unembarrassment required by her task. . . . The very portion of the scene between Tannhäuser and Venus in act i, which failed at Dresden despite the efforts of one of our greatest female artists, succeeded perfectly at Weimar later, where Venus had a representative who certainly could not compare as artist with my Dresdener, but discharged her task with all due warmth and freedom from constraint" (*P.* III. 176-7). Consequently, after the first performance he had to 'cut' the second strophe of Tannhäuser's song and Venus's preceding plea.

Johanna Wagner, on the other hand, in all the freshness of her eighteen summers, was formed by nature for the maiden rôle of Elisabeth. Free as yet of mannerisms, she was carefully trained by her uncle for the ideal representative of this unique character—and such she remained. In one point alone did she fall short: owing to her inexperience, Wagner found himself compelled to omit a portion of Elisabeth's Prayer; though he subsequently had reason to believe that she could do justice to the whole, he never restored it at Dresden, for fear the public might be perplexed by the change.

Of the principal singers there remains but one undealt with, namely Anton Mitterwurzer. His "Wolfram" was flawless, and more than twenty years afterwards the master refers to that "mutual inspiration" which had enabled the splendid barytone to give the most refined expression to this highly sympathetic part.

For the rest, the insufficiencies aforesaid were not so palpable during rehearsal-time. Everything as yet was in process of generation; the author stood among his company a captain cheering them to hope and certainty of joint success. Even as

* A. v. Wolzogen's *Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient* p. 307, and Dorn's *Ergebnisse* p. 51. But the latter's assertion, that this artist's relations with Wagner became strained by reason of *Tannhäuser*, is untrue.

regards the Devrient's hesitance, he remembered something like it with *Rienzi*, when she had professed annoyance at her rôle of "Adriano" and dispirited him by being the very last to learn her notes: on the first night, however, had she not absolutely eclipsed herself, so that he could hardly believe his eyes or ears? So, aware though he must have been of present defects in the rendering, he felt he could count on the power inherent in his work itself, and the general good-will of the performers, to set everything right. It is with hopes such as these that he consoles himself in a letter of August 29, to his "dear fat friend" Kittl, for the endless postponements of his *Flying Dutchman* at Prague: "You are wrong to worry. How could you think I had so little knowledge of the ways of our theatrical directors and musicians, not to be prepared for the very sight of a score like my 'Dutchman's' so terrifying them that only in the rarest event could one expect them to have a wish to tackle it?"

The first performance of *Tannhäuser* was originally fixed for the middle of September; but a private letter dated Sept. 14 announces that, "through a delay on the part of the scene-painters," the date has been altered to about the 12th of October.* At last Messrs Desplechin et Cie fulfilled their contract, and the next step was to adapt their scenery to the actual Dresden stage and the special requirements of the author. The scene representing the Venusberg had to correspond exactly, in point of structure, to the scene of the Wartburg valley 'set' in readiness behind it; an artifice made easier by the jutting rocks and eminences appropriate to each. Greater difficulties were presented by the shrouding of the background with a rosy mist, half-way through the scene, so as to reduce the space to allow of the change being effected unobserved: a massive cloud-piece would have been much too prosaic a device, so careful trials were made with vaporous veils of painted gauze, let slowly sink one after the other with due regard to the musical tempo, until at last a rose-hued backcloth completed the illusion; after the scene in Venus' bower the reverse procedure was adopted, the stage being momentarily plunged in darkness, and the backcloth and veils swiftly raised. The scenery for the second act, the

* The name of the lady recipient is unknown; the letter is now in the possession of Prof. W. Jähns of Berlin.

Singers' Hall in the Wartburg, unfortunately was not delivered by the Paris firm in time for the *first* performance: the arrangement of its tiers of seats, in particular, Wagner strongly commends to the notice of other theatres thereafter. The scenic arrangements for the third act, however, proved disappointing: it had been supposed that, the locality being the same as in the latter half of act i, the same set-scene would do for both; but no ingenuity of lighting could turn a scene conceived for a Spring morning into an Autumn afternoon and night; so that the characters were deprived of the whole triste poetry of their surroundings. One minor point may be further noted, as it has a counterpart in *Lohengrin*: according to Dorn, who reports it from the mouth of Schröder-Devrient (*Erinnerungen* V. p. 51), the passing of Elisabeth was originally represented by a series of three diminishing figures, appearing in turn on the higher windings of the path after the actress herself has vanished among the foot-hills on the left.

As he was about to lead his audience off the beaten track, Wagner deemed prudent to preface the printed textbook with a note explanatory of the opening scene, or rather, introductory to the situation in which the first pair of characters are revealed:—

“The Old-German Holda, the kind and gracious goddess whose yearly progress through the land brought thrift and fruitfulness to field and meadow, upon the introduction of Christianity had to share the fate of Wodan and all the other gods; popular belief in their existence and wondrous powers being too deeply rooted to be entirely plucked out, their earlier benignant influence was now perverted to an evil one. Holda was banished to subterranean caverns, to the inner heart of mountains; her sallying forth became a signal for misfortunes, her retinue a match to the Wild Hunt. Though belief in her benign and vivifying sway still lingered with the lower classes, her very name was later changed to that of *Venus*, to which were linked all kinds of notions of a wicked witch-like being, seducing to grossly sensual pleasures. In Thuringia the interior of the Hørselberg, near Eisenach, was regarded as one of her principal seats; there was Frau Venus' court of revelry and lust; even from without one could often hear the whirling sounds of riotous music; but the maddening strains could lure only men in whose hearts already throve the seed of wild and sensual desire: enticed and led by the joyous-tempting sounds, they passed into the mount, they knew not how.—

Legend tells of a knight and minstrel Tannhäuser (mythically, according to later views even historically, identical with Heinrich von Ofterdingen of the Wartburg Contest), who came in this wise to the Venusberg, and remained a whole year at the court of Frau Venus."

As though this were not commentary enough, and just enough, with *Tannhäuser* commenced a sort of nondescript which now has passed all limits of endurance, that so-called "Wagner-literature" to which the pulingest amateur or sentimental school-miss considers it a duty to contribute. For the first time did the first appearance of a work of Wagner's call forth an elemental brochure, product of the Dresden Librarian, Hofrath Dr Grässe, with a dedication to "his dear friend the Royal Saxon Court-Kapellmeister Richard Wagner,"* whose acquaintance he would appear to have made during the victim's frequent visits to the Royal Library. Nor was this the only token that the approaching production was locally regarded as an event of no little importance, for we find a Dresden contributor to the Augsburg *Allgemeine* writing Oct. 18: "If the music but comes up to the subject, which has been treated by the clever author with fantasy and poetic intelligence, it cannot fail that the keen expectations generally entertained of this opera will end in a great satisfaction."

How hopefully Wagner himself was looking forward to this production, may be gathered from a letter of Oct. 14 to Gaillard, in which he invites him to come and attend it: "In no spirit of vanity, but from an entirely natural belief in the thing, I venture to assure you that it will be worth while to make a little extra effort to come to this performance. It's no ordinary affair; you'll see something new, in the completest possible presentment. My valued friend, you *must* come; besides your-

* "*Die Sage vom Ritter Tannhäuser*, as told by the Folk, compared with allied legends and critically explained by Dr J. G. Th. Grässe, with an appendix of old folk-songs concerning the Saga," Dresden and Leipzig 1846. In his preface dated "October 10, 1845," the author confesses to having been prompted to his erudite research by Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, "the high-poetic text whereof will certainly attract the attention of many to this legend once again." But the events of May 1849 cut short this dear friendship, and in the second edition of Grässe's work (1861) not only does the dedication vanish, but "the textbook of his noted opera" is curtly dismissed as "a canting travesty of the German folk-song with its magnificently high-poetic return of Tannhäuser to Frau Venus."

self I'm asking nobody. My house just now is so overrun by family connections pouring in of their own accord, that I unfortunately cannot offer you a room in my abode, as would have been a matter of course: but merely send a line to say you're coming, and you'll find a chamber ready for you in the 'Stadt Berlin.' If you're able to arrive by Saturday morning, you'll be in time for the dress-rehearsal too."

On Sunday the 19th of October, 1845, took place at last the first performance of *TANNHÄUSER*, in an overflowing house. The public had been most curious as to this new opera for some time past: rumours about the extraordinary preparations, the special increase of the orchestra (to 24 violins, 2 harps etc.), the unparalleledly sumptuous mounting—all this combined with proper local pride to attract an eager and expectant crowd, despite the raising of the prices for the first few nights. From Leipzig, undeterred by the nipping winds then prevalent in Saxony, streamed in a goodly number of spectators; from Berlin came Carl Gaillard, obedient to his invitation. Applause was loud and frequent. The weakest effect was that made by the Venusberg scene; the embarrassment of Schröder-Devrient chilled the audience, and tortured the composer. With the change of scene things improved; the septet was received with loud cheers, and authors and singers had to 'take a call' when the curtain fell. The second act, with its preponderance of cadenced forms, its "duet" for Tannhäuser and Elisabeth, its March, its Minstrels' Contest, and its grand catastrophe, did not hang fire, and again rang rousing calls for author and performers—in the future, too, this act remained the centre of attraction. But the patience of the public had already been tried by an excessive wait of five-and-twenty minutes between the first and second acts (probably due to the makeshift nature of the mounting of act ii), and its temper was not sweetened by another pause of fully half an hour, including the introductory music, before the curtain went up on the third. This third act, moreover, we must figure to ourselves in its earlier guise, where neither Venus nor the cortège with the dead body of Elisabeth was presented to view, but the two opposing principles were merely indicated by the glowing of the distant Hørselberg and the tolling of the death-bell from the Wartburg's height. It seemed monotonous, and tired a large proportion of the audience: "The work evaporates, rather than

ends," remarks even the kindly notice of the opera in the Augsburg *Allg. Ztg.*

Though many a point had been warmly appreciated, the author could not deceive himself as to the missed effect of the whole. "By its enthusiastic reception of *Rienzi*, its colder welcome of the *Holländer*, the public had plainly indicated what I must set before it, to make it happy. I completely gulled its expectations; it left the first performance of *Tannhäuser* in perplexity and discontent" (P. I. 336). What it had liked, were the sections in accepted form, the Song to Venus, the grand March, the Romance of Wolfram, the Pilgrims' Chorus — undoubtedly effective pieces, yet not exactly those on which the work's creator had laid most stress. Against the finest features, such as Tannhäuser's narration of his pilgrimage, arms were taken at once: a "recitative" of such extent, given to the principal singer at a crucial moment, was contrary to all precedent, and attributable, so people thought, to nothing but poverty of musical invention! "You are a genius, but you write us such queer stuff. One can scarcely sing it"—Schröder-Devrient is said to have complained when the performance was over. Even the tragic close proved a stone of offence; Spontini's "*Chantez, dansez!*" to which he had lately given effect at the winding up of his *Vestale*, was still the rule in Opera. Herr von Lüttichau, in fact, borrowing a leaf from Wagner's own book, reminded him that Weber had understood this sort of thing much better, and always given his operas a "happy ending." Nor need we wonder, seeing that a man of the mental calibre of Ambros inquires years thereafter what Wagner would have probably done with *Der Freischütz!* and ironically suggests that he would have made no bones about ending it, like *Lohengrin*, with a wail. The function of Art in general being to "cheer one up," that was quite peculiarly the task of Opera.* And it was as opera, not drama,

* It was reserved for a certain Eduard Duller, poet, and C. A. Mangold, composer, to treat this subject cheerfully, i.e. with a "happy ending": Tannhäuser and Innigis come on at the close as bride and bridegroom, the Venusberg caves in, while the distance shews Tannhäuser's castle and a "lovely landscape." And it is to this smug libretto that turncoat Grässe gives the preference, in point of "reason," to Wagner's "canting travesty" of the *Folkslied* (see p. 99 *antea*). The Mangold-Duller "*Tannhäuser*" was produced at Darmstadt May 17, 1846, amid "unanimous applause"; the

that *Tannhäuser* had made its first bow to the public. All its author's efforts to the contrary had proved in vain. He had taken the pains to have every reference to the purport of a situation, or the progress of the action, copied from the score into the vocal 'parts,' only to discover to his horror that they had all remained unheeded: "For example," he writes to Liszt (Sept. 8, 1850), "in the Minstrels' Contest my *Tannhäuser* shouted the Hymn to Venus straight at Elisabeth, addressing the words 'Whose fervid arms round *thee* have closed' to the chastest of virgins, before a whole assembly." That doubtless was the consequence of being allowed only *one* dress-rehearsal: the conductor's eyes could not be all over the stage, and he would have his hands full with keeping his bandsmen to the mark. But, as he proceeds, "What must be the inevitable result, in the circumstances? That the audience, to say the least, was confounded, and didn't know what to think. In truth, my Dresden experience came to this, that the public made acquaintance with the story of the opera only after a close study of the textbook, and thus by disregarding the actual performance it learnt to understand that performance through an effort of its own imagination."

Such were the inner and outer conditions, such was the issue of the first representation of *Tannhäuser*. The artist himself, as he tells us, felt completely isolated: the few intimate friends, who tried to console him, could shew their friendship in no more active form than that of expressing their sympathy. To make matters worse, in the third act Tichatschek had been seized with an attack of hoarseness, which obstinately clung to him day after day, till at last a week elapsed before the second performance, so essential for the removal of misunderstandings and correction of mistakes, could possibly take place. In the interval Wagner had to engage in the mournful occupation of adding fresh cuts to those already effected, and in particular—though it cut

Didaskalia purrs at the opera as "in every respect a product of sterling German art." But it soon dropped into oblivion, and no greater blunder could have been committed by a speculative resurrectionist, E. Pasqué, than to drag the poor thing to the glimpses of the moon again in 1892. Newspaper paragraphs flooded the world with tidings of the grand discovery of this "older *Tannhäuser*," as they were pleased improperly to call it; yet the revival at Darmstadt, under the title *Der treue Eckardt*, simply proved how little life the opera had ever had in it.

his heart-strings into the bargain—of striking out that important passage in the Adagio of the second finale, "Zum Heil den Sündigen zu führen" etc. Albeit at the zenith of his vocal powers, Tichatschek's dramatic talent was unequal to expressing the ecstatic self-abasement here required, and consequently two or three high notes quite exhausted his strength. "In this passage," writes Wagner himself, "lies the whole significance of the catastrophe; eh! Tannhäuser's whole nature, all that made him so moving a type to me, lies here alone expressed. His whole agony, his blood-sprent pilgrimage of penance,—all wells from the sense of these strophes: without having felt it here, precisely here, and precisely as it should be felt, the whole Tannhäuser stays incomprehensible, a self-willed, vacillating, piteous figure.—What, then, could have determined me to omit this passage from the second and all later Dresden performances? My answer might well comprise the history of all the sorrows I have had to suffer from our operatic conditions, in my capacity of poet and musician; but I here will put the matter briefly. When after the first performance at Dresden I made the cut in this Adagio, in my despair I also cut through every hope within my heart of *Tannhäuser* itself; because I saw that Tichatschek could not understand the man, to say nothing of representing him" (combined from a letter to Liszt of May 29, 1852, and *P.* III. 179).

That Tichatschek's rendering of his part in other respects was fine and fascinating, the master himself has repeatedly testified. As Alexander Ritter says, "it was not exactly the proverbial charm of his vocal timbre, or that delicacy of musical sense which made his singing so expressively free despite his scrupulous regard for rhythm; but his implicit devotion to any task imposed by his great friend." Nevertheless, it was impossible for his naïve, almost childlike nature to penetrate that burnt-out crater of a heart into whose depths Tannhäuser's recital of his pilgrimage conducts us, or whence the piercing accents of his "Erbarm' dich mein" burst forth like a last eruption. That, not alone the crisis of the second act, but in a certain sense the whole drama, can never be rightly fathomed if this passage has not "swept the hearer like a hurricane,"—this it was impossible to convey to him. And so, in Wagner's words, "My having to make this cut, was tantamount to

abandoning all hope of getting my *Tannhäuser* understood by the heart."

The week that intervened between the first and second nights "was fraught with the burden of a lifetime. Not wounded vanity, but the shock of an utter disillusionment chilled me to the marrow. It was clear to me that my *Tannhäuser* had appealed to but a handful of familiar friends, and not to the heart of a Public to whom, when all's said, I had instinctively turned" (*P. I.* 337). The second performance, Monday the 27th of October, found the house "barely half-filled." * The eight-days wait had been most prejudicial, affording ample time and opportunity for busy enemies and envious rivals to aggravate misunderstanding, and spread the foolishest reports. This drama, which its creator had fondly hoped would "win him the hearts of his German fellow-countrymen in larger measure than his earlier works had done as yet," and thus react on *their* circulation,—at the second performance it was actually on the point of falling through, as earlier the *Flying Dutchman!* Luckily the singers stood so staunchly to their guns, despite the chilling aspect of the house, that a glimmer of understanding appeared at last, and the *third* act 'took'; proving that the audience, if small, was of the right order. The principal singers were called once more, and, after them, the house would not take No from the author. A spark had caught, and the third performance, Thursday the 30th, met with quite a good house and a cordial reception. Tichatschek had done far better than on the first night, and at the end of every act the singers and Wagner were vociferously called—in the third act, indeed, at the words 'Heinrich, du bist erlöst,' the auditorium positively shook with cheers, as if the audience felt the appositeness to the work itself. The *fourth* performance fell on a Sunday (Nov. 2): the theatre was "packed full"; after each act the singers, and then the author, were called—after the

* "How little real success the work had, is proved by the house being already barely half-filled at the second performance"—says an astonishingly adverse review in the *Neue Zeitschrift*—"and, with the defects aforesaid, it is not to be wondered at. The 'calling' of an author counts for absolutely nothing; last season the same distinction was conferred on the composers of two operas that vanished from the repertory after their fourth performance"—Lwoff and Hiller, or Marschner?

second he received a perfect ovation.* A tiny fact connected with this fourth performance is worth recording: the Wagners' maid attended it (as in most small German families, they would have but one), up in the fourth circle, or gallery, and brought home word that the people round her had thought this opera "still finer than *Rienzi*." A touch like that to him was worth a deal of condescension from the high-born first circle or highly-cultured parterre †; and the verdict of that gallery has won the day.

Things having taken a turn for the better, the management was pleased to encourage the work, and by the end of the year it had been played seven times in under nine weeks—the fourth performance being followed by repetitions on Nov. 12 and 22, and Dec. 19. On the 25th of January 1846 came the *eighth*, the last for some little while. Nevertheless, the author was fully alive to the weak points in the rendering, and consequently to the public's defective understanding of his drama. With *Tannhäuser*, as he says in the *Communication*, "for the first time did I feel, with any great distinctness, that the character to which we have become accustomed in operatic performances was thoroughly at variance with what *I* demanded. In our Opera the *singer* takes first place, through the purely material instrumentality of his voice; the *actor* takes second, or indeed a quite subordinate rank. My claim was diametrically opposed to this: I required the Actor in the forefront, the Singer simply as the actor's aid; consequently also, a public that should join me in this claim. For I could but see that, not until such claim were met, could there be the remotest question of an impression by the story told" (*P. I.* 337). The attention he wished to have directed to the whole, the dramatic work of art, he found devoted to the costumed singer and the numbered piece; and thus, as he goes on to say, "The gradually-arising interest in my work, displayed by a portion of the public, appeared to me like

* As already stated, the second act remained the general favourite; witness a "Tannhäuser" article in the *Leipzig Illustrirte Zeitung*, 1846, No. 131 (pub. J. J. Weber): "At the first representation the master was called with all the performers after every act, and at subsequent performances this was more particularly the case with the *second* act, which has turned out uncommonly well, and appeals to all the public."

† Wagner was always most kind and considerate to his household servants, and shewed far less contempt of their "judgment," whenever it came to his ears, than of that of many a celebrated critic or "art-colleague."

the benevolent interest of friends and relatives in the fate of a lunatic. That interest induces us to enter into the sufferer's ravings, try to unriddle some meaning from them, and in this guessed-at sense to answer, maybe, to make his mournful plight a little bearable to him. Then throngs perhaps the indifferent crowd, to whom it is a piquant entertainment to catch the sayings of a madman, and from their odds and ends of reason to fall into a pleasurable bewilderment as to whether the maniac has suddenly turned sane, or they themselves have gone crazy. This, and no other, was the mode in which I thenceforth interpreted my position toward the public. . . . And I ask any man of intelligence to judge whether a twenty-fold performance, with regularly-repeated 'calls' for the author, could compensate me for the gnawing consciousness that a large portion of the applause received was due to a mere misunderstanding, or at least a thoroughly defective understanding of my real artistic aim?" (*ibid.* and III. 180).

For all the success at last achieved with this epoch-making work, it retained for long a purely *local* character. With two exceptions, the reports that found their way outside contained nothing but misrepresentations or idle gossip*; those exceptions being a pair of articles in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (Leipzig, F. Brockhaus, Nos. 295 and 320) and an article in No. 311 of the Augsburg *Allgemeine* (Nov. 7). The unnamed contributor of the latter had clearly been admitted into the master's most intimate artistic confidence, so close an agreement with Wagner's inmost thoughts can we follow step by step in it. For instance: "The artwork should issue wholly from the inner nature of its subject. . . . To fix the due relationship of poetry and music, is a difficult matter. However, that they must not contradict each other; that the one must not be degraded to the servant of the other, but both must support and supplement each other; that neither of them must transgress their common circle, to act for itself without reference to the whole; but that here, too, Freedom can only consist in submission to the law of a higher Unity,—this follows irrefutably from the essence of the artwork and its single arts; whose elements, though different, are at harmony in their inmost nature." After discussing the

* See Appendix to vol. i, page 384.

positions adopted respectively by Gluckists and Piccinists, the writer continues: "But a third and higher course is thinkable, namely to pilot Opera into that region where the poem shall form in itself an artistic whole, whose development will proceed from nothing but internal impulse, and yet a whole that naturally begets the music from out itself; and where the music, in this intimate communion with the poem, may unfold its varied powers to the full, and all the splendour of its colours." As to the writer's identity, we learn from one of the master's letters to Liszt (Oct. 2, 1850) that his name was Dr Hermann Franck. Lately of Breslau, he then was staying awhile at Dresden; from there he went to Berlin, and eventually to London, where he met a very tragic end soon after Wagner had said goodbye to him in 1855.*

Alike the Augsburg and the Leipzig *Allg. Zig* were drubbed by their contemporaries, however, for these "trumpetings of the author's partisans." The Dresden *Abendzeitung*, for instance, indignantly inquires, "How comes it that people have been so absolutely silent about Ferdinand Hiller's *Traum in der Christnacht*, which unquestionably has more music in it than *Tannhäuser*?"—in reply to the *Deutsche Allg.*'s hint that Wagner, in his *Tannhäuser*, had raised Opera to a height outtopping any of its previous forms, it shudders into "God preserve us from such heights! It is so drear and cold there, that he who has safely, though wearily toiled up, will certainly be unable to remain there long," and so on. But perhaps of all the numerous accounts in musical, artistic, and "entertaining" journals, the spitefulest is that of the *Neue Zeitschrift*—once so kindly disposed—where two whole numbers are devoted to debasement of this opera.†

As a straw to shew the way the wind was blowing, we may note the dragging-in of Ferdinand Hiller and his ill-starred opera. If the Dresden acquaintance, or "friend," was so blinded by vanity as not to guess the difference in kind between himself and the genius who associated with him on an equal footing, it may be pardoned as a human weakness; but it sounds strange, to our modern ears, to hear his nerveless failure mentioned in the same breath with a "second performance of *Tannhäuser* to an already

* See Appendix; also *Bayr. Bl.* 1885, pp. 320 et seq, where Franck's article of Nov. 1845 is reproduced in extenso.

† For a tiny specimen see footnote to page 104 *antea*; for longer excerpts see Appendix.

half-empty house." Many things had contributed to Hiller's rating his own faculties at far too high a figure: from earliest youth every chance had been seized to push him into notoriety, though he had never yet brought off one genuine artistic success. Only two years older than Wagner,* during a lengthy stay in Paris he had been brought into contact with all the musical celebrities, through the brilliant salon started by his mother expressly for his sake; Liszt, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Cherubini, Rossini, Berlioz, had honoured him in turn with their friendship, or at least their civility, in a city where Wagner soon afterwards was to drain the cup of bitterness to its lees. About the time of Wagner's fiercest fight for bare existence, Hiller was taking his ease in Italy; thence he was summoned to Leipzig at the age of thirty-two by Mendelssohn, to keep his seat at the Gewandhaus warm for him. The deputy-conductor, however, did not wait for his principal's return: he "was not pleased with Leipzig," and the historian of the Gewandhaus Concerts adds, "perhaps the feeling was mutual." From the quite too exclusive atmosphere of Leipzig, in which it seemed impossible to make one's mark even in the worshipped one's absence, he transferred himself to Dresden, with an eye to permanence. According to his view of things, the peculiar aristocratic-cosmopolitan blend of elements in the residents here, and in particular the fortunes of *Rienzi*, seemed to point to an easy opening. "My successes at the Dresden court-theatre," says Wagner himself, "attracted F. Hiller and R. Schumann to my neighbourhood; just to see, no doubt, how it came to pass that at an important German theatre the operas of a previously unknown composer continued to draw the public. That I was no particular musician, both friends believed they soon found out; so my success must be based on the texts I had written myself. In truth I also was of opinion that, as they both were pondering operatic plans, it would be better to procure good texts first. In this they begged my assistance, but declined it when things came to the scratch—presumably for fear of shabby tricks that I might play them.—After I had succeeded in proving to Hiller the fundamental error in the poem of his *Traum in der*

* He was born at Frankfort in 1811, of Israelitish parents; his Paris sojourn, during which he performed his own compositions side by side with Bach and Beethoven at public concerts, falls in the period 1829-36.

Christnacht, he craved my advice as to the choice of a new subject. Later, upon hearing that he was brooding over *Konradin* with Reinick, I expressed to him my doubts of this subject in general—but added that very much would depend on the manner in which it was treated, as poem; my further opinion I offered him so soon as he should have initiated me into the details of the sketch. For long I learnt nothing more, till I heard one day that the verses were finished and Hiller was busy composing. I suspected mistrust of me, and refrained from further meddling, until Hiller at last confided to me of his own accord that he had feared I should not like the poem, and perhaps might so argue it down as to put him out of all conceit for composing; he therefore deemed better to remain in conscious error, to be able to set about composing an opera once more—which might have to be deferred for God knows how long, were he to wait for a poem which he could be quite certain was worth the composing" (*P.* VI. 167, and Letter 18 to Uhlig).

So much for one of his brother composers at Dresden. As for the other, Wagner had precisely the same experience when Schumann was compiling himself the text for *Genovefa*: "No reasoning of mine could dissuade him from his lamentably foolish scheme for the third act; he went into a huff, and undoubtedly thought I wished to spoil his very best effects. For 'effect' he aimed at: everything 'German, chaste and pure,' but dashed with piquant streaks of mock unchasteness, to be harrowingly supplied by the coarsenesses and vulgarities of the second finale." Almost thirty years after, Wagner heard a carefully-rehearsed performance of this *Genovefa* at Leipzig, and realised that the offensive scene which ends the third act of Auber's *Bal masqué* was quite a dainty bagatelle compared with the "truly sickening brutality" of its German counterpart. "And, strange to say!"—he adds—"Never have I heard a solitary complaint about it. With such energy does the German keep his innate purer feelings down, when he means to pit one man—for instance, Schumann—against another—e.g. myself.—For my part, I saw I could be of no earthly use to Schumann" (*P.* VI. 167-8).

Indeed a great change had come over Schumann of late. As youths at Leipzig, he and Wagner had been thrown into one another's company; though they had never become what one might term fast friends, Wagner had retained a feeling of artistic

comradeship, and proved it by an occasional letter from his various halting-places, as when he sent Schumann from Paris a copy of his own *Grenadiere*.* From Dresden too, in the early days of his engagement there, he once had written him, "Most valued Friend, let us pull together! Who knows what good may not come of it? Especially as I hope we yet shall meet in our artistic tendency." Just as he writes to Liszt some seven years afterwards with reference to Raff and Berlioz, "Children, do something *new*! *New*, and once again, *new*! If you cleave to the old, the devil of Unproductiveness will take you"—so he was constantly urging on Schumann, Kittl, Hiller, and even Mendelssohn by proxy, taking them in good faith for his equals, and longing to see them all press forward to the highest goal. Before Schumann left Leipzig, Wagner had wished him at Dresden, to introduce him to his works. Schumann, entirely missing the point, replied by wishing him at Leipzig, to make the acquaintance of *his* music. So Wagner begged him to forward those works on which he set most store, that he might make an eager study of them; in return he sent Schumann the score of his *Dutchman*, that he might see what he meant by his "tendency." Now, we cannot remember Schumann's having uttered anywhere or anywhen a syllable about the *Dutchman*; already he was too much engrossed with the opposite tendency, to gauge the value of this novelty. Since then he had removed to Dresden himself, and received the score of *Tannhäuser* as a present from the author. Shortly before the first performance he writes to Mendelssohn, whose "pure and limpid harmonies" he has just been praising: "Well, Wagner has just finished another opera. Undoubtedly a clever fellow, and bold beyond measure—the aristocracy is still raving about *Rienzi*—but, honestly, he can neither write nor think four consecutive bars of *fine* music, scarcely even of *good*. As for pure harmony, the knack of four-part chorus-writing—it's the common lack with all of them. What, then, can come of it in the long run? So the whole score lies before us in beautiful print—with its fifths and octaves into the bargain—and he'd give anything to alter and erase—too late! Enough! The

* As another trifling coincidence, it may be recorded that Schumann visited Bayreuth almost half a century before Wagner, namely in 1828, to pay his respects to Jean Paul's widow; also that he was married in the same church, at Schönefeld, as Wagner's grandfather.—W. A. E.

music isn't a hair's-breadth better than Rienzi, rather tamer, more forced! But if one said such a thing, the cry would be at once, 'What envy!' So I tell it you alone, since I know that you have known it long." Poor Schumann! His veracity being beyond all question, he evidently mistook some sly or half-ironical remark of Wagner's. Certainly the young master did not consider his new-fledged work a prodigy of perfection, or we should not find him altering first its close, and then its opening, thereafter; but to have wanted to "alter and erase" as soon as the finishing strokes had been put to his score, can mean nothing but a waggish freak of mock-humility. What does remain incomprehensible, is that Schumann, in view of his own creations, should have preferred the milk and water of Mendelssohn's harmonies to the flesh and blood of Wagner's!

Upon hearing the work, Schumann saw cause to modify his hasty verdict. Immediately after attending the performance on November 12, his first experience of the acted *Tannhäuser*, he writes to Mendelssohn: "I must withdraw much of what I wrote you after reading the score; on the stage it all wears quite a different look. I was quite moved by much." That's honest, and a good step farther than the addressee advanced in recognition of this opera. For Mendelssohn's utmost acknowledgement, after hearing a still later performance, was a compliment to Wagner on a certain canonic entry in the Adagio of the second finale; exacting to a degree in the matter of an operatic libretto for his own use (which he never found to his taste), he was apparently insensible to the dramatic power of Wagner's work. But Schumann—a "German musician" to the core—what baneful influence can have held him so aloof from Wagner's efforts, to his own prejudice? He wasn't even present on the first night, but waited for the fifth! And though he candidly admits his initial blunder, and repeated hearings of the work confirmed him in his changed opinion, yet in after years he reverts to his old disdainful attitude: in a letter of May 8, 1853, we find him writing to Debrois von Bruyck, "If I am to express myself in brief, Wagner is no good musician; he lacks the sense of form and euphony. Yet you must not judge him from pianoforte editions. At many points in his operas, were you to hear them from off the stage, you would certainly be unable to repress a deeper stirring. And even though it is not clear sunlight, such as genius diffuses, it is

often a mysterious spell, that holds our senses. As said, however, apart from the representation the music is slight, often downright amateurish, content-less and perverse; and alas! it is a proof of artistic demoralisation for anyone, in view of all the dramatic masterpieces the Germans have to shew, to dare to set these down beside them. The future will deliver judgment on these also." It has. What a risky thing is prophecy!

Such was the attitude of Dresden journalism, such of the master's professional comrades. Not a word of encouragement from either of those quarters; not one indication that his path was clear. Along it he must go his lonely way, cheered merely by a faithful band of personal friends. To these we must evidently add that Dr Hermann Franck aforesaid, whose pen was often busy for the Augsburg *Allgemeine* in criticism of the plastic arts. It is probably in this connection that Wagner made his first acquaintance; for he too, throughout his life, was on the best of terms with artists other than musicians. One of the chief of these at Dresden was Ernst Rietschel,* nine years his senior, who had removed here in 1832 to become Professor at the Academy and rescue the art of sculpture from local inanition: a tall gaunt figure with a chronic stoop, his sunken cheeks contrasting strangely with a massive brow and dark exuberance of flowing hair; almost apologetic in speech, in appearance he was "a queer mixture of genius and half-starved pedagogue," yet had something very winning in his ways.† It was to Rietschel that was to be entrusted the execution of the monument to Weber (unveiled in 1860), for which, in spite of Wagner's efforts, the money came so slowly in. Beside the gentle, though tenacious Rietschel stood the choleric Hähnel,‡ sculptor of the Beethoven monument at Bonn, antique in his artistic style, a shade dogmatic in his conversation; his friendly rivalry had led his senior colleague to adopt a bolder manner in his manipulation of the two pediments of the newly-built Court-theatre, the internal frieze of which fine structure Hähnel carved himself. Then we have the great

* Known the world over for his Goethe-Schiller monument and that to Luther.

† Pecht's *Deutsche Künstler*.

‡ Born 1811. Hähnel subsequently designed the two bronze Pegasus groups for the Vienna Opera-house (1875).

architect Gottfried Semper, thenceforth a lifelong friend of Wagner's; Bendemann, born 1811, a distinguished painter of the Düsseldorf school; Hübner, a genre-painter, born 1814; Ludwig Richter, born 1803, one of the first to make his landscapes eloquent with human life. In the Spring of 1845, shortly after the completion of *Tannhäuser*, Moritz von Schwind (born 1804) had paid a visit to Dresden, and his friends both old and new—including Rietschel, Hähnel, Ludwig Richter and others—had given him a little banquet on the Brühl'sche Terrasse, at which Wagner, too, was naturally present. During his two-years residence at Frankfort this clever, if somewhat slapdash artist had painted what then ranked as his magnum opus, the "Sängerkrieg auf Wartburg" for the Städel'sches Institut (a work more characteristic of his foibles than his merits, and particularly of his leaning to theatricalism); and hopes were generally, though vainly entertained, that he would be gained in permanence for Dresden.* Pecht humorously describes the entry of this singular cynic into the circle gathered in his honour; but occasions such as this made clear to Wagner how much less envy and internal conflict subsisted among the plastic artists than in the posse of composers known to him, every one of whom seemed frightened at the other, more or less, and sought security in standing off.

The chief point of reunion for Dresden artists of every stripe in these days was the "Angel's Club," so called after the surname of the proprietor of the restaurant on the Post-Platz where a room was set apart for their informal gatherings; the club being likewise known as the "Monday Society," from its day of meeting. The possibility of taking part in such needful intellectual intercourse, at least occasionally, Wagner had to secure by resignation of his unpaid post of first "Liedermeister" to the Dresden Liedertafel, with its time-absorbing practice and rehearsals.† Besides himself, there were Tichatschek, Mitterwurzer,

* See Appendix.

† In his letter of resignation (Nov. 14, 1845) he says: "I can truthfully attest that I have always been prompt at my place, whenever it was not rendered absolutely impossible to me through clashing with my official duties; but in those days the Liedertafel was not punctual, so that I constantly saw myself obliged to fill up time by giving the few members who happened to be present a sort of vocal exercise that could neither gladden nor advance." The claims arising from an astonishingly increased attendance he feels no longer able to meet; for which reason he recommends "Herr Musikdirektor

Eduard Devrient, and so forth, from the theatre, together with the plastic artists named above. One of the most regular habitués was Gottfried Semper, Professor at the Dresden Academy for the past eleven years, always fond of the pleasures of good-fellowship,* and distinguished for his jovial bonhomie, though a constant struggle with red-tape had lent his nature something of the hypochondriac, and stamped upon the nobly-chiselled features of his pallid face an unusual excitability. His standard treatise on the Polychromy of the Ancients, containing also a complete programme of the author's æsthetic, and even his political views, had been studied by the composer of *Tannhäuser* (ten years his junior) with the keenest interest.† Semper's claim that the plastic arts should be reintegrated, with the Architect as chief, is echoed in Wagner's letter to Liszt on the Goethe-Stiftung: "The architect, from whose uniting tutelage the painter and the sculptor still continue to withdraw with so much idle pride, is the virtual Poet of the plastic arts, to whom sculptor and painter should so demean themselves as musician and performer to the actual poet" (*P.* III. 19)—an ideal already realised, in part, by the impetus Semper himself had given to the two sculptors Rietschel and Hähnel in the adornment of the Dresden Court-theatre, whereof he was the architect. When Semper was in exile in London, contributing by his invaluable advice to the foundation of the South Kensington Museum, Wagner warmly advocated the cause of his old friend by an article in the *Eidgenössische Zeitung* (1851), evincing the most intimate knowledge and appreciation of his reformatory ideas; which eventually led to Semper's being summoned to found, build, and superintend the Zurich Polytechnic (1855).—Another frequent attendant was the

Hiller, who has lately settled in Dresden without any official ties," feeling convinced that "no happier event could occur for the welfare of the Lieder-*tafel*." Thus Wagner severed all direct connection with a post that had been wellnigh forced on him, and Ferdinand Hiller, stepping with alacrity into his vacant shoes, remained there till his own departure from Dresden in 1847, when he was succeeded by Schumann.

* Even at the age of seventy it was only after midnight, with friends and a glass, that Semper would really expand; when he would sit talking for some hours more, but rise as fresh as a lark next morning. See Pecht's *Deutsche Künstler des 19. Jahrhunderts*, p. 170.

† Witness the allusions in *Art and Climate* and *Opera and Drama* to the colouring of Greek architecture—*P.* I. 257 and II. 240.

painter Robert Reinick, Hiller's librettist, continually hindered in the pursuit of his proper calling by a troublesome complaint of the eyes. Among the musicians we find Hiller himself, the actual founder of the club, a thorough man of the world, sociable, avoiding every form of open contradiction; the taciturn Schumann; and so on.

It was to this semi-private circle that Wagner first read aloud his *Lohengrin* poem on Monday the 17th of November, between the fifth and sixth performances of *Tannhäuser*. The detailed draft, as we already know, he had brought back with him as the fruit of his holiday at Marienbad; since when he must have been tolerably busy, for there would scarcely be much time to spare during the rehearsals of *Tannhäuser*. He therefore can hardly have devoted more than three short weeks to the versifying of his subject, and that in all the depressing circumstances of its predecessor's first reception. In this work he had gone far beyond *Tannhäuser* in a strict adherence to purely dramatic lines and the exclusion of anything savouring of an "aria"; whilst, the Leitmotiv principle being as yet his personal and but half-conscious secret, it is little to be wondered at if the musicians among his hearers couldn't for the life of them imagine how he proposed to treat so freely-written a tragedy. Schumann, to borrow a now classical metaphor, was sitting on a damp cloud—his habit in this company of "angels"—but drizzled out at last the exclamation, that it passed his understanding how a text like this was ever to be set to music.* Next day he plaintively writes Mendelssohn—with whom he then was keeping up a regular correspondence, something in the style of two elderly spinsters aghast at the terrible carryings-on of Mrs X and the Captain—that the new text had pleased the majority of its audience, "*particularly the painters*"; for himself, it had been

* "Of my text for *Lohengrin*, Schumann remarked that it could never be composed as opera; wherein he differed from Upper-Kapellmeister Taubert of Berlin, who declared, after my music also had been written and performed, that he should like to set its text all over again for himself" (*P.* VI. 167). Apropos of which it may be mentioned that the text of the *Dutchman* actually was "set to music all over again" by the conductor at Stettin, Ernst Leberecht Tschirsch (died 1854 at Berlin). Fortunately for its author, this second "Flying Dutchman" did not reach a performance, or we should have had some *Didaskalia* pointing to it, like Mangold's *Tannhäuser*, as "in every respect a product of sterling German art."

a twofold surprise, since he had been contemplating "the same subject, or at least a similar one from the period of the Round Table, for the last twelvemonth, and now must throw it overboard"—an argument the force of which is not quite self-apparent. The other Dresden composer, Hiller, was more discreet: he praised the poem to its author's face, but went about prophesying behind his back, that "Wagner's talent as musician would by no means suffice for this subject. The fine verses would surely yearn for some other composer. Great aspirations, but inadequate ability: that was the gulf in which, to all likelihood, the Knight of the Grail would be swallowed."* After which brotherly expressions, it is some comfort to remember that "the painters" at least were pleased.

Apropos of this reading, Wagner relates another experience in his *Communication to my Friends*: "A critical friend"—Dr H. Franck, as he confides to Uhlig in 1851—considered that Lohengrin's unrelenting departure from Elsa made of him a cold, forbidding figure, more prone to rouse dislike than sympathy. Nevertheless this friend confessed that the first impression produced upon him by the poem had been thoroughly affecting, and it was only in the steel-cold light of subsequent reflection that he had come to that view. However, it infected Wagner himself to some extent, for he goes on to tell us that he once had serious thoughts of forcing a complete change of motive upon his poem: "Through my temporary adhesion to this criticism I fell so far out of touch with the essence of the story as actually to stray into the sketch of a new denouement, according to which Lohengrin should be permitted to divest himself of his higher nature, when once revealed, in favour of a sojourn upon earth with Elsa." A fall indeed: it would have been a lapse to Gozzi's termination of the story Wagner had improved on in *Die Feen*; the whole tragedy of *Lohengrin*, with all that mystic interest which keeps

* A. Meissner, in an article in the *Gegenwart* 1882, Nos. 47 and 48. Much the same story is told in his two-volume *Geschichte meines Lebens* (History of my Life): "A day or two after I saw Ferdinand Hiller with a roll of manuscript in his hand. 'Richard Wagner has just written a new opera-text, and lent it me to read,' he exclaimed. 'A most excellent, most effective libretto—what a pity, Wagner means to compose it himself! His musical talent won't run to it. In other hands it would have a very different effect.'" Hm! One can fancy the elegant trifle good Mr Hiller would have made of it!

the work an evergreen, would have vanished at one blow. However, "The utterly unsatisfactory and, in a higher sense, unnatural character of this ending was felt not only by myself—who had conceived it in a moment of weakness—but also by my critical friend." Thank heavens! Yet there was little actual fear of Wagner's really adopting such advice; the situation of his hero bore too striking a resemblance to his own, for him to be blind to the way in which alone a story such as this could end. In his own words, "the character and situation of this Lohengrin I learnt to recognise as the *type of the only absolute tragedy*, in fine, of the *tragic element in modern life*"; where the artist longs for understanding by the Feeling, he finds his every step confronted by doubts of carping Reason: "This it is, that, as an artist bred of flesh and blood, I could not help but feel; and this, that, on the pathway of my future evolution, was so to be forced upon my consciousness that I broke at last into open revolt against the pressure of that situation" (*P. I. 341-4*).

Soon after that semi-private reading of *Lohengrin*, and just before the seventh performance of *Tannhäuser* (Dec. 19), we find the author in Berlin for a couple of days, to sound the General Intendant, "great Küstner," about a Berlin production of the work last-named; for the expenses incurred in the publication of his three operas rendered it an absolute necessity to take some energetic step, if possible, to push their circulation. Seven months previously, as will be remembered, he had despatched his score with the ink scarcely dry; but there still was no immediate notion of accepting the opera for Berlin consumption, nor even much encouragement in the prospects of *Rienzi* there. An approaching bout of Jenny Lind's, and other minor allurements, put it out of the question to think of the Last of the Tribunes this winter; but next September—September 1846!—always providing a heroic tenor be found, the road would seemingly be clear. It was probably on this occasion that Graf W. v. Redern, General Intendant of the Prussian Court-music (really, these interminable Intendants are too bewildering), came by that elegantly bound and printed copy of the *Tannhäuser* poem which now reposes in the Wagner Museum at Eisenach. With Redern its author had entered into relations at the time of the Berlin *Holländer*; a man well-disposed enough, so far as

himself was concerned, but an intimate friend of Meyerbeer's. After Wagner's return to Dresden he seems to have carried on a sort of *Tannhäuser* correspondence, with the following results: "By the Intendant of the Royal Prussian Stage [Küstner] I had been dismissed with the critical remark that my opera was too 'epic' for production in Berlin.* The General-Intendant of the Royal Prussian Court-music [von Redern] appeared to be of another opinion. When, to gain the royal interest for the production of my work, I begged him to induce the King to let me dedicate *Tannhäuser* to his Majesty, he replied with the advice that—seeing, on the one hand, the King accepted none but works already known to him, and on the other, there were obstacles in the way of bringing out this opera at the Berlin Court-theatre—I had best assist his Majesty to a preliminary acquaintance with the work by arranging something from it for a military band, which something could then be brought to the King's ears during the 'change of guard.'—I could scarcely have been more deeply humbled, more definitely brought to knowledge of my station."

From Berlin and the immediate sphere of Meyerbeer, we turn to the common-lands enclosed by the other Royal Prussian General Music-Director. On February 12, 1846, the Leipzig public made its first acquaintance with the overture to *Tannhäuser*, at a concert in the Gewandhaus conducted by Mendelssohn for the benefit of the Orchestral Pension-fund, at which was also given Schumann's recently remodelled "Overture, Scherzo and Finale." Schumann's work was well received, and therefore had probably been sympathetically rehearsed. But Wagner's? He himself refers in 1869 to this performance's having been made a "deterrent example"; considering the stubborn inhospitality of his birthplace toward him for many a year thereafter, his indignation is accountable. But really Mendelssohn was too high-principled to be guilty of such perfidy as deliberate mutilation: it is hardly open to dispute that he didn't *like* Wagner's music, and that would be explanation enough of his murdering it unwittingly (von Bülow describes it in 1850 as "a literar

* Evidently owing to *Tannhäuser*'s great narration in the third act. Dresden critics, on the contrary, had deemed the opera "too dramatic," the *Leipzig Illustr. Ztg* quite "too lyric." With all their difference of adjectives, the adverb "too" preserves these critics' bond of union.

execution"); for it needed some love of the thing, at the least an intelligent interest in it, to unravel the technical difficulties of the score. The heart being closed, the head was not sufficiently alert, and the overture was literally galloped to death. One can easily imagine the result: an 'early Victorian' *Tannhäuser*. The audience was disgusted, and the whole Press pack fell yelping on a welcome prey. A lack of feeling of artistic comradeship had withheld the conductor from ascertaining at first hand the spirit and the tempo in which the composer wished so novel and important a work to be rendered; and that lack of fellow-feeling absolutely crushed the last hope Wagner had of seeing his latest opera extend beyond the walls of Dresden. So fatal an epoch does it mark in his career, that we may well conclude this chapter with a few choice extracts from the ravings of the Leipzig papers:—

"Interesting instrumental combinations, and in particular, interesting violin effects," says one, "do not compensate for the want of inner substance. True, at times one thinks there really must be something to seek behind these mere externals; but one precious soon assures oneself there's little or rightdown nothing." And another, "Craving for effect, and merciless abuse of the orchestra's forces, spoil all pleasure one might have derived from the melodies, when one has been lucky enough to discover any." Or, "As yet we have seen and heard nothing of the composer, i.e. of his creations; nevertheless we have read about them, especially his *Tannhäuser*, and after this specimen we scarcely think the bad accounts exaggerated." For the Dresden *Abendzeitung* had kindly informed its little world not long before, that "Wagner's *Tannhäuser* leads a hothouse life"; whilst a Dresden correspondent of the *Neue Zeitschrift* (1846 I. No. 5) had charitably declared that, in spite of the new opera's continued run, its success was more than doubtful: "Merely a little flock of the elect is able to discover and enjoy its boasted beauties. Amongst recent operas it is *Stradella* that has best retained the favour of the public, as proved by twelve repetitions. . . . With keen regret we have noticed that our Tichatschek's splendid voice has considerably gone off in quality, which must be chiefly attributed to the very wasting and destructive parts of *Rienzi* and *Tannhäuser*." Small wonder, then, if another Leipzig pressman writes, "Very few orchestras will be equal to the task of

Tannhäuser,—our own can scarcely remember anything like it since Berlioz; and if the music of this opera even partially resembles that of its overture, we would rather not hear it, for fear of total hebetude." A strong hint to the Leipzig theatre, not to vex its soul with the opera itself.—Even in private these good Leipzigers gave off their spleen, for we read in one of Moritz Hauptmann's letters (since published by Ferdinand Hiller): "The *Tannhäuser* overture is perfectly hideous, incomprehensibly clumsy, long and wearisome, for so intelligent a man. . . . He is no longer a callow youth; and anyone who at his age can write and print a thing like this overture, his calling as an artist to me seems very undecided." There can be but one explanation of all these invectives, and the *Neue Zeitschrift* was honest enough to give it voice, admitting that "the faulty execution may to some extent have contributed" to the general distaste,—though it blames the composer even for that.

So stood Wagner at the beginning of 1846, with three years of office behind him, and the three chief musical centres of Germany armed to the teeth against him.

V.

BEETHOVEN'S NINTH SYMPHONY.

Annual Palm Sunday concert.—Revolt of the Orchestral Committee against Wagner's choice.—The band begins to understand the music.—Reconstruction of the Old Opera-house platform.—Full rehearsal ; public performance.—Effect on the younger generation.—General results.

*Was it a god, who wrote these wondrous signs
that still the tumult of my being,
with joy my vexed bosom freeing,
and strangely open the confines,
the hidden mysteries of Nature to my seeing?*

FAUST.

“My chief undertaking of the winter 1845-6 consisted in an extremely careful preparation of *Beethoven's Ninth Symphony* for performance on Palm Sunday in the following Spring. This performance brought me into curious conflicts, and had most fruitful influence on my further evolution.” With these words Wagner prefaces his own account of an event in his career at Dresden only second in importance to its opening ; to which we therefore shall devote a special chapter.

The so-called “Grand” or “Old Opera-house” at Dresden, the locality of this memorable artistic feat, if not exactly one of the town's architectural ornaments, was at this date one of its largest buildings. Erected by August the Strong in the year 1718, under the Saxon Kings of Poland it had housed the most extravagant of operatic spectacles, in which processions of wild beasts from the Royal Menagery were no uncommon sight.*

* Thus the *Dressdnische Denkwürdigkeiten* announces a performance of the opera *Ezio* on Jan. 20, 1755: “This beautiful spectacle will eclipse all others ever presented here, since in the first act a procession of cavalry and infantry, a triumphal chariot, dromedaries, camels and mules, wild beasts, the finest trained and saddle horses, and 500 persons to boot, will appear upon the stage.”

Since 1769, however, debased into a ball-room, it had served for nothing but the special scene of Court festivities, such as those in celebration of the Pillnitz Congress at the time of Napoleon's first visit. Of late, the wings of court display having prudently been clipped, the house had fallen into greater and greater neglect, and was scarcely ever opened save for concerts given each Palm Sunday by the Royal Kapelle for the benefit of its Widows and Orphans.

As already stated, it was the custom at these annual concerts for the pair of Kapellmeisters to conduct, in turn, the one an oratorio, the other a symphony. Last time, Wagner had presented Haydn's *Creation*, Reissiger Beethoven's C minor; so the oratorio fell to Reissiger this year, the symphony to Wagner, who had a great longing to conduct *the Ninth*. His choice was guided by the fact that this work was as good as unknown at Dresden; in which particular it shared a common fate with all Beethoven's later works. Indeed he had heard the master's last quartets so hazily rendered by eminent virtuosi of the Royal Kapelle, world-famed Lipinski at their head, that he was not surprised at Reissiger's declaring them sheer nonsense; whilst the Ninth Symphony itself was a seven-sealed book to artists alike and to public. Some seven years earlier it had been attempted by his present colleague at a charity-concert,* but, as Reissiger himself confessed, had ignominiously failed; the general opinion condemning it as formless, savage, unintelligible, fatiguing, the blunder of a genius gone astray. Robert Schumann, on the other hand, had complained that Mendelssohn's too rapid beat, particularly in the first movement, had robbed him of all pleasure in the work at Leipzig. The more reason, then, for Wagner's rescuing this masterpiece from philistine disgrace.

It was only when it came to the actual preparations, that he realised what a mass of prejudices, and other almost insuperable obstacles, he would have to overcome. The opposition extended even to his own subordinates: "I remember well," says Gustav Kietz, "how put out Wagner was by the conduct of the members of the Kapelle, who left no stone unmoved to turn him from his purpose. They even spoke of approaching the *King* with a plea

* On August 27, 1838, in the pavilion of the Grosser Garten; repeated Nov. 7 in the theatre.

that this symphony, which had suffered such lamentable shipwreck under Reissiger eight years before, was not conducive to the honour of the band, and so forth. Everyone was in arms against it; a Dresden paper openly asked if it was not a positive scandal, on such a day as Palm Sunday, to wish to perform a Carnival farce like this." Truth to tell, the orchestra was actuated by a very practical motive; it feared its pension-fund would reap a poor return from the scanty audience that a work in such repute would draw. The fund's Committee therefore interviewed the Intendant, von Lüttichau, and begged him to put a veto on his Kapellmeister's persisting in so disastrous a course: it needed all Wagner's zeal and eloquence, to disabuse the mind of his chief. Foiled in this, the orchestral committee filled the town with complaints of their leader's harebrained recklessness; but, while providing a scandal that in itself may have paved the way for increased attendance, that only redoubled Wagner's resolution to make the work his point of honour and ensure its success by every means within his power.

Another obstacle had faced him on the very earliest mention of his project to his senior colleague. Reissiger informed him that he was very sorry, but for his part he had already promised the Dessau Kapellmeister, Friedrich Schneider—him of the "mendacious fugues" (vol. i. 176)—to present his oratorio "The Last Judgment" (*Das Weltgericht*) on this occasion, a work not only badly suited for alliance with Beethoven's Last Symphony, but practically excluding it, as this oratorio would monopolise at least two and a half hours. Here was a quandary! for the Ninth required a particularly strong choir, making the co-operation of the Dreyssig'sche Singakademie, well-versed in works of this calibre, quite indispensable; and unluckily the *Weltgericht*-composer's brother, Johann Schneider, organist of the Evangelical Court-church, had presided over that institution since 1830. The question therefore arose, would the brother of the Last Judgment man consent to lend his singers, if the fraternal work were shelved? A sensitive point, demanding Wagner's utmost tact to soothe. January 22, he sends the anodyne to worthy Johann Schneider, in the shape of a lengthy letter offering compensation: The management intends to improve the heating apparatus of the Old Opera-house, so as to make it available for other grand performances besides the

regular Palm Sunday concerts; a performance of the kind is contemplated for next autumn, to be exclusively devoted to the *Weltgericht**; for the present concert it is proposed to give a shorter oratorio, Beethoven's *Christus am Ölberg* ("Mount of Olives"), a work that really would not take so long to study. And so that obstacle was overcome.

Then came the trouble of obtaining the band-parts. The Committee of the Pension-fund objected to the cost of buying new ones, so Wagner appealed to Leipzig for a friendly loan. His request crossed a similar one from the Leipzig people for the parts of the *Tannhäuser* overture, for that ever-memorable scamper under Mendelssohn on February 12. A few days thereafter he punctually received his own parts back, but was naturally surprised, upon opening the packet, to find not a ghost of Beethoven's,—perhaps the Leipzig people thought it sacrilege to place the two works in such close company. Accordingly he writes again (Feb. 18) to Konzertmeister David, renewing his petition; he had as yet heard nothing definite about the fate of his overture in the Gewandhaus, but could scarcely avoid referring to it when thanking for the return of its parts. This portion of his letter we may quote: "The pains you took in coaching the good Leipzig orchestra in my difficult overture, I have heard from Vieuxtemps †; but the circumstance that to this day I have not had the smallest news of the performance either from any of my numerous connections, or from anybody else, leads me to conclude, to my sincere regret, that your self-denying efforts have very probably not had the desired success with the public. If that is so, as I can hardly doubt, and there has been no public recognition, then I remain the only person bound to thank you for your good intention and laborious zeal; wherefore I beg you herewith to accept the expression of my deepest obligation."—Whatever "bumptiousness" the Leipzig clique were so fond of detecting in the writer, there's not a trace of it in these honeyed

* The promise was faithfully kept; Nov. 7, 1846, *Das Weltgericht* was actually performed in the Old Opera-house, under the composer's direction, but to a "miserably empty house"; an episode to which we shall have to return.

† Wagner's old friend of the Paris period had just arrived from Leipzig to give two concerts in the Dresden theatre, Feb. 16 and 20, with the master presiding over the orchestra.

lines addressed to the enemy's citadel. Had he waited a day or two, for the papers to come in, he might perhaps have felt called to rub a little vinegar on the tip of his pen.*

When the parts arrived at last (wherever they came from), to Wagner it was like meeting a long-lost friend. "How I felt," he says, "to see and con those cryptic pages for the first time since my earliest youth, when I had spent the vigils of the night on copying out this score, whose look then plunged me in a mystic reverie! Just as, midst all the uncertainty of my Paris time, the hearing of a rehearsal of the first three movements by the matchless orchestra of the Conservatoire had suddenly transported me across whole years of roaming to a strange communion with those days of youth, so that last sound-memory now mysteriously took life in me anew when I saw again with my own eyes what in those earliest days had stayed but mystic eye-work for me. I had passed through much since then, through much that lay unuttered in my inmost soul and urged me now to earnest meditation, to wellnigh desperate questioning of my fate and fortune. What I dared not speak out to myself, was a knowledge of the utter groundlessness of my artistic and civic existence, in a walk of life where I could but deem myself a vagabond without one faintest prospect. But that despair, which I had striven to disguise from my friends, was turned to glad elation by this symphony. It is impossible that a master's work can ever have seized a pupil's heart with such enrapturing power, as mine was seized by the first movement of this symphony. Whoever had surprised me poring the open score to contrive its means of execution, and heard my fits of sobs and moaning, would certainly have asked in wonder if this was meet behaviour for a Royal Saxon Kapellmeister? Happily I was spared such visits by our orchestral committee and their esteemed first Kapellmeister, or any other gentlemen at home in classic music" (*P. VII. 242-3*).

The first-fruit of this impassioned study was the draft of that well-known *Programme*, in which the two supreme composers

* From a letter of Wagner's to Kapellmeister Taubert of Berlin dated April 26, 1846, it really looks as if he *never* received the parts of the Ninth Symphony from Leipzig at all, despite his repeated request, but had eventually to borrow them from Berlin; at anyrate he returns them with his thanks to Taubert!

of the century seem speaking face to face. Young Kietz relates how he had asked Wagner, after one of the rehearsals, "whether Beethoven did not mean to express some very definite thought in this symphony? He rose from table, went to his study, and brought out his newly-printed Explanatory Programme, which he gave me with the words: 'Here, read it. Perhaps that will content you.' The little book was studied eagerly by myself and friends; but our dear good critics had nothing more urgent to do, than to publish *warnings* in every journal against the purchase of this brochure. And the amusing part of it is, that in 1858, when the Ninth Symphony was to be revived under Krebs for the first time since the forties, these identical warners (Carl Banck, for instance) were to be found recommending this commentary to the public as essential to an understanding of the work, since no one had fathomed like Wagner the depths of Beethoven's creation." The idea of the Programme—a perfect model for its class—was, instead of worrying the hearer's eye with a musical analysis, to give his mind a notion of the mood best fitted to approach the various sections of the symphony. For this the customary Book of Words on sale at vocal concerts supplied a ready pretext; whilst the method chosen, was to illustrate the unfamiliar music by appropriate excerpts from a poem so familiar as Goethe's *Faust*: "words that, albeit standing in no manner of direct connection with Beethoven's work, and in no wise exhausting the meaning of his purely musical creation," as Wagner puts it in this Programme, "yet express so sublimely the higher human moods at bottom of it, that in the worst event, of an inability to understand the music, one might content oneself with treasuring up these thoughts, and thus at least not quit its hearing with a heart entirely unmoved."

Nor was this the only way in which the conductor endeavoured to prepare his audience for a becoming reception of the masterpiece. To counteract the adverse rumours diligently spread abroad by purblind critics, a week or two before the concert he published at his own expense in the *Dresdener Anzeiger* a series of "brief enthusiastic jottings, to interest the public in a work which, people told me, was in disgrace at Dresden." This paper had the charming idiosyncrasy, as Wagner knew to his cost, of publishing almost anything one chose to send it—providing one paid for the privilege. And nothing could throw

a more lurid light on the state of Dresden journalism in the forties, than the fact of Wagner's being driven to *this* channel for his disinterested "puffs" of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony; for it can scarcely be supposed that he would have chosen to pay for his recommendations of the great master's work, had it been possible to get the symphony appreciatively discussed, by himself or any one else, in a local paper that laid no toll on its contributors.

The first of these little Jottings appeared on Tuesday, March 24, 1846, and speaks of this symphony as "indisputably the crown of Beethoven's genius . . . for all his earlier creations of the kind to us appear but sketches and preliminary drafts whereby the master gained the power to soar to the conception of *this* work"—an idea repeated in *Opera and Drama* (P. II. 75) and developed at some length in the *Beethoven* essay (P. V. 98-102), i.e. at intervals of five and yet another nineteen years. A week later, March 31, comes a second jotting: the first having referred to the work as "a mystic riddle" to the minds of most, this second prepares the way for the Programme already in the printer's hands, with the question, "Would it not be well if at least an attempt were made to bring the Last Symphony of Beethoven somewhat nearer to the understanding of the general public?" The third, appearing two days later (April 2—three days before the actual performance), is couched in form of a parable, ending with a touching appeal on behalf of the "poor deaf man who cries to you so longingly. Will you pass him on the other side, if you find you do not understand his speech at once? O take him to you; clasp him to your hearts; in wonder listen to the marvels of his tongue, in whose new wealth you soon will greet sublimities and grandeurs ne'er yet heard!"* But Dresden critics were not to be mollified by touching appeals; soon piercing the veil of anonymity, they positively held up the author to derision for his simple championship. Sweet Dr Schladebach was so infuriated by these Jottings and their sequel, that, the concert over, he relieved his feelings in the following choice manner: "Whether the very favourable result was assisted by the truly mountebank anonymous appeals inserted by the *Dresdener Anzeiger* in its detestable

* All these Jottings are translated *in extenso* in Vol. VIII. of the *Prose Works*, pp. 201-3.—W. A. E.

rubric 'Besprechungen, Privatsachen,' we will not venture to decide. People must consider the public altogether too stupid, too childish, if they really imagined it would let itself be lured by baits of this kind, the purest charlatanry clumsily drawn up and shouted in true cheap-jack fashion. The authors—maybe, there was only one—must nevertheless have been filled with such a confidence in the public's good-humour and gullibility; and perhaps, after a few very significant utterances from a certain quarter, it is not hard to guess the source of these advertisements. In which case, one perhaps might draw an inference or two anent the origin of certain fulsome articles in certain journals on certain operas mounted here." The villainy of the innuendo stands self-confessed; and it was by such reptiles that the straightforward and plain-dealing Second Royal Saxon Kapellmeister had to submit to being judged in the eyes of all Germany!

Turning to the executive side of the undertaking, Wagner strengthened the regular orchestra by drafts from the military bands, and had every nuance of expression marked down in the parts themselves.* As to the actual band-rehearsals we have a witness in the person of young Kietz. With a few other friends, he would lie in wait for the conductor in the street, and gain permission to slip in behind him to the dim-lit hall: "It made an indelible impression upon me," he records in his old age, "to see Wagner walk up to his desk, shut to the open score, put it under his seat, and lead his people through this labyrinth by heart, at the very first rehearsal as at all the later ones. And what incredible obstacles he struck against." Yes: all the obstruction he had ever encountered in the ranks of his band, and succeeded before this in transmuting into warm enthusiasm, seemed now to have reached a head. The prejudice against the work itself passed on to the conductor, who once again was dubbed "an amateur" by some of his own bandsmen. "His corrections were demurred to," as Kietz continues: "How often during the earlier rehearsals did I hear these gentry exclaim in anger, when arrested by their chief's tap-tap, 'But it's *d* in our parts, not *d flat*.' Then Wagner would firmly tell them, 'You

* It would be well worth some explorer's while to ferret out these band-parts, and have them printed as a guide to future generations; it ought still to be quite possible to unearth them in Dresden, Berlin or Leipzig.—W. A. E.

must alter it; it's wrong; it ought to be *d flat*'; and they growlingly obeyed. The wood-wind, to give an instance, required his whole attention. Hüllweck the violinist, son-in-law to the then celebrated oboist Kummer, told me in later years that his father-in-law himself had confessed to him how he used to whisper in a fury to his neighbour, after each of Wagner's emendations, 'If the fellow only knew what he's about!'—yet little by little he came to see what was really being aimed at. After a rehearsal like this, the master would return home quite exhausted, bathed in perspiration, and have to change his clothes from top to toe, and drag a silk cap over his ears at meals, to save his streaming head from catching cold. Luckily it was but a few yards from the old opera-house to his flat in the Ostra-Allee. One midday he told his wife how peculiarly it distressed him to find even Lipinski infected with the general distemper; the greater his delight awhile thereafter, to be able to report the change that had come over Lipinski's sentiments in further course of the rehearsals, and how he took advantage now of every pause to nod approval."

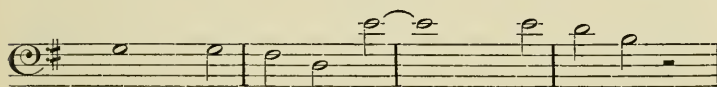
What kind of measures Wagner adopted "to secure distinctness," he tells us some twenty years later in his Report on the concert,* citing a passage in the second movement where the whole of the strings have to maintain the principal rhythmic figure, in a huge unison of three octaves, against a second theme allotted to a far too weak wood-wind. "Fortissimo" being prescribed for the whole orchestra, the wood-wind's melody is completely lost in what is virtually a string accompaniment, if that direction be rigidly adhered to: "As no letter-piety in the world could induce me to sacrifice the master's manifest intention to his misleading mark, I made the strings give a mere suggestion of strength, instead of actual fortissimo, until it comes to their turn to take up the continuation of the new theme. On the other hand, by doubling the wind, and making them put forth the utmost force, I got their motive heard distinctly—as I believe—for the first time since this symphony was written." He proceeded in a similar manner throughout, always aiming at correctness of perspective, and thus at the highest relief, for every passage in a work that is bound to suffer more than any of its predecessors

* *Prose Works* VII. 241 et seq. This Report, and that on the Bayreuth performance in 1872 (*P. V.*), should be in the hands of every student of orchestral readings.—W. A. E.

from vagueness in delivery: "Many a brain, for instance, has been racked by the Fugato in 6/8 time after the chorus 'Froh wie seine Sonne fliegen.' Taking my cue from the preceding strophe, as if a call to fight and victory, I read this fugato as an actual battle-piece in joyous earnest, and had it played throughout in fiery tempo and with the fullest energy. . . Further, I paid great attention to the singular recitative-like passage for the 'celli and double-basses at the beginning of the last movement, which had once brought great humiliation on my old friend Pohlenz [at the Leipzig Gewandhaus]. Considering the excellence of our contrabassists, I felt justified in making for the highest perfection here. In course of twelve special rehearsals, which I devoted to the instruments concerned alone, we succeeded in arriving at a phrasing that sounded almost spontaneous, bringing out the most striking expression alike of feeling tenderness and puissant energy." Think of it: *twelve* rehearsals for nothing but one passage in a symphony, to be played before an audience not over-keen to hear it, and in a by no means densely-populated town! Think of the personal magnetism it means, to have induced the recalcitrant bandsmen to undergo the penance! And the whole thing is recorded as a matter of course, a self-evident duty to composer and occasion. Was there another conductor then living—always excepting Habeneck at the Paris Conservatoire—who would ungrudgingly have dedicated days and weeks of toil and penetrative study to a work not his selfish own? No wonder Wagner lived to found Bayreuth.

But there were difficulties with and for the chorus too, as will be readily believed. "From the very commencement I had recognised that the possibility of making this symphony a truly popular success depended on an ideal victory over the extraordinary difficulties in the *choruses*. I saw that claims were advanced here, such as could only be met by a large and enthusiastic mass of singers. The first thing, therefore, was to secure myself an exceptionally strong chorus." His first addition to the theatre-choir, as we already have learnt, was that of the Dreyssig'sche Singakademie; the usual thing on such occasions, but somewhat of a favour this time, since its principal had been mulcted of the tribute to fraternal pride. Wagner describes this worthy troop of singers as "rather feeble"; so he doubled it with the chorus of the Dresden Seminary, "particularly well-trained

in sacred music," and brightened up the whole conglomerate by "the Kreuzschule choir with its splendid boy-voices"—the same he had been unable to procure some four years since for the church-music in *Rienzi*, and even now had to go on his knees for. Taken altogether, he thus had an available body of three-hundred singers for himself and his trusty deputy, Chorus-master Fischer, to steer through ever so many rehearsals. His plan, as he says, was to work them up "into a veritable ecstasy, in my own fashion. For instance, I succeeded in proving to the basses that the famous passage, 'Seid umschlungen, Millionen,' and particularly the 'Brüder, über'm Sternenzelt,' could not be sung in the ordinary way at all, but must be as if *ejaculated* in highest transport." Not at first, however, were they wax in his hands; the same feeling that inspired a portion of the band, had to be eradicated from his choir also. In the Andante Maestoso of the last movement



he ordered his men to take the upper *e*, not by way of a simple 'attack,' but with a swinging portamento from the *d* before it. Speechless amazement; then growls of rebellion: "It isn't possible. Nobody could expect it of us!" But he was not to be thwarted, and insisted on compliance. At first strange grunting sounds were heard, some of the singers thinking it obligatory to prove their words by jerking out the portamento as vilely as they could; but after another trial or two it went much better, till at last "a quite imposing effect was attained, remembered to this day by all who had the luck to witness that performance."* And it was Wagner himself who set the example,

* Alexander Ritter in the *Mus. Wochenblatt* 1871, No. 19, p. 294. Julius Schladebach on the other hand, in his eagerness to bespatter the performance from every direction, falls foul of this passage, remarking that the conductor had here endeavoured "to bring off an effect that was bound to fail, as it is totally inexecutable in this fashion. We refer to the attempted portamento for the chorus, which lightly taken by a soloist does not miss its effect, but even there too often degenerates into a disagreeable howl, and in choral-singing by a large body of voices quite inevitably." (I really cannot be bothered to disentangle the gentleman's sentence any better for him.—W. A. E.)

singing the passage with his people till he no longer could hear his voice above the others, "but felt as if submerged in the warm sea of tone."

As for the soloists, there was so much else to be thought of, that down to three weeks before the date of the concert they had not received their official invitation, as may be seen from a letter of Wagner's to Frau Kriete: "Most valued Friend, in anticipation of the special invite to be addressed you by the Kapelle, I take the liberty of sending you your old solo part in the Beethoven Symphony,* and thus setting my heart at rest. That in 'Christus am Elbberg,' † also, I believe Reissiger will forward you; he's in the best position to, since he lives there." Who took the other female part, does not appear, but the tenor was safe in the hands of Tichatschek, and years afterwards Wagner recalls the pleasure given him by the barytone recitative, *Freunde, nicht diese Töne*, which, "though so difficult as to be almost impossible, was rendered with superb expression by Mitterwurzer, after that mode of mutual inspiration we already knew so well" (*P.* VII. 245).

The scene of operations itself demanded careful forethought. The time-honoured disposition of the orchestra in the Old Operahouse had been ridiculous in the extreme: ranged two rows deep in a half-circle of sixty-feet diameter, its 'strings' went curving out along the lower boxes on the one side, while the 'wind' skirted those on the other; so that precision of ensemble was wellnigh past praying for. A little tinkering had been practised here and there as years ran on, the platform for the choir enlarged towards the front and raked a little; but the consideration of cost had always been prohibitive, and no appreciable improvement had been attempted in the straggling area for the orchestra itself. Determined to reform all this, on March the 4th Wagner submitted to the General Direction a minutely-detailed plan of alteration, after consulting with Machinist Hänel. Various irregularities of shape and level had to be allowed for, but the net result would be to concentrate the band toward the conductor's desk, with a slope up to nine feet high; whilst the large

* Referring to the performance under Reissiger in 1838, in which Frau Kriete—then Dlle Wüst—had also sung.

† The risky pun requires the explanation, that Reissiger, who was to conduct Beethoven's *Christus am Ölberg*, then lived on the Elbberg.

body of choristers would be accommodated on tiers of seats rising amphitheatrically behind it to a much greater height—an arrangement of equal benefit to the choral effects and the purely symphonic movements. As time pressed, and Wagner knew too well the dilatoriness of his senior colleague (with whom, however, he had already discussed the main outlines of his plan), he simply got Lipinski to endorse it, and begged the management to procure the formal assent of Reissiger—whose only criticism, by the way, was a fear of “terrible draughts when the doors for the chorus were opened.” But the question of expense, estimated by Hänel at 200 thalers, was a serious one: so many apprehensions having already been expressed as to the loss to the Pension-fund, it was impossible to dream of saddling it on that; there was nothing for it, therefore, but to ask the King himself to find the money. Representing that it was a cause in which “he himself would gladly make a sacrifice, were he only somewhat richer than unfortunately was the case,” and pointing out that the Kapelle would thus gain “many an additional opportunity of wooing Your Majesty’s favour,” Wagner was successful in obtaining the sum required; the carpenters at once set to work; the result was all that he had anticipated.

So much for the preliminaries.

At the final rehearsal, practically a first performance, the hall was crowded. There could no longer be a doubt as to the public success of the thing; but—or, unhappily, therefore—Reissiger committed the almost incredible folly of going about among the audience “intriguing against the symphony, and drawing attention to *Beethoven’s* lamentable eccentricity.” Friend Hiller, too, opined that Wagner had gone too far in his modifications of tempo: “How he meant this, I discovered later from his own conducting of spirited orchestral works.” Otherwise there was a general chorus of approval, and it must have been a peculiar satisfaction to Wagner that Niels Gade—who had come over expressly from *Leipzig*, where he was acting as Mendelssohn’s sub-conductor at the Gewandhaus—assured him “that he would willingly have paid the entrance-fee twice over, to hear that recitative of the basses once again” (*P.* VII. 246).

The actual concert took place on April 5, Palm Sunday, attended by all the better-educated populace of Dresden; so

that, in spite of unavoidable extra outlay, the profit to the Pension-fund far exceeded 2000 thalers (£300), a figure never yet approached within a hundred or two. Reissiger's task came first, with Beethoven's *Mount of Olives*; then followed the Ninth Symphony. After so much discussion pro and con, town-talk about colossal preparations, this work had roused the greatest curiosity; but "quite beyond dispute, the general success surpassed all expectation, especially with non-musicians"—as Wagner himself records, with his well-known preference for the non-professional hearer. "Among the latter I remember the philologist Dr Köchly,* who approached me on this occasion to confess that for the first time in his life he had been able to follow a symphonic work from beginning to end with intelligent interest." The day after, he received a visit from Musikdirektor A. F. Anacker, of Freiberg in the Erzgebirge, "who came to make confession that he had previously been one of my antagonists, but after this performance must number himself with my implicit friends; and what had completely overcome him, so he said, was the reading and delivery of that Fugato 'alla Marcia.'"

Not all antagonists, however, were so easy of conversion, and least of all the gentry of the Pen. Though the Leipzig *Deutsche Allgemeine* gives the performance its due meed, the Dresden critics found Wagner's labours in the cause of the Last Symphony "as overweening as superfluous"—according to Tappert, who declares that "the venomous vulgarity of which a man like Schladebach was capable, on this and subsequent occasions, is

* Theodor Köchly, born 1815 at Leipzig, died Dec. 3, 1876, at Trieste. Since 1840 he had been a teacher at the Kreuzschule in Dresden, devoting his leisure hours to philological and philosophic studies. His pamphlet on "Gymnasialreform" (Dresden 1846), and the Dresdener Gymnasialverein he called into being the same year, proclaim his Liberal tendency. In Dec. 1848 he was summoned, together with four of his colleagues, to draw up a set of regulations for all the schools in Saxony; in 1849, as deputy to the Second Saxon Chamber, he was to be found on the Moderate Left. The events of May compelled him, with many another, to turn his back on Germany; from Easter 1851 he became Professor of Greek and Latin Literature at the University of Zurich (where he met Wagner again), and from 1864 at that of Heidelberg. His best-known work is a *Geschichte des griechischen Kriegswesens* (Aarau 1852), in which W. Rüstow collaborated.

too repulsive even to be sampled." * Schladebach himself, however, is obliged, alike in his spiteful article in the *Abendzeitung* and in another in the *Neue Zeitschrift*, to acknowledge the perfection of the rendering in all essential parts, though he offers the conductor the gratuitous advice to "cultivate greater repose in future, and give up the annoying habit of marking time with his foot." Most singular of all, in the *Anzeiger* (the "detestable rubric" paper), coupled with a darkly-phrased attack on Richard Wagner, there is an anonymous warning against the *revolutionary* character of Beethoven's symphony, distinguished by the prophetic words: "Our authorities are to be envied the calmness with which they permit thousands of people to risk body and life on Palm Sunday in the hearing of music whose sounding-board is only waiting for fire or collapse: the pitcher goes once too often to the well." In his *Richard Wagner's geistige Entwicklung* (p. 178) Dr Dinger supplements this quotation with the remark: "Extraordinary! That very platform, which Wagner had had erected in the Old Opera-house expressly for this performance, was literally consumed by fire in the Dresden insurrection of May [1849]; and as Wagner was clambering over the principal barricade in the Wilsdruffer-strasse, to reach his abode, an old barricade-hand called out to him, 'Herr Kapellmeister, the Spark Divine (*Götterfunke*) has caught at last.'" If that copy of the *Anzeiger* ever came to Wagner's notice, we may be sure his only wonder would have been at the philistine contributor's so accurately hitting the right nail on the head; for he writes to Uhlig a few years later, "I'm curious to see if people will track us to the field of Art, to veto all innovatory ideas in that as well. Really they've left us a most damnable playground there, and no doubt will comprehend some day the dangerous use it may be put to. I almost feel inclined to denounce the danger to them, and compel them to place Art, too, under police supervision: I'd wager one soon could make them believe that Literature is nothing to it."

* W. Tappert, "Richard Wagner und die 'Neunte' von Beethoven," *Allg. Musik-Zeitung* 1887, pp. 375 et seq. A characteristic fact may be reproduced from this article: "I possess," says Tappert, "the programmes of the Palm Sunday concerts of 1846, 1847 and 1849. In none of the three is Wagner named. The younger master hid modestly behind the work of the older; a performance worthy of it, was all he had at heart."

But there was a younger generation growing up in Dresden, to whom this performance, equally with Wagner's conducting of Gluck's masterpieces and his own operas, was the very breath of life. Among the listeners to the symphony were young Alexander Ritter, afterwards one of his most enthusiastic adherents (cited a page or two back), with his school-mate Hans von Bülow, who used to doff his cap each time he passed the master's windows in the Ostra-Allee. Bülow's recollections of Wagner and his works go back to the time of the production of *Rienzi*. Eldest son of the well-known Tieckianer, the brilliant author and translator Karl Eduard von Bülow, he had dwelt in Dresden with his parents since the age of twelve; his quickness of apprehension and liveliness of wit had already roused attention, but both his parents looked askance at his passion for music—the old, old tale. In his thirteenth year he attended the first performance of *Rienzi*, under circumstances which he never forgot. On his way to school the boy had often been struck by a figure that outstripped him with short quick steps, but had been unable to discover who it was: *before Rienzi*, what Dresdener knew the artist by sight? He was sitting in the theatre in a state of feverish excitement; this work, this music opened up to him a whole new world. Then something happened to him, for the first and only time in his life. Dazed by sounds and emotions never yet experienced, for one whole act (the third?) he lost all sense of hearing, unable to grasp a note until the curtain fell and woke him from his trance. The author was called for, again and again, with deafening cheers; at last he appeared at the edge of the proscenium, bowing with an air of serious modesty; he was dressed in light brown, accentuating the extraordinary pallor of his cameo-like profile. At once the lad was conscious of the figure he knew so well from his morning trudge to school; gulping down his sobs, his little heart had but one wish, "to throw himself at this man's feet."* Three years and more had passed since then; the oft-renewed impressions of *Rienzi* had been followed by the still more potent stimulus of *Tannhäuser*; and now, on the point of removing with his father to Berlin, soon after the Palm Sunday concert, he could not bear

* As told by Bülow to his daughter Daniela, Frau Dr Thode, on a railway-journey from Dresden to Leipzig in the winter of 1884.

the thought of quitting Dresden without first having made the master's personal acquaintance. Wagner received the youth, just turned sixteen, with kindest cordiality, gave him words of warm encouragement, and wrote in his album: "If in you there glimmers a pure love of Art, be sure 'twill some day burst into true flame; but 'tis knowledge alone, can feed and fan that spark to mighty flame." Simultaneously with Bülow's departure there arrived in Dresden another future dear art-comrade, Ludwig Schnorr von Carolsfeld, a boy of ten years old—his father, the celebrated painter, having lately been appointed Director of the Dresden Academy of Art. In his case half a generation was to pass, ere he met the master face to face; but his residence in the town where Richard Wagner was at work cannot have been without important influence on the expansion of his budding talent.

After so many a tussle, so arduous a task, the impression left on the mind of the originator of the undertaking was one of thankfulness and elevation: "For my own part, this occasion fed the comfortable feeling of force and faculty to carry to a successful issue what I meant in earnest." Even the obstructive Orchestral Committee was fairly conquered, and took good care to get so lucrative a work repeated in the years to come. As it turned out, there were only three years left of Wagner's stay in Dresden; but two of their Palm Sunday concerts, 1847 and 1849, were again distinguished by his conducting of the Choral Symphony. Six weeks after the third performance he had to disappear from Dresden, for political reasons—and the Ninth went to sleep for nine years. Kapellmeister Krebs at last revived it for Palm Sunday 1858; but the difference was too obvious, even to Dresden critics: "At mention of this giant work," says a local paper of those latter days, "who is there before whose soul the image of Richard Wagner does not rise? First on April 5, 1846, and last on April 1, 1849, *his* genius revealed Beethoven's great creation to us. No one has since forgotten the impression." The change of tone is most remarkable, but we hardly know whether to pity or congratulate poor Krebs, that the bandsmen still remembered Wagner's rendering, and stubbornly opposed his sacrilegious beat; for it went the length of Konzertmeister Schubert's openly begging his colleagues to pay no heed to any but *his* tempi, as he

had faithfully preserved the memory of Wagner's, and by them would abide.

To sum up: Through its Dresden performance on Palm Sunday 1846 Beethoven's Last Symphony for the first time came to actual *life*. From that time dates the deeper general understanding of a work too long decried; and no performance worthy of the name has since been given in Germany without at least the Programme, then drawn up by Richard Wagner, having paved the way for the hearer.

VI.

REFORMS AND REJECTIONS.

"Tortures of Inferno." — Fresh financial difficulties. — Memorandum "Concerning the Royal Band." — Summer at Gross-Graupe: Lohengrin music. — Meeting with Spohr. — Accession to the critical ranks: Karl Banck. — Resumption of Tannhäuser performances. — Banquet to Laube. — Hiller's salon: Auerbach and Gutzkow. — Student Hanslick as musical journalist.

Things went pretty ill with me; whatever I attempted, I had to fight for tooth and nail. Somehow I began to think I should probably not die a Dresden Kapellmeister.

RICHARD WAGNER

(Speech at a Dresden banquet, Jan. 1873).

FOR all the pains and opposition it had cost him, the breaking of the ban that lay on Beethoven's grandest creation was a personal solace to the artist, a red-letter day in his Dresden career. It needed something of the kind, to keep his spirits up. Before accepting his appointment he had instinctively rebelled against the thought of binding himself down, for daily bread, to sacrifice the prime of his manhood on the rehearsing of operas whose utter emptiness none knew so plainly as himself. At the beginning of this very 1846 he had been obliged to return to its Bohemian composer, August Heller, an opera by the name of *Zamora*, received on approval; to his regret he could not honestly endorse it for production.* Not to wound the feelings of the

* Unfortunately the opera was not literally returned just yet. Heller had written that "some one" would fetch it; but that some-one never came, and so the thing was gradually forgotten. At last, nearly five years later, the composer wrote to Wagner in Zurich indignantly demanding back his work ("it was only a pianoforte score," says Wagner), and hinting that Wagner "wished to commit an artistic theft on him"! The little tiff was settled by the final discovery of the score among a mass of musical odds and ends left behind at Dresden. See *Letters to Uhlig etc.* pp. 343 and 346.

author, on Jan. 20 he had written to the music-historian Ambros in Prague, known to him through friend Kittl, with the request to act as palliator and offer a decent apology, "perhaps the most usual one, of which I myself have had so much experience, that the repertory is filled up for a long time to come, and one can't commit oneself to fresh engagements."

January 25, 1846, came the last performance of *Tannhäuser* for the present, since when the programme had been blocked in every direction by a dearth of prima-donnas. In the middle of February Johanna Wagner, accompanied by her father Albert, left Dresden for six months in Paris, sent thither by the management to take a course of finishing lessons under Emanuel Garcia; in her absence it was useless to think of *Tannhäuser*. Then Schröder-Devrient's two-years contract came to end, and once more she bade farewell to Dresden, appearing as "Armida" (March 5, the birthday of the Gluck-adoring King) and "Alceste" (under Reissiger), and finally on March the 31st as "Fidelio." Tichatschek, too, was on tour; for all Wagner's efforts to counteract the plague of leaves-of-absence in the middle of the season seem to have been in vain. So the Dresden Opera went floundering on as best it might, with Donizetti in all degrees, from *Lucrezia Borgia* to the *Elisir d'Amore*, from *Lucia* to the *Fille du Régiment*. Not that it meant any reprieve for the conductor and his men, as may be judged from what he writes some twenty years thereafter: "I believe the abuses practised on artistic forces at such an opera-house are comparable with no other. Among the sorest memories of my life I count the experiences reaped in my own person, and more especially by the members of the orchestra, under similar conditions. Reflect that the personnel of a first-class band consists, for no little part, of the only truly musically-cultured members of an operatic company; bear in mind what this means with *German* musicians, familiar with the flower of all musical art in the works of our great German masters: and *these* are the people employed for the most degrading uses of art-industry, on hundred-fold rehearsals of the musically-emptiest operas! For my part, I avow that in such a treadmill in my time, suffering alike in myself and with others, I have often learnt to mock the torments of Dante's damned" (*P. III.* 367).

Then we have the melancholy plight into which he had been dragged by the publication of his operas at his own risk. After

the phenomenal success of *Rienzi* at Dresden he had certainly been justified in counting on a rapid spread of his works: the inexplicable failure of his hopes placed him in the most awkward predicament. To make matters worse, ill luck had led him to a publisher whose "boundless incapacity for managing his business" became a constant source of worry. "With this poor timorous creature," he writes to Fischer five years later, "I have had to go through no small trouble. Oh! that it ever occurred to me, to wish to turn an honest penny by my compositions! That's when the fat fell into the fire." Again: "This man made my last few years in Dresden a living torture. I can truthfully say, a large share of the torments that I have ever endured, bears the name of 'Meser.'" And, at the very time he was up to his eyes in preparing for the Ninth Symphony, the wretched people who had advanced a portion of the capital for the publishing enterprise demanded back their money, bringing on a highly inopportune crisis, the consequences of which could not fail to react on his private purse. Nor was his purse the only thing they reacted on. With this incident began the stream perennial of malignant gossip about his monetary affairs. In a city so inquisitive as Dresden, it was impossible to conceal the efforts he was making to relax the pinch; so the Kapellmeister's pocket now became the subject of far livelier interest than his baton, to the huge delight of his open and secret foes. At last his friend and doctor Pusinelli strongly counselled him to clap an extinguisher on these blazing mendacities by a word or two in print, whereupon Wagner wrote him the following:—

DEAR FRIEND,

You urge me to do something to stop the town-gossip so unparalleledly busy just now with my affairs. Jean Paul once forgathered with Goethe, and they fell a-talking of the shameless slanders which at various times had spread about them; Jean Paul declared he would take no step against such cackle—at least until he was accused of stealing the silver spoons; Goethe replied that even in that case he would do nothing. Though I, alas! can compare myself in no respect with a man like Goethe, I nevertheless permit myself to follow him in opposing nothing but the most supreme contempt to an odious tittle-tattle that, the higher it mounts in its foolishness, the earlier must subside on its own want of basis. After what you told me yesterday, there really seems no extravagance

left to invent; and, unless we are to suppose people will go the length of making out I've shot myself or jumped into the water, this gossip must have pretty near come to the end of its rope. As it is, I'm quite touched by the untiring interest paid to my puny person, even though it takes the form of inventions, exaggeration, and spreading of rumours that under certain circumstances might haply turn out to my damage. If you think it would do me no harm to make this sentiment known to my friends, you are at liberty, just as you please, to get these lines inserted in the 'Anzeiger.'

Your R. W.

Dresden, 16 March 1846.

Pusinelli did think it advisable, and accordingly this gem of a Retort Courteous appeared in the "detestable rubric" on March 18—just six days before the first of those Beethovenian Jottings—with a postscript by the worthy physician himself:—

The recipient of the above lines believes he is acting equally in the interest of truth and right, and in that of his sorely injured friend, at the same time that he woos the thanks of all who wish well to the latter, by making use of the permission granted him and giving the above communication over to publicity. A. P.

Turning from the winds of Rumour to the solid ground of fact, the harassed artist managed to procure assistance from the Court-theatre, though not without humiliating petition and stipulation of a good stiff interest. For this advance, principally devoted to defraying the costs of the *Tannhäuser* score, "strictly speaking the King himself, and no one else, was my creditor," as he says in a letter of 1851 to Uhlig. How von Lüttichau exploited the situation in the long run, we shall subsequently ascertain; for this "advance" plays a sinister rôle in Wagner's relations with the Dresden Intendanz. For the present it gave him sufficient ease of mind to prosecute that great achievement which formed the subject of last chapter, but made it doubly necessary to leave no stone unturned to get his operas taken up outside: a task for Sisypus.

After Berlin, where matters were in a chronic state of suspended animation, it was Vienna to which he turned his eyes. From here, as we have seen, he had received an offer two or three years back, through the publishing firm of Mechetti, to write an opera expressly for the theatre by the Kärnthnerthor:

whether seriously entertained or not, the proposal had long since vanished in the sand. Last year, however, Director Potrimpos—no, no!—Pokorny had come to Dresden on purpose to treat with him about a personally-conducted performance of *Rienzi* in the Spring of 1846; and we also hear of a Herr Löffler, a pensioner of the King of Prussia residing in Vienna, who took an active interest in Wagner and his works, particularly as against his Viennese opponents. On the other side stood Kapellmeister Nicolai: some little while since he had sent in an opera to the Dresden theatre, but, the King having heard it elsewhere, and disliked it, it had not been accepted; a matter with which Wagner had nothing whatever to do, though Nicolai appeared disposed to play the game of tit-for-tat on the supposed author of this refusal,—on such petty pivots did the fortunes of most of Wagner's operas hinge. However, as Tichatschek was engaged for a fairly long turn at the Vienna Court-opera in May, Wagner addressed himself on March 22 to Liszt,* who then was staying in Vienna, begging him to do what he could to get this splendid chance embraced, at the same time sending him the scores of *Rienzi* and *Tannhäuser*. As Liszt was by now an active, though distant friend of his cause, it may be presumed that he used his utmost influence in this matter; but nothing came of it. Nevertheless, the despatch of the scores was not in vain; that of *Tannhäuser* fell on good soil, and bore fruit at Weimar three years later.

Vienna and its shelved *Rienzi* was capped by Leipzig with a piecrust *Dutchman*. The Director of the town-theatre, Dr Schmidt, asked Wagner for that score, for purposes of mounting, thereby causing him to undergo the premature labour of a careful revision of its instrumentation, in the light of practice gained with *Tannhäuser*. This remodelled score was duly sent to Leipzig—where it reposed in dusty idleness for six long years, till at last in 1852 its author reclaimed it for Zurich. Before transmitting it to Leipzig, Wagner had temporarily lodged it at the home note-copying bureau, to have the *Dresden band-parts* brought into line—an equal jump into futurity; for, although he now possessed in Anton Mitterwurzer the very man for “the Holländer,” the Dresden management was so indifferent that he

* The third letter in their published correspondence.

never was given a chance of rehabilitating his own opera there. How much he felt the slight thus cast on this earlier work, is proved by many a scrap of table-conversation of the period: "About this time," says Gustav Kietz, "I happened to meet at Wagner's a Leipzig writer—I forget his name—a play of whose had recently been hissed off the Leipzig boards. He went into tragical particulars about the horrible sensation it gave him, to have to sit quiet in a houseful of stamping and whistling protesters. The scant success of the *Flying Dutchman* having been the last topic discussed, Wagner replied that that made no difference,—one must just take one's drubbing, and not be scared from setting valiantly to work again."

Truly, "setting to work again" was his only comfort in the circumstances; there was little to find in his official duties. Instead of the healthy blood he had promised himself to infuse by degrees into an institute in which he remained in fact the only really quickening spirit, he had found it barely possible to stir a foot because of that same callousness and want of enterprise which had sluggishly condemned his *Dutchman* to oblivion. All that he had been able to effect hitherto, was a good performance now and then; no radical reorganisation had as yet been feasible. So he set to work this winter season and devoted the three months (Dec. '45 to Feb. '46) prior to the Ninth Symphony exploit to reviewing all the lessons of his three-years tilth, and embodying the results in a clear and comprehensive memorandum. Going conscientiously into every detail, and weighing all contingencies, re-casting some of his subdivisions twice, thrice, and even four times over, at last he had finished his draft to his liking, and, subscribing it with the date March 1, deposited it with the General Direction under the title "Die Königliche Kapelle betreffend"—"Concerning the Royal Band." It was accompanied by a letter in which occur these lines: "Whatever may be the fate of this work, at least I cherish the warranted hope that, in spite of its length, it will be found worthy of minute examination. Should it fall to my lot, thus to win Your Excellency's kind opinion that I am not unfit to be asked for advice in the organising of artistic institutions, I should consider myself truly happy to be given the future opportunity of turning my thoughts in a similar manner to proposals for the welfare of the *second* establishment under Your

Excellency's orders, so far as that concerns the *Opera*. Whilst recognising the far greater difficulty in the organising of an operatic personnel, I may prefigure that in such a work I should direct my chief attention to reducing the outlay upon singers' salaries as much as possible, since in this disproportionate expense every man of insight is compelled to see the impending ruin of all theatres; an expense that already makes any proper consideration for other, no less important factors in the whole art-institute extremely difficult, as it threatens in itself to swallow all the means required therefor."*

The memorandum dealt with evils of an urgent nature. Nothing but the apathy of a Reissiger could so long have calmly tolerated the yearly squandering of the excellent material in the Royal Kapelle on operatic performances of all degrees of mediocrity, with never an opportunity of really distinguishing itself. According to Wagner's proposals, senseless old traditions were to give place to a proper division of labour, to be crowned by the institution of a series of grand orchestral concerts every winter in a suitable concert-hall—a point already suggested in his requisitions for the Ninth Symphony: "Should such an orchestra not be employed, for all time to come, at other than the so-called Palm Sunday concerts?" Here he looked for a threefold advantage: the establishment of first-class concerts at frequent intervals, under the King's protection and free from the speculative element, must be of the greatest educational benefit to the Dresden public; the members of the band would gain at once a wider field for exercise of their abilities; and he himself would reap, not only new zest for his routine duties, but fresh authority and his sovereign's encouragement to hammer away at other much-needed reforms. It would appear, however, that Herr von Lüttichau was by no means of a kindred mind: in minor matters, special cases, such as that of the improvement of the platform at

* For this the greed of singers was less to blame, than the rivalry of stage-directors. About this time, for instance, the actress Fräulein Bayer produced to Lüttichau a letter from Berlin, in which she was told she might ask whatever salary she chose and be sure of engagement. And in a letter of 1849 Tichatschek apprises Lüttichau that he has an offer from Berlin guaranteeing him the sum of 36,000 thlr (over £5000) at the end of eight years' service, in addition to his salary meantime. (R. Prölss, *Gesch. des Dresd. Hoftheaters*: p. 510.)

the Old Operahouse, he was not so inaccessible ; but when it came to anything like submitting to His Majesty a sweeping plan of radical reorganisation, he had compunctions born of mental density and jealous conservatism. It is the Reformer's way, in whatever province, to see affairs with other eyes than those in whose clammy hands they have rusted ; his aims and objects are too remote from their horizon to be appreciated at their true value ; too often his only reward is a character for vain presumption. No: Lüttichau thought he had gone far enough, when he let Wagner brush aside the cobwebs from the Choral Symphony ; in all conscience, that was innovation sufficient for the present ; the pace must not be forced.

"Concerning the Royal Kapelle" was handed in at the beginning of March ; the decision dragged on till the summer,—when it was postponed until autumn. Rejected? O dear no! Things like this need most careful deliberation, minute inquiry into all their bearings ; and that in the vortex of a theatrical season! Then, all the members of that ponderous, though rather nebulous body, the Generaldirektion, must fire their shot at it, particularly one's colleague Reissiger, so slow of aim. Nor was it the only case of irritating dalliance, this same half-year. Full many are the sighs that found their way just now to paper, in the artist's private correspondence : "The fight with dulness in authority and ignorance in high places, is the very thing that makes our life so hard," he writes to Spohr. "Whom ought one to pity most? These lordlings in lion's skins, who expose themselves to ridicule at every step—or the artists who suffer under their absurdities?"* Soon afterwards he breathes the same complaint to friend Gaillard of Berlin : "I have put behind me one of the most odious winters in all my life. Envy, malice, silliness, and deadly slowness in the expansion of my outward sphere of action, have been the foes with whom I've daily had to

* Mention has already been made (p. 86 *antea*) of Spohr's *Die Kreuzfahrer*. This opera had been performed with continued success at Brunswick, Berlin and Cassel, and von Lüttichau himself had begged the score. Nevertheless the production had been deferred and deferred through fourteen dragging months, and finally the score returned in a dog-eared state, without either a fee or the textbook in which Spohr had inserted numerous directions in his own hand. In his letter of refusal von Lüttichau alleged as reason, that the work had lost the *spice of novelty* and its subject might *cause offence from a religious standpoint*. For once in a way the high and mighty Intendant had

wage that ghastly battle in which the attacked must use the greatest circumspection in his self-defence, though he feel so plainly that he owns the strength to conquer boldly in the open. . . . To bear tyrannic thralldom is bad enough : but what's more shameful than to have to shrug one's shoulders and edge away from idiocy and ignorance, maybe just thrusting out one's tongue behind their back ?”

And so the summer of 1846 came round. Scarcely could he himself say for certain whether his state of health were the cause of his low spirits, or they the ground of his feeling so unwell : perhaps it was a little of both. A few tiny business-trips had to be taken about this time to Leipzig, giving him the chance of seeing his good old mother off and on. Laube tells us of one of these trips, when he had been present at a reading of *Lohengrin* by Wagner in the house of his sister (Ottilie ?) : “We were all struck with the choice of subject and its musical atmosphere.” As to another, young Kietz records a touching trait. One day, according to the long-standing arrangement, he presented himself at table at the usual hour, but found Minna alone, who informed him that her husband had been obliged to start off suddenly for Leipzig : “On such occasions,” so she said, “he had been most strange of late ; leave-taking came so hard to him. To-day, for instance, he couldn't tear himself away at all, and still kept beckoning from the street below—then a sudden impulse seized him ; he turned back, rushed upstairs, and bade the tenderest farewell once more ; and when at last he did set out, kept blowing kisses till he vanished round the corner of the Zwinger.” In this we clearly see a recrudescence of the feeling that possessed him during the latter stages of the composition of *Tannhäuser* a year ago, “lest a sudden death should stay his hand”—that “*Todesahnung*” put into the mouth of his Wolfram in its third act, possibly at the very time. Nor need there be much

caught a tartar ; for Spohr, with no more than righteous indignation, replied that it was not *his* fault the thing had been allowed to grow so stale, and neither at Cassel nor Berlin, nor anywhere in Germany as a play, had the text given the slightest offence : “Wherefore the insult I have received remains wholly inexplicable to me, and I can only console myself with the reflection that it is the solitary instance of its kind in all my long artistic life, and rejoice at not standing under an Intendanz that shews so little respect for an artist's sense of honour” (*Louis Spohr's Selbstbiographie* II. pp. 303-5).

doubt, but that this happily-unrealised presentiment was the result of a longing such as he tells us he experienced some year and a half later: "Never was the ghastly curb imposed by modern Art and modern Life on a man's free heart more plain to me. Was there any possible outlet for a single-handed man, save—Death?" (*P.* I. 350). The impotence forced on him by his Dresden shackles was enough to hebetate a man of less resilience: "Where the fulfilment of desire is unnaturally checked, i.e. activity hindered, there is suffering; but where fulfilment is wholly denied to desire, there is Death," we read in one of those undated jottings found among his posthumous papers (*P.* VIII. 371). It faithfully reflects his state of mind during the last three years of his Dresden engagement, which may be characterised as nothing less than a criminal abuse of his matchless creative, constructive and executive powers by those in authority, coupled with a direct assault on his bodily strength.

The condition of his health just now is proved by his obtaining a three-months leave of absence, "to breathe again as man and artist" in the fresh tranquillity of Saxon Switzerland, three leagues from Dresden. Towards the middle of the month of May he escaped to a little hamlet called Gross-Graupe, between Pillnitz and Pirna, to draw a transient curtain of oblivion between himself and city, theatre, and press. "Thank God, I'm in the country,"—he writes to Gaillard in a letter of May 21, from which we have already made an extract. "My King has shewn me a great kindness, in granting me so long a leave. I'm living in a totally inviolate village,—I'm the *first townsman* who has ever hired a room here. So I have every hope this rustic life will mend my health and spirits. I go for walks, lie about in the woods, read, eat and drink, and try to forget all music-making." Alack! this selfsame letter has the mournful words: "Do you know what money troubles are? Lucky you, if you *don't!*" Even in his rural retirement, then, he was not permitted to shake off such squalid cares.

Among the various visitors who now enlivened, now disturbed his solitude, especially of a Sunday, young Kietz is the only one whose recollections afford a fair idea of Wagner's life in these surroundings: The house, in the upper storey of which the master lodged, was not precisely in the village, but a little way

out in the direction of Pirna, amid the most delightful scenery. "My first visit to Wagner's summer retreat is stamped on my mind by the fact of my having just entered the porch of a house, to inquire exactly where the Kapellmeister dwelt, when I was electrified by hearing strains from *Tannhäuser* float down from the upper landing. A flight of sandstone steps led up to an ante-room, where a grand piano was stationed, as the only place available; there sat Wagner's sister-in-law, the mother of Johanna, playing the Pilgrims' Chorus. Wagner himself was out on his Sunday-morning ramble toward the wooded heights of Pillnitz; so I went to meet him. Presently I saw him in the distance, his face completely shadowed by an enormous-brimmed white straw-hat, which became him admirably. He was in the company of a gentleman from Königsberg [perhaps a member of the "Mucker" sect], and astonished me by repeatedly addressing him as 'Dear brother in Christo.' At table this gentleman had to tell our host and hostess all the news of Königsberg acquaintances, but left us after dinner on his return-journey to Dresden. The ladies then descended to the garden, to see after coffee, which we were to take in the arbour. Wagner remained sitting awhile on the sofa, to the vexation of Peps, who kept pawing and barking at him in its impatience to go down. All at once, with that inimitable irony of his, he looked steadfastly at the dog, and asked it, 'Why do you bark at the great Richard Wagner?'—More than thirty years afterwards I visited the house again, and the whole scene returned to me as if it were yesterday; even the little nook behind the barn, with its fruit-trees and its glorious outlook on the mountains, was still unaltered; the little footpath leading through the meadows to the hills above, by which the master returned from his walk that day, is still the same."*

During this holiday at Gross-Graupe the artist relieved his idleness by sketching out the music for his *Lohengrin*, and indulging in his favourite pastime, reading. Since his return

* Since July 27, 1894—the date of the first Bayreuth performance of *Lohengrin*—the house bears a marble tablet, erected by the narrator and his relatives, the united families Kietz-Geisberg. Its inscription runs: "In diesem Hause entwarf | RICHARD WAGNER | im Sommer 1846 die Musik zum | LOHENGRIN. | Errichtet im Jahre der ersten | 'Lohengrin'-Aufführung in Bayreuth 1894."

from Paris, where Lehrs had furnished him with the incentive, his principal study had been that of German antiquity. His private library had been discriminatingly enlarged in this direction ; what books he could not buy himself, he diligently hunted up at the Royal State-library, to all the librarians of which (we may remember that original, Hofrath Grässe) he was a familiar figure. Very few professional Germanists can have been better-versed in the legendary lore of the Teutonic races, their ancient customs, speech and usages, than the poet of *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* ; and this profound intimacy with old German feudal and judicial rites, stamped on the work from one end to the other, gives *Lohengrin* that peculiar flavour of reality which marks it out from all other libretti. "In order to convey the outlines of the story in complete accordance with the effect it had made on myself, I observed a still greater fidelity, than in the case of *Tannhäuser*, in my presentment of those half-historical, half-legendary features by which alone a subject so remote from the beaten track could be brought with due conviction to the responsive senses. In the conduct of the scenes and dialogue this led me to a path that was ultimately to open to me possibilities, the logical pursuit of which involved an entire change in the relation of the factors that had hitherto made up our operative vehicle" (*P. I.* 345).

It is probably to such studies as these at Gross-Graupe, that we owe the present form of the *Lohengrin* text—save for minor variants when it came to the detailed musical setting, and one or two longer omissions after the words had all been set. Within the past few years a highly interesting document has come to light, at least to a passing glimpse thereof, namely a manuscript copy of the original text with various corrections. We can only call it a glimpse of light, for, as usual with these autographs put up for sale, it is impossible to say in whose secretive hands the relic now reposes. However, the facts we borrow from Liepmannsohn's Autograph Catalogue of Nov. 18, 1895, are something to our purpose. There the manuscript is described as a Text-book of *Lohengrin*, consisting of 48 pages quarto, evidently written out by some amanuensis, but with numerous corrections and a complete title-page in Wagner's hand: "This first version," so the salesman tells us, "contains over a *hundred and sixty* more verses than the final one, but lacks about *sixty* verses that exist

in the latter. Moreover some fifty verses, common to the two, differ either in style or contents. The specification of the *scenarios* [stage-directions on the larger scale is for a large part revised, in part *entirely departs* from the first version. The principal changes are in the first scene of the first act (the Herald's call and King Henry's long address—25 instead of 19 lines—being completely different), and in the third [the closing] scene of the last act. Lohengrin's narration, 'In fernem Land, unnahbar euren Schritten,' is almost double as long in the first as in the second version. From Ortrud's entry, 'Fahr' heim, fahr' heim, du stolzer Helde,' the earlier version has 55 verses, which are reduced in the later to 18. A long account by Ortrud, of how and why she changed Gottfried into a swan, has been omitted," and so forth.*—Now, we know that the text had been read aloud six months before this holiday: at no other than the present time, would the author have had sufficient leisure to think out such extensive changes; nor would any occasion have been so likely to prompt them, as that of his actual commencement of the musical sketch, after an interval filled up by other thoughts and cares.

The present studies were prolific in more than one direction. A few pages farther on in the *Communication* its author says, "Even during the composition of *Lohengrin*, amidst which I always felt as if resting by an oasis in the desert, the subjects of *Siegfried* and *Friedrich Rothbart* had usurped my fancy" (*P. I.* 357). Old Barbarossa must certainly have met him in his inquiry into medieval German usage; and, if Jakob Grimm was consulted once more about the Swan-knight—as we may almost take for granted—what more natural than that Grimm's "youth who knew not fear" should have come to his mind as he lay in the summer forest communing with Nature? In the following extract from a letter to his mother, written shortly after Wagner's return to Dresden, there is in fact a passage that seems to stamp Gross-Graue as Young Siegfried's birthplace:—

"Whenever I feel so driven or retarded by the world, striving ever, seldom reaping full success, often a prey to vexation at

* Such is the exasperatingly deficient account, in the best sense I have been able to unravel from the salesman's jargon. Neither the manuscript's precise date, nor the extent to which the said changes are represented by the autograph "corrections," is it possible to fix without a personal inspection.—W. A. E.

failure—then nothing but a taste of *Nature* can refresh me. Often as I have cast myself with tears and bitter cries into her arms, she has always comforted and raised me up, shewing me how imaginary are the sorrows that afflict us. If we strive too high, then Nature lovingly reminds us that we are but parts of her, sprung from her like these trees, these plants, that germinate, shoot up, and sun themselves, drink in the strengthening breeze, and neither wither nor decay until they've shed the seed of future trees and plants, and so the thing created-once lives on in ever-renovated youth. And if I feel myself so intimate a part of Nature—how quickly vanishes all personal egoism, how we are forced to smile at all those curious wriggings and perversities of our Human Society, that tortures itself to devise abstractions, by which those kindly bonds of Nature so often are confounded, rent or torn. . . . 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, listen to some dear woodbird's song, till a tear rolls down one's cheek unchecked for very happiness"—is not this his own Young Siegfried dreaming of his unknown mother?

In the second half of June his rustication was set off by another trip to his native city, at the pressing invitation of Spohr, who had long desired to make the younger master's personal acquaintance; a wish most cordially reciprocated. Spohr was just starting for Carlsbad with his wife, and proposed to break the journey for a few days at Leipzig; Wagner, on his side, was most anxious to explain by word of mouth how powerless he had been in that affair of *Die Kreuzfahrer*. For that matter, there were mutual explanations to be rendered; since Spohr had intended to produce *Tannhäuser* at Cassel in honour of the Elector's birthday, but his sovereign lord had inexorably forbidden it.*

Of the episodes of this encounter we are given a tolerably full account in Spohr's own memoirs, based on letters of the time †: "As Wagner embraced the idea with alacrity, and

* It was not till 1853, i.e. *seven* years later, that Spohr's proposal took effect.

† *Louis Spohr's Selbstbiographie* (2 vols., Cassel and Göttingen, Georg H. Wigand, 1860-1) II. 305-7; see also pages 271-3 for the Cassel rehearsals and performance of the *Holländer*, and pages 303-6 for Spohr's personal relations with Wagner.

arrived in Leipzig on the day appointed, the long-wished personal acquaintance was made to the greatest satisfaction of both parties. The first evening we had a musical party at Hauptmann's"—no friend of Wagner's, by the way. Friend Mendelssohn, of course, was present; a trio of his and one of Spohr's were played, with the co-operation of both their composers. We hear nothing of the conversation turning on the *Tannhäuser*-overture fiasco of a few months previously; presumably the topic was glided over as gracefully as possible, with the assistance of an invitation to Mendelssohn's house the next evening. But we are anticipating by a few hours. "Next day a most interesting dinner was given in Spohr's honour [we must imagine his *wife* to be speaking] by Wagner's brother-in-law Professor Hermann Brockhaus, as he himself had no home in Leipzig. There we made acquaintance with his sister and several other relatives, all intellectual people, and passed a very enjoyable time. Besides the family [which would include the dear old mother] there was also present the author Heinrich Laube, with his extremely well-read wife, who still further enlivened the conversation. *Wagner* himself pleased us best; on each occasion he appears more amiable, and we are still more struck with the many-sidedness of his culture. Among other things, he expressed himself on political topics with a zeal and warmth that truly surprised us, and delighted us the more, as he naturally spoke in the most Liberal tone."* That evening was spent at the Mendelssohns, "who did all they could to make Spohr happy." The account goes on to speak of "the wealth and luxury" displayed in the Mendelssohn house and its appointments, but does not forget "the charming unassumingness" of the host's demeanour. Mendelssohn played with great dash his Variations Sérieuses, considered by the Spohrs "unparalleledly difficult"; then came two of Spohr's Quartets, one of them being the Thirtieth, just published—Wagner and Mendelssohn are represented as following the score "with looks of rapture." Probably this bending over the same sheets of music is the "musiziren" referred-to in

* Spohr's own political sentiments are reflected in the remark he appends (when getting on for seventy) to his Sextet, op. 140, on registering it among his compositions: "Written in March and April 1848, at the time of the glorious Folk-revolution for the reawakening of the Freedom, Unity and Greatness of Germany."

Wagner's more general reminiscence : " We met, ate, and even musicked together once in Leipzig " (*P.* VI. 317) ; " once," but no oftener, the Christianised Jew fighting shy of the pure-bred German as if he feared the tempest of an elemental nature. " Frau Doktor Frege [see i. 151] sang a few of Spohr's arias, which Mendelssohn accompanied to perfection. And so, between music and stimulating talk, the hours slipped enjoyably by, till midnight came upon us unawares and warned us to break up. Upon leaving, Wagner bade also goodbye to us, having to start for Dresden next morning ; which grieved us just as deeply as himself. Even after his departure, however, we still were very busy with him ; for he left us a newly-written opera-text, his *Lohengrin*, which is highly original and attractive."*

Wagner's own account of this first and sole encounter is quite as appreciative, though far briefer than Spohr's. In a letter of July 6 to Ferdinand Heine, whom he is pressing to come to him for a week before that month is over, he says : " So I've managed, after all, to stay unmolested in the country for the last few weeks, barring the interruption necessitated by my visit to Spohr at Leipzig. I was much delighted with the upright, unsophisticated ancient ; he, too, was visibly pleased at my having followed his invitation." It has often been remarked that this kindness of Spohr's to Wagner is singular in a musician who confessedly had no understanding for the Beethoven even of the second period, and positively disliked the style of Weber ; it is still more singular that he should have been, not only the first to give an opera of Wagner's a hearing outside Dresden, but the only musician of repute who at that time treated him with any cordiality—a time, be it remembered, when there could be no refuge for other composers in the excuse that he had alienated their sympathy by his polemical writings. The secret must be sought in Spohr's own nature : his giant stature, often compared

* June 25, subsequently to Wagner's departure, Mendelssohn got up a special Gewandhaus soirée in honour of Spohr, consisting exclusively of this master's compositions, from the overture to *Faust* to the *Weihe der Töne*. The guest would far rather have remained a mere listener, but towards the end of the concert Mendelssohn insisted on his mounting the platform ; after thanking the orchestra for its services, he conducted the last two movements of his symphony, long a cheval de bataille of the Leipzig band, with all the fire of youth. (Dr E. Kneschke, *Gesch. der Leipz. Gewandhaus-Conzerte* p. 87 ; also *Spohr's Selbstbiographie* II. 307-8.)

to that of an aboriginal Hun, and the handsome features of his manly face, were an index to the Teuton single-mindedness of his noble character. Modest to a degree in his outward bearing, he would brook no slight upon his dignity as artist; but what he claimed for himself in this respect, he gladly dispensed to others; above all else, *he knew no envy*. Thus lived he in the memory of the younger man, who raised to him in 1859 a monument more durable than bronze, in the Eulogy inspired by the news of Spohr's death: "There has left us the last of that line of noble, earnest musicians, whose youth was still illumined by the immediate rays of Mozart's sun; who nursed with touching loyalty, like Vestal virgins, the sacred flame committed to their charge. . . . He was an earnest, upright master of his art; the mainstay of his life was belief in that. And this earnest faith made him free from every kind of pettiness: what he could not take the measure of, he left aside, as foreign to him, without attack or persecution. This was that coldness and asperity so often cast in his teeth. But what he understood (and a deep and delicate sense of beauty must surely be accorded the creator of *Jessonda*) he loved and prized without reserve, providing he perceived one thing therein: sincerity, earnest dealing with art. There lay the bond which, even in advanced old age, united him to the new art-efforts; they might be strange to him, but never hostile. Honour, then, our Spohr; homage to his memory! Faithful following of his example!" (*P. III. 147*).

Returned to his country haven, with summer skies and splendid weather inviting to long rambles, the work at *Lohengrin* made rapid progress; six years later, an exile in the greater Switzerland, he recalls these roamings in its Saxon namesake: "I know nearly all the country thereabout—at Dittersbach (on Schönhöhe) I've Lohengrined." Like all his "composition-drafts" down to act iii of *Siegfried*—nearly a quarter of a century hence—this is almost exclusively a one-line sketch, even for the most complicated sections of the music; merely here and there is a second note or sign thrown in on the vacant lines and spaces, as guide to future development*—so implicitly could Wagner rely on his

* The last time we heard of these precious sheets, they were safe in the hands of Herr Kommerzienrath Adolf von Gross of Bayreuth, with whose permission a facsimile of several pages was published some few years back in a Cologne musical journal.

memory. Alike in text and music, the draft, as already hinted, presents numerous variants from the finished setting. There are even a few paralipomena, one of the most interesting being a strophe put into the mouth of that silent character, young Gottfried von Brabant; a farewell addressed to the waters on which he had erewhile sailed as swan. Preserved by the accident of the composer's having inscribed them in a lady's album,* the lines run as follows:

Leb' wohl, du wil-de Was-ser-fluth, die mich so weit ge-tra-gen hat! Leb' Am

wohl, du Wel-le blank und rein, durch die mein weiss Ge-fie-der glitt! Am

U-fer hartt mein Schwesterlein, das muss von mir ge-trö-stet sein.

At this time he had not the smallest apprehension that his latest work would be refused a Dresden hearing, and we may take it that he figured to himself the following cast: "Lohengrin," Tichatschek; "Elsa," Johanna Wagner; "Telramund," Mitterwurzer; and "Ortrud"—there being no likelihood of the Devrient's return—Frau Henriette Kriete. At anyrate, although Frau Kriete lacked the temperament appropriate to this empress

* Frau Lydia Steche, of Plagwitz near Leipzig. A. Naubert published this *trouville* in the *Allg. Musik-Zeitung* of 1893, pp. 72-3, under the title "Ein bisher ungedrucktes Stückchen Lohengrin." The family resemblance to Lohengrin's own farewell to the swan is so marked that one needs no telling, to name the work the fragment comes from. It may be true, as Naubert says, that Wagner omitted this strophe for fear "no management would give a part of barely 12 bars to any but an inferior singer; whereas, at this imposing climax, anything below an absolutely first-rate voice would spoil the general effect"; but it is certain that the master had fears of something else, namely of spinning out this closing scene too much. *Before* the production at Weimar, he cast adrift the twenty lines of text that formed the peroration of Lohengrin's recital, "Nun höret auch, wie ich zu euch gekommen," etc., together with a two-line chorus immediately preceding them—though, owing to some accident, they seem to have figured in the first performance; see Letters 32, 38 and 41 to Liszt, and 24 to Uhlig.

of dæmonic hate, he had written to her husband on April 26—just three weeks after the Palm Sunday concert—sending the *Lohengrin* poem for perusal, and “begging your good wife to bestow especial notice on the second act.” It was she, also, to whom he applied to undertake the part of Venus in a reprise of *Tannhäuser*, immediately after his return to Dresden.*

That return took place at the beginning of August. His holiday was over; the burden of soul-wearying duties must be shouldered once more. August 6 he had to conduct a performance of *Figaro* for the preparation of which, as he says himself, he “had been able to do as good as nothing”: comparing dates, we may well believe him. During his absence the ranks of Dresden journalism had been increased by the foundation of a *Dresdener Tageblatt*, with Otto Banck as critic of the drama, literature and plastic art, and his brother Carl, Wagner’s old acquaintance, as ticker-off of musical mistakes. Carl Banck seems to have started with the stoic principle of being cruel to be kind; at anyrate he very successfully “dissembled his love” by metaphorically kicking Wagner downstairs. This *Figaro* performance was his first chance of saying a word in Dresden about his former friend’s conducting, and he said it with a vengeance, proving, in Wagner’s words, that “God-knows-what personal disinclination had saddled him with yet another captious adversary for the whole term of the latter’s reportership.” It was fatal to Wagner’s relations with this gentleman, that Carl Banck arrived in Dresden while he himself was away; for Banck appears to have been pounced upon meantime, and inoculated with the strongest virus of the Schladebach-Reissiger clique. In his report on that *Figaro* performance he consequently has the impudence, against the experience of every judge worth naming, to allege as “an apparently ineradicable evil, that the conductor takes scarcely any tempo firmly or aright,” and sapiently accounts for his mare’s-nest by the remark that “a substitution of the up-beat for the down-beat, coupled with general vagueness, may contribute to this shiftiness of time” —just as if the band had not been sitting under Wagner’s baton

* See a letter to Frau Kriete herself, reproduced in Tonger’s *Musikzeitung* 1887, p. 210, together with that to her husband just-cited—which latter, it should be remarked, is there erroneously referred to *Siegfried’s Tod*.

long enough, in all conscience, to get used to whatever idiosyncrasies there may have been in his method. However, the source of Banck's distaste is but thinly concealed, for he goes on to suggest that "so complete an upsetting of tempi might easily be avoided in future, if the conductor would only follow the traditions still faithfully preserved by older musicians"—one can but smile at the notion of a Wagner taking a Reissiger for model!

For once in a way the victim determined to enter the lists in person, and "let in light on certain matters which, even were a public champion to stand up for me, could be cleared by no one more explicitly than by myself." He literally had to pay for it, though, as there was no other journal open to him save the business-like *Anzeiger*, in which there accordingly appeared on August 14 his lengthy article entitled "Artist and Critic, with reference to a special case." * Starting with the general axiom that an artist should address the public no otherwise than through his art-work, he illustrates it by his previous behaviour: "If an artist is flouted by a critic whose verdict he, in common with the general public, has many and good grounds to neglect, assuredly the general judgment will not suffer by his behaving pretty much as I myself have behaved to the musical reporter of the local *Abendzeitung* [Julius Schladebach], of whose attacks and calumnies I have taken no notice whatever." But the rule admits of an exception when a man of the standing of Banck, "by whose verdict some store might be set," joins forces with that "Criticism monopolised by a mere handful of representatives in Dresden, to the exclusion of all prospect of anybody else's intervention on behalf of a man challenged forth without cease." This is the only time during his whole Dresden period, that Wagner deigned a reply to attacks on his artistic procedure; and perhaps, although equally dignified, it is still more crushing than his celebrated rejoinder in after years to Berlioz. Incidentally, it is further interesting as containing a two-edged allusion to those reform-proposals of his, which the management had quietly pigeon-holed: "Plans are already to hand, which, called forth by the untiring energy of the General Direction ["untiring energy" is delicious], promise, fortune favouring, to afford the only possible cure for stage-evils in the future. No reasonable being, however,

* Translated in extenso in Vol. VIII. of the *Prose Works*, pp. 204-14.

would expect to see such comprehensive projects brought to full maturity in half a year." The answer to Banck's objections to his technique is particularly neat: "I may calmly reply that, so long as the Kapelle is not hindered by my style of beat from such achievements as the performances of *Gluck's Armide and Beethoven's Last Symphony*, nobody, and quite certainly not Herr C. B., is justified in finding fault with it." Banck having referred him to "older musicians" for the Mozart traditions, Wagner deftly trips him up by neglecting the obvious intention, and simply remarking that those are the very men he *has* consulted, since he had his tempi from old Dionys Weber, who was present at Mozart's own rehearsals. Then he mauls him with the question, "What proofs has my critic afforded, that he understands what he is talking about?" and finally disposes of him with the happy turn: "In his catalogue of evils that obstruct improvement of the Theatre, Herr C. B. has clean forgotten *the mischief done by incompetent and one-sided criticism.*"

Banck, however, would not have been an orthodox journalist, had he acknowledged himself beaten. He returned to the charge, as we shall see in a moment; he also brought up reinforcements, in the shape of outside papers that praised the "admirable operatic criticisms in the *Dresdener Tageblatt*" and fell shrieking on the "wellnigh five-quarto-page drivel of Herr Kapellmeister Wagner," even descending to the bathos of reckoning up how much the poor devil was out of pocket by it, "It must have cost him 30 thalers down."* Such being the amenities of the German press, it is scarcely to be wondered at, that Wagner declined to take the cudgels up again.

The only one to profit by this little tiff, was its secret instigator, that upright "older musician" of the "true traditions," good simple-minded homespun Reissiger. August 16 he brought out his new opera *Der Schiffbruch der Medusa*,† a feeble product hailed by Banck with praises sandwiched between a frothy attempt to confute Wagner's recent article and a condemnation

* *Signale für die musikalische Welt* (published by Bartholf Senff) 1846, pp. 268 and 374.

† A German adaptation of the same subject with which Flotow had gained his first success at the Renaissance theatre in Paris (see vol. i. 284). The *Schiffbruch* had but a chilly reception, never getting beyond a ninth representation, then descending to the bottomless pit.

of the "perverse and rotten tendency of the latest German operatic music"—a tendency from which, of course, this opera of Reissiger's distinguished itself by its "wealth of clear and catchy melodies." Reissiger's own opinion could hardly have been better expressed, for "he once complained to me," says Wagner in 1879, "of the failure of his *Schiffbruch der Medusa*, in which, as I must admit, there was 'so much melody'—which I had to take as a side-thrust at the success of my own operas; in which, you know, there was 'so little melody'" (*P.* VI. 161).—However, there came an epilogue to this domestic drama. Not long thereafter, November 7 to wit, that same Friedrich Schneider, who had been so polite as to make way for Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, was given his solatium: at a charity-concert in the Old Operahouse he had the joy at last of conducting his oratorio *Das Weltgericht*. The joy seems to have been all upon his side, the house being "deplorably empty"; but the Orchestral Committee made it up to the veteran in the form of a banquet. On the list of partakers Reissiger had the imprudence to inscribe the names of Banck and Schladebach; Chamber-musician F. Kummer struck them out, on ground of the malicious attitude they both had taken up toward Wagner. Poor things! they had to go without their dinner, and raise the hungry cry of "demoralisation, and dread of free criticism," echoes of which soon found their way into the Leipzig *Musikzeitung*.—All this, no doubt, is very squalid; but unhappily it is merely a specimen of the slough in which Richard Wagner had to flounder at Dresden for years. Considering the airy style in which some critics still aver that he brought his endless troubles on himself by writing pamphlets, it was needful to remind them—their pardon! to inform them—that the first spear he broke was in *self-defence*, after years of meek endurance.

Meantime the scattered forces of the Royal Court-theatre had gradually straggled back, so that at last—after a pause of seven months—it was possible to think of *Tannhäuser* once more. Tichatschek's long leave of absence had expired; Johanna Wagner had returned from Paris about the middle of August, and made her *reentrée* on the 27th as Adalgisa in Bellini's *Norma* (in Italian!). In the excellent Frau Kriete, who had already filled the aching void left by Schröder-Devrient in *Rienzi*, there was found at least a decent representative of Venus, though

Dresden critics were neither grateful nor polite: "In the absence of Mme Schröder-Devrient, Mme Kriete has let herself be prevailed upon to take over the part of Venus. Mme Kriete as Venus! That's really doing too much violence to one's imagination, to the Tannhäuser-saga, and to the text of the opera!"—cries Schladebach, nice Dr Schladebach, in the *Abendzeitung*. The composer himself was of a different opinion, since that was the very rôle in which he would not miss his gifted friend so much.

The first performance with this slightly altered cast took place on Friday the 4th of September 1846; and it is significant of the popularity already attained by the work, that a new Dresden male choral union started existence under the name of "Tannhäuser" that very evening. On the Sunday came a repetition, both performances being attended with a success that proved how eagerly the public had been waiting for the work's resumption.* Once again it was the second act that had the warmest reception; seeing that it constitutes the backbone of the drama, and that the third act still lacked something in his own eyes, the author did not take the preference so very much amiss. When he saw how each fresh strophe in the Minstrels' Contest was greeted with loud applause, reaching a quite unwonted climax at Heinrich's final outburst, he could comfort his heart with the reflection that his indispensable ally, the public, had not altogether lost its naïvety and natural responsiveness to a moving situation. The more consciousness had he imported into his creative methods, the more had he craved to "make *whole* men," as he expresses it in a letter of this period: "I want bones, blood and flesh; I want my human beings to live and breathe, move freely and act naturally,—and so I wonder when I find so many thinking *only* of the flesh, tweaking it to see how soft or hard it is." No sympathy could he expect from peddling critics, who put his "text" and "music" singly under the microscope, or solemnly debated the question, whether it made for righteousness that the author of both should be one and the same; but the unforced welcome of the public, which abandoned itself to a spirited drama without inquiring if its enjoyment were due the rather to the poet or to the musician, to him was a promising sign.

* *Tannhäuser* performances in the winter 1846-7: Sept. 4 and 6, Oct. 7, Nov. 21, Feb. 7—the thirteenth and last with the original ending.

One of these two performances was attended by that young Marienbad acquaintance of a year ago, Studiosus Eduard Hanslick, whose Dresden impressions (to be taken *cum grano*) we may serve up as an "historical" side-dish.* His first business in Dresden, he tells us, took him to the Waisenhausstrasse, to see the object of his "ardent veneration," Robert Schumann; of whom, however, he paints a most ridiculous portrait. In one of his earlier accounts of the interview (*Mod. Oper*) he is supposed to have found his host immersed in the *Tannhäuser* score † —a stage-effect omitted from the latest record, where he merely says that Schumann extended his hand to him "in friendly silence," and exclaimed, after a pause, "What a pity you didn't arrive a few days earlier! Mendelssohn set out for England yesterday. ‡ I do wish you had made *his* acquaintance." After another disconcerting pause, Schumann began again about Mendelssohn: "Look here, what he gave me before going away—this lovely book!" (a copy of Simrock's modernisation of Gottfried's "Tristan und Isolde"). At last the caller informed him that he was anxious to hear *Tannhäuser* next evening: "He offered me the autograph score, just out, § on loan for half a day. Did he mix with Wagner much? 'No,' replied Schumann, 'To me Wagner is impossible. Certainly he is a clever man, but he talks one to death. One can't be always talking.' Next morning, the heavy score under my arm, I hurried off betimes to the Brühl'sche Terrasse, breakfasted there, and devoured *Tannhäuser* as if I were on fire. Toward midday I called upon Wagner. He received me very kindly, and begged me to take a seat on the

* We shall adhere in the main to Hanslick's last and lengthiest account, that in the *Deutsche Rundschau* 1893, though the episode is also recorded in the *Gegenwart* of 1876, No. 40, pp. 219 et seq., and in his book *Die moderne Oper*, pp. 261-3.

† This bears a strong family likeness to the Wagner-Berlioz story in vol. i. p. 286.

‡ A damaging gloss of the redoubtable critic's, for Mendelssohn was conducting his *Elijah* at Birmingham on August 26, having arrived in London on the 18th; whilst the performance of *Tannhäuser* which the narrator attended on the day after his visit to Schumann (according to his own account) can only have been that of the 4th or 6th September, as there had been *none* for seven months previously.

§ No: we *cannot* depend on the Leviathan's accuracy. The score had "come out" a year ago, and Schumann's copy been presented to him by the author at least as early as October 1845.

sofa awhile, as he had to test a singer. It was a young tenor, of the extensive stage-family Brandes: he suggested any number of operas to sing something out of, but Wagner hadn't such a thing in the house as a pianoforte edition of any opera [?!]. At last he [Wagner or Brandes?] thought he might be able to accompany Tamino's aria, from the *Magic Flute*, by heart; of course he managed it, though with a surprisingly clumsy pianoforte-technique. The tenor, so it seemed to me, was approved, and took his leave. Then Wagner launched forth on all sorts of musical subjects and Dresden personages, including Schumann. 'Outwardly we're on very good terms,' he said, 'but one cannot mix with Schumann: he's an impossible being; he won't talk at all. Soon after my arrival from Paris I called on him [at Leipzig, then?], told him any amount of interesting things about the Paris Opera, Paris concerts, French composers—Schumann simply gazed at me unmoved, or stared into vacancy; not a word did he say. So I jumped up and ran away. An impossible person!'—All which is highly diverting, as a caricature, but a little too neatly balanced for reality.—Hanslick continues: "That evening brought me a longed for, never-to-be-forgotten theatrical experience: a representation of *Tannhäuser* in the handsome Dresden Court-theatre (since burnt down). Wagner conducted; his niece Johanna sang the Elisabeth, Tichatschek the Tannhäuser, Mitterwurzer the Wolfram, Dettmer the Landgrave. The opera made a considerable, parts of it an intoxicating, effect on me. Schumann and his wife sat next me in the parquet." "How gladly would I have profited by his vicinity to hear his views on *Tannhäuser*. But his habitual taciturnity seemed intensified on this occasion by a certain diplomatic caution: 'The opera is full of fine, effective things, but very unequal. Eh! if Wagner had as much melodic invention, as dramatic fire!——' There he broke off." * "Next morning I

* The last passage is from Hanslick's more ancient account (*Gegenwart* 1876, p. 219): in the third version (*Die mod. Oper*), in point of authorship the second, he has nothing to say of "diplomatic reticence"—which would scarcely harmonise with Schumann's confidences during the friendly call—but simply tells us that "he followed the performance with strained attention, found the music threadbare ('gering') here and there, but warmly praised the handling of the dramatic element." Hanslick's reminiscences proving thus subject to the personal equation, we will supplement them by one of their obvious tributary sources, Schumann's own words to Dorn in a letter of Jan.

made an expedition on foot through Saxon Switzerland. On the rocky plateau known as the Bastei I met Wagner and his niece Johanna, and was able to thank them for the pleasure of the night before."

As if spurred by the successful resumption of *Tannhäuser*, a few days afterwards the artist buckled to the systematic "composition" of his *Lohengrin*,* on the basis of those disconnected jottings from his recent holiday. Strange to say, he began with the *third act*, the original first sheet of which bears the date "Dresden, 9. September 1846," (not finished until six months later, March 1847, owing to countless interruptions). In none of either his earlier or his later works is the natural order of the *musical* development so surprisingly reversed, though we have a notable parallel on the dramatic side in the gradual underpinning of the *Ring des Nibelungen*. In the case of the *Holländer*, to be sure, Senta's Ballad was the first to see the light; but that was months before the actual text of the work was commenced, and looks like a deliberate attempt to fix the mental picture ere it faded. Perhaps there was something of the same desire in the present instance; at anyrate he brings the two into close connection in the *Communication* (1851): "Only that I here had not a finished musical piece to start from, such as that Ballad; but from the aspect of the scenes, and their organic growth from out each other, I first created the picture itself on which the thematic rays should all converge" (*P. I.* 370)—necessarily that "picture" must either have been Lohengrin's Narration, or the crucial scene in the bridal chamber, the virtual culmination of the tragedy.

7, 1846: "I wish you could see Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. There's depth in it, originality; altogether a hundred times better than his earlier operas,—though, to be sure, much that is musically trivial. In summa, he may become of the greatest importance to the stage; and, by what I know of him, he has the pluck for it. The technique, the instrumentation I think capital, beyond comparison more masterly than of yore." Unfortunately, as we have already shewn, Schumann's appreciation subsequently progressed *backwards*.

* There appear to have been *three* stages in Wagner's usual procedure with the music of his dramas: first the one-line "sketch," fragmentary more or less; secondly its so-called "composition," when an act was taken in hand and worked out from beginning to end, with indications, more or less complete, of its future instrumenting; and finally the "orchestration" proper, or full-scoring.—W. A. E.

Moreover, seeing how the author had had to wrestle with friendly objections to that tragedy itself, he seems to have determined to put the question to the test at once by an appeal to the infallible musician within him ; or, as he expresses it himself, " Criticism having proved unequal to alter the denouement of my *Lohengrin*, by this victorious issue of the encounter between my instinctive artistic Feeling and the modern critical Reason my zeal for its artistic completion was kindled to yet brighter flame. In this completion, I felt, would lie the demonstration of the rightness of my feeling " (*ibid.* 345). The ease with which the music flowed from him, would soon prove if he had been right or wrong in cleaving to his first intention ; and proved it was to all time.

Coming to the outward landmarks of this autumn season, we have the first performances of two stage-plays, by an old and a new acquaintance, each of whom had a certain influence on Wagner's destinies. Owing to constant friction with his brother Emil, Eduard Devrient had laid down the reins of Oberregisseur (or Superintendent) of the Dresden Play in February 1846, since when there had been two rival candidates for the resurrected dignity of " Dramaturg," once held by Ludwig Tieck. These candidates were Laube and Gutzkow, of whom the last-named eventually bore off the prize. The success of his *Urbild des Tartüffe* (see page 84 *antea*) had proved so enduring that Lüttichau plumped for *him* at once, urging him upon the King as " a man 34 years of age, in the prime of his poetic powers, upon whose influence, alike general and individual, any stage might found the highest hopes." But the Royal will had not as yet been finally declared, and Gutzkow's rival Laube, who had already run over for the Dresden première of his *Struensee* (see i. 383), once more arrived from Leipzig for the production of his *Karlsschüler* on November 12. The piece was crammed with telling situations and effective lines, and consequently made a tremendous hit ; after the second, fourth, and closing acts the actor was called before the curtain. A very successful evening, so far as the public was concerned ; but with a disconcerting private sequel.

Wagner had pre-arranged a little complimentary banquet in his own apartments, to which he had invited a whole posse of Laube-enthusiasts, Dresden and Leipzig scribes, and so on. Among the

guests was a certain young man, a Dr Alfred Meissner, who, as the nephew of a well-known Dresden connoisseur, J. G. von Quandt,* and also as a famulus of Hiller's, had wormed his way into the artistic set, and thus into Wagner's house itself. Some forty years later this mediocrity brought out a book with the amazing title "The History of my Life," the only merit of which consists in its store of lively anecdotes of other people—but book-titles are hardly a field in which the Germans shine. Between the date of the Laube-banquet and the writing of this scrapbook of gossip Dr Meissner had the misfortune to apply to himself a stray remark of Wagner's, since when "he took a strange dislike to me." † These ancillary facts one has to allow for, when appraising the tattler's account of a party that failed: "We met after the theatre, about twelve of us, in Richard Wagner's modest dwelling." Of these twelve he gives the names of "the clever Friedrich Pecht," the novelist Robert Heller, who had come over with Laube from Leipzig, and the editor of the Dresden *Abendzeitung*, Robert Schmieder; whilst the presence of the sculptor Julius Hähnel is vouched for by Pecht. The to-be-fêted arrived the last, as was fitting, in a state of supreme self-satisfaction. After the usual compliments, they sat down to table, and all went swimmingly for a time: "while the first courses passed round, everybody was remarking that this was Laube's finest work." But Wagner had begun to fidget about on his chair, and finally shot forth the bomb: Whether, to put a man like Schiller on the boards, one ought not to have something of Schiller's genius in oneself? The question was couched in quite general terms; some temporised, some answered in the negative. Then Wagner proceeded, so Meissner relates, to a more pointed criticism of the piece produced: it was nothing more than a well-constructed comedy of intrigue in the style of Scribe, with several very piquant scenes; and by no means solved the problem, how to treat a drama the hero of which was to be the most ideal of German poets. Not till the ice-bucket appeared with its friendly champagne, did he draw his horns in, proposing a congratulatory toast to set all right

* J. G. von Quandt, who himself possessed a valuable collection of pictures, had collaborated with ADOLF WAGNER in 1830-3 in a German edition of Luigi Lanzi's "History of Italian Painting"—see vol. i. p. 378.

† See *Prose Works* VI. 135.

again: "But nothing now could make amends; people emptied their glasses, and dispersed in low spirits. I myself went off with Laube, and wandered about with the disconsolate man in the lone dark streets by the river [was suicide contemplated?]. Next morning came news that the *Karlsschüler* had been given the same day at Mannheim and Munich, where it had also had complete success."* However exaggerated, there is a grain of truth in the little tale, for Pecht also informs us: "After the performance Wagner gave Laube a feast, at which he congratulated the poet very intelligently and to the point, but, to the minds of us enthusiasts, by far too insufficiently, the consciousness of his own superiority seeming to dominate it all."† Whichever account we accept, it was awkward for the guest of the evening, and scarcely more palatable because, as Meissner himself adds, "Perhaps Wagner was right." He had no intention of wounding his guest, but he does appear to have had the unfortunate habit of thinking aloud; and his standards were so far above the heads of his company, that his thoughts were bound to bruise when suddenly let fall on them.

Another specimen of Wagner's reckless open-mouthedness is given by the same small-talker. This Austrian young dabbler in literature first met the artist, whom he understood so ill, on an excursion made by a pretty large party to the "Waldschlösschen" (Sept. 1846). With his strikingly broad and massive brow, his eagle nose and protuberant chin, "Wagner then had much the look of a professor"—the train of ideas is not self-evident—"especially as he went clean-shaven at a time of beards." A

* Meissner's impressions of his first hearing of *Tannhäuser* (Oct. 7, 1846) are tinged with much the same colour. He informs us that "the house was decently full [only that?], and the temper of the audience so good that Wagner and his singers were called after every act." For himself, as he "understood nothing of the music," he stuck to the text-book, which seemed to him "sheer medieval Catholicism." Apparently fond of late hours, he "sat up at the inn" (that Angel's Club?) with Professor Hähnel, unbosoming his strictures on the poem; but the professor was wise, and simply chaffed him, "If he were bent on viewing the opera in the light of questions of the day, at least *Tannhäuser* must have been a German-Catholic, since he cut himself loose from the Pope"—so poor Nietzsche's gibe about *Parsifal* and the Student of Divinity was exposed full forty years before he perpetrated it.

† *Aus meiner Zeit* I. 266. It should be mentioned that Pecht connects the tale with Laube's *Struensee* (Dresden, Sept. 2, 1845); but the very nature of the thing excludes all possibility of its having happened twice over.

detail probably not to be taken too strictly, as at no time of his life does any portrait shew us Wagner without the so-called "Newgate fringe"; it should also be remarked that "beard" is a generic term in German, and with various prefixes, holds good for whiskers or moustache.—But we are wandering away from our excursionists. Somehow or other young Meissner got into conversation with the composer, who confined his talk to *politics*, rather a dangerous subject to discuss with a perfect stranger: "Richard Wagner considered the political conditions ripe for the most radical change, and looked forward to an approaching upheaval as to something quite inevitable. The transformation would take place easily, and with very few strokes; for social and political forms were only holding together by their outer shells. I remember his exact words: 'The Revolution was already completed in everyone's head; the new Germany was ready as a cast in bronze, that needed but a hammer's blow upon the shrouding clay, to come to light.'" That *has* the ring of a Wagnerian image. "Meanwhile Gutzkow had come up with us; he took the opposite side, laid stress on the force of inertia, the might of the old and dread of the new, the habit of the mass to serve and follow, the want of character in the infinite majority, and in his cautious way expressed a hundred hesitations. Wagner lost his self-control, and broke off the debate with strong and angry words." Which really is very characteristic of both parties. For we know, by later utterances, what an exalted notion Wagner had of German unity and freedom; whilst Pecht describes Gutzkow as a man with "a weasel profile and close-set eyes, harmonising only too well with a character that knew no such thing as self-abandonment. He was eaten up with ambition, and the slyness of his nature inspired antipathy; though he could make himself most entertaining when it suited his purpose."

Oddly enough, the production of Gutzkow's *Uriel Akosta* on December 13, over which no end of a fuss was made in Dresden literary circles, nearly had a fatal result for its worldly-wise author. It was so easy to transpose these types of Jewish life into modern Christian characters; a dunce might unearth the political key. Accordingly, by Gutzkow's own account, the King sent Lüttichau an autograph letter, threatening to establish a Censorship if pieces of so inflammatory a tone as the *Karlsschüler* and *Uriel Akosta* were given again—reminding us of the Intendant's own

words to Wagner, "Nowadays at anyrate, Schiller would never have dared to write a thing like *Tell*." Had it not been that his rival, a notorious democrat, was also attained, and that *Frau* von Lüttichau—whose acquaintance we have made as a lady of culture—appealed to Prince Johann, and through him to the King, cautious Herr Gutzkow's appointment would have fallen through at the eleventh hour. As it was, after two or three years he had to withdraw from the theatre, where his position had long been growing more and more untenable, partly owing to his touchiness and hasty temper.

For the rest, the centre of gravity of Dresden æsthetic society had somewhat shifted this winter. The Angel's Club still spread its wings as an "artists' tavern," but the cream of its habitués had been skimmed for a weekly gathering held in Hiller's private salon. Not altogether equipped on the creative side for the celebrity he hankered after, this artist sought to make himself at least the focus of a brilliant coterie. His means permitting him the little luxury, he had taken to keeping open house each Wednesday for all that Dresden held of fixed or errant luminaries in art and letters. "On many a night," as Meissner has it, "every room was packed to its utmost capacity, and almost everybody present had a name well-known for this or that. It was no exclusively German salon, for one heard a deal of French talked too. The lady of the house, Antolka, a singer who had given up the stage to follow her husband, was a Pole, young, beautiful, of semi-Slavic grace. Three or four surpassing beauties grouped themselves around her, connections who stayed a longer or a shorter time in Dresden. Since Mazarin, perhaps no man has had such handsome nieces as Ferdinand Hiller; and their good looks brought them all good matches: one became a Countess Kolowrat, another the wife of the French author Ernest Feydeau," and so on. One rising notability was stopping as a guest in Hiller's house, an under-sized, broad-shouldered chap with glinting eyes, and dark-brown hair that fell in streams below his collar. It was Berthold Auerbach: once a rabbinical candidate, he next had tried his hand at novel-writing, but passed unnoticed till he leapt to sudden notoriety with his first budget of *Tales of the Black Forest*. Pecht, who of course was one of Hiller's omnium gatherum, aptly describes this young man as "not having yet got through the first edition of his naïvety. His conceit was so

frank that it never irked you, even when he made it a condition of the higher culture that you should have read his *Village Tales*." Referring to their present meetings, Wagner afterwards calls him "an undoubtedly gifted, truly talented and intellectual writer of Jewish origin, who seemed almost to have grown into the most distinctive traits of German folk-life, and with whom I long and oft debated Judaism in all its bearings" (*P.* III. 120), though he could not quite endorse the "lightly-veering manner of the day, that sets before the unnatural luxury of our fashionable world the naïvety of Swabian peasants" (*P.* I. 87).

Wagner himself is mentioned by all the chroniclers of Hiller's soirées,* though it is doubtful if he attended them often. Of what he heard at one, at least, he has left a tiny souvenir. Hiller very much prided himself on a finished pianoforte style, and naturally 'obliged with a tune' at times; so, Bach just then being all the rage with the school of Mendelssohn, Wagner begged his host to play a great favourite of his, the eighth prelude and fugue in the *Wohltemperirter Klavier*. Without naming names, the guest recalls the shock it gave him: "At anyrate there was no question here of sombre German Gothic, or any tomfoolery of that sort. Under the hands of my friend the piece flowed over the keyboard with such a 'Greek serenity' that its harmlessness quite bore me off, and involuntarily I saw myself seated in a neo-Hellenic synagogue from whose musical rites every trace of Old-testament emphasis had been neatly scoured away." †

There were painters, sculptors and architects, writers and musicians, at Hiller's; to say nothing of people from the theatre, such as the inimical brothers Emil and Eduard Devrient, and a whole swarm of minor poets, mostly of the host's persuasion, who had turned their backs on their Austrian home to escape the Censor's attentions. "Gutzkow too," says Pecht, "I here made acquaintance with for the first time; if being strongly

* Friedrich Pecht, A. Meissner, Johannes Nordmann, *et al.*

† *Prose Works* IV. 345, where the performance is contrasted with *Liszt's* rendering of Bach: "I knew what to expect from Liszt at the pianoforte; but from Bach himself, much as I had studied him, I had never expected what I learnt that day. For then I saw the difference between study and revelation; through his rendering of this single fugue [the fourth] Liszt revealed the whole of Bach to me."

repelled, can be called an acquaintance. . . . Among the ladies shone the Schröder-Devrient, her fair face and blonde complexion eclipsed by nothing but her genius; always in high spirits, seductive and a wee bit *polissonne*; the latter a characteristic shared with the Countess Hahn-Hahn,* a dame far less seductive, but distinguished at all times, and in her good moments by no means destitute of charm, living just then in irregular union with a Livonian Baron Bistram, to no small chagrin of the Queen and other high ladies, who were longing to ask her to court." An instance of the Devrient's "polissonnerie" is given by another of Hiller's regular guests, the young Austrian poet Johannes Nordmann (author of the words of Liszt's song, "Kling' leise, mein Lied, durch die schweigende Nacht"), whom she archly presented to Wagner as "a touring flute-player." Here Nordmann met Weber's widow and son, also Robert Schumann and wife, Hähnel and Semper, the painter Arthur von Ramberg, and Dr Ignaz Kuranda, editor of the famous *Grenzboten*; but the figure that impressed him most was Richard Wagner: "He spoke of the Greek dramatists with an acumen one might seek in vain in many a Professor. But what struck me most, was the predilection he already displayed for German Myth, his rapt enthusiasm for our old Heroic Lays. The hour I passed in listening to the master's stimulating talk, was an intellectual feast indeed." †

From the flashing lights of Hiller's drawing-room we pass to the track of another comet. In a New Year's gift received by Wagner we have an event the consequences of which were doomed to exercise an untold influence on his future fortunes. His young Vienna worshipper, E. Hanslick, had stolen many an hour from his legal studies to devote to an analysis of *Tannhäuser*, from the musical side: "With Liszt's permission I had borrowed his copy of the score then lodged at Mechetti's, and used it for an essay, laced with musical examples, that dragged its length through eleven numbers of the *Wiener Musikzeitung*." Piously he packed these numbers up, and sent them to his idol. However poor the execution, the intention called

* Countess Ida, the novelist, an older cousin of the late Helena Petrovna Blavatzky.—W. A. E.

† "A Meeting with Richard Wagner at Dresden," in Kürschner's *Wagner-Jahrbuch* 1886, pp. 73-8.

for recognition. So Wagner, always eager to encourage and improve young talents, wrote a long letter of thanks on the first of January 1847, in which he pointed out his commentator's salient error in the following memorable words: "Do not rate the value of reflection too low," he says, "The unconsciously [i.e. spontaneously] created artwork belongs to periods that lie remote from ours: the artwork of the highest period of culture can only be produced in consciousness. The Christian poem of the Middle Ages, for instance, was that direct spontaneous product; but the full-fledged artwork was not shapen then—it was reserved for Goethe in our age of objectivity. That none save the richest-gifted human nature can effect the magic union of this power of the reflective reason with the fulness of direct creative force, *there* lies the rareness of supreme achievements. Though we be right in doubting that the art-domain discussed by us will shew so soon a kindred giftedness, yet a more or less happy blending of both mental faculties must already be presupposed in every artist who is really to further the cause of art—whilst the severance of these gifts is, strictly speaking, antagonistic to a higher aim."

However, it was the correction of another of the shaky youth's mistakes, that upset the apple-cart for good. In the appendix to our first volume we have shewn how Meyerbeer's nameless myrmidons were making a regular trade of turning Wagner's Dresden successes into puffs of his impudently so-called "master," the Grand Mogul of Opera, thereby blinding the public to his real endeavour. To have to sit calmly by and let his aims be thus perverted, must have been one of Wagner's sharpest tortures during this Dresden period. When at last it came to an open rupture in the preface to the first edition of *Opera and Drama* (written 1851), there were those who expressed amazement at the sudden outburst of disclaimer; but they can scarcely have realised how long the master (the real one) had had to withhold it, out of every possible consideration, from that of "gratitude" for illusory favours, up to that of personal modesty. But in the present case it was a young professed admirer, who had taken up the cry (quite innocently, for all that Wagner knew) by publicly declaring that "Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, in the cleverness and characteristic novelty of its treatment of the orchestra, belongs to the most eminent achievements that we own in this

line, and is to be placed on a par with the three greatest works, *Freischütz*, the *Huguenots*, and the *Midsummer Night's Dream*"; there was nothing to hinder the artist from protesting in private against the classification, and supporting his protest by instructive grounds. So this New Year's letter continues: "What parts me from you by the width of a world, is your reverence for *Meyerbeer*. I say this with the most complete impartiality; for personally I am a friend of his, and have every reason to prize him as an amiable, sympathetic man.* But when I sum up everything in operatic music-making that goes against my grain through inner scatteredness and outer labour, I heap it all together in the rubric 'Meyerbeer.' And the more so, since in Meyerbeer's music I recognise a great knack for outward effect; which retards a noble ripening of art the more, as, denying all inwardness, it seeks to please in every hue. Who strays into the trivial, has to pay for it in his better nature; but he who seeks it purposely, is—lucky, for he has to pay for it in *no* coin."

Wagner closes his letter with an invitation to his correspondent to let him hear from him again ere long, and, with his countless preoccupations, in all probability thought no more of the matter. Not so the youth who had been striving to serve two masters, if not three or more. He saw himself at the parting of the ways—and chose the wrong one. At first he kept entire silence, in his twopenny pride; but a few years thence began the crusade against Wagner which the influence of his leadership soon spread across the globe, so virulent in temper that its object, to use his words of 1869, "stood utterly aghast at the conversion" (*P.* III. 104). A comparison of two criticisms of different dates will best convey a notion of the change. Hanslick *anno* 1846: "The music of the *Flying Dutchman* is one of the most poetic and heart-grappling products of modern days; and what raises it cliff-high above the sea of our everyday operas, is the genuine high poesy in the conception of the subject, the inspired swing in the dramatic expression." Hanslick *anno* 1859: "Where this opera [the *Dutchman* again] leaves the

* In this neutral-tinted reference to a "friendship"—the exact qualifications of which were not to be set forth to a mere passing acquaintance—we seem to have the true substance of that remark in the Marienbad conversation which either young Hanslick seized imperfectly, or Hanslick middle-aged distorted.

pictorial element, where it ceases to be Marine and begins to be Music, there Wagner's shallows stand revealed in plainest light: the poverty of his invention and the amateurishness of his methods; a wooden pathos battles with the waves of triviality that break upon it on all sides." We will do him the justice of believing that it took some time before the very gentle lesson in æsthetics, read to him by Wagner, turned all his kindly thoughts to gall; but had he not himself informed us (*Mein Leben*), we should have as little deemed him capable of resenting such benign and fatherly correction, as of considering it a sign that Wagner was "unwarrantably put out."

Let us close the chapter. Air, air! though the ground outside be ankle-deep in snow.

VII.

“ LOHENGRIN.”

Wagner's last "opera."—*Gluck's Iphigenia in Aulis, revised, revived and reviewed.*—*Visit of Kittl.*—*Composition of act iii Lohengrin finished.*—*Chorus-master W. Fischer.*—*Removal to the "Marcolini Palace"; composition of acts i and ii.*—*Differences with the Management.*—*The King of Prussia hears Rienzi at Dresden.*—*Tannhäuser with its new ending.*—*Rienzi in Berlin.*—*Scoring Lohengrin; Wagner ill.*—*Bianca und Giuseppe.*—*Death of Wagner's mother.*—*Lohengrin completed.*

My present and forthcoming works I regard as nothing but trials whether Opera be possible. (Letter to Hanslick, Jan. 1, 1847.)

I can get light to create for these people only when I do not see them. (Letter to M. v. Meysenbug, March 12, 1862.)

RICHARD WAGNER.

FROM that historic letter of the New Year 1847 to Hanslick, which occupied us at the end of last chapter, we have reserved a most momentous portion to usher in the present. The young student might have deemed himself lucky, that his three-legged article had hit on Wagner in so expansive a mood. Though he was in no position to appreciate the honour, we at least may profit by it to take a peep into the genesis of what may be termed the Last Opera, in the sense its author lent the designation “The last Symphony” :—

“ I cannot harbour the peculiar ambition, to throw my poem into the shade by my music; but I should be dismembering myself to bring a lie to light, were I to wish to do a violence to music by my poem. I can take up with no poetic subject that does not lend itself to governance by music. Where music co-operates, this powerfully sensuous element presses so actively

into the foreground, that the conditions of its operation are bound to be the only valid ones. On the other hand, whether music is always in the position, through its most vital element, to keep step with what is offered by a poem—let it be as musical a poem as you will—I cannot yet dare to decide. Gluck's texts by no means made an exhaustive, an extreme demand on the impassionedness of music; they move more or less in a certain shackled pathos—that of the Racinian Tragedy—and wherever the line was to be completely overstepped, Gluck's music undeniably remains much in our debt. The texts of Mozart's operas still less approach these utmost depths of human nature; his 'Donna Anna' is a solitary exception, very far from exhausting the region. What Spontini had before him in the second act of the *Vestale* (Julia's scene), and Weber in portions of *Euryanthe* (e.g. the moment after the betrayal of her secret to Eglantine etc.), neither of them could answer with aught save that so reprehended 'music of the diminished seventh'; and for my part, at least as concerns what our forerunners have accomplished, I here must recognise one of music's limits. That with such forerunners we haven't yet reached by a long way the highest verity of Opera—not for its purely musical part, but as a whole dramatic artwork—can scarcely be doubted; and in this sense, and from the standpoint of my own powers, which I far rather question than overrate, my present and forthcoming works but rank to me as trials whether Opera be possible."

Here we have the most valuable contemporary evidence that the author of the *Dutchman* and *Tannhäuser* was striving in *Lohengrin* for something he felt was as yet unattained; more than that, that the whole class of works called "Opera" was now upon its trial. Within the four corners of Opera he was about to make another experiment; but, plainly as words can convey, it was almost settled in his mind that it should be the last. Moreover, the document has also an extraneous value: it proves to a nicety the reliability of the account of his artistic development given us in the *Communication* nearly five years later—a reliability too often called in question by those who do not realise his strength of memory and scrupulous regard for truth.

At the hand of that *Communication* let us follow him into the privacy of his study, and note the mood in which he is venturing this last operatic attempt. Almost throughout this volume we

have had to view him in a throng of more or less subsidiary characters. For a moment or two, we may allow ourselves the relaxation of a private interview :—

“ I was now so completely awakened to the utter *loneliness* of my position as artist-man, that only from the feeling of this loneliness could I derive the spur and the ability to address myself to my surroundings.” Don't we see it in the seizing upon even young Hanslick, to whom to expound his artistic heart-searchings? “ This prompting spoke so loud within me, that, even without conscious prospect of arriving at an intelligible message, I yet felt passionately impelled to unbosom myself; so that it could only issue from a mood of fanatical yearning, which itself was born of that feeling of isolation.” Those outpourings to Gaillard, Kietz, Nordmann and other young men,—even the harangue about Laube's unfortunate play—what are they but a longing to lay down the sole custodianship of ideas that were panting for adoption? “ —In *Tannhäuser* I had yearned to flee a world of frivolous and nauseating sensuousness,—the only form our modern Present has to offer; there my compass pointed toward the unknown land of pure and chaste virginity, as toward the element that might allay a nobler, but still at bottom a sensuous longing: only, a longing such as our frivolous Present can never satisfy. So the strength of my longing had swung me up to the yearned-for realms where purity and chastity abide. I felt myself outside the modern world, amid a sacred limpid æther, which, in the transport of my solitude, imbued me with that rapturous awe we feel upon the summits of the Alps, when, circled with a sea of azure, we look upon the hills and vales below.” A dream of the region whither his Elisabeth had sped, and where his Lohengrin still had his home? But it cannot chain the man of glowing flesh and blood. “ Such mountain-peaks the Thinker climbs, and on this height imagines he is free and ‘purged’ of all that's ‘earthly,’ the highest power of the human sum; here at last can he feed upon himself, and in this self-repast freeze finally amid the chiller atmosphere of Alpine heights into a monument of ice; as which, philosopher or critic, in frosty self-content he glares on the warm world of living forms beneath him.” Not quite the precincts of the Grail, then, but the pillar of Simon Stylites. “ But the yearning that drove *me* to those heights, had been a yearning sprung from art and

man's five senses : 'twas not the warmth of *Life*, I fain would flee, but the vaporous morass of trivial sensuality whose exhalations form the life of modern times. Upon those heights, moreover, I was warmed by the sunshine of Love, whose truest quest alone had sped me up." The problem, broached in *Tannhäuser*, is trembling toward solution. "And so it fell that, hardly had this blessed solitude enwrapped me, than it woke a new, an overpowering desire, the yearning *from peak down to valley*, from the dazzling radiance of the chastest purity to the tender shadows of love's humanest caresses. From these heights my longing glance beheld at last—*das Weib* : the woman for whom the 'Flying Dutchman' had yearned from out the ocean of his misery ; the woman who, like a star of heaven, shewed Tannhäuser the pathway upwards from the lust-den of the Venusberg ; the woman who now drew Lohengrin down from sun-drenched heights to the warming breast of Earth." *

Now, "the Woman" also connotes here that "spontaneous, undeliberate principle" which Wagner elsewhere identifies with "the Folk" ; in fact the two are brought into the closest relation by Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger*, the first draft of which, it will be remembered, was twin to that of *Lohengrin*. And it is here that lies the whole gist of Wagner's disquisition on his hero : he is aiming at something much more vital than a commentary on the text of his opera, for he "found the tragedy of Lohengrin's character and situation deep-rooted in our modern life. . . . The most natural and urgent longing of the true artist is, to be taken up without reserve into the Feeling, and by it understood ; and the impossibility—under the modern conditions of our art-life—of meeting with this Feeling in such a state of freedom and undoubting surety as he needs for being fully understood—the compulsion to address himself almost solely to the critical Understanding instead—this it is, that constitutes the tragic element in

* So far, the quotations given above form one continuous passage in Wagner's *Communication* (P. I. 339-40) ; I have merely strung them on a slender thread of comment to emphasise their application. Those that follow now, are gathered here and there from pages 341 to 346 *ibidem*.—I may as well take this opportunity of stating that in almost all the passages quoted from the *Prose Works* etc. in this "Life of Wagner" I have permitted myself a trifling departure from (I hope, improvement on) the old translation.—W. A. E.

his situation ; this it is, that, as an artist made of flesh and blood, I could not help but feel ; and this, that on the pathway of my further evolution was so to be forced on my consciousness that I broke at last into open revolt against the burden of that situation.” He had penetrated to the temple’s inner niche, and seen the god enshrined there ; his face still radiant with the glory of the place, he hastened back among “the Folk,” his fellows, to spread a little light in pay for love ; but the first thing their self-appointed tutors called for, was its name and a minute description of its whereabouts, though his very language was unintelligible to them : “Forms, forms !” they cried, “We ask the forms of Flotow or Rossini.” He offered them bread, and they asked for a stone. His very followers, young Hanslick for instance, “merely worshipped him”—the words, be it explained, are those he applies to his hero—“as a being past all understanding ; whereas his longing had not been for worship, but for the one thing able to redeem him from his loneliness, to still his yearning,—for *love*, for *being understood through love*. With his highest thought, his clearest knowledge, he fain would be none other than a warmly-feeling, warmth-inspiring Man ; *human*, in a word, not god—i.e. no absolute artist,” no artist for the analytic chemist : “Thus yearned he for the Womanly—the human heart.”

How to react on that heart, the heart of the public, without descending to vulgarities ? How chain it to the all-absorbing subject of his drama, that none should ask the wherefore of its vehicle ? That was the problem before him, now that the setting of the crucial third act of his *Lohengrin* absorbed this winter’s scanty leisure : “I was led by *one* sole object, namely to set as plainly and intelligibly as possible before the eyes and ears of others what my own eye had seen. And here, again, it was always the Substance that governed me, in every line I gave its Form. Utmost clearness was accordingly my chief endeavour in its working out.”

Of the technique of his present mode of procedure we shall have something to say a little later on. Let the above suffice to shew that *Lohengrin* marks the metamorphic crisis in the artist’s mind, the point where all the fires within him were searing down the vain resistance of external forms. If ever score was carved out with a blow-flame, it was this.

Besides the work at *Lohengrin*, there was the close of *Tannhäuser* to be altered—significant parallel. But both had to be laid on one side awhile, in favour of one of those monumental restorations which stamp the years of Wagner's Kapellmeistership as the most important in the history of music at Dresden; nor only there. Devoted to Gluck as he had proved himself from his first entry upon office, his introduction of *Iphigenia in Aulis* into the repertory of the Court-theatre at this particular moment is surely more than a coincidence; it looks as if he wished to place before him on the stage a fresh, unblunted model from the studio of the only master who could rank as his forerunner in dramatic style. Frau Schröder-Devrient having signed a fresh agreement with the theatre the first of last October, he might count upon all the principal rôles being worthily filled*; so that nothing would be wanting for a fine performance save a careful, possibly a discriminating study of this much-neglected masterpiece.

For the music, the only score at first available was that of Berlin, where Spontini years ago had given the work by order of the present King (at that time Crown Prince) to a beggarly array of empty benches. No sooner had Wagner opened it, than he saw the danger of being deceived by certain arbitrary dealings of Spontini's. So he sent at once for the old *Paris* edition of 1779,† to get a clear idea what Gluck had really meant. Then he found that, with the subsequent extraordinary progress of instrumentation, the work would sound thin and superannuated if it were not piously retouched for the modern ear; and thus began an endless labour.—Here the purists will fold their hands in holy horror; but more reasonable folk need only be reminded that, just as it was a MOZART that refurbished Handel's *Messiah*, so it was a WAGNER that now administered Gluck's legacy. The seriousness with which he approached the trust, may be judged from the fact that, out of a total of three-hundred pages, there are at least two-hundred in which he has made more or less extensive changes or comments. Almost every line

* "Agamemnon," Mitterwurzer; "Clytemnestra," Schröder-Devrient; "Iphigenia," Johanna Wagner; "Achilles," Tichatschek; "Calchas," Dettmer; "Artemis," Fr. Marburg.

† "Iphigénie en Aulide: tragédie opéra en trois actes dédiés au roy par Mr. le Chevalier Gluck." Paris, Le Marchand, 298 pages folio.

is furnished by him with marks of expression, and countless are his directions and improvements in respect of orchestration. As to more considerable changes in the music, there are nine manuscript slips of revision attached by him to different passages; to say nothing of additions that fill no less than forty pages folio, chief of which is the eight-page interpolation at the opera's close, to which we shall return in a moment.*

For the German *text*, alas! the original Paris edition could help him no otherwise than by proving the atrocity of that provided by Berlin. A few years afterwards, in *Opera and Drama*, he characterises it thus: “Whoever has seen a Berlin score of one of Gluck's operas, and convinced his eyes of the nature of the textual basis whereon these works are set before the German public, may gain an inkling of the character of Berlin art-æsthetics, that has made the operas of Gluck its standard for dramatic declamation. From Paris one had heard so much of this ‘dramatic declamation,’ through literary channels; wherefore one has been so astoundingly clever as to recognise it for oneself—through performances in those translations” (*P.* II. 360). So he must set to work himself, to put things straight; which meant overhauling the whole text, to bring its sense, and more especially its *accent*, into line with the music. But, one thing leading on to another, when he came to its closing scene he was faced with the same kind of difficulty that already was worrying him at the close of *Tannhäuser*: by no means could he rest content with the priest's mere announcement of the goddess' change of mind. In the old Greek tragedy, in consonance with antique custom, this miraculous intervention had merely been narrated; Schiller on the other hand, feeling the chilling effect of a simple verbal statement after so acute a psychologic struggle, had omitted it in his translation from Euripides, and dropped the curtain at the point where the conflict in the heroine's soul has been fought out. Meantime Gluck himself had written an *Iphigenia in Tauris*, and Goethe's drama since had made the sequel a familiar one to German audiences; so that the substance also of Calchas' proclamation in Gluck's *Iph. in Aulis*, the marriage of “Iphigénie” to “Achille,” had now become a solecism. Wagner therefore determined to round off this noble work

* See Liepmannsohn's *Autographen-Katalog* of December 1886.

in the only manner that appealed to his poetic instinct, bringing Artemis herself upon the scene, to proclaim her will and bear the daughter of the house of Atreus forth to expiate in banishment the horrors of her stock. It was a venturesome stroke, not to be dared by a lesser mind; but the end fully justified the means. The words he puts in the goddess' mouth, as she hovers in mid-air above the altar, remind one by their fine simplicity of Goethe's Tauric *Iphigenie*; whilst the scenic arrangements are detailed with all that scrupulous care he evinces in the stage-directions for his own works. Especially is this the case with the composition of the final tableau: the lowering clouds are melted into brightest sunshine, revealing at the back a smiling shore, with the Grecian warriors blithely hoisting sail for Troy.

He had no difficulty in inspiring his executant artists with enthusiasm for their task; but, just as with the Ninth Symphony a year ago, so soon as ever the press got wind of it, it pounced upon the project as another opening for attack. A Dresden contributor to the Leipzig *Signale* writes on Feb. 17: "They are getting up Gluck's *Iphigenie in Aulis*. An unfortunate choice, that squanders time and pains to no result. For this is the most antiquated in form of all Gluck's works, unrelieved by its dramatic contents, and nowhere has it yet been possible to keep it on our modern boards with any effect." The signalman then proceeds to deliver himself of the following oracular malapropos: "It is an interesting, a marvellous phenomenon, that the Dresden audience, else so cool and coy, has been changed by Wagner's operas to a band of fiery enthusiasts, the like of which cannot be found in all Germany." Oh no! the anonymous Herr does not intend a compliment, but a crafty innuendo,—"For whence comes it that the composer of an opera that has been on the repertoire for over a year is still called *thrice* before the curtain, as at the last performance of *Tannhäuser*? Alackaday, and strange to say, this staunch enthusiasm has been cultivated only for *Wagnerian* music." Poor Hiller's *Christmas Dream* and Reissiger's *Shipwreck* got none, you see! "So long as German Court-Kapellmeisters shall regard the operas of other German art-colleagues with such abominable indifference, and rave about none save their own operas, sit in solemn judgment over other German works, and refuse to hear a word about their own but the sugared echoes of their self-conceit, so long will German

Opera be in sorry case. . . . Opera will degenerate into *town-music*, and the composer fan his local fame as best he may.” —It really is laughable, when one remembers that the percentage of press-matter in Wagner’s favour, in these days, was something like 1 to 99 of that against him ; but to him it can have been no laughing matter, for every bullet fired at him from behind the hedge was pretty sure to hit its mark : even if it did not wound himself, it made his Intendant uneasy.

Fortunately, all these ambushes were powerless when he took the open field in force. On February 22, 1847, Gluck’s “antiquated, undramatic” opera had a glorious triumph. The Devrient, though her voice was shewing signs of wear, made a magnificent Clytemnestra in all that concerned plastic pose and tragic action, creating an immense sensation in the great scene of the third act, when Iphigenia has been led off to the altar, and the queen bursts in with the agonised cry, “My daughter ! Where is my daughter ?” Agamemnon, too, was represented in masterly fashion by Mitterwurzer, particularly in the finale of the second act. Tichatschek sang his part with such fire, that the effect of the famous aria in D recalled the first Paris performance, when young French nobles drew their swords for Marie Antoinette and turned the trembling balance. Johanna Wagner made an excellent Iphigenia, and the parts of Artemis and Calchas were also in good hands. In fine, so perfect was the rendering of the work in all its parts, that *Iphigenia in Aulis* scored the “most popular, i.e. the least affected success of all Gluck’s works” at Dresden, to quote the conductor, and was repeated to full houses no less than six times in the ensuing three months.

With the *overture* this revival brought Wagner some curious experiences, of which he has left an enlightening record in the shape of a letter written to the *Neue Zeitschrift* just seven years later : “Alike at concerts in my youth,” he says, “and when given by my colleague Reissiger before Gluck’s Tauric *Iphigenie* [!], this overture had always made a cold, indifferent impression on me.” It was simply owing to wrong *tempo*, as he soon discovered from the Paris score : “The standing pattern for all overtures in the past century, particularly in the case of serious operas, comprised a shorter introduction in slow time, followed by a longer, faster movement.” Now, this particular overture is likewise built upon that plan ; since it led directly into a

scene beginning with its introductory theme, however, Gluck had preferred to make no outwardly apparent change, but write the second part in notes of half the length of their representatives in still later scenes—semiquavers in place of quavers, and so on. German concert-conductors, with their wooden heads, “had overlooked this peculiarity of signature, and where the quicker notes begin, heralding the twentieth bar, they likewise introduced their routine faster tempo; so that at last a bare-faced ‘Allegro’ had been inscribed in German editions of this overture,” i.e. the taking of its greater portion “exactly twice too fast” had been stamped with all the stern authority of printer’s ink. Here was a discovery, indeed, for “an amateur musician!” But it would have been too humiliating to “those persons who decry me as a troubler of our musical religion, a base denier of the glories shapen by the music-heroes of the past,” to acknowledge an egregious blunder; for “there are many happy souls who keep their feelings so in check, that in face of every fresh experience they plume themselves on staying what they were, or rather what they were turned into, at some earlier, some solitary phase of evolution.” One of these happy beings was our whilom friend Carl Banck, “at that time head reporter of Dresden [rather hard on Schladebach!]. What this gentleman had never heard before, namely the opera itself, he fairly unreservedly approved in my version of it, in spite of his rooted dislike to my conducting; but the altered rendering of what he often *had* heard, namely the overture, was an abomination to him. So wondrous great a power had habit here, that I found myself held for most confused precisely where I had gone the most convincedly and conscientiously to work, for most abandoned where I fancied I had dealt the surest stroke for common-sense.”

The whole remainder of this article of Wagner’s is of inestimable value, as shewing the insight, the reintegrating genius one might call it, with which he rescued classic trophies from a humdrum shibboleth, and the immense importance he attached to the interdependence of phrasing and tempo, with all the nuances and modifications thereof; but we can spend no further time with it, than just to quote a more humorous experience than that with Banck. Good Dr Hiller, “professional musician” down to his heels, was amenable enough to conviction by black upon white, and conceded that there really was no change of signature

in the authentic score, but proposed to heal the schism “by simply taking this one and only tempo, and thus the very beginning of the overture, in the same quick time as its supposed Allegro was played by everybody else. I found this back-door most convenient for people who don’t like to be torn from that basis of Authority on which they wax big, play music, compose, conduct—and criticise. For, once admit that one has sworn up to now by a work to which one hasn’t even done the justice of a true appraisal, but allowed to stand the racket of the most absurd distortion—and how much besides must fall out of joint!” (*P. III.* 155-66).

About the time of the *Iphigenia* revival Wagner received a visit from his former comrade Johann Kittl, who was returning to Prague at the end of an extensive tour. He arrived from Berlin, by the way, where Meyerbeer’s mother had invited him to a solemn feast in honour of the first performance of Michael Beer’s *Struensee* (music by great brother Giacomo*); the gentlemen of the Press were not forgotten. The news would be interesting to Wagner, as helping to explain the Berlin shyness of *Tannhäuser* and perpetual postponement of *Rienzi*. But the two old friends had something pleasanter to talk of. When Wagner asked him how he fared, Kittl dolèfully replied, “Only so-so. Some people suffer from want of appetite; some from want of sleep—I’m suffering from want of opera-text.” For three whole years he had been looking out for one, and, though offered him by the dozen, not a single text would suit. He could not have come to a likelier doctor, for Wagner had had a libretto founded on König’s *Hohe Braut* lying idle for close on five years—the same he then had offered as a sop to Reissiger. “I’ve the very thing you want, dear Hans!” said Wagner, and promptly read him out the manuscript, making but one stipulation, namely that his name should not figure on the playbills. Kittl was a man of sense, and jumped for joy. No sooner had he got back home, than he set to work with all his heart, and polished off the opera in eleven months. On the 19th February 1848 his piece was produced at Prague under the title “*Bianca and Giuseppe, or the French before Nice,*” with a brilliant

* See Appendix to our first volume.

success. Not only did its first performance earn the composer a twelvefold call, partly due to its subject's chiming in so well with the political excitement of the period, but by the middle of the fifties it had run through twenty repetitions. When resumed in 1868, again it called forth loud applause,—a last solace to Kittl, who died at Lissa (in Posen) that July. Manifestly Reissiger had stood in his own light, when he declined the gift; and Schumann and Hiller may too late have looked wistfully back.

What with one thing and another, the composition of *Lohengrin*, commenced last September, had been laid aside repeatedly for weeks at a stretch.* Not until March the 5th in 1847, the King of Saxony's birthday, was the third act finished: the god-sent hero had unveiled the mystery of his descent, and wifeless returned whence he came. "I suffered deep and actual pain, often bursting into tears over the tragical necessity of the parting, the unavoidable undoing of this pair of lovers," says the author; and no one who recalls his hero's anguished cry, "O Elsa!" with all the sad farewell that follows it, but will believe him.

The historian, however, has no right to emotions. Our province is to shew, as intelligibly as is possible without trenching upon that of the musical critic, the advance marked by *Lohengrin* in the composer's evolution; and here again there is no better guide than his own *Communication*. "Without laying myself out for an enrichment of the expressional powers of music," he says, "I was driven to extend them by the very nature of the things I was seeking to express" (*P. I.* 367)—reminding us once more of that New Year's letter, "Gluck's texts by no means make an exhaustive demand on the impassionedness of music." "As I was determined by my subject once for all, and by that as seen with the eye of Music, I must necessarily advance in time to a complete upheaval of the standing *operatic form*." A change he dates from the *Dutchman*, but the "gradual" nature whereof is still apparent in parts even of *Lohengrin*. "I saw no possibility

* For anyone possessed alike of the ability and the leisure, it would be an interesting task to compare the *Lohengrin* music with its composer's almost simultaneous revision of Gluck's *Iphigenia in Aulis*, to ascertain whether and how the one work had influenced the other; possibly that marvellous effect of dead silence in act ii, after Ortrud has tauntingly shrieked out the name of "God" might be traced to inspiration by Gluck's dramatic pauses.—
W. A. E.

of demarcation in a drama, other than the Acts in which the time and place, or the Scenes in which the personages change. . . . Upon the working out of these scenes, which I had been able to reduce in number, and thereby to increase in weight, I might linger with an exhaustiveness allowed for in the preliminary draft; I was not bound down to mere suggestions, but might placidly display the simple object in the very last connections requisite to bring it to a dramatic understanding." This had already been practised in the great monologue of the first act of the *Dutchman*; with still finer effect in Tannhäuser's narration in the third act, and the highly-wrought finale of the second act, of *Tannhäuser*: but those were mere outline drawings, to the extraordinary elaboration of the half-act bridal chamber scene for Lohengrin and Elsa. "In the planning of my scenes I thus had not been forced to pay the least regard to any set musical form, since they dictated of themselves their mode of setting. . . . Not that I started with the deliberate intent of a transmogrifier, to raze existing operatic forms, the aria, duet, &c.; but their omission followed from the very nature of the subject, with which alone I had to do. Indeed, involuntary knowledge of traditional Form still influenced me so much in my *Flying Dutchman*, that any attentive observer will recognise how often there it even governed the arrangement of my scenes. Only gradually, in *Tannhäuser*, and yet more markedly in *Lohengrin*, did I withdraw myself from that influence, and more and more definitely rule the Form of portrayal by the requirements and peculiarities of the Stuff and Situation." The vestiges in *Lohengrin* indeed are few, yet still distinctly traceable in such passages as the Quintet before the ordeal by arms, the first finale, the Bridal Chorus (surely an instance of "form" in its right place), and the unison cadenza for Ortrud and Telramund—which latter is the more remarkable, as coming at the end of a scene that takes us straight into riper Wagnerian Drama.

All irrelevant episode being sternly excluded, and the 'situations' limited in number (though act ii of *Lohengrin* has rather more than its share), "my whole dramatic edifice acquired a certain unity: no note (*Stimmung*) was to be struck in one of these scenes that did not bear an important relation to the *Stimmung* of the other scenes, so that their development from out each other should keep the drama's unity of expression in sight at every point." And now comes the real innovation in *Lohengrin*,

—for it was an entire novelty as here applied by Wagner: “Each of these chief-moods (*Hauptstimmungen*) must moreover gain a certain musical vehicle, recognisable to the sense of hearing as a definite musical theme”; the advantage being that, as the characters and motives of the dramatis personæ became unfolded, and their emotions developed, the music could emphasise the situation by keeping the hearer ever in mind of its connection with what had gone before. “And this was naturally to be effected by a weaving of the principal themes, characteristically selected in each instance, not merely over *one* scene (as heretofore in single operatic numbers), but *over the whole drama*, and that *in intimate connection with the poetic aim*.” True, this had been partly foreshadowed even in the *Dutchman*; but there a definite “number,” Senta’s Ballad, had supplied the material for distribution over the rest of the work: whereas in *Lohengrin* the whole drama had first been transmuted in its creator’s mind into what one might call a musical picture, from which he drew the colouring for its single scenes—that, by the way, being the more probable interpretation of a somewhat ambiguous remark already quoted (p. 164 *antea*). On that long holiday at Gross-Graupe in 1846 he had been inspired with all the chief thematic details for the music of his drama, embodied in its so-called “sketch”; then, by a process of subconscious integration in the interval before the “composition” was engaged in, they had knit themselves into an organic simulacrum of the whole; to which he had only to appeal, to find the combination requisite for every part. Further, “in *Lohengrin*, in particular, my treatment took a more distinctly artistic form, through a constant remodelling of the thematic material to fit the character of each fresh situation. And thus the music won a greater variety of appearance than in the *Flying Dutchman*, for instance, where a theme’s recurrence often had nothing more than the character of a reminiscence pure and simple (a device employed, before myself, by other composers).”*

Not to weary the reader with too much terminology at once, we will defer the composer’s account of his “melody” till we reach acts i and ii; which he was not to have leisure to touch for a couple of months at least. Pecuniary troubles, among other things, were arriving at a crisis again, to rob him of peace both of

* Gathered from *Prose Works* I. 365-71.—W. A. E.

mind and body. A letter to Kittl of March 21, 1847, deals with the miserable plight into which he has been thrown by that publication venture; a difficulty interminable. His quarter's salary he has already been obliged to make over to Meser; now he is compelled to give up his apartments in the Ostra-Allee, and house himself at less expense. Under these circumstances, he gratefully accepts Kittl's offer of a loan; though whether it came to actual cash, we cannot tell.

Palm Sunday, March 28, brought with it a repetition of the Ninth Symphony; for which, it is hardly necessary to say, Wagner did not have to fight on this occasion. Unsparring as before in his pains to ensure a fine performance, this time he was unable to superintend *all* the choral rehearsals, and transferred a portion to that “grandly vigorous, above all lovable” old chorus-master, Wilhelm Fischer. As he says in the beautiful threnody wherein he weds the names of Spohr and Fischer, to the honour of both: “The possibility of a popular success for Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, to my way of thinking, rested on the choruses being delivered with such confident boldness as I indeed proposed, but nothing save Fischer's matchless excellence as Chorus-master could realise” (*P.* III. 149).

Ever since Fischer's unselfish labours in the cause of *Rienzi*, the heartiest friendship had prevailed between the two men, despite the difference of four-and-twenty years in their respective ages; and, though we have lost sight of the elder for a considerable time, we must picture him at Wagner's side in all his duties. “Thenceforward I was his delight. My efforts and my doings were his pride, my straits his toil, and my attainment his success. Full of zeal and loyalty as ne'er another, he passed all limit when it came to standing by me in exceptional tasks. If what I had madly asked succeeded, how glad a smile shone from his face! And how he then prevailed, stamping his achievements as choir-conductor a red letter in the chronicles of art! . . . The more such service has remained unrecognised, the juster it becomes, once mentioned, to mark it with emphatic token. And therefore would I re-assert that such achievements, for which their real effector is often hardly thanked [Wagner's own experience], are the result of untold labour and anxiety. How often had I to commiserate the poor fellow, when he could answer my reckless demands only with his despair: his good singers were on the sick

list; the best, resigned for refusal of an increase of pay; the remainder, worked to death, or told off for supers in the play. Yet he was a man of resource, who would not break hastily with a thing, but made the best of what we had, and sought from tolerable to bring forth good. Then we two would tread on each other's heels, and the sturdy one would fume against the stormy one; the more violently as, after all, he only wished what I wished. Yet the thing succeeded; God knows how. And then the joy of reconciliation!"—Incidentally, a lurid picture of that chaos at the Dresden theatre which Wagner himself was eating his heart out to reduce to order.

Then he follows valiant Fischer to his humble lodging, where he often finds him on his hobby-horse, "deftly copying rare and precious tone-works of all kinds, by ancient masters the very names of whom were scarcely known to most men. To my astonished smile he would reply that so he pleasantly filled up his leisure, and learnt uncommon much besides; for if one could not write such works oneself, he thought, 'twas the next best thing to write them out." Yet, unlike those who fossilise themselves through assimilation to their cabinets of antiquities, "he ever studied to maintain his gifts in vigour, to take a weighty share in art's most earnest and exacting problems; above all, to keep an open mind for every forward movement, for each improvement on the old. And thus, after many a fatherly shake of the head, was he able to stretch an unwavering hand even to such misdoubted matters as my works; by helping in their realisation he came to understand them, and won himself belief through love"—the Elsa problem solved. But with touching modesty, the man who had done so much for Wagner still declined the proffered "*Thou*" till outlawry had made his friend no longer his worldly superior. The master well may add, "There live not many on this earth, as was this rare one" (*P.* III. 148-52).

Another subordinate officer, Musikdirektor August Roeckel, now comes more prominently forward in our hero's life. In the earlier years of Wagner's Kapellmeistership we hear but little of this deputy conductor;* they were good friends from the first

* Judged by internal evidence, the alleged letters from Roeckel in *Wagner as I knew him* must be classed in the same category as a large proportion of the letters "from Wagner" in the same book.—W. A. E.

(p. 11 *antea*), but the circle of artists in which the master then was moving appears to have been a little above the head, or beyond the reach, of rough-and-ready Roeckel. Now that the composer of *Lohengrin*, however, had “drawn back into greater and greater solitude,” he “lived in intimate communion almost solely with [this] one friend, who went so far in his sympathy with my artistic evolution as to eschew the natural impulse to develop, and gain credit for, his own artistic talents—as he himself declared to me” (*P. I.* 348). How far it was a sacrifice to Roeckel, remains a question. Certainly his opera *Farinelli*, the score of which had contributed to his obtaining his present post, was never performed, and the above would imply that he had voluntarily withdrawn it out of a feeling of its poverty when compared with the work of his senior. But the whole bent of Roeckel’s talent seems rather to have lain in a politico-literary, than in a musical direction: not one of his musical compositions *before* the Dresden period has ever been published, so far as we are aware; nor can we gather from his own full account of his imprisonment thereafter, that during any part of those twelve and a half years he was engaged in writing music—surely the most unobjectionable method of whiling away a captive’s time. Once in 1855, ’tis true, Wagner jokingly refers to his own tetralogy, suggesting that the captive will probably compose the whole thing straight off as soon as he sees the score of *Das Rheingold*; but after Roeckel’s pardon we find Wagner begging back the text of *Wieland*, significantly adding: “Come now, mighty politician! Do you seriously think of turning opera-composer again? Honestly, I don’t believe it.” What drew these two men closer together toward the end of their stay in Dresden was evidently a community of political sentiment, perhaps aided by Wagner’s experience of the chilling atmosphere of social planets such as Hiller and Co.: “I consoled myself by saying that my loneliness was no self-sought, egoistic thing, but absolutely imposed upon me by the wilderness around” (*P. I.* 348).

One friend of longer standing, to whom the master so often acknowledged a debt of inspiration, was on the point of leaving for good and all. On Sunday, May 16, 1847, Frau Schröder-Devrient appeared on the Dresden boards for the very last time, making her farewell bow as “Clytemnestra.” Apart from the loss of so fine an artist, to Wagner and her other intimates it was a dismal

outlook, for they foresaw the fate on which she was rushing. To the horror of them all, on August 29 she bound herself by marriage (at Kleinzschocher near Leipzig) to that rascally ex-lieutenant v. Döring. The same day a certain high personage had written to warn her of his perfidious character: too late. So blind was her infatuation, that she signed the marriage-contract, prepared by Döring, without so much as reading it. With one stroke of the pen she had made away all she possessed, or ever should possess, even to the half of her Dresden pension, to a man who almost immediately "threw off the mask," to use her own words, "and revealed himself a perfect devil" (A. v. Wolzogen's *Wne. S.-Devrient* 316-7).

By way of a brighter interlude we may introduce another episode of this same May, one of the few occasions that Wagner broke his present solitude. It was a little dinner at Findlater's, an open-air resort with restaurant commanding a splendid view of the Elbe (subsequently purchased by a Prussian prince). The guest was Emanuel Geibel (afterwards author of a *Brunhild* tragedy, 1857), who had recently made his first attempt at libretto-writing with the text for Mendelssohn's unfinished *Loreley*. As the poet was on his way through Dresden, Pecht, Wagner, Semper, Hähnel, Ramberg and Hiller, appear to have clubbed together to fête him. Of a frank and open nature, the very opposite of Gutzkow's, he delighted everyone—so Pecht informs us—by the genial harmony of his presence. This time there was no harangue by Wagner, but Geibel himself supplied the after-dinner entertainment, with an improvisation: "Possibly," says Pecht, "he acquitted himself in better form, than Wagner on that memorable New Year's Eve in Paris, but certainly not more wittily and aptly: he spoke, maybe, in better verse, but hardly could contend with Wagner for happy hits" (*Aus meiner Zeit* I. 205-6, 291).

From this tiny streak of sunshine we return to the gloom of the theatre, where it was becoming more and more obvious that Wagner had no real chance of gaining any wholesome influence. His proposals for the reform of the Kapelle had now been definitely rejected; so that it was worse than hopeless to dream of reorganising the Opera itself. For the present at least, there was nothing for it but to "give up the attempt entirely, and confine himself to the strict letter of his duties." In fact it was begin-

ning to be pretty clear to him, that the authorities regarded him as an insufferable nuisance. With the beginning of 1847 the author of *Uriel Akosta* had entered upon his ambiguous duties of “Dramaturg,” which he interpreted as giving him rights not only over the conduct of the Play, but even over the engagement of singers for the Opera: an endless cause of friction. How little Gutzkow understood the objects of the second Kapellmeister, is proved by the unconscious humour of a story he relates in 1875: *Tannhäuser* had bored him, “with exception of the charming polonaise”—good gracious!—“but one day on the Dippoldiswalder Platz I asked the author himself, ‘Why on earth did you omit Klingsor from your Wartburgkrieg? He surely belonged to the text. You could have used him for a powerful bass part à la Bertram in *Robert the devil*, and your plot would have gained a representative of the Dæmonic, to work on Tannhäuser. To let it all arise from Tannhäuser alone, his mere reminiscences, is really not dramatic.’ After this open-heartedness of mine we ceased to be on speaking terms” (*Rückblicke* p. 319). Yet we should have liked to be told Wagner’s answer, even without minute particulars of the street in which it was given.

The sinister effect of Gutzkow’s accession to office comes out very plainly in a letter of Wagner’s dated August 6 of this year to his old friend Regisseur Heine, who happened to be away on a protracted cure: “I’m so full of the deepest contempt for our present theatrical system, that—recognising my inability to improve it—I’ve no more ardent wish than to cut myself entirely adrift. And I have to regard it as a positive curse, that my whole creative energy has taken the dramatic direction; for in the wretched constitution of our theatres I’m bound to see the most complete derision of my efforts.” Then he comes to the immediate incentive of the exclamation: “Perhaps you’ve already heard of my having definitely broken with Lüttichau somewhere about three weeks back, so that, from my side at least, a reconciliation is not so much as to be thought of: Gutzkow was the cause. The details are quite immaterial: the old, old strife of knowledge and conviction against want of understanding. Agreement, in such a case, is out of the question; but when a conflict has reached the pitch of this last one, even a jogging on together is inconceivable, and so I tarry in the fixed determination to make an end of the affair.” The allusion is somewhat dark to

us outsiders ; but it is sufficient to prove that unboiled peas, to use a homely metaphor, were being thrust in the shoes of the second conductor. As Wagner further contemplates the necessity of "going to the King" in the long run, it looks as if he were pondering the alternative of a resignation. That, at anyrate, is how town-gossip took it ; for a Dresden correspondent sarcastically writes to the Leipzig *Signale* (1847, No. 39, p. 309) : "A dreadful loss has menaced the Dresden Opera ; but, to the salvation of Germany, the affair is now happily settled. Herr Kapellmeister Wagner had resigned because of a squabble with the Dramaturg [Gutzkow]. Tichatschek also is sulking with Wagner ; for Dresden these are weighty matters"—and for the correspondent too, it seems.

With a sigh of relief we come to "pleasanter news. My life at Marcolini's suits me well :—in capital health, I've finished the other two acts of *Lohengrin* ; so, that opera's composition is ended ; and I'm glad of it, for my work delights me." The change of abode had been effected the beginning of April, soon after the Palm Sunday concert. It was necessitated, as already mentioned, by the hole the publication business had eaten in his salary ; but it suited the composer much better, to have moved to where he could enjoy more quiet and seclusion. He now was living in a "palace," but the extravagance came to less than half his former rent—£15, instead of £33, a year. The truth of it is, the Marcolini Palace had greatly fallen from its high estate, since the days when it housed a Napoleon* ; having passed into municipal proprietorship, it was let out in 'flats.' The lower floor, or part of it, was occupied by Professor Julius Hähnel as a sculptor's studio and private dwelling ; a suite of rooms on the upper floor was hired by Richard Wagner. Minna—to whose kind thought Heine owed his present letter—had made everything ship-shape in three or four weeks ; and, his duties at the theatre being temporarily lightened owing to the death of Prince Ernst and other causes, her husband was able to settle down to his work again in comfort. On Wednesday the 12th of May he began the 'composition' of the first act of *Lohengrin* ; in less than a month, namely Tuesday, June the 8th, he had finished it. Ten days later, Friday the 18th, he pro-

* See vol. i. 49, 50. Situate in the Friedrichstrasse, it now is an infirmary.

ceeded to the *second* act, and finished that on August 2,—so entirely had the final act determined all that goes before.

It is time to seek a private interview.—We enter a modest but decently appointed room, the prominent feature of which is a well-stocked library : somewhat unusual with musicians of those days, and quite exceptional in the nature of its contents. For here we have far more than scores, or Theories of Harmony and Counterpoint ; an historian might have selected those books on ancient national customs, a philologist those on myth and saga, a sculptor or architect those on the plastic arts, and a poet that treasury of epics and dramas. A grand piano of course we find ; perhaps a plaster cast by Hähnel in a suitable corner ; but luxury there is none, save the luxury of tranquillity and an open view across the park-like gardens. The composer hurries in, with short, quick steps, too gently-bred to keep us waiting : this noon he is taking a rest, and has not yet exchanged one of those cosy dressing-gowns of Minna's manufacture for the strangling garb of the citizen. After accepting a pinch of snuff, and remarking on the quiet of the spot, we inquire if he means to have no holiday this year, then?—My little change of quarters must suffice for that ; and there are other reasons. But I expect to have to travel Berlin-wards ere long. Meantime, you see, one gets almost as much retirement and fresh air in a budding suburb, as by journeying farther out. Also, my latest opera was progressing so fast, it seemed a pity to break the vein.—Its style will differ from its predecessors?—Considerably ; but rather in degree, than in kind.—We have heard something of the mode in which you propose to extend your application of the Leitmotiv principle, in connection with the various moods and characters. May we venture to ask how you are dealing with melody proper?—Well, the work is practically finished now, that is to say, all but its full scoring ; and as it will probably be my last experiment until I have had time to go much deeper into the *dramatic* problem, I will read you what I'm pretty certain to say when looking back on it a few years hence :—

“In the ‘absolute-music’ period of my youth, I remember, I often put myself the question, How must I set about it, to invent original melodies, melodies that should bear a stamp peculiar to myself? That anxiety I lost, the nearer I approached the period when I based my musical procedure on the nature of my poetic

subject. In my earlier operas [*Feen*, *Liebesverbot* and *Rienzi*] I was governed by traditional, or modern Melody, to which I merely sought to give originality and a style of my own by rhythmic and harmonic tricks. But I had always a greater leaning to broad and long-spun melodies, than to the fragmentary and contrapuntal melism appropriate to Instrumental music: in my *Liebesverbot*, indeed, I had frankly fallen into an imitation of the modern Italian cantilena. In *Rienzi*, wherever the *subject* did not already dictate my treatment, I was governed by Franco-Italian melism, especially as it appealed to me from Spontini's operas. But Operatic Melody lost more and more its influence over me when I took in hand the *Flying Dutchman*. . . . Whenever I had to express the emotions of dramatic personages, their speech must so be rendered that the *expressed emotion*, and not the *melodic expression per se*, should rouse the hearer's interest. My melody, therefore, must spring from the words themselves; for itself, as sheer melody, it could not be permitted to arrest attention, but only in so far as it was the most palpable expression of an emotion plainly outlined in the words. With this imperative conception of the melodic element I headed completely away from the usual method of composing operas, since I no longer tried deliberately for wanted melody, or in a sense for Melody at all, but simply *let it take its rise* from feeling utterance of the words. How very gradually this came about, however, will be obvious from a consideration of my music to the *Flying Dutchman*. Here I was still so subject to the influence of customary melism, that I even retained the Cadenza here and there in all its nakedness; and, to anyone who will not deny that this *Flying Dutchman* marks my new departure in respect of melody, this may serve as proof, with how little premeditation I swerved into that path.

"In the further evolution of my melody, in *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, I instinctively withdrew more and more from that influence. Nevertheless here too, and notably in *Tannhäuser*, a sense of compulsion to give my dialogue a recognisably melodic form is still distinctly visible. It is clear to me *now*, that this was owing to an *imperfection in our modern verse*. . . . Our modern Verse is totally void of *real rhythm*; its rhythm is purely imaginary, and no one could feel that more keenly than the composer who fain would draw from this verse the contours of

his melody. Tied to such verse, I was compelled either to dispense with Rhythm altogether, or—if I felt its crying need, from a purely musical standpoint—capriciously to borrow it from that of absolute Opera-melody, and often artificially to foist it on my verse. Conversely, wherever the expression of the words was the first consideration, my melody was bound almost to lose all rhythmic character, if it were not to stand in forced relation to the verse; and in so dealing I was infinitely more conscientious, than when I sought to liven up my melody by wilful rhythm. . . . My melody's loss in rhythmic strikingness I made good, however, by *harmonic* pliancy, by characteristic modulations which were to convey the most appropriately to the sentient ear the expression of each feeling uttered in the verse. Further, I heightened the individuality of this expression by a more and more distinctive treatment of the *orchestral accompaniment*; a course—directed solely to *dramatic melody*—I followed with the most decision in my *Lohengrin*, where I thus have pursued to its legitimate consequences the line first taken in the *Flying Dutchman*” (*P. I.* 371-4).

The interview has not been unfruitful, if only for its supplying the clue to a marked peculiarity in *Lohengrin*. The general character of the music of this opera is far less rhythmic than that of either its predecessor, *Tannhäuser*, or its successor, *Das Rheingold*; its harmonies and modulations subtler, we derive that undefinable impression of something suprasensual, something from another world, of “timeless, spaceless Harmony” (*P. V.* 79); and that, not only the world of Lohengrin, but at the opposite pole the world of Ortrud—for instance the weird descending sequence of chromatic chords (act ii, scene 1) that shews her to us as a “seeress.” Not that Rhythm even in its most seizable forms is banished from *Lohengrin*, as witness all that portion we may call the militant or ceremonial—to say nothing of more elusive suggestions, such as that sterling Nibelung-syncope accompanying parts of the scene just cited; but the prevailing effect is one of half-tones and dreamy shades of colour, fading off one knows not where.

The best form of verse for setting to dramatic music had not as yet been settled; the lines, iambic as a rule, were too long and dragging. Of this a remarkable proof is supplied by the first scene in the work, where the composer seems to have been

absolutely driven back to the old-fashioned *recitativo secco* for the greater part of the long speeches by the King and Telramund: contrast them with the perfect melos, as natural as it is expressive, of the dialogue between the King and Elsa in the scene that follows! When the verse permits a drastic subdivision, as in Ortrud's invocation of her gods, we are transported bodily to the *Nibelungen* period, where bold-cut rhythms combine with the richest harmonies and warmest colouring to produce an effect unmatched by any other master; in fact, Siegmund's "Nothung! Nothung!" in *Die Walküre* is literally a magnification of Ortrud's appeal to the selfsame deity. Nevertheless, in *Lohengrin* the harmonic element preponderates over the rhythmic, and anyone wishful for proof of the statement may be referred to Wagner's own description (1879) of Elsa's first *arioso* as consisting "almost solely of a tissue of remote harmonic progressions" (*P. VI.* 189); with whom, let us hope, he will also agree that, when properly rendered, "this phrase appears quite natural, for all its wanderings."

The day before the finishing touch was put to the second act of *Lohengrin*, its predecessor *Tannhäuser* had at last appeared with a remodelled ending (August 1, 1847). Whatever may have been the final instigator,—whether the author's experience with Gluck's *Iphigenia*, or his intimate concernment with the close of *Lohengrin*,—it was a debt he long had wished to pay his earlier work. As he tells us in his pamphlet *On the Performing of Tannhäuser* (1852), "The revised ending stands toward its first version as a finished picture toward its sketch. At my first conception I had just as clear an image of it in my brain, as that developed in its second version; but I had built too much on certain scenic effects, which proved inadequate when brought to actual execution. A mere distant glowing of the Venusberg was not enough to raise the haunting fears I meant to be dispelled by the denouement; still less could the far-away dirge and the lights in the windows of the Wartburg, also in the background, bring the full significance of Elisabeth's death to instant perception by an uninformed spectator. My experiences of the misunderstanding of this situation had been so painfully convincing, as to afford an urgent reason for remodelling the close. And this could only mean, that Venus herself must appear

again, with witchcraft sensible to eye and ear; whilst, instead of Elisabeth's death being merely hinted at, the dying Tannhäuser sinks down upon her actual bier" (*P.* III. 185-6). The immense advantage of this change can be fully realised only when the difficulties of inscenation are properly overcome; so that there is something to be said for those who still prefer the earlier ending, as a more poetical *suggestion*. Nevertheless we may fairly ask professors of that preference whether the suggestion would have been quite clear to them, were they unacquainted with the details of its later carrying out?

Opinions were certainly divided at Dresden in August 1847. The more naïve hearers (in a house crammed full) were delighted with the change, and applauded to their hearts' content; "even the strangers [? touring English], who on such occasions mostly keep their mouths a-gape, but never stir their hands, became quite lively" (letter of Aug. 6 to Heine).* The intensely dramatic climax where the soul of Tannhäuser is battled for by Venus on the one hand, on the other by Wolfram—already the spiritual executor of Elisabeth—had manifestly struck an answering chord. But the critics were not to be disarmed: "With what object the change has been made," says a contributor to the *Neue Zeitschrift*, "to us is not apparent. The new close is just as unsatisfactory as the earlier one, and merely gains a little more variety through the appearance of the evil principle." No grounds are given for "our" discontent, which might have been accounted for by three extraneous factors: first, no new scenery having been allowed the composer, "the whole apparition of Venus was driven too much into the foreground" by use of the old properties from act i; secondly, the chorus of Younger Pilgrims was omitted, because of the insuperable difficulty of getting sufficiently fresh and pure soprano and alto voices; and thirdly, no arts of the stage-manager could coax from a back-cloth that had already performed a double duty yet a third effect, that of the flush of early dawn, so necessary to

* Schumann was present at the repetition on August 7, and wrote that night in his theatre-diary: "It is an opera that cannot be dismissed in a word. It certainly has a touch of genius in it. Were Wagner as melodious a musician, as he is a clever one, he would be the man of his age,"—which is little more than an echo of his letter of Jan. 7, 1846 (p. 164*n antea*). Strange that, after several hearings, Schumann cannot make up his mind about this opera!

send the spectator home assured that Tannhäuser is veritably "redeemed."*

After the production of his amended *Tannhäuser*, Wagner seems to have had to make a little trip "at Küstner's request, to inspect the two Berlin tenors" (why, we shall hear in a moment); so that he was unable to write down his *Lohengrin* prelude until August 28, † Goethe's birthday. Three years from that very day, was the work to be first produced (Weimar 1850)—three years that for the composer almost meant a lifetime.

So *Lohengrin* was finished, except for its scoring; but, strange to say, with little immediate prospect of production at Dresden. Though *Tannhäuser* had been accepted even before completion, and was now at the meridian of local popularity, the composer's relations with the Intendant had of late become more and more critical, as we have already seen. Yet, as he continues to F. Heine, "I have taken counsel of prudence, and recognised that if I can first put a big Berlin success into my side of the scale, it cannot but tell in my favour." What that "big Berlin success" was to be, we learn a few lines later: "If *Rienzi* goes off as I hope at Berlin, *Lohengrin* will follow it there in the first place." Extraordinary man! His *Dutchman* had been stifled in Berlin, his *Tannhäuser* declined, *Rienzi* eternally postponed; yet he has the hardihood to think that *Lohengrin* has only to be glanced at, to be taken up! If it had not been for these ignes fatui, we may be sure he would have been swallowed in the Dresden swamp; but in the present instance there was a reasonable ground of hope: "The King of Prussia stayed a week at Pillnitz, and must have spoken about me to von Lüttichau, and in fact to all the Court. For, on the day after a grand banquet, L. came rushing back to town, and gave orders for everything else to be set on one side and *Rienzi* put on again—all this, mind you, *after* my catastrophe"—i.e. the unspecified rupture occasioned by Gutzkow.

* See *Prose Works* III. 196-7 and 187. At Bayreuth *three* different back-cloths are used to represent the selfsame scene: one in act i, for the effect of Spring noon; two in act iii, the one giving the effect of autumn twilight, and the other that of rosy dawn. What a loss the work must have suffered by the omission of the chorus announcing the miracle, may be realised by those who remember that "Heil! Heil!" at Bayreuth.—W. A. E.

† The original sketch for its score gives no *year* date, but no doubt about that is possible.

Now, there is something very singular about this “desire” of Friedrich Wilhelm IV. Two years ago he had attended the 25th representation of the same opera at Dresden, and expressed his delight with it. That his pleasure was genuine, is proved by his present desire. Yet Berlin hadn’t moved an inch towards mounting the work! The excuse, as we know, was the lack of “a heroic tenor.” But surely it would have been easy enough to borrow Tichatschek, in view of that singer’s lavish leaves-of-absence.—Evidently there was somebody behind the scenes, who baffled every move. The King was not master of his own Royal Opera-house; in fact, as shewn by Mendelssohn’s experience, not even master in the more general musical arrangements of his capital. We all know who *was*: Friedrich Wilhelm might joke about “Catholics and Protestants cutting each others’ throats in the *Huguenots*, whilst the Jew played the tune”; but for all practical purposes he was under his General Music-Director’s thumb at the Berlin Opera, and had to seek the gratification of his personal tastes elsewhere.

For the moment Wagner seems to have lost sight of this undignified conjuncture; but it was not long before it all came back to him, so that we find him remarking in a letter of the 31st of this same August (? to E. Kossak): “Here nothing but *deeds* can help,—good luck must bring to power and influence some man of zeal and character, who shall be permitted to raise his heart’s conviction to a temporary law; for it really may be presumed that, should Chance so will it, a King would give an able man as free a hand as an incompetent [meaning Küstner]. Then the public must be trained by facts; for until it has learnt to know the good by a series of examples, it can be inspired with no true need thereof. So long, however, as an immense majority of the public is simply melted by the *mezza voce* of a virtuosa, its need seems easy to our managers to satisfy.” Revolutionary as the writer was on the point of becoming, it is perfectly characteristic of his principles to view the bureaucrats and courtiers as the obstacles, and pin his faith to a sovereign’s good-will. Thus we already have a premonition of that historic cry of sixteen years hereafter: “Will this Prince be found?—In the beginning was the Deed” (*P.* III. 282).

If he believed he had found that Prince in Friedrich Wilhelm IV. of Prussia, the would-be patron of the arts to whom he had

sent his *Holländer* from Paris, he was terribly mistaken. But the wish was father to the thought, and a resounding Berlin success had become to him the one thing needful: "One sole distasteful bond still tied me to our public art-affairs—the necessity of taking thought for monetary profit from my works, to mend my situation. Thus had I still to care for outer success, after I had quite renounced it for myself and inner need. Berlin had declined my *Tannhäuser*: no longer for myself, but for others [his publication creditors], I bestirred myself about the production of *Rienzi* there, a work I long had done with. My only reason was experience of this opera's success at Dresden, and calculation of the outward benefit a like success would bring me in the shape of Berlin *tantîèmes*" (P. I. 348). It was worth an effort, if only to place him in a more independent position when dealing with his own Intendant.

Delayed for years by the machinations of Meyerbeer and his hangers-on, *Rienzi* was at last to be given at Berlin by Royal command, for the King's birthday on the 15th of October. To be able to set out in mid-September* to superintend the Berlin preparations, Wagner had been compelled to beg his senior colleague to put some limit to a holiday, as we gather from a self-pitying letter of Reissiger's (to music-publisher Böhme, Nov. 19, 1847): "I stayed on at Berlin a week longer, and was thinking of spending a few days at Dessau and Leipzig; but my colleague Wagner implored me to return, as he wanted to coach up his *Rienzi* in Berlin. So poor Reissiger had to do the handsome, and give up all his plans. . . . Enclosed you'll find my Eighteenth Trio—full of melody, thank God!" A heroic act of self-sacrifice, rendered the more touching by the fact that the pharisee's "trio" and its fellows are dead as door-nails, whilst even the publican's *Rienzi* still lives on. We are sorry to hear, however, that Reissiger had been ploughing Berlin before Wagner arrived there; the omen does not augur well.

Wagner seems to have got on very well, as usual, with the Berlin singers and bandsmen. But there is mostly some jackal of the Press to be found in such a gathering, and the conductor had to suffer for an unguarded remark. At the first general rehearsal he felt it incumbent to apologise to the performers for

* Just after a visit from his old Riga friend Löbmann, who left a younger brother behind him for Wagner to look after in the musical line.

the excessive tax on their endurance, characterising it as an artistic offence of his youth—“eine künstlerische Jugendsünde.” It was a rash thing to say in strange company, but no one can have been more surprised than himself, to find it served up steaming-hot in the papers as a hint to the public how to approach a work, “which the composer himself had stigmatised as a miserable failure.” Unfortunately too, the singer of the part of “Adriano,” Frau Schlegel-Köster (expressly engaged from the first of October), fell ill a little while before the date announced for the production, and it consequently had to be deferred for ten days, thus missing the Royal birthday. The Berlin *Figaro*—followed by the Leipzig *Signale*, the *Wiener Musikzeitung* and all the rest of them—at once led off the cry that the work had been dropped, “apparently for ever,” owing to the applicability of certain portions to the present state of things in Rome. So jealously was every move of Wagner’s countered by the enemy, even in these days of small beginnings.

The postponement gave him leisure to look round him in Berlin; but there was little to encourage him. The authorities at the theatre, “great Küstner” and Co., were not likely to be particularly sociable, after having their hand forced. As for the literary world, the only person with whom the master formed some sort of friendship was Ernst Kossak, to whom he writes from Dresden soon afterwards.

The King, on whom he naturally had built his hopes, was inaccessible; though it was by his special request that Wagner had come to his capital. Even had he been admitted to the royal presence, it would have profited him little, it seems: “When in 1847 I wished to communicate my ideas to this talented monarch, I was told that, after he had understood me, it was to be presumed he would refer me to his Operatic Regisseur Stawinsky; it came to neither one thing nor the other” (*P.* VI. 119). In a letter of 1873 to the Berlin Wagner-Verein he defines the object of the sought-for audience more precisely: “In the autumn of 1847 I went to Berlin with the special wish to present myself to his Majesty King Friedrich Wilhelm IV. and read him out the poem of my *Lohengrin*, with a view to interesting him in that work sufficiently, if possible, to obtain his order to complete it for production at the Berlin Court-theatre. At that time it seemed to me as if this work belonged particularly [through the Im-

perialist speeches of Henry the Fowler?] to a spot whither the eyes of all who longed for a genuine revival of the German spirit were then directed. My wish stayed unfulfilled: it was made impossible to me to arrive at the right quarter." Some uncanny influence barred the path,* vetoing an audience which had not been so difficult for Mendelssohn to obtain a few years back. Antechambering was as unfruitful to Wagner in Berlin as it had proved in Paris.

Looking back on these cheerless Prussian weeks, just four years later, he is somewhat harder on himself than there seems to be call for: "I was forced to adopt the whole modern vice of lying and hypocrisy. People I despised from the bottom of my heart I flattered, or at least concealed from them my inner sentiments, because, as circumstances stood, they were masters of the success or failure of my undertaking. Men of the world, on the side the farthest from my own true nature, of whom I knew that they as jealously suspected me as I inwardly disliked themselves, I sought by counterfeited unconstraint to rob of their suspicion, though all the while I felt how little chance I had of doing so. For I was but a bungler in the art of lying: my candid opinion, which had a knack of always slipping out, simply turned me from a dangerous person into a ridiculous one as well" (*P. I.* 349). The word "dangerous" supplies a key to the whole allusion: there being no question of politics, "dangerous" he could only be to Meyerbeer—who hurried away just *before* the performance, after scuttling the ship.

On Tuesday, October the 26th, in spite of every obstacle, *Rienzi* took the Berlin stage.† The King, by whose command the work had been mounted, was *not* present, nor at either of the two repetitions conducted by Wagner. Inscrutable mystery.

At 6 P.M. Wagner led off the opera before a house filled to the last seat notwithstanding the doubled prices. The overture, for all the swing of its themes and swell of its harmonies, had a chill reception—a Berlin speciality. Wellnigh every number in the first act, however, was applauded; at end of the second the

* See vol. i. p. 383.

† Herr Pfister in the title-rôle, Frau Schlegel-Köster as "Adriano," Frl. Tuszek as "Irene," Frl. Brexendorf as the "Messenger of Peace"; the minor parts being filled by Herren Krause, Böttcher, Zschesche, Heinrich and Fischer.

composer was called, as also at the curtain's fall, 11 P.M. The representatives of the principal rôles had to respond more frequently. Nevertheless, the author had a strong presentiment that the work would not run much longer than the *Flying Dutchman*. Nor was he deceived, as it vanished after eight performances.* Small wonder! For the Press mines at once were exploded: want of form, lack of melody, brutality of instrumentation, and all the rest of it (see Appendix). Whereas the tenor, who in Wagner's opinion had ruined the name-part, was praised to the skies, the *plot* of this opera was written down “tedious”; not, overcharged with incident and catastrophe, but baldly tedious! Almost the only one to print a line in its favour was Carl Schröder,† a former collaborator of Wagner's friend Carl Gaillard (whose journal had already been bought up by the Meyerbeer party).

“It was a hideous state of mind, in which I returned from Berlin. Only those who misinterpreted my prolonged outbursts of ironic mirth, could be blind to the fact that I felt the more wretched as I now had failed with even my enforced attempt at self-dishonouring—more commonly called worldly wisdom. Never did I more clearly recognise the ghastly force with which our modern Art and modern Life combine to yoke a man's free heart and make him bad. Was there any other escape for the unit—save death? . . . But one thing held me erect: *my art*, which for me was no mere means to gain and glory, but to conveyance of my thoughts to feeling hearts” (*P. I.* 350). So he set to work at once on the final phase of *Lohengrin*, its scoring. Can we not hear in the orchestral accompaniments of Ortrud's diabolic plot an echo of those sudden outbursts of unbridled irony? At the other extreme: who but a man that had felt the utter emptiness of earthly hopes, could have conceived those lambent combinations which paint for us the celestial kingdom of the Grail?

* The three in 1847 conducted by Wagner himself, and five in 1848. *Rienzi* was not resumed in Berlin until 1865, the year after *Meyerbeer's* death.

† Born May 1, 1823, at Endorf in the Lower Hartz. In February 1850 he was carried off by consumption, the same disease that felled T. Uhlig in 1853. Almost whenever a young man promised to be of more than ordinary help to Wagner, Fate cut his thread of life. The mercenaries of Meyerbeer were made of tougher fibre.

This instrumentation of *Lohengrin* so completely marks the transition of the Wagner of Opera into the Wagner of the Bayreuth Drama (the only serviceable title, however anachronistic), that we are bound to dwell a moment with it. The most competent of judges shall be our spokesman; a master of the orchestra himself; the first to set this work before the public. Written three years from the date at which we have now arrived, consequently when *Lohengrin* was still Richard Wagner's last word in music, Liszt's essay on that opera remains to this day the classical appreciation:—

“To anyone who has neither seen nor heard Wagner's scores, neither studied their consummate workmanship nor felt their scenic power, it is not so easy to convey a notion of his extraordinary doubling of the great symphonist with the great dramatist.” In a passage already embodied in our previous volume (p. 118) Liszt signalises the division of the orchestra into three main constituent bodies, with subsidiary groups of three, and then proceeds: “This ternary system has the advantage, among other things, that the whole chord can be given and held in the same scale of colour. . . . Wagner also makes frequent use of a distribution of the strings into separate bodies. In a word, instead of treating the orchestra as an almost homogeneous mass, he parts it into tributary streams and brooks; at times—to change the metaphor—he spins it to the finest parti-coloured threads, and casts their spools first here, then there, now weaving them together, now dividing, until their wondrous ravelling has formed a tissue of most priceless lace. . . . Even in his earlier operas Wagner had always mixed a separate palette for each of his chief characters; but pre-eminently in *Lohengrin*. The more attentively you examine this last score of his, the more are you struck by the intimate relation he has established between his poem and his orchestra. Not only does he personify in rhythms and melodies the feelings and the passions drawn, but animates their contours by a corresponding scheme of colour. Thus the motif figured in the Prelude, and recurring whenever the Holy Grail is thought of, is invariably entrusted to the violins. Elsa is almost exclusively accompanied by the wood-wind, producing the happiest contrasts whenever they follow, or are followed by, the brass. A peculiarly enthralling moment is that after the scene of the long recital for the King, whose rôle is insistently

accompanied by regal trumpets and trombones : a silence follows, melting into the softest sigh, like that of a wave just kissed by a breath from heaven : we are under the spell of Elsa's virgin purity, even before herself appears. The selfsame quality of sound descends like dew to quench the ravening flames of the scene between Friedrich and Ortrud, so soon as Elsa steps upon the balcony. It further serves for the bridal procession, and paints so vividly the simple bliss of innocence, as to make this one of the most perfect scenes in all the opera."*

Before Wagner left Berlin, the musical world had to mourn the loss of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy. Last April he had conducted his *Elijah* in London for the Sacred Harmonic Society, and literally been heaped with laurels ; only to be prostrated, on his return to Germany, by the shock of his beloved sister Fanny's death. He never thoroughly recovered from it ; but the news of his demise on November the 4th came with such unexpected suddenness, as to startle even the most indifferent into sympathy.

Wagner last had seen him in the best of health and spirits, on that visit to Leipzig in the summer of 1846 ; the sad tidings could not have reached him at a time and place more likely to enhance his sorrow, than in the arena of the Meyerbeerian tiltings at *Rienzi*. The distinction he draws between these two world-celebrated "rivals" in his *Judaism in Music* (1850) is not merely of degree, but of character and kind : little community of inner feeling as there can have subsisted between the composer of *S. Paul* and the composer of *Lohengrin*, Wagner speaks of MENDELSSOHN as having owned "the amplest store of specific talents, the most refined and varied culture, the keenest and the tenderest sense of honour. . . . And if in the domain of Art we are to give our sympathy to the sheer personality, we cannot deny a large measure thereof to Mendelssohn ; even though the force of that sympathy be weakened by the reflection that the tragedy of his situation rather clove to him, than came to actual cleansing consciousness." It therefore is simply atrocious, that he should have been accused in an anonymous letter from Leipzig of having expressed delight at this sudden removal. Nothing could more effectually dispose of this squalid calumny, than his allusion to it in a letter to Kittl : "What am I to do ?

* Franz Liszt's *Gesammelte Schriften* III. 2, pp. 141-4.

That I should have a large number of enemies in Dresden, is natural : the worst of it is, my temperament forbids my trying to conciliate them. Perhaps nothing would be easier, if only I could be more sociable, go more about. The great retirement of my mode of life is to blame for all these absurd reports about me. Outside my duties, I pass my time in my own house ; which, moreover, is now very out-of-the-way. Every malicious slander of my person is therefore the more readily believed, as so few are in a position to deny it, since very few come near me. Thus the most incredible tales about myself have often come to my ears already—how much besides may never have reached me ! Here there can only be two effects, the deepest trouble or the profoundest disgust : I have almost arrived at the latter.” And this was the man who was scoring a *Lohengrin* for those vipers !

“The gaping of the common herd, the poisoned trail of envy” (*P. I.* 341).

A favourite device with these gentry, was to get their inventions printed in an outside journal first, and reproduce them with a borrowed weight in Dresden. Thus, while note after silent note is being added to the score of *Lohengrin*, J. Schladebach reprints in the *Abendzeitung* a whole nosegay of would-be witticisms intended to damage its lonely creator : “In the *Wiener Musikzeitung* 1847, No. 101, it is reported from Dresden : A composing Kapellmeister, who is striving to transplant the style, or want of style, of Berlioz to the German Opera, got his first opera published by a music-dealer who then was living bel-étage. Scarcely had the opera been out a year, than the publisher had to move up a storey. The second opera of this prolific composer drove the publisher another flight higher, and the third yet another ; so that he now has reached the fourth floor, and will have nothing to say to the fourth opera, for fear of arriving at the roof” (Nov. 11). “The soon-to-be-completed opera of Herr Kapellmeister Wagner is said to have already caused a notable rise in the price of violin-strings, as German enthusiasm for the great tone-artist is developing more violent symptoms day by day” (Dec. 2). “The new opera by Kapellmeister Wagner, *Lohengrin*, with a text adapted from the Grail legend, is finished now. The talented composer has tannhäusered himself a Royal Prussian Ritter-ribbon.” Neither was *Lohengrin* finished as yet, nor had its composer received a decoration from the King of Prussia : in

all his life he accepted nothing of the kind—in this period of it, none was offered him.

Yet there is a grain of truth in the last piece of gossip, and a very curious one. Friedrich Wilhelm IV., who had twice heard *Rienzi* at Dresden; who had made short work of the endless delays in producing that opera at Berlin, and requested the King of Saxony to allow the composer to come and conduct it; that same Friedrich Wilhelm, who then had absented himself from its commanded production in his own capital—came over to Dresden to hear a performance of *Tannhäuser* in the latter half of November, i.e. some two or three weeks later! In Berlin he was not permitted to be contaminated by this work, either now or for many a year to come; but the keeper of the King's home conscience seems to have been paralysed by the Saxon frontier. There's something weird about it.

The King of Prussia thoroughly enjoyed his holiday, and did not forget to say so. Writing about the event to Kossak on the 23rd, Wagner reflects the royal pleasure: “I'm not ashamed to confess that this opera gave me great delight that evening.” Kossak had been reporting the progress made by *Rienzi* in musical circles over there; so Wagner continues: “Only now have I arrived by degrees at fairly ridding myself of all the bad Berlin impressions. My Berlin ambitions are at an end; and what consoles me, is that I am growing aware I shall get farther without them.” How, may be gathered from the next few lines, in which comes out the trend the artist's thoughts are beginning to take: “Dear friend, what's the use of all our preaching to the public? Here there's a dam to break through, and the tool for it is—Revolution!”

Very shortly after the despatch of this, the consequences of having forgone his annual relaxation became apparent: in a letter of December 2 to Spohr* he speaks of a sick-bed to which he has been confined for some days. The indisposition must have lasted for at least a month, and seriously interfered with the scoring of *Lohengrin*; for its victim writes to Kittl as late as Jan. 4, 1848, that he has had a “severe attack of illness.” Schumann

* A hearty recommendation of W. Fischer junior as a candidate for the vacant post of Chorus- and Music-director at the Cassel theatre, young Fischer having already filled similar posts at Cologne and Mayence.

also—transferring to Hiller* the post of confidant erewhile enjoyed by Mendelssohn—informs the absentee that January, “I had a talk with him lately. He doesn’t look well, but wants to get back to his *Lohengrin*”: an icicle of a reference, accentuating the solitude of Wagner’s lot among his “German art-colleagues.”

With his own work calling loudly for completion, the invalid himself cannot look thus coldly upon others’ efforts. Kittl had just finished the setting of *Bianca und Giuseppe*: though Wagner had expressly forbidden the divulging of his name as author, he retained a father’s interest in his early text, and would dearly have loved to be the first to bring the opera out; as it is, he would have liked to be present at a few of the Prague rehearsals, but, that being impossible, hopes at least to be able to run over for the first performance. He is worried by a change Kittl proposes to introduce in the part of Giuseppe, upsetting all his notions of dramatic balance. This portion of the letter we must quote, as it is another proof how actively he was engaged throughout the present period in pondering the *dramatic* question. However, the opera’s argument is known to so very few that we shall have to preface Wagner’s comments by a little sketch, which we will borrow, with trifling corrections, from A. Meissner’s *Geschichte meines Lebens* (II. 6-9):—

“At the curtain’s rise we find ourselves in 1793, of gloomy memory. The French Revolutionary army is pressing on Nice, threatening an end to the feudal system. We are introduced to a pair of lovers, of unequal rank: high-born Bianca, whom her father is forcing to marry a certain Baron Rivoli, and Giuseppe her foster-brother, a mere huntsman. Sormano, another vassal, has secretly married Rivoli’s sister, and been hounded from his land; thrown into prison for her offence, the sister has escaped, but with the loss of her reason. Giuseppe’s life and freedom are therefore menaced by the jealousy of Rivoli [who has a further cause

* Hiller had floated off to Düsseldorf, having at last obtained a musical conductorship to his mind. His opera *Konradin*, founded on one of Raupach’s sixteen Hohenstaufen dramas, had been produced at Dresden with Johanna Wagner in the title-rôle during her uncle’s visit to Berlin. The work fully justified its composer’s apprehensions, expressed to Wagner some two years back (p. 109 *antea*); its fourth performance, given after Hiller’s departure, was faced by an empty house.

of resentment, in that Giuseppe had protested against the sister's persecution]. Sormano saves him, and conducts him to a lonely crag among the Maritime Alps. Sormano himself has turned captain of a revolutionary company, which is but waiting for a cannon signal from their French allies to fall upon a fort below, that forms the key to Nice. [Military music is heard in the distance, followed by a Requiem sung by Pilgrims]. Sormano's poor mad wife is carried in by Pilgrims, dead ; over her corpse he swears vengeance on the aristocrats, and urges Giuseppe to throw in his lot with the republicans. Giuseppe resists awhile. Then from one side of the valley ascends the music of Bianca's bridal festival, from the other are heard the drums of the French army, ever nearer and louder : Giuseppe's feelings are wrought to the height of passion, and he rushes with the others to the fray, while the music of the Marseillaise peals forth.—Now, if there is one talent possessed by Richard Wagner, it is that of working up a situation to such a pitch as to carry the hearer uncontrollably away : such a master-stroke of construction is the arrival of the swan in *Lohengrin*. We here have something similar. First the night, Sormano's story of his wrongs, the finding of his wife's dead body, and his vow of vengeance ; next the dawn of day among the mountains, the group of republicans intently listening for the movements of their allies down below ; then the wedding-music from the one side, the military tattoo from the other—the Marseillaise—a cumulative series of contrasts.”—To which we must add, that in the last act Sormano and Giuseppe, disguised as hermits, take shelter in a side-street by the cathedral door ; the wedding-procession arrives, and passes into the cathedral. Giuseppe watches the ceremony through the open door, and at last endeavours to rush in, but is prevented by Sormano ; they swear that Rivoli shall not go unpunished. From the midst of the crowd that envelopes the returning procession is heard the bridegroom's cry, “Help ! Murder” ; he dies, presumably of a dagger-thrust from Sormano. As the crowd opens a pathway, Bianca is discovered in Giuseppe's arms ; she has put an end to her misery by poison, and dies with three words of farewell. The French army attacks the gate ; Giuseppe snatches a sword from one of the bystanders, and goes with the Italian soldiers to face the enemy. The French fire ; he falls dead.—

The plot sounds strangely unlike the Wagner we know ; but it

will be remembered that it dates from just after *Das Liebesverbot*, whilst the text itself is a contemporary of that for *Die Sarazenin*. What directly concerns us, however, is the declaration elicited from the author by Kittl's contemplated change:—

“Do you know what the closing of an opera is?—*Everything*.”—Have we not just found it so in *Lohengrin*, *Iphigenia* and *Tannhäuser*?—“I had set much store upon the shock, the lightning-swiftness of this end: the terrible catastrophe at the exodus from the church should not be sugared down with anything,—the one thing awe-inspiring is the stride of a great world-destiny, personified here in the French Revolutionary army, which tramples down the old régime (of caste) in dread disdain. In my opinion, this point should not be whittled down; if the close, as I conceived it, is to be the most uplifting moment of the whole. If retained as I framed it, the grand atonement in the appearance of the French army consists *in this*: that with open eyes we here behold the advent of a new order of the world, whose birth-throes were those sorrows that made out the drama's previous motion. The ordinary public has no manner of need to go so deeply into a thing; if the right aspect is drastically set before it, by instinct it receives the right impression. That Giuseppe should not make his exit under the reproach of betraying his fatherland, is quite immaterial to this thrilling close; he pays sufficiently for his offence by what he has just suffered. But if it really must be, at least you must make it as brief as possible:—at the cry, ‘Close the gate! The French!’ let him rouse himself with the expression of a man turned frantic by despair, who sells himself to death at any price, and rush among the people crying, ‘To me, who loves his King!’ With that he may place himself at the head of some of the nobles from the bridal procession, and dash towards the gate: a volley from the oncoming French, and he falls. But for God's sake no lingering here, nothing tender or maudlin. After that cry of alarm, let there be no dragging break; thenceforth the last stream is set loose, to be dammed by nothing, if the effect is not to be chilled of all its power. Should the censor forbid the Marseillaise, you must extemporise something just like it.—I implore you, observe what I have said for your good!”*

* In a footnote to the *Communication* (1851) Wagner remarks: “The opera was produced at Prague after divers Royal-Imperial-Austrian altera-

Not a week after writing the above—that is to say, with a frame still enfeebled by the after-effects of his illness—Wagner suffered the severest blow that can fall on any man. We know with what tender affection he referred to his mother throughout his life. Through every change and chance he treasured up her letters, against his custom; letters received during his Magdeburg, his Riga and his Dresden periods. There had been a terrible gap in the dismal Paris time, when his mother herself—sister Rosalie being dead—seems to have been turned from him by other of her children; an estrangement to which he alludes in the birthday epistle of 1846, “My good little mother, though many strange things had stepped between us, how soon all that is wiped away!” But whenever he ran over from Dresden to Leipzig, his first visit was to her, too keenly realising that “only in the sense that thou art still among us, can thy children feel themselves one family.” A few years back she had written asking a little assistance for his elder brother Julius, whom fortune had not treated kindly, as she had not the heart to beg it from his wealthier Leipzig relations: “My good dear Son, in whom I am well pleased,” is her touchingly scriptural mode of address. And now, on January the 9th of this opening year of crisis, she dies at Leipzig in her seventieth year. The last link with the past is broken. The filial feeling of regard for her, which had certainly been one of the factors in keeping him to his Dresden post against his artistic convictions—that feeling is interred. To the advent of Revolution, illusory, elusive “Revolution,” he can look with sterner fixity of gaze; but the solitude of genius is made still loner by the silence of a mother’s love.

In that solitude, that valley of the shadow, he completed three months hence the scoring of his only hope-less tragedy.

tions” (*P. I.* 317). Kittl was *not* allowed to use the Marseillaise; but his own march attained enormous popularity. With regard to the close, he seems to have made a compromise between his own desires and Wagner’s better judgment; there is no “tender aria,” but, instead of Wagner’s six suggested words, he introduces half a dozen lines: “Ihr flieht! ihr flieht! O feige Memmen! O Schmach! O Schmach! So folgt mir nach! Nichts soll den Fuss mir hemmen, bis mir das Auge brach!” A few bars of chorus are sung, while fighting; Giuseppe falls shot through the heart.—W. A. E.

VIII.

THEATRE AND NATION.

A court-theatre junta.—Subscription-concerts.—Petition for increase of salary; Lüttichau's report to the King.—Liszt visits Dresden again; a friendship commencing.—Political commotions.—Draft of Reorganisation for the Dresden theatre.—Roeckel on Folk-arming.—Suggestions for political reconstitution of Germany.

The Theatre is an art-institute which claims, as no other, to be the expression of the nation's higher mental activity . . . its organisation should include the full free partnership of the intellectual and moral forces of the nation.

RICHARD WAGNER (1848).

THE little people who formed its managing committee, or "Generaldirektion," still held their weekly sittings in the bureau of the Dresden Royal Court-theatre, though Wagner had withdrawn in disgust from the vain attempt to better it in this way, and "confined himself to the strict letter of his duties." There was almighty Herr von Lüttichau in the chair, the gentleman of the contractile eyebrows; that imperishable old pigtail Hofrath Winkler—alias Theodor Hell—the Secretary; phlegmatic Reisinger, of the flow of melody; refined, but middling Eduard Devrient, of the "streak of leather"; and last, but in his own eyes chief, the "Dramaturg," or dramatic touchstone, Carl Gutzkow. What good reasons Wagner had for absenting himself from this symposium, the Dramaturg shall tell us; for Gutzkow soon became quite noted for his picturesque descriptions:—

"The Intendant, for what concerned artistic matters, as a rule was *tabula rasa*: what had been decided on a week ago, in a week was clean forgotten. Then he would take out his calendar, and find his longitude. Of course! he had marked it all down: here stood Gluck, there Shakespeare, there Bauern-

feld; and what his Regisseurs and Kapellmeisters considered possible, in fact had promised to bring out, from Easter to Whitsuntide, from Whitsun to Ascension-day, from Ascension to the first Sunday in Advent, he made another careful note of. That's what he called 'casting his net.' . . . When he dwelt on all the grand results implicit in these pencillings, fumes of opium seemed to cloud us round, sweet dreams of fulfilment sank down on us; so much so, that the minstrel of the 'Lyra-tones' and quondam editor of the *Abendzeitung*, Theodor Hell, would fall a-slumbering, and regularly woke up with the cry 'Ja wohl, Excellenz!'" A nice waste of time and energy, for the composer of *Lohengrin* to dance attendance on these soporifics! As a fact, when Wagner had brought forward some important scheme, he was simply cut short by von Lüttichau with "Herr Jesus! All we want to know, is whether the Kriete can sing the part or not."

After long abstention, the "second Kapellmeister" set foot once more in this dreary council-room, apparently towards the end of 1847. Though Gutzkow throws no light on the object of his return, his account of it is worth reciting in confirmation of Wagner's slighted loneliness: "Richard Wagner was then living in the suburbs, like an exile. He had had some differences with the chief; his reappearance at the conference in the bureau seemed to be connected with certain mutual conditions beyond my knowledge. One day the sulking Achilles left his ship in the Friedrichstadt, and took his place at the council-table; what had moved him to it, I know not. His first reappearance was followed by no second."

Perhaps we can assist the Dramaturg, whose memory is so slender that he even forgets *who* was the cause of those "differences with the chief." Obviously, the object of Wagner's reappearance in the star-chamber was to arrange about the Subscription-concerts he was on the point of giving in the theatre. Of all his careful scheme of two years back, the only plank he had been able to rescue was this poor little block of three concerts; by no means as a settled institution, but simply by way of experiment, with the dim prospect of renewal next winter in case of success. "Kapellmeister Wagner," says the *Neue Zeitschrift* in its last issue for 1847, "has at last succeeded in obtaining for Dresden the opportunity of hearing three Abonnement-concerts

by the Royal Kapelle, to be given in the concert-room of the New Opera-house this winter. The King's permission is already granted." The Leipzig *Signale* makes a similar announcement a few days later (Jan. 5, 1848), but cannot miss the chance of adding something tart: insufficiently apprised of the details, it protests against the cost of doing up the smaller hall of the *old* opera-house, and asks, "Who wants to freeze in such a place?"—finally, aiming a Parthian dart at the wrong target, it puts in a word of most excellent counsel: "It would be better to place the Opera itself in tolerable condition."

The three concerts duly came off, at intervals of about three weeks: the only really notable event of this winter's musical season. They were given in the theatre itself, in lieu of a stage-representation. The first, on January 22, 1848, began with Mozart's Symphony in D, and closed with the *Eroica*, separated by Bach's eight-part Motett, "Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied," and a scene from Cherubini's *Medea*: in the Motett "old Fischer had schooled the stage-choir to such a pitch of accuracy and sureness, that I felt induced to take the first Allegro—generally assigned by its hair-bristling difficulty to the most cautious *moderato*—in its proper fiery tempo, thereby frightening our critics out of their lives" (*P.* III. 149). At the second concert, February 12, came Haydn's Symphony in D and Beethoven's Seventh*; between them a "De profundis" of Gluck's and Mendelssohn's Psalm XLII. The third concert, Wednesday the 8th of March, was treated as an *in memoriam* of Mendelssohn, beginning with his Symphony in A minor, followed by Wagner's studiously 'pious' revision of Palestrina's *Stabat mater*, and winding up with Beethoven's C minor. This third instalment fell among the famous "March days," when revolutionlets were cropping up all over Europe: "King and court were ill at ease; the whole public was oppressed by a dread of instant dangers and convulsions. Add to that a most melancholy programme. Beginning with Mendelssohn's Scotch Symphony—overcast like all his landscape-painting with elegiac sadness, making one think of Bendemann's *Trauernde Juden*—so it went on. Noticing that the spirits of the audience were ebbing fast away, at last I turned

* Wagner has a good story to tell about Reissiger and this work, for which we must refer the reader to the essay on "Conducting," *Prose Works* IV. 331-2.

in horror to the bandsmen sitting nearest my conductor's-desk, 'Heavens! What are we to do? What *are* we to do with this terrible minor programme?' Then fiddler Lipinski whispered to me, 'Wait a bit! At the first stroke of the C minor you'll see the difference.' He was right: the symphony strikes up; what a stir, what enthusiasm! All depression banished, Lebehoch's for the King,—the cheering multitude filed out as if redeemed. That—that's the ineffable about this art!"*

To round the triplet off, came the regular Palm Sunday concert, April 16. As Reissiger was laying his tribute on the tomb of Mendelssohn with a perfunctory performance of *Elijah*, the Ninth Symphony would have made the evening far too long; so Wagner chose Beethoven's Eighth. We have already referred to the violence done this work by Reissiger and better-known musicians, who themselves should have known better, confounding the tempi of the two central movements so that "the whole wondrous symphony had come to be regarded as a sort of by-blow of Beethoven's muse; as if, after her exertions with the Symphony in A, she had meant to take things easy for a change," as Wagner remarks in *Conducting*. "I shall not forget the positive sigh of relief sent up by all the band," he continues, "when I let them play this third movement in its proper *tempo moderato*. In the Trio the humorous sforzando for the basses and bassoon at once made its telling effect, the brief crescendi grew distinct, the pianissimo close came by its own; above all, the principal section of the movement reached a fit expression of its leisured grace" (*P. IV. 309*).

It was all thrown away on the critics. The *Signale* admits that the Symphony was excellently performed on the whole, but opines that "the Menuet was taken too slow—probably out of consideration for the horns, to whom the Trio offers very serious difficulties." Of course it does, when taken wrong; but Wagner had another consideration, namely "a tempo in keeping with the *tender theme* for horns and clarinet," also with Beethoven's indication. That sort of consideration was beyond the ken of a signalman who could flash out the following: "We have to protest against the coquetry with which Herr Kapellmeister

* Told to Hans v. Wolzogen, July 18, 1879, after a pianoforte rendering of a Beethoven and a Mendelssohn symphony,—*Erinnerungen an Richard Wagner* pp. 35-6.

Wagner persists in conducting Beethoven's masterpieces by rote, without so much as a glance at the score. It cuts a fine figure, but means no more than that Herr Wagner is mightily taken up with himself. Moreover, the spectator [!] is left in doubt whether Herr Wagner does not treat Konzertmeister Lipinski as his animated book; for his beat simply follows that leader's bow. At the general rehearsal, in fact, Herr Wagner did not think it *infra dig.* to let his orchestra pull him away from an outrageous tempo, in the last movement, and lead him to a calmer one." A curious perversion of one of Wagner's noted "modifications." But this is criticism as it was swallowed alike in Germany and England half a century ago—to come no nearer; France alone knew better. Yet perhaps in this instance it was only what schoolboys call "trying to be funny," for the anonymous Julius Schladebach grins himself out with the signature "Richard."

So much for the side presented to the public. Behind the scenes a little comedy of intrigue was going on, with a long 'aside' for the principal plotter.

With the beginning of February 1848 Wagner was entering his sixth year of office, and no impartial judge could deny that whatever had been done in the past five years to raise the standard of the Dresden Opera was solely due to *him* and his initiative. The least that might have been expected, was that the authorities should *volunteer* a rise in salary, to a level with that of his older, but unenterprising colleague, Reissiger. There was nothing in their respective titles to signify that one was ranked above the other; yet the anomaly continued, that Wagner—whose operas really brought grist to the theatrical mill, though none to himself—received but 1500 thalers (about £220) a year, while Reissiger, who turned out nothing but failures, drew a clear 2000. The smallness of the "second" Kapellmeister's wage is still further accentuated, when we compare it with that of other servants of this same Court-theatre: Eduard Devrient (actor &c.) was given 2600 thalers to start with, and his appeal to have it rounded off to 3000 was "granted with alacrity" in the very first year (Prölss, *Geschichte &c.* pp. 504 and 564); whilst the Schröder-Devrient, in addition to lucrative "touring leave," had a salary of 4000 thlr. with 200 thlr. wardrobe money, 20 thlr. for every night on which she sang, and a prospective pension of

1000 thlr. a-year. Of course it would be anticipating a revolution beyond the prophecy of mortal man, to expect that a first-rate conductor should be rated as high as a prima donna—though the first is a still rarer bird than the second; but it surely is not asking much, to propose that he should be as well paid as a bad one.

Von Lüttichau argued otherwise. When Wagner at last applied to him in the matter, he spied a splendid opportunity for regaling the King with his private opinion of the undesirableness of his subordinate, larded with whatever scraps of public gossip he could conveniently thrust in. His report (dated Feb. 8,—? 18th,—1848) “in support of Wagner’s petition” is a masterpiece of the art how not to do it, and forms so important a contribution to the inner history of Dresden bureaucracy that we can spare neither him nor our readers its publication in full:—

“Touching the humble supplication of Kapellmeister Wagner, I have to submit in all obedience my deferential opinion. Through his earlier residence in Paris, unfortunately, Wagner acquired so light a view of the relations of life that he probably can be cured by nothing but experiences so serious as he is making in his present predicament; if, indeed, he can cure himself at all. The good fortune which fell to him here, in his appointment as Kapellmeister at a salary of 1500 thalers, he has not known how to value; and the praises bestowed by many people on his talents and compositions, in part exaggerated, have merely encouraged him the more in his overweening ideas; so that he pictures to himself successes and gains from his operas as great as have fallen to the lot of Meyerbeer and other composers in Paris and London, indeed, but are incompatible with the state of things in Germany. Through a more expensive establishment than he can have had any need of, he fell into debt here from the first; and the fancy (*Wahn*) not to leave the bookseller with the profit from the publication of his compositions, but sequester that himself [most shocking!], betrayed him into undertaking their issue at his own expense and risk; whereby, as the sales proved poor and the outlay must be paid in cash, he has been plunged for some time back into the greatest embarrassment. Still he hoped for great gain from the production of his *Rienzi* in Berlin last autumn; but since that also has failed, he finds himself in the most straitened plight, which has given him the courage to appeal directly to Your Majesty for a rise of 500 thlr. in his salary.

Now, as to the question whether his retention is of such moment as to justify so exceptional an advance, I must admit that the latter

does not appear to stand in due proportion to what he has hitherto achieved here in general. Nevertheless it cannot be denied that in particular cases, for instance in the production of the opera *Iphigenia in Aulis* last year and the subscription-concerts of the present [evidently the King had expressed approval of these], he has put forth all his powers and displayed a zeal that can but tend to his praise, and would make his loss regrettable. To Your Majesty's sovereign grace it must therefore be left to decide whether, and how far, his submissive request can be granted him; in which case I venture to suggest, without presuming to dictate, that

In fulfilment of the sum besought by Kapellmeister Wagner, 300 thlr. be most graciously granted him, not as an addition to his salary—which would make it equal to that of Kapellmeister Reissiger, who has served much longer—but simply as a gratification to regulate his debts, to come from the fund for extraordinary Kapelle-expenses; and 200 thlr. as a contribution from the receipts of the yearly subscription-concerts—a portion of which receipts, according to my humble report on the matter of those concerts, was in any case to be devoted to the relief of needy members of the band, as which we certainly may reckon Wagner [a sneer that deserves a horse-whipping!—it is followed by certain business calculations, which we omit]; but that he be threatened in any event with instant dismissal, should he plunge into fresh pecuniary embarrassments, or should his present ones prove impossible to regulate, in which worst of events there certainly would remain nothing but to deprive him of his post."

A very ugly stroke of work! Had it not been that the original document figures as one of the inalienable archives of the Dresden Royal Court-theatre, we should have considered it a gross and wicked forgery, perpetrated by some scoundrel of not the smallest education. Such a tissue of heartless tittle-tattle and contemptuous disparagement comports but badly with the dignity of a high-born, high-placed court-official. The object, however, is only too apparent: jealous of a lieutenant who is not to be *browbeaten*, yet precluded by the terms of Wagner's contract from cashiering him, the Intendant endeavours to make the petition for increase of salary a handle for operations in the future. The second Kapellmeister is to be dismissed, if with a paltry additional £75 (*not* per annum) he cannot settle debts incurred through the ambition to get his operas known outside the narrow walls of Dresden; and the very form of the grant, that of an honorarium, not a fixed addition, is astutely chosen so as to

cut away all possibility of a permanent settlement with his creditors. Evidently it is not England alone, where poverty is thought a crime. For that is the only fault which Lüttichau can charge him with: had he spoken of their mutual dissensions, it might have proved a ticklish subject, opening the door to re-creminations. As to the innuendo of an extravagant mode of living, Lüttichau need not have gone far, had he wished to disprove an idle slander; even Meissner turned up his dainty nose at Wagner's "modest dwelling" in the Ostra-Allee, when relating that famous Laube episode. But unfortunately the whole thing is of a piece with the traditional treatment of German musicians at the Dresden Court: Weber himself had had to suffer exactly the same kind of snub, when he applied for an increase of salary; Minister von Einsiedel would only raise it by 300 thlr. "as Morlachi was the older of the two Kapellmeisters and leader of the Italian Opera" (cf. vol. i. p. 86).

King Friedrich August not being ill-disposed toward Wagner, we can scarcely believe that he read this precious report himself; for in that case he must surely have smelt out the animus inspiring it. It is far more likely that his private secretary merely summarised its contents—putting them into better German, let us hope—when laying it before him among weightier matters of State. In his Rescript of Feb. 24, 1848, the King falls in with the recommendations of his Intendant; but the tone is pronouncedly milder and kinder—even in the fragment which has alone been made public. The honorarium is granted for this year in the manner suggested above, with the remark: "We also are not disinclined, in case a thorough arrangement of his indebtedness be effected, and he do not involve himself in fresh debts, but fulfil his duties with diligence and energy to the satisfaction of the Generaldirektion, to allow him a similar gratification annually. In the opposite event, however, we reserve to ourselves further decision as to the necessity of dispensing with his services."

Luckily for Wagner, he was not admitted behind the scenes, like ourselves, and could know no more than the *result* of his application, not the manner in which it had been advocated. Yet the threat with which it was coupled, in whatever terms it may have been conveyed to him, must have embittered what material satisfaction there lay in the pauper relief. To think that the prince he had

always revered should manifest so little recognition of his labours! It was different some few years back, when the King had openly expressed delight in him. Had he been but a nine days' wonder?

Amid such a gloomy retrospect was the scoring of *Lohengrin* finished, end of March 1848.

But 1848 was big with promise, had Wagner only known it. Not where he had already begun to look for it—in a revolutionary movement that ended in smoke; but in the love and passionate energy of a friend whom Providence itself raised up to rescue him, and give him to a larger world. For it was at the very end of this same March, just after *Lohengrin's* completion, that FRANZ LISZT commenced with him a heart-whole friendship which has no parallel save one in all the modern world of art—the bond linking Goethe to Schiller.

On his way to Weimar from the tumult of insurgent Vienna, Liszt had come to Dresden with no idea of giving concerts, but apparently with the sole purpose of maturing an acquaintance with Wagner, whom he had not seen since 1844.* Nearly ten years afterwards he happens to be putting up at the same Dresden Hotel de Saxe, in the identical room, No. 17, that he occupied either for these few days of 1848 or during that earlier visit, and commences a letter to Wagner with: "Dearest Richard! how could I ever fail to think of thee with love and sincerest devotion? In this city, this room, where we first drew closer to each other, when thy genius flashed upon me! *Rienzi* still is echoing down on me from every wall, and if I go into the theatre, it is for wellnigh nothing but to greet thee at thy former desk." Liszt had just abandoned his career of European virtuoso, and that very fact may have opened Wagner's eyes to a sense of his true character. But whatever the immediate cause, at this meeting in the Spring of 1848 the barrier that had parted two predestined friends and allies was broken down. Not yet did either realise its full significance for each; not yet was the formal "You" exchanged for "Thou": but the scale in which re-

* Frau Lina Ramann, in her generally commendable *Franz Liszt als Künstler und Mensch* (II. 2, p. 53), has it that it was an evening at Schumann's that brought Wagner and Liszt into closer relations, an evening on which Liszt defended Meyerbeer from the attacks of his host; but this particular anecdote, unfortunately, is not in exact accordance with Wagner's recollections.

posed the fate of Richard Wagner's works was gently dipping on the balance.

Incidentally we have just referred to a rising in Vienna. Events connected with it had so determinant an influence on our hero's future, that we are obliged to make a brief excursion to the barren field of Politics.

The revolution of February 1848, which temporarily converted France once more to a Republic, had the instant effect of a stone flung into a pond; its waves were felt throughout all Europe. Agitation promptly invaded Germany; "reform" was in the air. A few days after the upheaval in Paris a mass-meeting at Mannheim passed resolutions demanding a German Parliament, Freedom of the Press, Trial by Jury, and other popular measures; Munich, Vienna, and Berlin, were in a state of ferment. Nor did Saxony lag behind: from Leipzig (the scene of an impromptu riot three years earlier*) a deputation approached the King with similar requests, followed by representatives from other Saxon towns; commotion was spreading day by day. In Dresden itself it was mainly owing to the tact and wisdom of Professor Wigard that the temper of the populace was kept within due bounds. The von Könneritz cabinet, however, had to be sacrificed to panic, and replaced by members of the former opposition; whilst a governmental proclamation decreed fulfilment of the people's fondest wishes. "This happened on March 13. While Vienna was passing through that terrible struggle (March 13 to 15), which, with its counterpart in Berlin six days later, was to close the first act of the German revolution, Dresden was swimming in a sea of light to celebrate a bloodless victory; the King was greeted with loud cheers wherever he shewed himself." News soon came in, of the insurgents' success in Vienna; Metternich had been chased from the city, which was now in the hands of its burgesses and students. From Berlin, after many a desperate tussle in the streets, the tired troops had been withdrawn by order of Friedrich Wilhelm IV. In Munich, Ludwig I. had abdicated in favour of his son Maximilian. To crown all, on March the 31st a provisional parliament had resolved at Frankfort-on-Main to summon a "Constituent German

* Provoked by the unpopularity of the King's brother, Prince Johann. See *The Meister* 1894, pp. 5-6.—W. A. E.

National Assembly" to draw up and found for the united fatherland a lasting "Reichsverfassung," or political Constitution. "Thus seemed already realised, what a few weeks since had been a dream the boldest scarce dared let pass his lips. A sudden storm had burst all fetters. A thrill of joy filled all the Fatherland, to its remotest hamlet."

Thus August Roeckel describes the notorious "March days" of 1848 (*Sachsen's Erhebung*, 1865); and it is little matter for surprise that Wagner, his friend and intimate, should have felt the inspiration of the hour. A new era seemed dawning for his country. To the creative artist this foretaste of freedom and unity appeared prophetic of a brighter day for German Art; the advent of a Liberal Ministry afforded ground for hope that that powerful engine for good or evil, the Theatre, might be dealt with in a manner worthy of the State, if only its cause could be suitably championed. So, as soon as *Lohengrin* was finished to the faintest hue of colouring, he set to work with all his soul on a scheme that long had exercised his serious thought, the reorganisation of the Dresden theatre—needless to say, on paper.

Now, too much stress cannot be laid on the fact, neglected by nearly all of his commentators, that it was this draft of Reorganisation that literally brought the author into the thick of the revolutionary movement in propriâ personâ, and thus directly led him into exile—after an interval. Yet it was by no means the first time that Art and Politics had presented themselves to his mind in close connection. If we turn back to his Paris period, we find him already deploring the divided state of Germany. In 1841 he writes to the *Gazette Musicale*, in course of his article on *Der Freischütz*, "Indeed we are a singular nation: 'Through the woods and through the meadows' will melt us all to tears, though we can look with barren eyes upon a fatherland split into four-and-thirty princedoms" (*P. VII. 176*). A year before that, in his very first article for the *Gazette*, he had treated the subject more in detail: "The desire to shine by his creations but rarely seizes the German. Before what public should he step?—His fatherland is cut up into a number of kingdoms, electoral principalities, duchies and free towns. He dwells, we will say, in a market-borough of some duchy: to shine in such a borough never occurs to him, for there isn't so much as a public there; if he is really ambitious, or compelled to support himself by his music—he goes to

the residential city of his Duke. . . . At last he makes his way there ; his music pleases : but in the duchy next-door not a soul has ever heard of him. How, then, is he to begin to make a name in Germany?—He tries, but grows old in the attempt, and dies ; he is buried, and no man names him any more. . . . He can find no stage in Germany, on which to present himself before a nation. The opera-composer who has produced his works at Berlin, stays unknown at Vienna or Munich for that very reason ; only from abroad, can he succeed in capturing the whole of Germany. Their works are therefore like nothing more than provincial products ; and if a whole great fatherland is too small for an artist, how much smaller must one of its provinces be !” (*ibid.* 85-8).

But this “want of centralisation” could not be met immediately upon the grandest scale ; reform of the German Theatre, to make it worthy of a great united nation, “could never be brought to pass, if one’s hand were not stretched out at once to work that lay the closest ; no matter where my artistic views should find their realisation, yet ’twere best at Dresden, where I lived and worked” (*P.* I. 350-1). For the Dresden theatre was only a type of all the German Court establishments : the success of its reformation would furnish an example to the rest ; and thus the whole wide fatherland might benefit.

In six weeks, or thereabouts, the comprehensive plan was elaborated and written out. Publishing it among his Collected Writings twenty-three years later, Wagner expresses a fear lest the draft should prove wearisome to the ordinary reader (*P.* VII. 225) : to such no doubt it might ; but to those who wish to probe the secret of his power the document is perfectly invaluable, as shewing how complete at all times, and in every province, was his mastery of detail. On the supposition that a Theatre is to be elevated to the rank of a *national* institution, no more effectual foundation could be laid for it, than is outlined in these fifty closely-printed pages (*Ges. Schr.* II. 309-59). The haphazard system of fishing for one’s actor, one’s singer or one’s bandsman in troubled waters, was to be superseded by their state-assisted training for the stage when young—just as we train our naval or military cadets ; the theatres throughout the kingdom were to be fed with this prepared material, so that every town should share to some degree in the privileges of the capital ; church-

music (Catholic) was to be purified, and a regular series of choral and orchestral concerts instituted; the pay of the individual bandsman and chorister raised to a level compatible with decent living, with suitable provision for sickness and old age; the management to consist of experts in the various departments, *elected* by those over whom they would have to rule, and assisted by a consultative committee of playwrights and composers, to whom would fall the duty of deciding on the acceptance of new works; finally, the whole tripartite institution was to be under the supreme control of a Minister of State—not of the irresponsible Courtier of heretofore—and accordingly the “Court” part of its title would be replaced by “National,” i.e. the subvention granted by the nation would be administered by national representatives (*P.* VII. 321-60).

In drafting this practically Socialistic project, the Kapellmeister naturally had no idea of entrusting it to the secretive pigeon-holes of his superior, the courtier Lüttichau: bitter experience had shewn him the fruitlessness of such a step, even where the courtier's perquisites were in nowise endangered; official suicide was a height to which he could scarcely expect the Intendant to rise. No: the same political movement that had crystallised his floating reconstructive notions, supplied him with an indication of the quarter to which to address them. He had got wind of the spirit in which the Royal Civil List was about to be criticised in the Landtag: “Among other things I heard that the subvention for the Court-theatre was to be *struck out*, as a useless piece of luxury. So I determined to approach the Minister of the Interior, and place him in a position to reply to the proposal of the Deputies; admitting the justice of their strictures on the present working of the theatre, he would thus be enabled to shew them how a theatre might well be made deserving of exceptional support by the State” (*ibid.* 321). Considering the circumstances in which the new Ministry had come into office, there was nothing inherently improbable in the supposition that his scheme would be most heartily welcomed by *both* sides—not counting the man in possession. Events were soon to tell a different tale.

The promise of reformation had been but a mask assumed in higher quarters, the change of Ministry little more than a decorous farce. The whole bearing of Herr von der Pfordten in a few days roused profound and general mistrust; Georgi and

Dr Braun (the President) were the merest trimmers; the only name in this Cabinet that commanded the respect and affection of the people was that of Martin Oberländer—the Minister of the Interior aforesaid—appointed to give the thing a face. “Single-minded to the core, imbued with the sacred truth of what he had hitherto so staunchly championed, he knew no suspicion, but built his faith on the King’s sincerity” (Roeckel, *Sachsen’s Erhebung*). But the King stood aloof from him, and in the eyes of the Court he was the embodiment of the whole unwelcome change that had been forced upon it unawares, a “personification of Revolution itself,” to be shaken off at the earliest opportunity. Nor, like many another able tribune, had he the iron will to carry through far-reaching plans when raised to power: “Just as Oberländer had nothing but the most obstinate resistance to expect from the Court, so he had to contend with the obstruction of all subordinate officials. Under the last few sovereigns the whole effective power had lain in the hands of the bureaucracy, which was by no means disposed to co-operate in innovations that must necessarily end by robbing it of that cherished power; even if the purpose of the Court, merely to gain time by specious promises, had not been so transparent. To overcome these obstacles surrounding him on every hand, Oberländer would have needed to be a man of reckless energy, stern in authority, and treading down all hope of resistance by the firmness of his measures. That was not in the making of this man of tender feelings: gentle and forbearing, he left his foes with all the power, ever hoping by patience and compliance to attain to-morrow the thing denied to him to-day; and thus, with the purest of motives, paving the way for reaction” (Roeckel, *ibid.*).—Such was the Minister before whom Wagner had to lay his departmental project of reform.

By the middle of May it was ready for inspection, under the title, “Draft for the Organisation of a German National Theatre for the Kingdom of Saxony.”* In breathless haste, as the

* In the *Ges. Schriften* Wagner gives it the date of 1849, but the letter quoted above leaves no doubt as to its being 1848, thereby confirming the account he affords in the *Communication* (written only three years later) and in Letter 15 to Uhlig, where he speaks of the “Spring of 1848.” After an interval of twenty years and more, it would be quite natural that he should have condensed, so to speak, his memory of a period so confusing in its out-

Landtag was to be reassembled on the 18th, and some meddling Deputy might attack the subvention before its defences were manned, Wagner writes on the 16th of the month to Oberländer, begging an interview: "In the interest of an institution the fate of which is now to be decided on the point whether it be to the honour and use of the country, I take the liberty of craving an exhaustive hearing. My paper will occupy an hour to read; the question therefore is, whether it will be possible for you to accord me that hour to-morrow (Wednesday) evening, or in the course of Thursday at latest? In that case I would respectfully beg you to induce State-minister Herr von der Pfordten to be also present at the audience granted me; for I am not quite sure to which department of the Ministry the matter to be set forth by me will properly belong, and should like to have that settled between the Ministers of the Interior and of Cultus.* In any event there are special circumstances making it an affair of such urgency, that I feel it my duty most pressing to crave the honour of a speedy answer."

The interview was accorded. Its result was to reduce Wagner to a line of strategy the opposite of his original intention. In the childlike belief that high quarters meant honestly by their Liberal professions, he had intended his Reorganisation-draft as a measure to be laid before the Chambers by the *Government itself*, of course after submission to the King by his Ministers. This is plain enough from its peroration, manifestly written for the King's own eyes: "Would his Majesty be hereby deprived of the Patronage of the institution?—The answer is:—The first, the head of the nation is the King: nothing can be assigned to the nation, in which its Head will not partake; the success of the nation's free agency is the honour of the King, the thriving of a national institute his glory. Wherefore the King does but lift this institution to a higher level, when he appoints the officer through whom he makes known to it his will, no longer from the

ward course. Another explanation might be, that Oberländer advised him to withhold the scheme until after the election of a new Chamber of Deputies, on a more popular basis, in the autumn, and that Wagner *finally* sent it in to him at the beginning of 1849 (with which date the MS. would then have been officially docketed); for it is a little singular that, as we shall presently see, it never reached Lüttichau's ears until February 1849.—W. A. E.

* Public Worship and Education.

placemen of the Court, but from the members of the Ministry of State, responsible to him as to the nation." There was the rub. The courtiers, whom Wagner was outgeneralling by the very fact of a direct appeal to supposedly responsible Ministers, would never consent to be displaced; Oberländer knew it from recent personal experience: while expressing his warmest sympathy, "He could promise me little success if I made a point of having the draft submitted to the Government, as he feared the whole affair would find small favour at Court; people there would only scent an inroad on their privileges, and never consent to taking the initiative in such a measure" (*P.* VII. 322). Nevertheless the draft was left in the Minister's hands,* though he advised its author to seek a backing for it among the Radical deputies, thus indirectly leading him to a step which made no little noise a month later, as we shall learn next chapter.

"A revolutionary for love of the theatre": for this was Wagner mocked at afterwards. But the position was strictly logical. There must always be some starting-point in a man's own practical experience, for any line of theory he passionately adopts; and this very gibe is openly accepted in the *Communication* through a footnote "laying stress" upon a passage in the text that runs as follows: "From my artistic standpoint, and especially while pondering a transformation of the Theatre, I had arrived at full perception of the necessity of the commencing revolution of 1848" (*P.* I. 355). And how? The answer is supplied just one page earlier: "I gradually came to perceive that the Theatre was no phenomenon apart, but knit by endless ramifications with our whole political and social system. While thinking out the possibility of a radical change in our theatric relations, I was automatically driven to full perception of *the worthlessness of that political and social system, which of its very nature could beget no other art-conditions than precisely those I then was grappling with*" (*ibid.* 354).—The italics are the auto-psychologist's own; whilst the accuracy of the tracing of his mental process is fully borne out by chronology, as we shall prove

* Whether now, or at some later date, is not quite clear from Letter 15 to Uhlig (Sept. 18, 1850); but left it was, and "slumbered peacefully" in Oberländer's desk until the exiled Wagner asked for it back, when he found that its slumbers had been of the somnambulistic order, for it had gone the round of all the Court.—W. A. E.

in the course of a page or two. For the moment we may simply reiterate that *before* the said Draft was submitted to Oberländer, Richard Wagner had pursued his theme to its ulterior consequences. Till then he "had never occupied himself with actual politics," and even in this agitated Spring of 1848 he "held himself at first aloof from any manner of share in the formal political movement of the day" (*ibid.* 355); but this Reorganisation scheme itself had brought him to a point where wider vistas opened to the thinker, and what he *at first* avoided might soon become the only path for a man in earnest.

All this time, as we have already heard from Wagner's own lips, almost his only society was that of August Roeckel; a man who has so often been rebuked as his evil genius, his "Mephistopheles,"* that it becomes necessary to inquire into his supposititious influence. In the first place, we have to ask if Roeckel himself was engaged in politics before this date—for the mere fact of his starting a political journal in the autumn, entering parliament as a Radical deputy at the beginning of next year, and subsequently playing a prominent part in the Dresden insurrection, is no argument for his having been a ringleader from the first. The answer will come as a surprise to the adherents of the Mephisto theory:—"Down to this date [i.e. somewhere in May 1848] I had followed the march of events with the greatest excitement, but never had occasion to quit the rôle of a mere spectator"†—an absolute counterpart of Wagner's statement with regard to his own case. Both friends were simply on-lookers, though they naturally would compare notes on the social whirligig around them. Why it should be taken for granted that Roeckel was the master-mind in these private discussions, passes the comprehension of anyone but a skilled casuist, particularly in view of Wagner's explicit denial of this very point in a letter of Sept. 1849 to one of his old Dresden friends, Ferdinand Heine: "When you make the acquaintance of my *Art and Revolution* etc., you will understand, I hope, that I have evolved to what I am and utter from no outside influence, but the deepest inner necessity. It seems to be

* Dr Hugo Dinger in his *Richard Wagner's geistige Entwicklung* (pp. 96 and 179) so nicknames him, in search of a scapegoat for a line of conduct on Wagner's part for which he considers it his duty to *apologise*.

† *Sachsen's Erhebung* (2nd ed.) p. 19.

the fancy of you all, to attribute everything that has failed to please you in my conduct to the evil influence of another. The premises of my creed, as you knew them from my works and views, you admitted to be right; but you drew back in horror from their legitimate conclusions. In this you all were wrong." Some half-century after such a categorical disclaimer, it is singular, to say the least of it, to find any writer of distinct ability attempting to prove by '2 and 2 make 5' that the man whose "mental evolution" he is straining every nerve to trace had so unstable a character as to make the pains not worth the taking.

Was 1848 the first occasion that thoughts of "Freedom" had entered Richard Wagner's head, the first time he had trounced the aristocracy? Have we never heard of a certain Rienzi, or of a parrot with the catchword, "Richard! Freiheit! Santo Spirito!"? Have we not read in a certain Autobiographic Sketch (written at the end of 1842) that the French July-Revolution of 1830 turned the autobiographer "into a revolutionist at one blow . . . happy only in the company of political writers"? True, this was at the immature age of seventeen; but a comradeship with one of those political writers had been maintained down to the last year or so, and it assuredly was not the *political* aspect of Laube's recent production at Dresden that Wagner had found fault with. Is not the confession in itself somewhat unusual for a man to publish on the eve of accepting official employment under a Court? Throughout the whole of that engagement, too, we have found him giving vent, now by letters, now by word of mouth, to opinions of a decidedly unconventional cast. And a man of quite third-class talent is of a sudden to be transformed into the "dæmonic" tempter of a genius who could have put a dozen Roeckels into his waistcoat-pocket! Worthy August himself would never have claimed the power.

Let us have a look at this "Mephistopheles." Contemporaries describe him as of "the genuine German type"—which certainly doesn't sound alarmingly satanic. His figure was inclined to stoutness; his full round bearded face, lit up by clear blue eyes, had "a most kindly expression"—nothing of the serpent in them; "fair hair, parted on one side and falling below his coat-collar, leaving his forehead free to the spectacles which he had a trick of thrusting up, shewed you the man of the people and

pen." So much for his exterior, which does not strike one as much out of the common. As to his interior, Liszt writes to his cousin Eduard in 1867: "Under the name of August Roeckel you probably figure to yourself, like many others, an ultra-revolutionary agitator; instead of which you will find an amiable, cultivated, humane, and excellent creature." Not that Roeckel had abandoned his political career by the time Liszt met him in the sixties: on the contrary, he had resumed it with renewed vigour after his long imprisonment, so that Wagner himself could write him that a recent letter of his recalls "the best of the old memories. With a faith like yours you should be able to move mountains." That was it: it was Roeckel's sturdy faith and singleness of purpose, that drew Wagner to him, and made him his constant companion in these stirring times; not any magnetic or insidious influence. In fact, if one of the two may be said to have spurred on the other, it certainly was Wagner in these early days of their common awakening to the stress of the age. Like Wagner, Roeckel had been moved in his youth by the July-Revolution and the fate of the Poles, and had mixed with advanced politicians in Paris, but we have no evidence whatever, not even a hint, of his having taken any active part in politics, either behind or in front of the scene, before the month of May 1848; that his first step in that direction then was prompted by Wagner, is scarcely open to doubt.

It was thus. A great deal of public talk had been indulged in, right and left, about a "Volkswehr"—a military equipment of the whole people—to replace the standing army of mercenaries. The Government had patted the idea on the back, but raised all kinds of technical objections, such as an insufficient stock of arms, the impossibility of sparing any officers or sergeants to instruct them, and so forth. "One day," says Roeckel in continuation of the passage last quoted from his book, "I remarked to a friend that it would very much expedite matters, if the citizens could go through drill intermixed with trained soldiers." The sequel shews *who* this friend was, though the same discretion that prevented Wagner from naming Roeckel in 1851 (*Communication*) would naturally dictate to Roeckel a most sparing use of Wagner's name in 1865. The idea, as Roeckel summarises it, sounds either not very workable or not startlingly original, but the friend "thought it practical, and urged me to embody it in a few lines to the

Dresdener Anzeiger, which was then much used for political comments. When I set to work on it, however, the brief note grew under my hand into a whole pamphlet, in which I warmly espoused the ethical and political merits of a general Folk-arming, and sketched the outlines of an organisation after the pattern of the Swiss militia-system. This I laid before the committee of the Vaterlands-Verein, who had several thousand copies of it printed and distributed alike to the Saxon deputies [and the Ministry itself] and the members of the National Assembly at Frankfort. Moderate as was the whole tone of my essay, it in nowise concealed the democratic tendency of its unnamed author; and, that name soon becoming known,* it led to my being discharged from the King's service [a few months later]—which threw still further light on the sincerity of the promises made us." Reserving the Vaterlands-Verein for our next chapter, what immediately concerns us now is the deposition of Roeckel, at his trial next year, that a discussion of this topic took place in *Wagner's* garden behind the Marcolini Palace, in the month of May 1848, several army officers being present by invitation,—naturally before Roeckel's draft was submitted to the committee of the newly-founded club aforesaid, and probably with no definite idea of such a destination.

So that we have the two friends running on parallel lines in this month of May, before *either* of them makes a public appearance; Wagner polishing off his Theatre-reform scheme, Roeckel drafting a general Militia system for every Saxon capable of bearing arms. Certainly Roeckel's task, while the more prosaic, is the more palpably revolutionary of the two, as his project would deprive the Court of its last resource in the way of suppression; but, for all that, it was only carrying out in detail what the Government had professed to approve in principle. The next paragraph will shew Wagner standing godfather to Roeckel's Folk-arming, but galloping far ahead of him on the National question.

May 18—events were crowded in this Spring of '48—the first German National Assembly was solemnly opened in S. Paul's Church at Frankfort on Main. The old Bundestag had sanctioned its mode of election, and delegated to it the drafting of

* The gossip-loving musical critics took good care of that: in the *Neue Zeitschrift* of July 18, 1848, Roeckel's name is given in full.

a "Reichsverfassung" for the whole of Germany, subject to such Constitution's acceptance by the governments of the separate states—a highly stultifying clause. Professor Wigard, who had calmed the passions of the Dresden crowd in March, and evidently formed one of the recent gathering in the Marcolini garden, had gone to Frankfort as a representative of Saxony.—Dates are important here: on May 16, Wagner had applied for an interview with the Ministry on the 17th or 18th, to expound his Theatre-reform scheme; that was temporarily off his mind, but the closeness of its mental association with a general national resurrection is manifested by the rapidity of his next step forward. On the 19th, just three days after his letter to Oberländer, he writes to Wigard, now in Frankfort:—

"I fear much trouble if the German Parliament does not commence by resolving as follows: (1) The Bundestag of heretofore is done away with; consequently the Parliament is invested with the only constructive power, as also with authority to elect a provisional Executive from among its members. (2) Immediate introduction of Folk-arming after the model known to us. (3) Offensive and defensive alliance with France.—These three measures will be sufficient to give a definitive direction to the inevitable conflict; in every town ["Stadt"—? state, "Staat"] two well-defined parties will evolve, the Frankfort (*German*) party and that of the specific government. Thus the thing will come to a head. Then let the *fourth* step be: the Territorial question of the German states. If the Frankfort Assembly intends to create a Constitution to unite all Germany, its hand must first be laid on the inequality of the integrating German states; it must appoint a commission to formulate proposals for a rational and natural division, on the principle that no one State in the federation shall consist of less than 3 or more than 6 millions.* There you have the decisive point, without establishment whereof our work would all be patchwork. So it depends on the princes' own attitude, what lot they prepare for themselves. If they begin by hostility and protests, they must one and all be impeached; and their impeachment is to be based

* Saxony then had about *two* million inhabitants, so that it would have had to be enlarged either at the expense of lately-encroaching Prussia, which was many times more populous, or of the *smaller* princedoms above-referred-to as likely to protest.—W. A. E.

on wholly historic grounds. Only when these questions are settled, these strifes fought out, should the Assembly proceed to its Constitution work ; for that cannot be undertaken until we have the ground clear. How useless would a Constitution be, in face of the present state of Germany ! Parliament must first completely revolutionise the individual States, and that it will do by its earliest decrees ; for through these decrees will the parties acquire that foothold which they lack at present. Could you share my view, and put forth all your strength to guide the Assembly accordingly, your merit would be undying. No milder measure can lead to the goal ! Every good wish from yours sincerely Richard Wagner."

"How useless would a Constitution be, in face of the present congeries of States of all sorts and sizes"—there we have a veritable *statesman's* thought, against the tinkering nostrums of provincial politicians. Had it been adopted then—and at no time since the War of Liberation was there a more auspicious opportunity—Germany would not have had to wait for a war with Austria, a war with France, and her own virtual Prussianisation, to gain the proud pre-eminence she occupies to-day in Continental Europe.

With that prophetic utterance we may close the first stage in Wagner's "revolutionary" development, the stage at which the universal reformer has not yet left his study.

IX.

COMING TO A HEAD.

“Greeting to the Viennese.”—Political parties and clubs: republic or monarchy?—Wagner’s “King and Republic” essay; read at the Vaterlandsverein; its effects.—Lüttichau renews his sapping.—Vienna and Weimar.—Jubilee of the Kapelle; fragment from Lohengrin; tercentenary Toast; Gustav Freytag.

My observation of the haziness of the contending parties as to the essence and true import of Revolution decided me to declare myself in public against a merely political conception of this Revolution, and for the necessity of keeping its purely-human aspect in view. . . . The lying and hypocrisy of political parties soon filled me with a disgust that drove me back again, awhile, into the most entire solitude.

RICHARD WAGNER.

WHILE Wagner was putting his signature to his project of Theatre-reform a second insurrection broke out at Vienna, May 15; the Emperor fled to Innsbruck. On the 26th a *third* revolt took place, provoked by a declaration that the Students’ Legion was to be disbanded; the military left the city in the hands of a Committee of Safety, consisting of burghers and students. Reminding Wagner of the old Leipzig days after the July-Revolution, this drew from him the first open sign of his adherence to the revolutionary movement. He drops the pen of the closeted constitution-monger, and takes up that of the people’s poet. Within ten days of his letter to Professor Wigard he sends off a spirited “Greeting to the Viennese” in lively metre and jingling rhyme,* ending up with the lines: “The moment for decision bides, The answer’s in our power: How far the German’s courage strides, And shall we do, or cower.” On June the first it

* Translated in *Prose Works* VIII. 215-7.

appeared in the *Allg. Oesterreichische Ztg* with the author's full signature.

Meantime events in Saxony, and more particularly in Dresden, were by no means standing still. The Chambers were busy on a new Electoral law,* and the future Saxon Landtag, to be elected so soon as its terms had been settled, was to frame a new Constitution for the kingdom. The prospect naturally led to the creation of clubs of various shades of politics throughout the country. Of these the most important were the *Deutscher Verein* and the *Vaterlandsverein*, both of which appear to have been started early in April (the appeal for the foundation of the last-named went out at the end of March). The *Deutscher Verein*, which never numbered more than about 20,000 members in all, was mainly composed of Moderate Liberal tradesmen and merchants: its motto for a while was "Monarchy on the broadest democratic basis," but when it came to determining that basis, it fell back on the philistine catchword with which it had commenced, "Quiet is the citizen's first duty"—an echo from which we hear in that *Greeting to the Viennese*: "The bloated lords of wine and meat, They money have and land; For gaolers, soldiers, will they treat, That all may tranquil stand"; and again, "They talk behind, they talk before, Bid men not be too bold here; Say Quiet fits the Burgher more, And valour more the soldier."

The union of the out-and-out democrats took the title of *Vaterlandsverein*, or Fatherland Club, and eventually numbered from 50 to 100 thousand members (according to different estimates): its motto was "The constitutionally-expressed Will of the People is the highest law," but with a rider to the effect that "In Saxony the *Vaterlandsverein*, in union with the People, wills the maintenance and progressive development of the Monarchy." Later on, it became more definitely Republican; but its earlier avowed objects were the obtaining of manhood suffrage, an annual one-chamber parliament, abolition of the aristocracy and all caste prerogatives, and the replacement of the military by a general arming of the nation. Its members were drawn from every manner of vocation, but with a considerable sprinkling of the professional classes; for Dr Dinger informs us that out of 57 signatories to a petition resolved on at one of its principal Dresden

* So busy that it took them five months to pass this Reform Bill.

meetings (July 9, 1848) there were 8 magistrates, 2 professors, a clergyman, an army-officer on the active list, and a ministerial councillor (Regierungsrath). State-minister von Friesen, who joined the Beust cabinet when it was in its direst straits in May 1849, goes so far as to state that the March Ministry's "entire dependence from the Vaterlandsverein was soon placed beyond a doubt," and that "Oberländer himself declared officially that public discussion of the theoretic question, whether a Republic were a better form of State than a Monarchy, was not contrary to the constitution, and therefore the formation of debating clubs for that purpose not illegal" (*Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben*, p. 81, published 1880). In Saxony, therefore, they temporarily seemed to be anticipating Nietzsche's dictum, "Everything is allowed."

It was this Fatherland Club that Wagner and Roeckel joined, apparently towards the end of May 1848, i.e. *after* the former's interview with Oberländer. Down to the middle of May, Wagner's own project of Theatre-reform would certainly take up all his leisure hours. As for Roeckel, we have seen that the drafting of his plan of Folk-arming was distinctly the result of private instigation, followed by private discussion; and it evidently was not published before the end of June. Moreover the statements of both men are clear and precise, that they took no sort of part "at first" in the political movement; whereas the *earliest* general assembly of the Vaterlandsverein itself was held on April 25. The first specific mention of Roeckel's name in connection with the club gives the date of July 9; the first and only dated record of Wagner's connection is June 15. If we suppose their enrolment to have taken place midway between this June 15 and that letter to Oberländer of May 16, we find a distinct meaning in Wagner's characteristic reference to the opposition club in his *Greeting to the Viennese* of the end of May, also in his "past fortnight" of the letter cited below: that third successful rising in Vienna (May 26) would thus have been the excitant not only of the poem, but of open entry into political company; whilst the poem would reflect the artist's decision as to which of the two new great clubs he should join. We are not going to pretend that Wagner *dragged* Roeckel after him, any more than we can admit the puerile suggestion that Roeckel dragged *him*. It was the most natural thing in the world, that the pair of friends, each of whom now had a practical scheme in

his pocket, should look round them for supporters—to say nothing of their deeper interest in a movement that seemed to promise, in almost everybody's eyes, an entire change in the complexion of society. In Wagner's case the contact with these mouthing people could lead to no internal harm: with Roeckel it was different; he had not the strength of wing to keep him poised above the quagmire of jejune or rancorous debate, and became a party-politician for the rest of his life.

But we must say goodbye to Roeckel for the present. The two men would not often be likely to be at liberty on the same evening; at anyrate the deputy-conductor has no part to play in the scene we are now arriving at, the preliminaries of which we will relate in the chief actor's own words:—

“At a time when even the most uneducated is accorded the right to express himself on the affairs of our State, the educated feels all the more bound to exercise such right. The party friction of the past fortnight has forced the opposing views of dwellers in our city to such a climax, that no onlooker could escape a nervous strain. I joined that club in which the party of Progress is the most decidedly represented: firstly, because I recognise that the party of Progress is the party of the Future; but secondly from the consideration that it is just this party that needs the most to be restrained from raw excesses. I have seldom attended these gatherings, and never mixed in their debates, but merely looked on; thus in the last few days (*in der letzten Zeit*) I came to see that, precisely through the violent attacks of the so-called Monarchists, a defiant spirit had begun to evince there in a more and more regrettable fashion. In the declaration that a Republic is the best form of State, there is, according to present ideas, no crime in itself; but the immediate connection with the idea of a Republic, in the minds of the generality, is a belief in the necessity of abolishing the Kingship. Nowhere had I seen a speaker or political writer espouse the notion that the Kingdom could remain the hallowed centre around which all imaginable popular institutions might be erected; but the idea of a Republic was always directly associated with the assumption of a ceasing of the Kingship. . . . Hence it lay at my heart to shew these people clearly for once that, even though we aimed at the very limits of attainability, yet the actual Kingship in itself was not immediately opposed to such endeavours:

that with the Kingdom, in fact, all might very well be attained, and would only prove more lasting" (Letter of June 18, 1848, to von Lüttichau—see *Prose Works* IV. 145-8).

In passing, we may observe that this directly confirms von Friesen's statement, that Oberländer had given official permission to discuss "the theory of a republic"—a highly dangerous permission at such an epoch, with insurrections right and left, and the immediate example of France for a conversion of theory into fact. But the authorities appear to have completely lost their heads, and floundered about in such a manner that the marvel is that the loss did not, as with Louis XVI., become something more than figurative. At such a juncture, the step now taken by Richard Wagner ought really to have been vigorously applauded by the head of the Court, though most distasteful to the Courtier.

This is what happened: On the two or three occasions when he had visited the newly-fledged Fatherland Club, Wagner had heard repeated use made of such expressions as "Were we rid of the King, we were rid of this Court," while Monarchists and Republicans were hurling their shibboleths at each other's heads. Taking his text from the etymologic significance of the two opposing words, *Respublica*, the common cause, and *Monarchia* the rule of One, he determined to shew that neither was rightly applied by its adherents, whereas the old German idea of Kingdom—of which he had made a special study for his *Lohengrin*—was compatible with the fullest liberty for all the people. So, in hot haste he penned an essay on the theme, "In what relation do Republican endeavours stand to the Kingdom?" As he wrote, the thought expanded, embracing the whole fabric of society, and penetrating to its present foundation on "the sallow metal,"—in every way a most remarkable production, instinct with the purest breath of poetry, the highest belief in his nation's beneficent mission, the most ardent devotion to his King. This he signed as "A Member of the Fatherland Club" on June 14, and sent round to the office of the *Dresdener Anzeiger*, a journal which had already inserted his "Jottings on the Ninth Symphony" and his "Artist and Critic" just two years back.

From meditating on the problem of a national *Saxon* Theatre, we have already seen, by his letter to Professor Wigard, how rapidly Wagner advanced to the question of the territorial regulation of the larger fatherland. In less than a month from

that letter's date, he has consistently passed on to a consideration of the very grounds of the whole nation's existence, and beyond that, of society at large. A brief synopsis of the article will make this clear, the chief points being marshalled as follows:—The drift of our Republican efforts: extinction of aristocratism, useless court-offices and court-parade; one Chamber, manhood suffrage, Landwehr (or Folk-arming); one free Folk—then shall we *begin* in earnest: liberation from bondage to Money; division of labour and mutual exchange of its products; *not* Communism and equal division of property and earnings; found colonies, and populate them with “children like the gods”; German freedom and benignity illuminate the globe;—let the King be the first and truest Republican of all; 'twould be no sacrifice to so high-minded a King to lose the tinselled fetters of his court and keep his people's lasting love; abolish Monarchy, but emancipate the Kinghood; no other King in Europe so fit as ours to institute this reconciliation, “the Man of Providence”;—let the King declare Saxony a Free State; let us, in turn, invest the House of Wettin in perpetuity with the highest executive power; that oath would never be broken, since we had sworn it freely;—Constitutional Monarchy a contradiction in terms: let the King be First of his Folk, freest of the free; thus would the historic cycle of Germanic Kinghood have rounded back upon itself.*

Before going farther, we must not lose sight of the fact that the original destination of this manifesto was for the printing-press †: to denominate it a “Speech,” is to open the door to an error that has misled most writers in their judgment of its contents; at once for sake of brevity and to avoid misconception, it would be better in future to refer to it as its author's Germanic *Address*. It was by the purest accident, that the members of the Vaterlandsverein heard it orally delivered, before the general public, for whom it was really intended, had the opportunity of reading it in type. This consideration will elucidate several points: for instance, had the Address been

* Translated *in extenso* in *Prose Works* Vol. IV. pp. 136-45.

† Proof conclusive of this statement is furnished by the sentence, “He who has uttered these thoughts in such daring enthusiasm, believes with unshakable conviction that never was he *more loyal* to the oath he, too, has sworn his King, than when he wrote them down to-day”—Note the “*wrote* them down to-day”: that is not the expression of a public speaker.—W. A. E.

written as a harangue to the Vaterlands-Verein, the third, instead of the second person plural would have been chosen for the sentence, "Dupe not yourselves, ye who want a 'Constitutional Monarchy upon the broadest democratic basis'"—that being the motto quite recently adopted by the other club, the Deutscher Verein; and thus we obtain an explanation of the enigmatic "ye" in an earlier sentence: "Ye ask, Wouldst reach all this, and *with* the Kinghood?—Not an instant have I had to leave its preservation out of sight; but were *ye* [evidently the Court, or Courts] to hold it impossible, 'twould be yourselves had uttered its death-warrant." Remembering the signature, "Ein Mitglied des Vaterlandsvereins," we now perceive that Wagner's "ye" and "you" are directed to the other camps, the Moderates and Courtiers.

Again, the fact of the Address being already in the printer's hands while a club debate on its major issue was still proceeding, is positive proof that the whole thing was a spontaneous act on Richard Wagner's *individual* part, proceeding on independent lines, i.e. that he stood in no connection with the club's committee. This is confirmed by the very insignificant rôle here played by the club's specific programme. Taking the Address as covering eight and a half pages—the number it works out to in *Prose Works* IV.—the preamble occupies a page and a half, of which the last *half page* alone is devoted to points appearing on the club's official manifesto, viz.:—one Chamber, manhood suffrage, folk-arming. The whole remainder is occupied with the author's personal views, most eloquently expressed; set forth, in fact, with a vigour and warmth entirely absent from that half-page summary of formal political tenets. Those tenets, we see at a glance, in the author's eyes are merely *instruments* toward effecting a change that might really be termed revolutionary—so revolutionary that only in Utopia could its full realisation be hoped for. The sweeping away, not only of Capital (a word not once mentioned), but of Money itself, was a dream beyond the brains of the strange company into which Wagner had temporarily entered. He imagines his fatherland reborn by this emancipation, and pushing out strong offshoots to colonise remoter regions of the world, proclaiming and establishing freedom and kindness from the rising to the setting of the sun, "the dawn of a new era of undying happiness, not alone for Saxony, no! for Germany, for

Europe."* To crown all, comes that splendid burst of loyalty and personal affection for the King, "a prince whom his people love because of his pure virtue, his high sense of honour, his probity, his clemency," ending with the much-debated words: "Not we, will proclaim the republic. No! Let our dear prince, the noblest, worthiest King speak out, 'I declare Saxony a Free State'; and let this Free State's earliest law, the edict giving it the fairest surety of endurance, proclaim: 'The highest executive power rests in the Royal House of Wettin, and descends therein from generation to generation by right of primogeniture.'" A declaration of the author's views and sentiments by no means transitory, but stamped on all his conduct through this troublous time, and afterwards in exile. On this point his conscience was clear; and when it came to 1865-7, the ideal he cherished of the Kinghood had not varied one iota, as we may see in *State and Religion* and *German Art and German Policy*: "Unflinching justice, ever ready mercy—here is the mystery of the King's ideal" (*P. IV. 31*); "The State which builds itself from below upwards will also shew us finally the meaning of the *Kinghood* . . . that Kinghood which must set the ideal crown upon the new true Folk-State now in course of building" (*ibid. 117*). Dark words to his country's formalists of every stripe, though the autocratic Friedrich Wilhelm I. of Prussia had declared himself a "Republican, a sole-ruler for the exclusive good of his people"; but clear as day to us in England, who have seen the *influence* of

* In his eagerness to shew that Wagner was but a sponge for the absorption of other people's ideas, or a mouthpiece of his "party," Dr Dinger (*R. W.'s geistige Entwicklung 107-35*) has printed this Address in parallel columns with extracts from various Saxon newspapers. But, even were the similarity of thought more obvious—to say nothing of the difference between an organic whole and random scraps from here and there—the argument could not hold water for a moment; for Mr Houston S. Chamberlain has proved that over 90 per cent of the confronting extracts are derived from journals published *after* an interval of weeks or months, most of them being from those very *Volksblätter* to which Dr Dinger himself alleges that Wagner was a frequent contributor! In the light of Mr Chamberlain's discovery, we must reluctantly decline to accept any of Dr Dinger's conclusions without the most irrefutable of proofs that they are not tinged with a strong mental bias: a very unfortunate predicament, as Dr Dinger is the only writer who has been accorded access to the State archives referring to Wagner's connection with the revolutionary movement of 1848 to 1849. With the latter we shall deal in the proper place.

the Crown increased by one beloved mother's reign in ratio as its prerogatives were merged in popular institutions.

On Thursday, June 15, there was a big meeting of the Vaterlands-Verein. Manifestly writing on the 16th, a contributor to the *Dresdener Journal* of the 17th, refers to "yesterday's very numerous assembly," and goes on to say that "Kapellmeister Wagner read out the article which appears in to-day's *Anzeiger* over the signature 'Ein Mitglied des Vaterlandsvereins.'" Obviously, therefore, the paper, which is dated "June 14," was already in type,* and would have appeared on the 16th in any case. How it came to be *read* out, we learn from the following passage in the letter of explanation to Lüttichau:—After referring to his wish to direct both parties, Monarchists and Republicans, to one common goal, "the preservation of the Kingdom, and with it of internal peace," a wish that "alone incited me to write that essay" and thus express "a deeply-felt conviction of what would lead to peace and reconciliation," Wagner continues: "The warmth of that conviction is chargeable with my going so far as to champion it in person. On entering the recent meeting of the club, I once more heard those speeches that perpetually connect the idea of a republic—which has undeniably become the principal topic of a large proportion of the people—directly with the abolition of the kingdom." Now, according to that report in the *Dresdener Journal*, "The debate on the nature of Republic and Constitutional Monarchy was resumed by three speakers. Editor Lindemann confessed himself a republican in theory, but sought to prove that it made a difference whether one already possessed an edifice of State or not . . . wherefore he voted for retention of the monarchy." The other two speakers named by the *Journal* were Wagner and Deacon Pfeilschmidt, who came after him and declared himself for "Constitutional Monarchy such as had become a fact since March 16." But minor lights must always have their say in the intervals of a long debate, and we may take it that Wagner arrived in the thick of a frothy outburst of rank

* Of this there can be no doubt, for Wagner writes on the 15th to his brother-in-law, E. Avenarius, "I send you herewith an essay of mine" (No. 128 in Kastner's Catalogue of Wagner's letters). He must therefore have been supplied with some advance-proof, or a few separate "pulls," before he attended the club-meeting.

republicanism such as eventually made the central committee of the Vaterlandsverein strike out its saving clause aforesaid (p. 237). "In full assurance that now, of all times, I should be speaking a good and salutary thought to this assembly," he proceeds, "I swiftly resolved to read out my article." So the converting of his article into an actual speech was a sheer impulse of the moment; nor is a man likely to withhold his signature from a contribution to a newspaper, if he intends to proclaim himself its author by reading it out at a meeting attended by reporters on the very eve of its publication. Clearly the action was wholly impromptu: the printer's proofs would be in his pocket; probably he had even been spending the first part of his evening in correcting them; with the artist's justifiable pleasure in his handiwork, he could not resist an inner prompting to throw off all disguise, and risk the consequences of "upholding to a most prosaically-guided crowd a poetic picture of the Kinghood as I figured it." His own heart told him what its *instantaneous* effect must be.

We have already considered this article in its mere printer's garb of black and white. To gain an idea of its effect on the *hearer*, we must consider it as a masterpiece of rhetoric. Someone has lately spoken of the "orchestration of prose": whatever that may mean, the Vaterlands-Verein Address may be termed a Symphonic-poem in monologue; everything in it is working toward a glowing climax, such as none but a great musical-dramatist could have conceived. Starting with a drastic picture of the brutal past, the hearer's emotions are touched at once; then come a few familiar themes from questions of the day, just to give a sense of actuality to the sequel—not a word too much is wasted here. The introduction is over: at one stroke, of the magician's wand, you are soaring with him through the empyrean; cloud after sun-drenched cloud is past, till all the earth lies smiling at your feet. Suddenly, while the brain still is reeling at the prospect from this dizzy height, you are set face to face with the central figure: the features are well-known to you, so often have you seen them passing down your city's streets; but, standing sharp against that rainbow-coloured sky, the father of his country seems transfigured, and the joyful cry "*Behold the Man of Providence!*" awakens feelings of devotion in the coldest breast. Then filmy threads from the entrancing background are woven to a canopy, a shrine for this beloved figure, and with the orator

you raise your hand and shout "The King shall be the freest of the Free!"

No one, who has ever witnessed the electrifying effect produced by Wagner when speaking from the fulness of his heart, can wonder at his present audience being completely carried away. "Never in that club was praise of our King received with such enthusiasm as greeted the passage in my speech that extolled his lofty virtues" (Letter to Lüttichau). It was the second speech Wagner had ever delivered in public—the first having been pronounced with equal fervour over Weber's tomb; and we know, from what he has told us concerning the Ninth Symphony, that he was not unconscious to the sense of power. Imagine the use a self-seeking demagogue would have made of the demonstration; if it is possible to imagine such a man having created its exciting cause. How easy it would have been, to leap upon this sudden popularity to the leadership of the whole movement in Saxony; to storm every barn with similar speeches—or variations of the same old speech—and make his name ring through the land; to go farther, and turn the enthusiasm he had evoked for his King into a stepping-stone towards authority that should end by overshadowing the throne itself. But Richard Wagner's ambitions did not set in that direction; as we shall discover later, when a young King in reality sat at his feet, and any position might have been his for the asking.

His enemies were not so sure: in a day or two the old ones had the satisfaction of seeing their ranks recruited by a new contingent drawn from every side. "It is precisely the applause evoked by my address, that has woken me jealous foes," he says in the Lüttichau letter; "I will not here express my opinion of many of these popular-leaders, further than to remark that it fills me with the gloomiest apprehensions, since it is especially my inspiration for the King that has displeased them." Indeed he had plunged his hand into a hornet's nest. The Government organ, the *Dresdener Journal*, could dispassionately refer to the speech as "This beautiful imaginative picture, which reminds us of Lamartine, and at times too of Lamennais, but is certainly fuller of problems than of their solution. Among the cold reasoners of the Fatherland Club, the politics of the romantic poet and composer of *Tannhauser* present a strange appearance"; and the *Dresdener Morgenblatt* (June 18) could speak

of the "never-ending applause at the end of an undoubtedly brilliant address being chiefly due to the novelty and originality of the ideas and the courage of the speaker," though it adds that those ideas had "brought him into somewhat strained relations with every party and opinion." The *Dresdener Anzeiger* on the other hand—the journal which had printed the address—filled its "detestable rubric" with all manner of anonymous taunts in prose and verse, mainly directed to branding the Royal Conductor with its authorship, headed with insulting titles such as "To Richard Faust," "To the little tin King," and so forth.* To all of which the victim made one sweeping rejoinder: he inserted in the *Anzeiger* the curt reply, "Be it known to all crimps and blackguards that I shall not answer their anonymous attacks. Richard Wagner." Quite the best course he could have taken—in addition to withdrawing his patronage from the club itself.

But there were two people that did matter; his wife, and the King. Poor Minna, we may be certain, was in a terrible stew, though her husband was swift to "recognise the danger of speaking out an independent thought, such as does not bear the stamp of either party; and it did not need my wife's entreaties, to win from me the promise never again to take a personal part in questions of the day" (Lüttichau letter). As for the King, his courtly news-purveyors assuredly would bring the incident to his notice, in its very worst dress; but of his private opinion we have only the indirect evidence supplied by that much-quoted letter of Wagner's to Lüttichau (written three days after delivery of his

* The trumpery verses, "*An Richard Faust! O Wortgeklimper und Gesumm, Wie gehst du mir im Kopf herum! Cuschmum, Wettin und Republik, Das nenn'ich einen Pickenick! Den Leser widert's, ihn bangt und graust, Wenn Wagner thut, als wär' er Faust,*" and "*An den kleinen Blechkönig! Die neunte Symphonie, was wär' sie ohne ihn? Was ohne ihn die Zeit, der Thron, das Haus Wettin? Steht er nicht grösser da als Lamartine? O lasset im Triumph uns seinen Wagen zieh'n Und vor dem grössten Geist der Mit- und Nachwelt knie'n,*" may with little hesitation be assigned to the caustic pen of a jealous 'colleague' at the theatre, namely Dramaturg Gutzkow. But right and left had each their fling, in various papers, and even the Town-guard—which cut such a sorry figure next May—so far resented Wagner's harmless little joke about "a standing Army and a recumbent Communal Guard," that he was served with two several challenges to a duel (see A. Oppenheim in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* June 16, 1877).

Address), which we will now dismiss with its extremely becoming close: "But I cannot stay indifferent, if I am to fear that I have been completely misunderstood by the other side, if the King himself, how unpractical soever he might deem the formal aspect of my plan, should see in it some sinister endeavour. . . . A gloomy, terrible foreboding takes my mind, that the war will soon be waged by the raw element of the masses only. . . . Should my black forebodings be unfounded, O much the better! On the other hand, if my step has stirred but bitterness, then has it not fulfilled its aim. Has it not *atoned*, but *only* wounded—at least it sprang from an illusion for which I heartily beg forgiveness of every person I have wounded." A peroration that well might have shamed the courtier who had dealt such a blow at the writer's back but four months since.

Lüttichau, however, was no man to be easily shamed. In the Kapelle itself, as in every other group of Germans in those days, two parties had formed, which we may translate as Progressives and Moderates: among the former were Rühlmann, Kummer, Fürstenau and others, but more particularly a young musician who for some time past had arrested Wagner's attention by his quick artistic sense and rare precision of technique, namely Theodor UHLIG, of whom we shall hear a great deal more when the master has left Dresden. Now, on June 19 some lackey of the court (according to Prölss, who does not give the courtier's name) took advantage of this split in the band to attend an orchestral rehearsal, in Wagner's absence, and instigate the bandsmen to press Lüttichau for *instant dismissal of the second Kapellmeister*. The pretty little plot was not entirely successful, for, the Progressives being in a majority, the bare suggestion was repelled with scorn, and a deputation headed by Uhlig at once acquainted Lüttichau with what had happened. Lüttichau expressed approval of the band's behaviour, as no one but the King had to decide in this matter, and he could not allow any interference by others—at least, so he said to the friendlies. But the Moderate minority, which had hitherto slunk in the background, felt emboldened by the courtier's lure to send *its* deputation also to Lüttichau, headed by opera-singer Schuster: these gentry Lüttichau received in a different key, declaring that their request had placed him in great embarrassment, as his Majesty alone had to decide in this matter, *nevertheless he would report it to the King*.

Of that report, in all probability a verbal one, we have no further intimation; but its nature is tolerably evident from its result, as we next find Lüttichau informing the second deputation that "His Majesty bids the members of the Opera and Kapelle quietly to go on serving under Wagner, as his Majesty himself will be able to judge whether, and when, the conductor is to be removed from his post." One can scarcely imagine the King having ordered his Intendant to convey the latter part of *such* a message to the rank and file, as it would be cutting at the root of all discipline: surely it must have been meant as a royal snub for Lüttichau himself, and passed on by his own stupidity—or worse.

In a retirement made still more profound by his recent experiences, Wagner had heard nothing of this little comedy—which would not take more than a couple of days in playing—till Eduard Devrient was sent to him with a message from Lüttichau, apparently the only answer he received to his letter of the 18th. Devrient seems to have been left in ignorance of the first, the friendly deputation, as also of the incident having really been brought to the ears of the King; in any case, he simply told his friend that a deputation of the Kapelle had approached Lüttichau to demand Wagner's dismissal, but Lüttichau had *called these gentry to order, and rejected their demand*. At such a crisis, this fallacious token of good-will on the part of his chief quite overpowered the recipient, whose characteristic readiness to let bygones be bygones comes out most strongly in the following undated letter (June 22?)—the first sentence of which evidently refers to some verbal message of Lüttichau's touching the closing passage of Wagner's explanatory letter of the 18th:—

ADMIRABLE MAN!

In my good intention, at least, lay reconciliation; and for that reason I did not scruple to hit out right and left. But you shew me now where reconciliation really lies,—it lies where no offence is given on either side.

Though I might presuppose that a truly noble man, conscious of his own integrity, would really feel wounded by myself and my intention,—though it was only on this supposition, that I could deem it fitting to address myself directly to you in my previous letter, yet I am weak enough to confess that not before the assurances

just brought me by Eduard Devrient had I been rightly able to value you at your true worth. Only one wish can remain to me, a wish from the bottom of my heart: that *all* were like you!

May these hasty exclamations depict to you the mood in which the messages from you have set me!

But I come at once to a great favour: please examine the accompanying missive to his Majesty. Should you judge it suitable, and in keeping with the circumstances, then I beg you to convey it to the King.

N.B.—This time I have forgotten “Excellenz” and all the rest. Pardon! I could no else.

There is no record of the said letter to the King, but we may presume that it followed pretty much the lines of the earlier letter of explanation to Lüttichau. That it was considered altogether satisfactory, the sequel forbids our concluding. In all probability the writer was just left in a state of suspense.

On the 22nd, concurrently with the above, he begs Oberländer not to lay before the King his scheme of Theatre-reform at present. In no case was it an auspicious season, but it would have been madness just now to reopen the rupture between himself and Lüttichau, which seemed to be so nicely healed. Seemed; only seemed. For it was not long, before Wagner heard of the *other* deputation, that in his favour, and his eyes were opened for good and all to the double-dealing of his chief, so studiously concealed from him.

Meanwhile the poor man had other serious troubles to face. The creditors of his publication-venture had pockets as sensitive as most of their tribe: the little tempest raised by Wagner's half-hour appearance in the sea of politics—why! one of these days he might shipwreck his Dresden engagement, and then where would *they* be? So they promptly sent a pilot on board. At his wits' end what to do, Wagner suddenly bethinks himself of Liszt, and writes him on June 23: “I have received notice to refund all the capital I borrowed, and cannot hold out another week; for every attempt to sell my copyrights, even for the bare outlay, has remained unsuccessful in the present hard times.” The sum required was 5000 thalers, i.e. about £750; just what it had cost to publish his three operas, less the proportion already paid back. This he implores Liszt to procure for him, “either yourself, or from someone attached to you,” and become the lawful owner of his stock-in-trade and

publishing rights: "For that amount you would buy me out of slavery! Am I worth it to you as serf?" Many a modern composer has reaped a far larger harvest from a single song, a writer from one novel.

But Liszt, who not so long ago had been princely in his largesses to artists, was now himself in circumstances that demanded some heed of the purse-strings. His answer, if any, to the first letter of appeal does not appear in the *Correspondence*, but Wagner writes again on July 1: "Here I am fighting for life or death, and don't know what the end will be. I have written my lawyer that my last hope is that your energetic intervention may furnish a possible chance of regulating my affairs. . . . Your name will work wonders in the negotiation, but still more your person. Give me that for a day—but *soon, soon.*" Liszt was unable to come to Dresden, but wrote July 3 to a certain Herr von Villen, begging him to discuss the matter with Wagner, his lawyer, and Meser the publisher; next day he writes to Wagner himself, telling him of this, and adding: "God grant that the state of your affairs prove such as to enable me to offer you my much enfeebled services." Somehow or other, the quicksands were tided over; and if *the King* was a principal creditor—as we gather from *Letters to Uhlig* pp. 113-4—it ought not to have been so difficult of accomplishment.

Now, in that letter of Saturday, July 1, to Liszt there is a mysterious passage: "According to communications received here (*hier vorgefundenen Nachrichten nach*), I must undertake a journey next Wednesday or Thursday, absenting myself from Dresden for about a fortnight." Everything about this fateful couple of months is so impenetrably cloaked in obscurity as to be perfectly tormenting to the historian with a passion for tangible data. That vague "*Nachrichten*" is the same expression applied by Wagner to the message conveyed to him a week ago from Lüttichau, and, speaking for myself (W. A. E.), the only interpretation I can put upon it, is that the King had so far yielded to pressure from his Court as to suggest that Wagner had better renew the application for a fortnight's leave of absence with which he had commenced his letter of June 18 to the Intendant. Anyhow, Wagner supplements the statement to Liszt by saying that, because of this forthcoming absence, "and for other reasons, I can offer you no performance of my operas." Something was

certainly going on behind the scenes of the Court-theatre; for this same first of July the stage-managership of Wagner's trusty old friend, Wilhelm Fischer, "underwent an interruption" of five years, to quote the quaint formula used by Prölss, though he continued to serve as chorus-master. Whether von Lüttichau was contemplating a general purge, or not, Wagner applies to him on July 2 for "3 or 4 weeks' prolongation of the leave already granted, to fortify body and soul by a little journey," adding these significant words: "Yours truly, it appears, is a difficult person to teach. In the interval alike yourself, Excellency, and I, too, will probably see clearer whether there is any future left for me in Dresden. Then I shall tranquilly seek your kind advice, and cheerfully abide by what you think necessary and proper." From the confiding tone of this letter (and of another written July 3—see Prölss) it is plain that the Intendant is still posing as his friend at court, and Wagner has been too busy with his financial worries to hear as yet from Uhlig the genuine version of that deputation trick; he takes the hint of the "kind" protector from the wrath of an offended monarch, and, after an arrangement with Reissiger as to a clashing with *his* holiday, leaves Dresden on Friday, July 7.

Certainly a change of air and scene was absolutely indispensable, after all the excitement and harass of the last four months, supervening on a trying illness in the winter. But even in the midst of preparations for departure, he finds time to think of other people; so we have a letter of July 6 to his old Riga friend Löbmann, touching that brother he had left in Wagner's guardianship a year ago. The young man had joined a band of instrumental players formed in Dresden for a peaceful invasion of the United States.* "For my part," writes Wagner, "I tell you candidly, were *I* a poor executant musician, I shouldn't now be

* In the *Neue Zeitschrift* 1848 II. No. 12, we read in a Dresden note: "Under the lead of an art-loving member of our Kapelle, Herr Eckhardt, there has been formed a band of 25 young able-bodied men, who mean to exchange hopeless starvation in the Fatherland for the hopes of the New World, and will emigrate to New York the beginning of next month. A rendering of Haydn's immortal Symphony in D [at a concert in the pavilion of the Grosser Garten] proved that the young emigrants feel it their high mission to transplant to a new world the world-historic spirit of such art-achievements by the Kapelle here"—language that sounds like Uhlig's.

going to America, for the simple reason that I should long ago have been there. What a slave's lot is that before a poor bandsman with us! I can't conceive what arguments I should employ, to dissuade anybody from seeking his fortune there, where, under any circumstances, he ought to find it sooner and better than here."—We shall find the idea of transferring himself to America recurring pretty often during the next decad: what an immense difference in his fortunes it would have made, had he only been able to sell his scores and get away from Europe for the next twelve months!

However, we have to take things as we find them: apropos of which, we should be only too glad, could we tell the reader what became of Wagner during the remainder of July. Eventually he gravitated to Vienna, where we hear of him at the beginning of August: we can only hope, for his health's sake, that he spent the first part of his holiday in a quieter spot. At Vienna, the aspect of which would necessarily be entirely changed by the events of the last few months, he seems to have thought there might be a chance of artistic employment in the very possible event of the ground being cut from under his feet at Dresden. But unfortunately our only definite information as to his doings there, is that supplied by Hanslick many years afterwards; and reliability, either in spirit or letter, is not the point in which that famous critic shines. "In August 1848," to quote this deponent, "Richard Wagner came to Vienna for a few days, manifestly attracted by the political movement. I passed an evening with him in a little café-garden by the Danube, together with Professor Josef Fischhof, of the Vienna Conservatorium. Wagner was all politics; from triumph of the Revolution he expected a complete rebirth of Art, of Society, of Religion, a new Theatre, a new Music. He inquired after the best-known democratic leaders in Vienna, and allowed Friedrich Uhl to take him to a democratic gathering. Moreover, it soon transpired that he had meant for the democratic deputy, Dr Adolf Fischhof, the visit he paid to Pianoforte-professor Fischhof, who was no little astonished to hear him talk nothing but politics, without a mortal word on *music*." (How about "rebirth of art," "a new music," etc.?)

The only part of this inconsistent statement we can accept unreservedly, is that concerning Wagner's entry into acquaintance with Friedrich Uhl; since the opening lines of his essay of 1863 on

The Vienna Opera-house inform us, "My friend the editor of the *Botschafter* has long been aware how much I busied my brain with plans of theatric reform in general" (*P.* III. 363). As to a confusion of the two Fischhofs, it is a childishly gratuitous assumption on Hanslick's part, coloured by his manifest desire to prove that Wagner was still dabbling in politics. Had Wagner been entrusted with any secret mission to Dr *Adolf* Fischhof—the obvious innuendo—he surely would have come armed with at least the deputy's full name and address. Professor *Josef*, on the other hand, was not only a friend of Schumann and Liszt, and most hospitable to passing artists, but also, as Hanslick himself admits, one of the favourite figures in Vienna's world of music, owner of a well-stocked library and collection of musical manuscripts, and distinguished—rare among musicians of those days—for his general culture, social talents, and philologic erudition. The company of such a man would naturally be eagerly sought by Wagner, whilst his patronage would be of the greatest value if he contemplated overtures of any kind—an offer of *Lohengrin* or the like—to the Vienna theatre.

That Wagner's visit to Vienna was mainly connected with the theatre and its altered prospects, we may judge from the commencement of an article he penned a few months later (Jan. 8, 1849): "After the populace of Vienna had revolted last March, besides the Jesuits, police-spies and many others, it drummed out the Ballet and Italian Opera. The directors of theatres had to learn that the flabby, sickly viands of their repertory no longer agreed with the public, that the time for theatrical offal was over, and other allurements must be offered the young people with the resolute, courageous mien. Wherever a wholesome piece breathing truth and freedom was to be had, it was brought upon the boards" (*P.* VIII. 218). There we have a plain indication of Wagner's purpose in going to Vienna, and his field of interest while there. Coupling it with his words of 1863 to Uhl, we may even conjecture that he now discussed the application to Vienna of that project of Theatre-reform already drafted for Dresden: at anyrate it was during this visit that the first hint of its general scope leaked out, for we find the Leipzig *Signale* remarking in its No. 32 (first week of August), "Richard Wagner of Dresden is in the Kaiser-city *Vienna*. He has elaborated a programme for the reorganisation of the Vienna theatre, from the standpoint of the

Theatre as a National institute, and contemplates submitting it to the Minister of Education, who then would hand it for deliberation to a committee of writers and musicians. Is there nothing to reorganise in Dresden?" Mere hearsay, to be sure, or the correspondent would have known that the project *originated* for Dresden; yet there must have been a mite of foundation for so very near a guess. We cannot say as much for the *Signale's* next rumour (No. 36—last week of August): "Kapellmeister Richard Wagner is composing in Vienna a new opera, 'The Vermilion Republic'"; which is capped by the *Europa* with a spiteful little paragraph, "Kapellmeister Wagner is still in Vienna, half-and-half in banishment. His republican expressions in presence of the King [!!!] are said to be the cause of his not quite voluntary journey." Could Dr Hanslick disclose to us *who* was the Vienna kind friend?

However strained his relations with the Court may have been, Wagner returned to his post at Dresden in course of this August. For no more than a week or two; as we next hear of him on a brief excursion to Weimar, presumably in connection with his recent arrangement with his publication creditors. Here his practically new-found friend Franz Liszt was provisionally installed in the Crown-Prince hotel; the Altenburg, a stately building afterwards so inseparably linked with his name, was at present only occupied as to its first floor—by Princess Caroline Wittgenstein. This remarkable woman, a Russian by birth, who had been associated with Liszt for the past year by reciprocal passion, had taken refuge from the persecutions of Tsar Nicholas the First under the direct protection of his sister the Grand Duchess Maria Paulowna, a patroness of the arts and wife of Saxe-Weimar's enlightened ruler. It was this new factor in his private life, indeed, that had been chief reason for Liszt's abandonment of his world-wide career as virtuoso, and settlement in tiny Weimar; for, although he had nominally been a Grand Ducal Kapellmeister since November 1842 (just after the Dresden production of *Rienzi*), he had never paid his future scene of operations more than a flying visit before.

WEIMAR. What does not the name convey to those who love their Schiller? What memories from his youth must have risen in Wagner's mind, when he first trod the stones which only sixteen years ago had still resounded to the step of Goethe!

But the glory of the place had faded, and little could either of its two revivers have dreamt that in their power it lay to raise the little Residenz once more to be the cynosure of modern art. As yet it was not even quite settled that Liszt would take a prominent part in the affairs of the Weimar court-theatre, and there was nothing to tell Wagner of his comrade's genius as conductor. We can imagine the man of intimate experience of the ways of Courts giving the ardent world-improver sage advice as to the necessities of his present situation, and exerting a generally calming influence on his troubled spirit; but the future was still in the clouds—Liszt had not yet heard *Tannhäuser*. Some talk of coming over to Dresden for this opera, there certainly was, as we gather from a message to Princess Wittgenstein in Wagner's first letter after definite return to his duties, written September 6; but that was as far as it got, for the present.

He had not returned exactly in disgrace, or we should not hear of even the possibility of a performance of *Tannhäuser* "about a week later"—a performance actually given on the 24th. For which reason it seems that Prölss has confounded dates, when he assigns to this September a refusal by Lüttichau to support Wagner's petition for a renewal of that yearly "gratification," first granted last February. Of course, it is possible that Wagner was looking ahead, so as to reassure his creditors; but it is inherently improbable that he should have chosen so inopportune a moment, instead of waiting for the softening effect of time and the more natural occasion at end of the year. We shall therefore defer all consideration of that refusal.

For the present the composer-conductor seems to have been on his best behaviour: not so his friend and deputy, August Roeckel. July 9, during Wagner's absence, he had put his signature to a manifesto of the Vaterlands-Verein, and by the time the Kapellmeister returned to his duties, the Musikdirektor had so far thrown himself into the vortex of the political movement as to start a weekly sheet, the *Volksblätter*, for the propagation of democratic doctrine. Its first number appeared on August 26, while Wagner was on his Weimar trip; there can be little doubt that he would not have counselled such a step just now, and none whatever that he had nothing to do

with it for several months to come, as Roeckel himself says that Wagner had "turned in the deepest dudgeon from the enthusiastically-greeted uprising of the year 1848, and sought in his artistic drafts the comfort for a bitter disillusion." What that disillusion was, we know from his own words, namely "the lying and hypocrisy of political parties"; and the "utter solitude" into which the composer states that he had now retired (*P. I.* 356) even points to a temporary break with more headstrong friend Roeckel. However that may be, Roeckel was publishing his *Volksblätter*, and this playing with fire very soon ended in the only way that could reasonably be expected*: Reissiger had already written to Lüttichau in the summer, from another standpoint, that the singers objected to studying their parts under the Musikdirektor; so, on one pretext or the other, August Roeckel was dispensed from further service about the end of September (see *Signale* 41, i.e. first week in October).

A month of contrasts. While everything seemed presaging a new order of society, the ancient institute which numbered two such revolutionary spirits on its list of officers was about to celebrate its tercentenary. Founded in 1548 by the great Protestant Elector Moritz as a mere choristers' establishment in connection with his Court *Chapel*, from which it derived its name, the Kapelle had passed through many a change in its three-hundred years of existence. The Court itself had renounced the Protestant for the Catholic faith; the Kapelle's church duties had been almost effaced by those for the theatre; whereas the choir had dropped into quite a secondary rank, divided from the band, so that the very name of Kapellmeister had practically become a synonym for Orchestral Conductor. Then the Court-theatre, which itself had been cause of the chief of these changes,

* I must take this opportunity of absolving Herr Glasenapp from all responsibility for my estimate of Roeckel: the position of affairs at this period is not so self-evident, as to exclude the possibility of two opinions. For my own part, I consider that no self-respecting Court could have retained in its service an officer who edited a paper the leading article of which for the third or fourth week in September (No. 5) upheld the Vaterlandsverein's action in striking out its former clause in favour of "retention of the monarchy." If court-employés *will* edit political papers, they must take the consequences; and I cannot see that Roeckel had any reason to appeal to his own dismissal as a particular instance of broken promises (p. 233), however just that charge may be in general.—W. A. E.

had developed, from a private place of entertainment for the Court, into a hybrid resort for any member of the public who chose to pay his money at the doors. But still the hoary institute held out, consuming, not creating artists, a veritable Minotaur; and if we can imagine it gifted with language and a sense of humour, it must slyly have chuckled to itself and said, "Court-appanage I've been for these three-hundred years, and Court I shall remain. Don't worry me!"

Some such thought must have passed through Wagner's brain as the festival approached; for it was once again to prove that court-parade was here considered more than art. A sounding-board had lately been erected in the orchestra, with excellent acoustic results: for this jubilee the sounding-board was to be removed, making way for a pasteboard decoration *ad majorem gloriam regis*. Wagner objected, on purely artistic grounds of course; but his enemies interpreted it as another symptom of disloyalty. Whereupon he writes on Sept. 15 an energetic letter to the band, disclaiming insinuations "prompted by ridiculous malice," and setting forth the reasons of his protest; but, so tired is he of the constant perversion of all his motives, that he begs the bandsmen, should *they* not choose to back him up, to consider that protest withdrawn, "as *they* are the real providers of the feast." How this subsidiary point was settled, is not on record; but it was scarcely encouraging to a man honestly striving to avoid all "offence."

The Festival was to take place on the 22nd, the chief feature being a grand Historic concert, ending with Weber's once-rejected *Jubilee*-overture, preceded by two modern compositions, i.e. a composition apiece by the reigning Kapellmeisters. Wagner naturally chose a portion of his long-completed *Lohengrin*, from the hero's first entry (?) to the end of act i. Permission to present this fragment was *his* share of the carefully-scaled distinctions in commemoration of the event, the lowest being the imminent dismissal of Roeckel, the highest the bestowal upon Reissiger of a Ritter's cross of the Royal Saxon order for Civil Merit,—quite in keeping with Lüttichau's passion for arranging in tiers. That Ritter-cross of Reissiger's, just newly affixed by the King, made a wonderful hit; at its first appearance it was greeted with effusion by an awe-struck audience, and it wove its glamour round its wearer's "melodious" early overture to *Yelva*

(see i. 141*n*). The success of the *Lohengrin* excerpt was equivocal ; according to eye-witnesses the applause in this instance, also, was directed rather to the person of the composer, than to his work ; in other words, a succès d'estime. The singers and bandsmen had worked with a will ; but the fragment was bound to suffer from making its first appeal without its scenic and mimetic action ; at the close of a long "historic" concert too !

A leash of contemporary comments must here be let loose, as the Tercentenary concert of Sept. 22, 1848, was rendered *world*-*"historic"* by this first presentation of a morsel of *Lohengrin* :—

To the *Neue Zeitschrift* wrote J. G. Müller, conductor of the Orpheus union, "Honour and thanks to the laudable efforts of this man to enrich the repertory of German Opera with a fresh product of his untiringly creative brain ! Already we are looking forward to it with delight. To-day's number was received with tumultuous applause." No : that does not carry us very far. Perhaps this ?—from the *Signale* : "The finale from his new opera, brought by Wagner to a hearing, set big instrumental masses in motion and left the singers in the lurch, notwithstanding that they had more to scream than sing." We don't quite recognise the work ; so we'll call our third witness, the actor Carl Sontag (*Bühnenerlebnisse* I. 50) : "His personal friends laboured in the sweat of their brow—yet the evening remained a defeat for Wagner." A defeat, with an extract from *Lohengrin* : even in philistine London a few years later it did not come to *that*. Had they ears, these good Dresdeners ?

The truth must be told : they were all dying for supper ; for the evening had only commenced. The large hall of the Harmonie-Gesellschaft was gay with lights and flags and flowers, for a solemn banquet and informal ball. The usual official healths were drunk, but the atmosphere was leaden, and the company tongue-tied, until Wagner got upon his feet and proposed the toast of "The Royal Kapelle"*—his third recorded speech in public, this time, apparently, impromptu. We can well believe that his friends were a little nervous, after a recent experience ; but, apart from his eulogy of "a beloved, art-devoted Prince," the King of Saxony, this address has nothing whatever in common with that startling utterance of June. The vital

* See *Prose Works* VII. 315-8.

history of the Kapelle is reviewed in a few graphic sentences, ending with "all praise and thanks to those who so staunchly have maintained and nursed this institute—they have done good service in the cause of Art" (Lüttichau, who of course would be present, must have smoothed out his wrinkles and smiled self-complacently). But Wagner bids his hearers not to rest content with past achievements: there's a field the institute has not yet trodden, that of "forming and educating." (A hint how little he was disposed to consign his Reorganisation scheme as yet to limbo. It is only a hint, scarcely recognisable to those not admitted to the secret; but Lüttichau had already shelved a plan for reforming the Kapelle itself, and must have contracted those famous eyebrows). Then, making use of a simile he is so fond of during the next three years, he calls this Instrumental Orchestra "a man," and wishes it a "wife," a healthy Vocal Institute to mate it (lifting another corner of the veil that shrouds his Theatre scheme.—Lüttichau must have felt very uneasy, but mystified). He ends this Toast, which cannot have taken more than ten minutes to propose, by a characteristic touch of humour: "If we all are sitting here again three-hundred years to come, may we be able to speak of that future past with just as honourable a pride as we are happy enough to feel to-day in that now flown!"—reminding us of the Oxford don and his "I come to this sexcentenary only once in six-hundred years, and yet" etc.

The right note had been struck; with the clinking of glasses every tongue was set free. And now came a dramatic surprise, perhaps neatly led up to by that allusion of Wagner's to "woman"—the unexpected appearance of Frau Schröder-Devrient.* "Die grösste deutsche Künstlerin ist unter uns!" flew from lip to lip, amid deafening cheers. "It is my greatest pride, to have belonged to you," was the favourite's reply as she began her progress round the tables, thanking almost every guest in turn for the heartiness of her reception.

Heinrich Marschner was one of these guests. How different from that of his brother composers was Wagner's attitude towards

* She had lately obtained the dissolution of her marriage with that rascally von Döring.—In English we have nothing to denote sex in such words as "artist," "singer," "performer," etc.; so "The greatest German lady-artist is among us" is the clumsy alternative for leaving the above exclamation in its original simplicity.

the humbler ranks of his profession, is indicated by Marschner's expostulation to him, that "he really should remember, the bandsman was downright incapable of understanding him" (*P.* IV. 340). As a matter of fact, the band understood him far better than most, witness Uhlig,—certainly better than did such shining lights as Gustav Freytag, who also appears to have graced the banquet with his amiable presence. Freytag was scholar, poet, dramatist and novelist in one, and subsequently joint-editor with Julian Schmidt of the by no means friendly *Grenzboten* (see *Letters to Uhlig*). In his *Erinnerungen* he speaks of having met Wagner in the autumn of 1848 "at a large party,"* when Wagner told him of "his idea for a grand opera dealing with the Germanic Gods." With that "adorable simplicity" for which the chatterer has been so praised, Freytag adds that "Wagner had not yet made up his mind, what the story of this opera would be; but the inspiration started from a chorus of Valkyries, riding on their horses through the air." With his no less celebrated "ripeness of judgment," Freytag interrupts Wagner's glowing description by the momentous question, "Why hang the poor ladies on string? You'll find they'll sing false in their fright." Naturally that ended the conversation, or rather, its reproduction; having scored his point, Freytag winds up with the enlightening remark that "this hovering in the air and singing from the sky, the delight in unheard-of effects in stage-mounting, was the thing that first attracted Wagner's fancy to this subject from the world of Gods."

If anyone still wonders at Wagner's "solitude" in Dresden, let him take this as a sample of its cause. Whenever we get a glimpse from their private recollections of his intercourse with those men of light and leading, the ornaments of German literature in that day, we find them exposing their superficiality in precisely the same way, and mostly for sake of a hopeless straining after wit. Decidedly, "the bandsmen" understood him better.

* Obviously the present occasion, as Hiller had removed his salon to Düsseldorf a year ago, and Wagner was not 'going out' just now.

X.

DRAMATIST OR MUSICIAN?

“Friedrich Rothbart” and the Wibelungen essay; significance of the Hoard.—Historic play or musical drama?—The Nibelungen myth: “Siegfried’s Tod”; its poem read in private.—Fortunes of Wagner’s operas at Dresden; Lohengrin rejected by the General Management.—The Court regaining courage; Roedel’s arrest.—“Jesus von Nazareth” and its corollaries.—Liszt enters the arena, with Tannhäuser at Weimar.

It was inevitable that I should reach a point at last, where, under certain external impressions, a subject such as that of “Friedrich Rothbart” would present itself to me, in the treatment of which I should have to abjure all musical expression. . . . It was not my profession of Opera-composer, that caused me to abandon a story merely fitted for the Play . . . but when I gave my preference to “Siegfried” I had entered a new and most decisive period in my evolution, that of conscious artistic will.

RICHARD WAGNER.

ONE aspect of the summer of 1848 we have purposely reserved, and that the most important. Had it not been for what may almost be called the accident of Wagner’s presence in Dresden during the insurrection of May 1849, the Vaterlandsverein affair would have had little effect on his life; it was an isolated incident, or rather—so far as concerns any meddling with actual politics—the desquamatory stage of a short and sharp attack of fever. That skin had been sloughed, and, with reasonable avoidance of chills, there need be no fear of disastrous sequelæ. A vital crisis, on the contrary, was taking place inside, but for which external stimuli might have met with little response. To vary the metaphor: as one alters the focus, the picture changes; the foreground fades to insignificance, and the real landscape is brought to clear view. The rocks composing that foreground have certainly descended from the mountains in the distance, as may be seen by their

stratification; it was right that they should first be scrutinised; but human agencies might lift them, while nothing save an earthquake could convulse their source. We now must shift our focus to that solid background.

The crowded events we have depicted from March to September might well be thought sufficient for the six-months diary of any man of ordinary activity; there were only two short reaches but partially accounted for, namely from the latter part of May to the middle of June, and something like a fortnight in July—just time for a little rest. But Richard Wagner was a man of no ordinary activity, especially in the period 1847 to '51. If you turn to the second volume of his *Gesammelte Schriften* (see *Prose Works* VII.) you will find "Summer 1848" and "1848" on the title-pages of two works, together occupying over sixty pages, representing an immensity of preliminary study before they could be written out, the *Wibelungen* essay and the *Nibelungen-Myth*; and these are but the scaffolding for two projected dramas, *Friedrich der Rothbart* and *Siegfried's Tod*. This whole mass belongs to that span of time when Wagner's momentary appearance in the political arena encouraged his enemies of all degrees and kinds to pretend that he was busily engaged in plotting treason!

How he shouldered the work, heaven knows. Down to the end of March he was busy scoring *Lohengrin*. From then till the middle of May, he was engaged on the time-devouring task of drafting his Theatre-organisation plan, with a side-glance at the course the outer world was shaping. His duties at the theatre had still to be attended to; yet we must claim some portion of the interval to June 14 (the date of the 'Germanic Address') for the jotting down of those exhaustive notes upon the "Wibelungen" which were to form the flesh and blood for a skeleton sketch of a drama already conceived in honour of Barbarossa, i.e. Frederick Redbeard. This point of time must be assigned them for various reasons, of which for the moment we need only lay stress on the internal one, namely their immediate applicability to that passage in the Vaterlandsverein Address, "The farther back we search among Germanic nations for the Kinghood's meaning, the more intimately will it fit this new-won meaning [of an ideal Freedom etc.]. The historic cycle of the Kinghood's

evolution will thus have reached its goal at last, have rounded back upon itself"—which we may compare with his rendering of Kaiser Friedrich's historic action, in the *Wibelungen* notes, "Once more arrived at plenitude of power and undisputed might, he spake the Lombards free, and struck with them a lasting peace." So that we have two great streams embouching in that much-discussed Address, and both connected with his art. The Theatre and its abuses had led him along the social channel, the exploration of a region of material for the Drama had led him along its political parallel, to a common haven in the "King and the Free State." And thus we perceive how organically connected is the whole broad tissue of ideas which the haphazard analyst so loves to represent this many-sided mind as picking up at random here and there, as the sparrow picks up crumbs.

Lohengrin itself also stands in intimate relation with the work on which we now find Wagner engaged. We have seen him busy with researches into old German rites and customs, the "Judgment of God" and so on, in his successful endeavour to make the background for that opera's characters no mere conventional mosaic: those studies had carried him once more across the Hohenstaufen era, so old a favourite of his, and there had shewn him that ideal of German Kinghood which usurped his every thought to-day. During the composition of *Lohengrin*, as he has told us, a *pair* of subjects had already begun to haunt him; of these, "when the wave of political commotion lately broke on us, proclaiming itself in Germany at first as a longing for national unity [see the letter to Prof. Wigard], it could not but seem to me that Friedrich I. would be nearer to the people's heart, and be more readily understood, than the purely-human Siegfried." He had no need to cast about him for a national hero: the people itself had its legend that the great Kaiser still was alive in the Kyffhäuser hills, enthroned on the Nibelung's Hoard, by his side Siegfried's dragon-slaying sword, awaiting but the moment of the nation's sorest need, to end his trance and bring it rescue. What matter if prosaic pedants—the "historico-juridic critics" to whom Wagner refers in a footnote to page 360 of the *Communication*—insisted that this was Friedrich II., not "Redbeard Frederick"? To the folk and its poet, son and father were one. And more, yet more. These *Wibelungen* notes were "world-history from legend": the Hoard was also the Grail,

and Friedrich was Siegfried, and Siegfried was Baldur, and Baldur was Christ. Past Cæsar and Priam of Troy flew the gist of the legend, far back to the ur-old cradle of the race in Caucasus.—This all was to shape to breath and life in Friedrich Rothbart of the Hohenstaufen, old Barbarossa of the kingly will, a theme to lead both prince and people across the threshold of the golden age.

So, *Lohengrin* completed, Wagner takes from his portfolio the three-page sketch of a *Rothbart* drama he had already drafted during an early stage of that opera's composition, and applies himself to working out its underlying thoughts. This dramatic sketch—preserved at Wahnfried, but not yet published—is dated "October 31, 1846"; so that it had already lain dormant for a year and a half. Its author now proceeds to a sifting of old, and collecting of new, material for it, in a kind of private notebook which he eventually styles "Die Wibelungen." How far "Die Wibelungen" itself was retouched a year afterwards, it is impossible to say in the absence of the original manuscript of 1848. "I have made a good many alterations in fair-copying," writes the author to Uhlig in September 1849, evidently referring to the more doctrinaire portion; but the central idea and all its more direct accessories undoubtedly belong to this period when the dream of a reborn *German* nation had not been dispelled by events. Yet the whole thing was but a study, the scattered heads and limbs and folds of drapery a Raphael throws on paper when thinking out the composition of a mighty fresco. Here and there you can guess how a point will be worked in, and again you feel that some particular thought is but a private meditation, the ore from which its gold has yet to be extracted. In the preface (1849) Wagner virtually disclaims all pretension to scientific symmetry: "In the stimulating recent past I, too, was occupied with the reawakening of Friedrich Rothbart, so longed for by so many, and strove with added zeal to satisfy an earlier wish to breathe poetic life into the hero-Kaiser for our acting-stage. The outcome of the studies by which I sought to master my subject I have embodied in the following work.* . . . This prelude will

* In an article in the *Bayr. Blätter* for January 1898 Herr Max Zenker brings forward most valuable documentary evidence of the historic accuracy of many of what might appear to be Wagner's most fanciful assumptions in this essay.

remain the only fruit of all my labours on the stuff itself" (*P.* VII. 258).

Until that sketch of 1846 is given to the world,* our only definite knowledge of its substance is to be derived from a couple of lines in the *Communication*: "Already I had sketched the plan for a five-act drama which should exhibit this Friedrich from the Roncalian Diet to his entry upon the Crusade." Meantime, however, an indication of the projected drama's close may perhaps be contained in the following cameo from *Die Wibelungen*: "At Mainz he gathered his Reich around him; all his feudatories, from first to last, he fain would greet once more; the dignitaries of Church and State surrounded him; from every land Kings sent ambassadors with precious gifts, in homage to his Kaiser-might.† But Palestine sent forth to him the cry to save the Holy Tomb.—To the land of morning Friedrich looked; a force resistless drew him on toward Asia, to the cradle of the nations, to the place where God begat the father of all men. Wondrous legends had he heard of a lordly country deep in Asia, in farthest India—of an ur-divine Priest-King who governed there a pure and happy people, immortal through the nurture of a wonder-working relic called the Holy Grail.—The old hero girt him up. With splendid retinue of war he marched through Greece: he might have seized it—what booteth that?—unresting he was drawn to farthest India. On tempestuous field he broke the power of the Saracens; unchallenged lay the promised land before him; he could not wait for the construction of a flying bridge, but urged impatient Eastwards,—on horse he plunged into the stream:

* According to Hans von Wolzogen (*Bayr. Blätter*, Sept. 1885, p. 262) its main body is in German script, but there are a few additions in what we call "Italian hand." Now, *Siegfried's Tod* is written throughout in German script, so that the definite change of handwriting cannot have taken place until the end of 1848, at earliest. The question therefore arises, whether at the time of making his fair copy of the "Wibelungen" essay (Zurich, Sept. '49, Italian script) Wagner may not have entertained the *Rothbart* project once again, for a moment, and again dismissed it; or whether he even recurred to it in that perplexing Spring of 1849 at Dresden, when Friedrich Wilhelm IV. of Prussia was offered the Imperial crown.—W. A. E.

† A striking premonition of the scene described by Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung*; just as the antiphonal chorus at the end of *Siegfried's Tod* is practically transferred to *Parsifal*, when the Hoard has been transfigured into the Grail.

none saw him in this life again" (*P.* VII. 293). Surely this *must* have been the idea of the closing scene, for the catastrophe is virtually reproduced in *Siegfried's Tod* after *Rothbart* had been abandoned.

And why was *Friedrich Rothbart* dropped? For one thing, because of the very motive that had called the subject from the mist of things one means to do some day. In direct response to a burning question of the hour, the author had given momentary preference to a draft that "approached the closest to political life"; but the same revulsion of feeling with which he was so soon inspired by "the empty formalistic tendency of political parties" (*P.* I. 366 and 360) quenched his enthusiasm for a "politico-historic" subject. There was another reason, however, and that of the highest importance in forming our estimate of Wagner's gifts.

Soon after the composition of *Lohengrin* had been commenced, he wrote about it as a last experiment "if Opera be possible." In the event of Opera proving *impossible*, from the æsthetic standpoint, what then? Before the ordinary composer there would lie but one course: that of flying to Oratorio and absolute Instrumental music, like Hiller after his operatic failures. To the ordinary playwright the question would never occur, though it had exercised the minds of Goethe and Schiller. Before Wagner there lay the alternative, of transferring his energies to the spoken Play—or creating an original form of Drama, where word and tone should hold equal and united sway. There was bound to come a point in the experiment, where the balance would just be quivering between the two; and nothing could be more characteristic of his double qualification, than that he should actually have sketched a *drama without music* immediately after finishing the scoring of his "last opera." Let those who are perpetually admonishing us to do nothing but study his scores* give a moment's reflection to this most symptomatic crisis in the artist's inner life; not forgetting that it was also a crisis in the brain of the thinker, in the man's outer lot.

"Not for a moment did I doubt that *Friedrich Rothbart* could only be dealt with in a spoken play, by no means in a drama to

* Something more than "study" and analysis is what we want *there*. We yet are waiting for the musically-intuitive Ruskin to this Turner.

be worked out musically. In that period of my life when I conceived *Rienzi* it perhaps might have occurred to me to regard even the 'Rothbart' as an operatic subject: now, when it was no longer my object to write operas, but to communicate what I had seen with the eye of poetry in the most living of artistic forms, to wit the Drama, I had not the remotest idea of handling an historico-political subject otherwise than as a spoken play" (*P. I.* 361). That it was in his power to write a 'spoken' drama of the very highest order, will be disputed by no one competent to judge the purely poetical merits of the text of *Tannhäuser* or *Lohengrin*—not to pass beyond this period. Nor, associated with the theatre from childhood up, could he fail to turn out a play most eminently adapted to the actor's art. What made him "ever and again turn back in discontentment from the plan" (*ibid.* 359)?

It was no timidity about forsaking the speciality in which he was versed, that of "Opera poet and composer"; no preconceived antipathy to blank-verse—or he would never have contemplated it. But the closer he approached his subject, the more clearly did he see that History was no material for so instantaneous and *compact* a thing as Drama; the appeal of History was far too much addressed to the sifting and re-combining Understanding, instead of to the immediately responsive feeling; it left unsatisfied "that selfsame purely-human Feeling which in actual life was wounded by the political formalism of our age. I felt that the highest of what I had seen from the purely-human standpoint could not be imparted to others in the portrayal of an historico-political subject; that the sheer intellectual exposition of *relations* would make it impossible to bring to view the purely human individuality; that I consequently should have to leave to be *unriddled*, not movingly presented to the feeling, the only vital thing I was concerned with" (*ibid.*). What had prompted his sketch, had been no mere desire to lead the spectator through a gallery of imposing historical pictures, but to shew the mutual dependence of a whole great group of phenomena in such a way that it might be grasped at once. The hero "striving with giant force to bend to his will a world of opposing 'relations,' only to be overwhelmed by them at last," was a subject fitted to the simpler surroundings of Mythos (the Wotan problem, in fact); but, "to comply with the imperative demands of History, no single link could be omitted from the vast mass of incidents and

complications, if their concatenation was to be intelligibly set forth." To use this subject for a drama, of any kind, he would "have been obliged to reduce this mass of relations by *free construction*, and thus have absolutely violated History. Yet it was the main characteristic of Friedrich, in my eyes, that he should be an *historic hero*" (*ibid.* 359-60).

Hence it was a scrupulous regard for truth, and therefore the bedrock of Wagner's nature, that stood in the way of his shifting his ground. Where he had to deal with historic relations, they could not be trimmed to suit his purpose. There were a mass of purely extraneous surroundings that could not be lopped away from his central figure, and thus he reluctantly abandoned his subject—with a personal conviction that History in general was unsuited to Drama. Two new and kindred spheres had he tried in this quarter of a year, the political and the historic; in neither could he find acceptance or nurture for his poetic ideals: "I now returned to 'Siegfried'—and at the selfsame time as, disgusted with the formalistic tendency in the empty cries of our political parties, I withdrew from publicity. Simultaneously I had solved for my private self a problem of artistic formalism; and that was the question of the validity of the merely spoken play for the Drama of the Future" (*ibid.* 360).

Incidentally we are here supplied with the date of abandonment of *Friedrich Rothbart* and definite adoption of Siegfried, namely July 1848, that other blank in our story of this summer. From the delivery of the Vaterlandsverein Address, June 15, to his departure for a holiday on July 7, Wagner had enough to do with political attacks upon himself, with his bothers with the Intendant, and finally with his serious pecuniary entanglements; so that we may fix the sketch of the "Nibelungen-myth" in the brief period of rest before we find him in Vienna at the beginning of August. And that sketch was the foundation not only of *Siegfried's Tod*, but eventually of the whole tetralogy. The *Ring des Nibelungen* itself, the real "drama of the future"—of which *Siegfried's Tod* was but the harbinger—therefore owes its genesis to a brief lull in this time of storm and stress, when half Europe seemed trembling toward an earthquake. For that at least we may thank the strangely unfruitful political movement of 1848.

Now, the substitution of Siegfried for Barbarossa was no arbitrary act on Wagner's part, no freak of the author who finds

one subject rebellious to his hand and racks his brain for another: he says, in fact, that "they almost seemed to him as one." In his studies of old Jakob Grimm he had discovered that this Friedrich "appeared to the saga-framing Folk an historic rebirth of the old pagan Siegfried," and the idea had germinated in his mind. Thus in his "world-historic" essay not only does he trace the very name of "Wibelungen," or Ghibelines—in contradistinction to the Welfs, or Guelphs—to the old Nibelungs of legend; but every truly imperial Kaiser, according to him, was *de facto* heir to the Hoard*: "This Hoard, with the might residing in it, becomes the immovable centre round which all further shaping of the saga now revolves: the whole strife and struggle is aimed at it, as the epitome of earthly power, and he who owns it, or governs by it, either is or becomes a Nibelung" (*P.* VII. 263). "When Light vanquished Darkness, when Siegfried slew the Nibelungen-dragon,† he further won as victor's spoil the Nibelungen-hoard it guarded. But the possession of this Hoard is also the cause of his death: for the dragon's heir now plots to win it back. This heir despatches him by stealth, as night the day, and drags him down into the gloomy realm of death [where the Dwarfs have their home]: thus *Siegfried himself becomes a Nibelung*. Though doomed to death by acquisition of the Hoard, each sequent generation strives to seize it. . . . The hero-god who won it first, and thus became a Nibelung partly through his power, and partly through his death, left as heirloom to his race the active right to claim the Hoard. To avenge the slain and keep or win the Hoard afresh—this stress marks out the soul of all the race, that race of the Nibelungen-Franken" (*ibid.* 276).

* According to Herr Zenker (see footnote to page 265), "it was the Hoard that made the Ruler"; a mysterious power was attached, in the eyes of the Franks, to the royal treasure—golden ornaments, *not* minted money—and its possession, whether in virtue of force, stratagem, or inheritance, became the patent of sovereignty. It is quite remarkable, that Wagner should have seized by intuition a cardinal point theretofore neglected by professional historians.

† "The Nibelungen-dragon" is an expression both halves of which stamp this passage as anterior to the prose-sketch of the "Nibelungen-myth," where the dragon has become the "Wurm," or lindworm, and is in the service of the Giants. It may here be mentioned that the "Worm" has yet to go through several stages of evolution; in *Siegfried's Tod* it is "*begotten* by the Giants"; not until the *Ring* does it become Fafner himself.—W. A. E.

It is highly interesting to observe that as yet neither Gods nor Giants have come between, nor has the Ring itself been evolved, but Siegfried wins the Hoard directly from the Nibelungen. The idea of "vengeance," on the other hand, is common to this essay and the poem of *Siegfried's Tod*, where the hero says: "My only heirloom, venger's right, already have I voided" (see also act iii, scenes 2 and 3): from *Götterdämmerung* it has vanished. A little later in the essay, Wagner makes the Franks, when temporarily deprived of power, take comfort in the thought, "Can we but regain the Kaiser rank, with it we win again our ancient title to lordship of the world; and then we'll know to ply it better than these usurpers of the Hoard, who do not even understand its use"; words for which there is an exact parallel in *Siegfried's Tod*, where Hagen, son of Alberich creator of the Hoard, says "Who knew how it rightly to use, o'er the world would he verily rule," and Alberich himself tells Hagen, concerning Siegfried, "Plaything to him is the ring, whose power he cannot fathom." Moreover, the curse on this Hoard, a curse "woven by waking Norns in the ur-law's endless coil," as Siegfried is told by the Rhine-daughters (then simply called Three Water-women), is only to be removed by restoration of its symbol to the depths of the water; and thus we saw Friedrich himself plunge down on horse, a second Marcus Curtius, no more to be seen in this life.

But the subjects have a more important feature in common, than any of these. As Friedrich "spake the Lombards free" and redeemed the Holy Sepulchre, so, according to Wagner's conception of Siegfried in 1848, his hero's death sets free the Nibelungs and redeems the Gods.—So opposed is this to the spirit of *Götterdämmerung*, that it brings into the strongest relief the author's original motive in substituting the one subject for the other. With the historical play he could not have conveyed the social allegory intended: in the form of a myth he could drive his moral home in a few pregnant lines, with an effect immeasurably enhanced by music.

Knowing the *Ring* as we know it, it may sound strange to be told that in its earliest form it partly bore the character of a political manifesto, a kind of dramatisation of the glowing 'Germanic Address.' But if we look into the prose-sketch of the "Nibelungen-myth" (summer 1848) we find the Nibelungs, the

Giants, and the Gods, described in terms that point to their representing the three classes of the nation, namely the workers, the landed aristocracy or idle rich, and the princes: "the Nibelungen go their way of fruitless labour . . . their bondage is not broken; merely the lordship has been reft from Alberich, and not for any higher end, but the soul, the freedom of the Nibelungs lies buried uselessly beneath the belly of an idle worm: Alberich thus has justice in his complaints against the gods" (*P.* VII. 302). Accordingly the end, also the aim, of the drama is here foreshadowed as the proclamation, "Loosed be the Nibelungs' thraldom, the Ring no more shall bind them. Not Alberich shall regain it; no more shall he enslave you, but he himself be free as ye . . . One only shall rule, All-father thou in thy glory!" There we have the "King as first of a free State," whilst the reign of the "sallow metal" is over.

Nor is the idea confined to the prose-sketch. At three typical points in the drama of *Siegfried's Tod* we have this emancipation of the Nibelungen harped on. 1) In the Prologue, the Second Norn (the Present) says, "Thralls, the Nibelungen; thrall too, Alberich, since his ring was stolen," and again "In fear I see the Gods' race, in bonds the depths are groaning: the free alone give peace"—a topical allusion as manifest as could be; whilst the Third Norn (the Future) replies, "Gleefully dareth a glad one freely to fight for the Gods: through triumph a hero brings peace"—the latter half is Wagner's explanation of Siegfried—can the former half have meant anything but Folk-arming? 2) In the semi-prologue to act ii, Alberich tells Hagen his son, "By the ring was I bann'd, as my brothers it bound; unfree were we all thenceforward. Restlessly striving, nothing we reach . . . a Worm, whom as warder they bred, yet held in fetters all our freedom," and Hagen consoles him with "Prince of the Nibelungen, free shalt thou be." 3) In the closing scene, Brünnhilde proclaims the Nibelungs' emancipation in the terms already quoted, adding to her apostrophe to Wotan, "Have joy of the freest of heroes! Siegfried I bear to thee, warrant of might everlasting." Turning to her horse, her last words are "Joy to thee, Grane: soon are we free!" whilst the chorus of men and women sing, "All-father's free comrades in joy shall greet Walhall, made one for a bliss without end." Could there be anything more thoroughly in harmony with the Verein address?

But perhaps most significant of all is a passage in the prose-sketch which has been prudently dropped in the finished poem. The Rhine-daughters ask Siegfried, "Wouldst outvie the Gods?"—to which he replies, "Shew me the possibility of vanquishing the Gods, and to my mind must I bend them. I know three women [the Norns] wiser than you three: they wot where once the Gods shall strive in bitter fearing. Well for the Gods, if they take heed that then I battle *with* them," i.e. on their side. Remembering that passage directed to the Monarchists in the Address,—“But held *ye* it [our freedom and progress] impossible, 'twere ye yourselves had signed the Kinghood's death-warrant,”—the political tendency of the whole sub-argument is simply underlined by this omission of a passage thoroughly characteristic of the hero, but certain to revive the old offence the author's speech had given in high quarters, especially after the little misunderstanding previous to the jubilee-concert.

Clearly then, when Wagner wrote his *Siegfried's Tod* he not only introduced into it the idea of social emancipation with conscious purpose, but was perfectly aware that such would be the light in which it would be read. Four years afterwards, upon recasting the drama, he must have recognised that this political tinge was a blot on any artwork, for he expunged *every trace* of it: his characters should stand or fall on their own merits, not as the mouthpieces for questions of the day.—

If the above digression has helped us to restore *Siegfried's Tod* to the frame of its temporary mental surroundings, it will have served its purpose. The permanent central type yet remains to be dealt with.

“Since my return to Germany from Paris, my favourite study had been that of German antiquity. I have already spoken of the deep longing that filled me then for my native home. In its present reality, however, this Home could nowise satisfy my longing. . . . I sank myself into the native element that greets us in the poems of the past, and the more warmly as the present repels us with its hostile chill. To all those wishes and ardent aspirations that bear us to the *future*, we seek to give a palpable shape by pictures from the past, and thus to win for them a form the modern present cannot offer. In the endeavour to give the wishes of my heart artistic shape I drove step by step into the deeper regions of antiquity, where at last, and truly in the utmost

reaches of old time, to my delight I was to come upon the fair young *human being* in the most exuberant freshness of his force. Right through the poems of the Middle Ages had my studies led me, to the old ur-German Myth. One garment after the other, with which the later poem [the *Nibelungenlied*] had disguised him, was I thus able to strip off, to gaze at last upon him in his chastest beauty. What I here beheld, was no longer the historic-conventional Figure, whereof the garment interests us more than does the shape inside, but the real naked Man, in whom I might spy each surge of his blood, each quiver of his strenuous muscles, in uncramped freest motion, the type of the *true Human being*" (*P.* I. 357-8).

Verily a subject to inspire the dramatist : but this purely-human being was not so easy to carve out at once, and for the same cause that constitutes the difficulty experienced by modern plastic artists in treatment of the nude—the eye of neither artist nor spectator has been trained to it from youth. It therefore will not surprise us, to discover that the Siegfried of *Siegfried's Tod* is only "naked" in part, namely in the scenes with Brünnhilde in act i, and in the unrivalled act iii. In the open he is in his element ; but his creator has to take him to the court of "historic" figures, the Gibichungen, and poor naïve Siegfried needs must snatch a hasty garb from his surroundings—the flaw, inevitable perhaps, that still attaches to the plot of *Götterdämmerung*, and ranks it lower, so far as concerns the first and second 'scenes' of act i and the latter half of act ii, than the other members of the ultimate tetralogy. After all, *Siegfried's Tod* was a transition work, and its author had not yet rid himself entirely of the influences of Opera : so far indeed was he from regarding it as itself a "drama of the future," that he inscribed the title-page of its MS. with "Grand Heroic opera in three acts."—

We have supposed some date in July for the prose-sketch of the "Nibelungen-myth." The actual poem was written in November ; of which date more anon. Of the interval, beyond a week or two in August, Wagner can only have had October fairly free for working out his subject, prior to committing it definitely to paper,—September with its commencement of another operatic season, its jubilee-concert, and a resumption of *Tannhäuser*, would scarcely leave much vacant time. Yet there was an immense amount of mental labour to go through, before

the drama could be moulded to its finished shape, and we need not wonder at young Kietz being told by Wagner one day at table, "that he was busy at present with ideas for a big work from German mythology, but feared he wouldn't have leisure for it; indeed he might already be too old, and should have undertaken it when younger." To that feeling of "age," consequent on the extreme high-pressure of the past six months, we perhaps may ascribe the weaker and more stagey features in a poem that demanded the fullest vigour of redundant health to keep it at one pitch of youthful buoyancy; at anyrate, as we shall presently see, it is followed by a spell of great depression.*

Whether he felt old or young, the self-appointed task must be achieved. Though the broader outlines were his own creation, 'origins' had still to be consulted for details, and it is manifest that in this autumn fell his reading of the *Völsunga-saga*. As one out of many instances of that indefatigable perseverance he shared with Schiller in getting to the bottom of everything connected with a subject, we may quote from Letter 43 to Uhlig (Nov. 12, 1851) his account of the discovery of this work: "At Dresden I went to all imaginable trouble to buy a book which, however, had ceased to exist in the book-trade. I found it at last in the Royal Library.† It is a thin small 8° or 12° volume, called 'Die Wölsunga-saga'—translated by H. van der Hagen from the old Norse. It forms a portion of the old Northern 'Ritter-romanen' (I think that's the name) which Hagen published 1812 to 1816—if I mistake not—at Breslau. That book I now want, to look through once more."

* Again I must absolve Herr Glasenapp, as I have taken the liberty of entirely re-writing the commencement of this chapter.—W. A. E.

† Perhaps we can even *date* this discovery: on Nov. 3, 1848, just nine days before commencing to engross the poem of *Siegfried's Tod* in its final Dresden form, Wagner writes to old Fischer that "owing to a windfall" (*durch einen eingetretenen Fall*) he is most anxious to have his mornings free. As the morning hours were those he devoted to creative or literary work, whenever possible, it looks very much as if he had just "happened" on the *Völsunga-saga*. Whether we assign his first acquaintance with it to Nov. 3, 1848, or a few weeks earlier, it immediately inspired him with the conception of a great part of *Die Walküre*; for in 1851, on the point of constructing the latter drama, he is asking for the book, "not to follow it—you will soon see what relation *my* poem bears to this saga—but to recall precisely to my mind all that I had once conceived for certain details"; and when it does arrive, he recognises that he no longer has any use for it.—W. A. E.

In his *Nibelungen-myth*, of the summer, Siegmund and Sieglinde had sprung from "a barren union fertilised by Wotan through one of Holda's apples, which he gives the wedded pair to eat": in the *Völsunga-saga* he found that Volsung, their father, was himself great-grandson to Odin; so in the poem he traces their descent as follows, "From Wotan sprang Wälse, from him a twin-pair—Siegmund and Siegelind" (Hagen in act i, sc. 1)—the first step toward making Wotan himself figure as Wälse, and thus gradually develop into the protagonist of the whole ultimate tetralogy. The Norns and Valkyries also have to be hunted up, for scenes that are not so much as hinted at in the general sketch of the myth.—In passing, it may be noticed that the Norns introduce him to a future subject, that of Wayland the Smith; whilst the Valkyries were exercising his mind at the end of September, according to Freytag's flippant perversion of what assuredly was a serious inquiry on Wagner's part (see p. 261 *antea*).—Grane too, the "Grani" of the *Völsunga-saga*, now makes his first appearance. We have no mention of him in the "Myth" sketch, either as Brünnhilde's gift to Siegfried, or in the closing scene: on the contrary, waiving an old Germanic usage, the heroine there expressly says, "No horse, no vassal shall be sacrificed with him; she alone gives her body in his honour to the Gods."

But more than all this exploring of details, there was a question only second in importance to that of Historical play versus Mythical drama, namely as to the form of verse in which to cast that drama. The answer was prompt, to the author's mind well-nigh self-evident with such a subject; yet the mastering of the principles of a versification so foreign to modern use must necessarily have absorbed many hours of patient study, and apparently of first experiment. For at Wahnfried there is preserved another forerunner of *Siegfried's Tod*, in the shape of a manuscript draft covering about 20 pages, dated "20. Oct. 1848," i.e. a little over a fortnight prior to the commencement of the drama published in vol. ii of the *Ges. Schr.* (*P.* VIII). It is devoutly to be hoped that this profoundly interesting document will some day be given to the world in print, thus supplying the missing link in the chain that leads from the general outline in the prose "Nibelungen-Myth" to the final Dresden version of the poem. Of course, it may be that the dialogue of this unpublished MS. is merely 'roughed out'; but we should certainly expect it

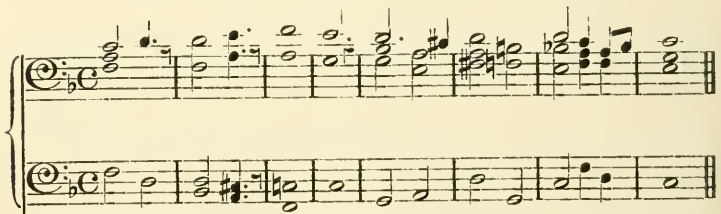
already to contain certain trials of the unfamiliar vehicle of expression.

Now, what was to be gained by the new departure in poetic technique? Briefly this:—

In *Lohengrin* the chief remaining formal difficulty was the limpness, eh! even the smoothness, of traditional verse; the absence of explosive emphasis in the word-lines that were to be clothed with music, nay, that were themselves to engender it. With certain dreamy moods, or elaborately narrative episodes (as in *Parsifal*), this neutral iambic form, whether blank or rhymed, might very well comport; but you might as well put Siegfried into a silk hat, frock-coat and varnished boots at once, as constrain him to express himself in verse so destitute of vim; nor was the stately splendour meet for one of Shakespeare's or Schiller's heroes by any means adapted to this muscular pagan. "When I sketched my 'Siegfried,'" says Wagner in 1851, "I felt the impossibility, or at least the thorough incongruity, of carrying out that poem in modern verse. Here I had the human being before me in the most natural and blithest fulness of sentient life; no historic garb confined his limbs, no outwardly-imposed relation hemmed his actions. . . . And just as this human being moved, so also must his speech. Here the merely *fictive* modern verse, with its viscous lack of body, would not do at all; the phantasmal trick of terminal rhyme no more could mask with its seeming flesh the lack of all living backbone. I must have straightway let my '*Siegfried*' go, could I have dressed it only in such verse. Consequently I must bethink me of another verbal melody. What do I say? I had not even to bethink, but simply to decide me; for at that same ur-mythic source [the older Edda], where I had found the fair young Siegfried man, I lit quite of itself upon the sensuously perfect vehicle in which alone that man could express himself. This was that form of verse which follows the actual accent of our speech in the liveliest and most natural rhythm, while it lends itself with ease to the most varied moods—that *Stabreim* in which the Folk itself once sang when it still was poet and myth-creator" (*P.* I. 375-6). The vastness of the gain for the future Wagnerian Drama implied in the adoption of this old Alliterative type of verse, with its pithy lines, its knotty 'roots,' and predominance of accented first syllables, can be realised only upon comparing the grit and grip of the 'motives' in the

Ring des Nibelungen with the majority of the themes in the operas preceding it (the "Hojohe" of the *Holländer* must be excepted, as an anticipatory case in point).

But with whatever intention Wagner originally embarked on this dramatic scheme, a fate hung over it—a kindly fate, that half-unconsciously forbade his launching on the world a cargo not yet ripened. *Siegfried's Tod* was never set to music: a quarter of a century hence, after many a change, the work was finished as *Götterdämmerung*. "My poem I had sketched and executed solely in obedience to an inner stress, nowise with the thought of performance at our theatres and with existing means, which I could not but deem unsuited to it under every aspect. . . . In the autumn of 1848 I never gave an instant's thought to the possibility of its performance, but looked upon its technical poetic completion, and some fragmentary jottings for its musical composition, merely as a private gratification which I bestowed on myself at that time of disgust with, and withdrawal from, public affairs" (*ibid.* 378). One of these musical jottings, only one, is contained in the November manuscript of the completed poem; evidently a sudden inspiration for the mourning music to accompany the bearing-off of Siegfried's body, for it is written along the margin of the text at that situation in the drama, immediately above "Scene 3":*



This impressive elegiac strain, so strikingly related in spirit to the Andante of his early Symphony in C—but what a new world in the harmonies!—has not been utilised for the *Ring* itself in any form, and makes us long for the recovery of more such

* In his *Richard Wagner* Mr H. S. Chamberlain gives the passage not only in the transcription reproduced above, but also in photographic facsimile from the original MS., where the upper staff appears in the tenor clef, which he imagines, with every probability, to indicate the trombones.

treasures. But the only other survivor is a sketch for the Chorus of Valkyries in act i, scene 3: whether written just now or a little later, its preservation is due to a subsequent request that the composer, then in Zurich, should contribute an autograph to a miscellany which eventually appeared under the title "Deutsches Stammbuch: Autographisches Album der Gegenwart" (Franz Schlodtmann, published Bremen 1855). On the point of discarding his Valkyrie-chorus for a scene with Waltraute, on November 12, 1852, he bids farewell to the fragment by the very act of making it away—little dreaming, perhaps, that its theme would form so marked a feature of his new-born *Walküre*:—

Alto-voices.

Nach Sü-den wir zie-hen Sie-ge zu zeu-gen,
 kämp-fenden Hee-ren zu kie-sen das Loos; für Hel-den zu fech-ten,
 Hel-den zu fäl-len, wehr-li-che Sie-ger zu sen-den nach Walhall.

With the actual date of the poem's completion we come to firmer ground. After all the preliminary studies of the early autumn we reach the 3rd of November, 1848, when Wagner writes to chorus-master Fischer, telling him that he has just begged his colleague Reissiger to replace him in the rehearsing and conducting of a score of Handel's for a certain Choir-benefit, as he is "particularly anxious to have his mornings free" for awhile. On Thursday the 9th comes the nineteenth performance of *Tannhäuser*, to a crowded house. Sunday the 12th, as witness the manuscript itself, the writing out of the new drama, in the form we have it in *Ges. Schr.* ii, is commenced—while Liszt is rehearsing the *Tannhäuser* overture for its first Weimar performance that very afternoon! Barely over a fortnight, and the manuscript is completed, with the terminal date "Dresden, 28. November."

Completed only to be interred, though not in absolute silence; for we hear of its being read aloud, apparently more than once,

in the author's private circle. Of the first such occasion we are informed by his young friend Gustav Kietz : One day in December he received a note from Wagner, inviting him to a hearing of his new poem "if he has nothing better to do." Of course Kietz had no better engagement, and at Wagner's rooms found Gottfried Semper, old Fischer, Ferdinand Heine, and the latter's son Wilhelm (who had recently finished his studies of scene-painting in Paris and settled down in Dresden, where Lüttichau had already given him a first commission—to design the scenery for *Lohengrin*). Roeckel was *not* present,* nor does Kietz remember meeting him on any of his constant visits to the Wagner's. Fashionably late arrived the two youngest guests, Hans von Bülow and Karl Ritter, ceremoniously attired in evening dress, with chimney-pot under the arm. This terrible mark of homage was a little too much for Wagner's sense of humour : he advanced to meet the two young men with mock humility, "Dear Sirs, you overwhelm me"; relieved them of their headgear, and sidled round the room in search of a becoming shrine. At last behind the fire-stove he discovered a wood-basket, and solemnly set the hats on end in it, saying "Here, here they'll be safe!"—one wonders if they called them the equivalent of "stove-pipes" in Germany?—All being assembled, with full clear voice and ringing emphasis Wagner began the recitation, and went straight through the poem, but for a brief pause after each act : no small exploit, with a work of its length. Then came a discussion of the manner in which it was to be set to music. Kietz distinctly remembers old Fischer repeatedly shaking his head—he had done it over *Rienzi* at first ; when the author referred him to the narration in the third act of *Tannhäuser*, Fischer observed that "even there, perhaps, he had gone too far." Wagner knew his man, however, and how valiantly he had stood by his side when it came to the realising of his intentions ; so his objections weren't taken amiss. On the contrary, they supplied a text that night for many an enlightening remark on the important part to be played by the orchestra in dramatic expression, as also on the necessity of making the *Word* more predominant in Musical Drama than

* That Roeckel should not have been present on *such* a night, confirms my suspicion of a temporary coolness.—W. A. E.

hitherto ; with a final hint that in *Lohengrin* itself they would soon discover that he "had already gone much farther than in *Tannhäuser*."

So much for the first reading of *Siegfried's Tod*, which, with its friendly discussion, must have lasted well into the small hours of the morning. We should have been grateful for more precise particulars of Wagner's share in the conversation, but must rest content with what may be gleaned from a further reminiscence of Kietz's. On one of those long afternoon rambles he was so fond of taking with a young companion, Wagner told the youth, "I shall write no more operas ; *Lohengrin* is my last. I'll compose fairy-tales — that's the thing ; the tale of learning to fear." Scarcely has he finished his poem, then, than he not only falls foul of its title "Grand heroic opera," but is already on the high road to "Young Siegfried." For a letter to Uhlig of May 10, 1851, revives the same association : "Didn't I write you once about a merry subject ? It was the tale of the lad who fares forth 'to learn fear,' and is so stupid as never to be able to. Conceive my alarm, when I suddenly discover that this rascal is none other than—young Siegfried, who wins the Hoard and wakes Brünnhilde." He *had* written to Uhlig, so long ago as August 1849, but merely said that he had "two comic subjects in his head." There they must have lain for more than two years side by side, till, with his extraordinary instinct for combination, he suddenly discovered that they had merged into one. But with the end of 1848 the Siegfried chapter closes for the present.

What had meantime been happening with the earlier operas, and *Lohengrin* in particular ?—This last was the fourth work that Wagner had offered to, and had accepted by, the Dresden Court-theatre since the summer of 1841. Of its predecessors, the *Dutchman* had been dropped by the management after four performances, without the smallest inclination to pick it up again ; but its two survivors were the most profitable investments that theatre had made for many a year, always filling the house. In October 1848, after a pause of uncertain duration, *Rienzi* had been resumed at full length, and its four-and-a half hours seemed none too long for the audience's endurance. On the contrary : a new element had been added to the work's success. If its previous popularity had been more attributable to the brilliant

singing of the title-rôle and the perfection to which old Fischer had trained the choir, in these stressful days a novel meaning had been discovered in the opera. Of a sudden there dawned on the Dresden public what more wideawake folk might have detected years ago, namely that *Rienzi* was a "Freedom opera," and each successive representation was greeted with more and more demonstrative calls for the author—to the consequences of which we shall return. *Tannhäuser* also, though it still remained 'cut,' and its higher artistic significance had not been grasped by more than a growing handful of enthusiastic friends, yet had won its way to the people's heart; and here again, down to its twentieth and last performance, the composer was repeatedly called. In fact this autumn season had unexpectedly developed into a regular ovation for the inconvenient Kapellmeister, as may be seen by the playbills: Sept. 24, *Tannhäuser*; Oct. 1 and 14, *Rienzi*; Oct. 17 and Nov. 1, *Iph. in Aulis* (revised by Wagner); Nov. 9, *Tannhäuser*; Nov. 19, *Rienzi*; Dec. 1, *Tannhäuser* (twentieth performance); Dec. 26, *Rienzi*. Certainly there was hope of a public that could make such works the trump-cards for a theatre to play. What could Richard Wagner not have effected for its artistic training, had the management but kept faith with him, and fulfilled its promise to produce his *Lohengrin*! What an incentive it would have been to him, to abide by his art and maintain his present abstinence from all political embroilment. But—*Lohengrin* was suddenly rejected.

Another mystery. For there can be no doubt whatever of its having been accepted for speedy mounting: months ago Lüttichau had been in possession of a copy of the score, for which he had handed the composer the sum of 36 thalers as payment to the copyist. Expense cannot have been the reason for this sudden change of policy, as the scenic requirements were by no means out of the ordinary—nothing like so elaborate as those for *Tannhäuser*; whilst the most short-sighted management might expect from a work so effectively planned a prompt financial harvest. As to singers, this opera would fit the present company like a glove: Tichatschek, Mitterwurzer, and Johanna Wagner, all had been in the artist's mind when he composed it; no better cast could be imagined. Nevertheless, *Lohengrin* was rejected toward the end of 1848. As Wagner writes to Fischer three years afterwards: "At that time folk thought fit to chicane

me a little. Young Heine had already received his orders for the scenery, when it suddenly occurred to Lüttichau to countermand everything. I said nothing at the time; but you have no idea how it shamed and oppressed me, to feel so dependent on circumstances that only as a fawning hypocrite could I see a prospect for my art. Phew! if one has an ounce of honour, one takes oneself off!"

The strangulation of *Lohengrin* was no isolated fact. After that performance of *Rienzi* Dec. 26, 1848, *not another representation of any of Wagner's operas was given in Dresden until October 1852!* Moreover, the addition to his salary granted in February 1848, subject to annual confirmation, was refused when he applied for its renewal, and refused in a very odious manner. According to Prölss the archive-explorer, von Lüttichau's letter to the King,* embodying Wagner's application, points out that "Your Majesty was pleased to make that gratification dependent not only on Wagner's effecting a thorough arrangement of his debts, but expressly also on his constantly performing his duties with diligence and energy, to the satisfaction of the General-direktion; a condition as to the adequate fulfilment whereof no guarantee, unfortunately, can be afforded after recent occurrences, and I therefore can endorse neither the one nor the other."

Why this sudden disgrace, after a *modus vivendi* had clearly been arrived at? It cannot have been due to any fresh indiscretion, such as had "occurred" last June; for we hear nothing from the most censoriously inquisitive purveyor of scandal of his having mixed once more in public politics, or even in private political discussions—as yet. Neither is there any tangible evidence that the Theatre-reform draft had come as yet to Lüttichau's ears—we shall hear in due course what happens when it *does*. One cause alone is entertainable: the popular demonstrations that had been increasing with every performance of *Rienzi*, coupled with the political interpretation now read into that opera's plot. The court-party could scarcely look indifferently on such a thing; we have already seen how

* Prölss vaguely assigns this letter to "September," leaving one to conclude that it is undated. For the reasons already stated, however, it must have been somewhere about the New Year 1849 that it really was sent—*cf.* that passage in Wagner's letter to Liszt of Jan. 14, 1849, "I am dependent on the good-pleasure of certain persons."—W. A. E.

it tampered with the members of the orchestra last June; no "hint from high quarters" was needed, when Lüttichau's own peers were banded with him to squeeze the "dangerous" Kapellmeister from his post.

Indeed, the Court was recovering from its Spring attack of fright, and the reaction, so soon to pronounce itself quite openly, already had stealthily begun. Events in other capitals were encouraging to those who pulled the strings of Saxon government. Vienna had led off the dance, with a bombardment of the city and its reoccupation by Imperial troops in October, followed by the judicial murder of Robert Blum, Becher and Jellinek. Then had come the dissolution of the Prussian National Assembly in November, the declaration of a "state of siege" in Berlin, and sanguinary excesses of the soldiery against its citizens. Dresden authorities began to pluck up heart. Though on the eve of a General Election, with a new franchise wellnigh universal, the bureaucrats commenced to quash the liberties so rashly granted to the people. Freedom of the Press had been nominally accorded, but Roeckel tells us that quite half the numbers of his *Volksblätter* (started Aug. 26) were confiscated, and he had to smuggle copies out of the place. How far this paper was legitimately indictable, cannot be judged from the disconnected extracts lately reproduced by Dr Dinger; but in any case the confiscations were followed by no legal process. Its editor fared worse with a Warning he got distributed broadcast to the Berlin soldiery, denouncing the recent excesses there. A few copies of this "Open letter to the Soldiers" found their way about Dresden, and led to Roeckel's arrest (apparently in December); but the arrest created such commotion in the city, that he was released at the end of three days. To quote his own words, "Scarcely had the news of my imprisonment and its cause been spread about the town, than a total stranger, a landowner, presented himself at the law-court and deposited the sum of 10,000 thalers to bail me out. Though they had no legal right to detain me, the bail was accepted, and a few friends brought me safely back to my family late in the evening. My comrades in opinion had intended to celebrate the victory achieved in my release by a grand torchlight procession. The police-authorities forbade the torches, but it may be regarded as a significant makeweight that some twenty soldiers from the King's Body-

guard, regardless of their certain punishment, left guard and opened the procession, publicly to express the feeling of the military" (*Sachsen's Erhebung*, p. 20).

The details of Roeckel's story, written some sixteen years after the event, seem exaggerated in every direction; but, discounted to the utmost, it may throw some light on several obscurities. In the first place, if there really had been some coolness between Wagner and Roeckel for the past few months, there could be no occurrence more likely to remove it, by arousing the sympathy of the former: however that may be, we may be certain that the Kapellmeister was one of those "few friends" who escorted his late junior home that day. In the second place, we get a very plausible explanation of the words "recent occurrences," or more literally, "the latest occurrences," in that letter of Lüttichau's recommending that Wagner should *not* again receive his promised honorarium. And in the third place, we can see how the growing demonstrations in the theatre on *Rienzi* and *Tannhäuser* nights would assume a highly sinister appearance in the eyes of the court-party; they would naturally be connected with this little act of popular homage to Wagner's known friend Roeckel. These are mere surmises, it is true*; but in presence of so suicidal an act as the sudden tabooing of operas so profitable to the theatre's exchequer, one can but make the likeliest guess. The fate that had already overtaken the Musikdirektor was now impending over the second Kapellmeister; though he was not quite so easy to get rid of—as we shall presently learn.

We have now arrived at the neighbourhood of Christmas 1848, and must follow the artist once more into the privacy of his study. "Autumn and winter were never my friends," he remarks in a subsequent letter. Winter in especial seems to have been always attended, in his case, with a certain lowering of vitality. Last year we saw it take the form of a serious illness; this year it takes that of a general depression of spirits, explicable enough even were it in the heyday of Spring. We may recall that remark to young Kietz, that he felt "too old" to undertake his *Siegfried*:

* Again I have to take full responsibility for this paragraph, as also for much in the comments and arrangement of the present group of chapters.—
W. A. E.

too old at 35, when we know how young he still was between 60 and 70! But there were epochs in his life when the weight of the world was too great for the artist, and that tired feeling would invade the man. After his Berlin disappointments in 1847 he startles us with the question, "Was there any possible way out—save death?" Now, at the end of 1848, we find the same gloom mastering him, the same despair in his "sad and solitary situation as artist-man," and he could combat it only by diverting it into an artistic channel. "My grief itself impelled me to translate it into some poem that should convey it in a fashion to be understood of present life. Just as with my 'Siegfried' the force of my yearning had borne me to the fount of the Eternal Human: so now, when I found that yearning altogether unappeasable in modern Life, and could but recognise afresh that the sole redemption lay in flight from out this life, in casting off its claims on me by self-destruction, did I come to the fount of every modern rendering of such a situation—to *Jesus of Nazareth* the man" (*P. I.* 378).

This passage, as it stands, needs explanation. The context gives us no hint of the way in which "modern Life" had made his artistic situation more "sad and solitary," more unbearable, since the inditing of *Siegfried's Tod*. But the passage is preceded by a dash, indicative of an ellipse, which we may reasonably construe in the light of Breitkopf and Härtel's having insisted that "a few changes" should be made in the *Communication* (1851) before they published it. Thus it presumably came about that the Dresden Intendant, von Lüttichau, is let off so extremely lightly. His name is not once mentioned in the book, and the only direct reference to his discharge of his official functions is studiously neutral; after a lengthy diatribe on the management of Court-theatres in general, Wagner most cautiously hints at particulars: "That no one, even the best-intentioned and most disposed to do the right for honour's sake, can wrest himself from the iron grip of this unnatural situation, unless he finally decide to give up his office for good—this could not but become perfectly plain to me from my Dresden experiences. Those experiences themselves I scarcely need describe more closely: suffice it to say that, after constantly renewed and as constantly fruitless endeavours to gain from my Intendant's good will towards myself a definitely favourable influence on the affairs of the theatre, I at

last withdrew entirely from the attempt, and confined myself to the strict letter of my duties" (*P. I.* 354). That is the sole reference to Lüttichau in all the *Communication*, and applies to a period at least a year earlier than the one at which we have now arrived; not the most distant hint is afforded of any later "Dresden experiences"; the fate of *Lohengrin* is passed in total silence. For our part, however, whether we attribute that silence to magnanimity or prudence, its veil must be lifted before we can satisfactorily account for so abrupt a change as that from the mood which engendered a "Siegfried" to that which suggested a "Jesus of Nazareth" as the apotheosis of "self-destruction."

The countermanding of the order for *Lohengrin* had been an absolutely staggering blow. How futile it must now appear, to think of setting music to *Siegfried's Tod* or any other drama. What future could possibly lie before the composer, if his latest work was thus denied access to the very theatre that claimed his services? How could he face his enemies, ay, his creditors, under the stigma of such a rebuff? After the substantial profit already brought by two out of his three earlier operas to the Dresden Court-theatre, there could be but one interpretation of the sudden refusal to mount a work so eminently adapted for its stage: it was a deliberate affront, a blow directed at his most vital spot. If it was by the *King's* orders, then all question of gratitude on Wagner's side must vanish into space; for this was *lèse majesté* of the most heinous type, an offence against the Right Divine of Art. Already a Weber had been snubbed to death by this same ungrateful House of Wettin, and now the whole career of the greatest creative artist of his age was to be arrested, perhaps cut off for ever, to satisfy a camarilla! Why had Lüttichau and his royal master not done the manly thing last summer, and terminated the conductor's engagement when he practically had placed his resignation in their hands? It was no charity, to keep him on and suffocate him inch by inch.—*These* were the "gnawing torments" to which Wagner refers, and which brought him wellnigh to the point of "self-destruction." What use was there in living, in a world where everything was so fenced round with double-dealing that no honest man could spy a path?

How bitterly he felt the degradation, we may judge from a letter he wrote to Liszt some week or two later, when the first

shock of the news was past: "I am living on, in a very humiliating position, and fairly without hope. I am dependent on the good pleasure of certain persons: every thought of joy-in-life I have let go. Nevertheless—to your comfort be it said—I still am living, and don't intend to be so easily crushed by anyone" (dated Jan. 14, 1849).

This is the mood, a "revolted mood," in which he approached the subject of "Jesus of Nazareth." To no better haven of consolation could he have taken refuge; for it necessitated a prolonged and searching study of the New Testament, the quieting effect whereof may be seen in the philosophic spirit that breathes from the whole of the letter just-cited. But what immediately concerns us now, is to trace the relation between this remarkable project and Wagner's inner field of thought, on the one hand, his outward surroundings on the other.

For one thing, it is surely significant that alike *Siegfried's Tod* and its later development as *Götterdämmerung* should have been directly followed by a religious drama. There must have been some connecting link in the author's mind. There certainly was. The same hollow and hypocritical conventionality that Wagner had sought to escape by flying back to Siegfried, a perfect type of the first Adam, the second Adam had most flamingly denounced on earth; and so we find his Parsifal hereafter uniting the characteristics of Siegfried the young with those of Jesus.

There was another association at *this* period, that with Friedrich Rothbart, Barbarossa, whose opposition to the Pope of Rome was based on the following idealistic claim, according to the *Wibelungen* essay: "In the German nation survives the oldest lawful race of kings in all the world: it issues from a son of God, called Siegfried by his nearest kinsmen, but Christ by the remaining nations of the earth; for the welfare of his race, and the peoples of the earth derived therefrom, he wrought a deed most glorious, and for that deed's sake suffered death. The nearest heirs of his great deed, and of the power won thereby, are the 'Nibelungen,' to whom the earth belongs, in name and for the happiness of every nation. The Germans are the oldest nation, their blue-blood king is a 'Nibelung,' and at their head he claims world-rulership. . . . The Pope accordingly is the Kaiser's most important officer; and the weightier his office, the more does it behove the Kaiser to keep strict watch that the Pope

exerts it in the meaning of the Kaiser, i.e. for the peace and healing of all nations upon earth" (*P.* VII. 289). But this imperious Friedrich had finally abandoned world-rulership, to go himself to save the Holy Sepulchre from desecration; he had forsaken the Hoard, in quest of the Grail, a quest in which he vanished from this life. Siegfried, also, after winning the Hoard, had left its world-power unemployed; through his death the Nibelungen were set free and the Gods redeemed. Jesus, in *Jesus of Nazareth*, "as scion of the oldest race, might claim supreme dominion of the world," but casts it from him to redeem mankind. The leading idea of all three subjects thus is proved to be the same, namely actual or potential possession of supreme authority over the world, discarded in contempt, and—if we substitute Brünnhilde for Siegfried—discarded together with life itself in the conscious aim of conferring an ideal blessing on the world.

Deferring for a moment the question of poetic form, we must next inquire under what aspect the central figure of this latest plan was to be treated? "I arrived at a conception of the wondrous apparition of this Jesus peculiarly advantageous to the artist, inasmuch as I severed the symbolic Christ from *him* who, figured in a given age and definite circumstances, presents so easily embraced an image to our heart and understanding" (*P.* I. 378). With the greatest reverence this "Jesus of Nazareth the man" is set before us without a single miraculous accessory; from the first he disclaims that power, and on the last night "Judas displays his vexation at Jesus' not having come forward with actual signs and proclaimed his plenary power: he is rebuked, but hopes that Jesus is simply deferring his manifestation of divinity for the hour of utmost peril" (*P.* VIII. 292). Here his whole divinity is to consist in the beauty of his character and example as man, the man of Love, the "*solitary* one" in the midst of a "loveless throng." His disciples "do not understand" him; Mary Magdalene alone has fathomed his true mission.—Siegfried had been the "innocent egoist," the man who lives but for joy-in-life; Brünnhild had led the poet to the man who "advances to complete repeal of egoism, in death, in self-annihilation" (*ibid.* 320).

Proceeding on these lines, the poet drafts a preliminary prose-sketch for a drama in five acts: an inspiration if ever there was

one. Though the whole sketch occupies barely twelve pages, the story of the Redeemer's life on earth was never told in words so exhaustive of its highest message, so luminous in their painting of its movement; each act is limned with such a certainty of stroke that we seem to have before us the account of an eye-witness. Nor is the art of composition, construction, balance, at all inferior to the general design; the contrasts of night and day and early dawn, of peace and tumult, stern energy and sorrowful depression, are planned with the highest skill of a master-hand, especially observable in the separation of the swiftly-moving third and fifth acts by a whole act devoted to the Last Supper and the Garden of Gethsemane; whilst the delicacy of a nicer taste is not assaulted, as at Ober-Ammergau, by actual vision of the crucifixion. The very scenery (acts iii and iv alone demand two 'sets') is indicated with a touch that shews how plainly visual was the conception. Take that for act i: "Tiberias in Galilee.—A broad roofed space—like a large shed—quite open to the country at the back: at one side it leads to the interior of the house of the publican Levi. Night." With his mind's eye the author had *seen* that; for the covered space outside the house serves no ostensible purpose in the action.* Then the secondary characters, Judas, Barabbas, Caiaphas, Pilate, Peter, the two Marys,—each stands lifelike from the canvas. Even the Roman soldiers are stamped at once upon the eye: "they discuss the hardships of their service; so small a force, against a constantly uproarious mob," and again, as they mock at Peter, "Let the coward be! So these are the heroes you'd rout us Romans with?"—there is the dramatist who can realise the smallest detail of a situation. Finally, we may note with what insight Wagner has seized on two of the tiniest indications in the Gospels to form the pivot on which revolves the earthly plot. In John xix, 8, we read, "When Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid," and in Luke xxiii, 19, of Barabbas, "Who for a certain sedition in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison." From these two parenthetic clauses Wagner has evolved the important factor of a rising

* Possibly it may suggest that the first idea was for the drama to be played in the open air, and this "roof" was to be a protection for the stage and actors; but Wagner cannot have heard of Ober-Ammergau itself at this period, as even in *Opera and Drama* (1850-1), when touching on the subject of "Passion-plays," he merely refers to the "Middle Ages."—W. A. E.

of the Jews under Barabbas, which has convulsed the whole country and caused Jesus himself to be regarded as "the most dangerous demagogue," whom Pilate sacrifices to the clamour of the Priests since his garrison is too weak in default of the procrastinating "Syrian legions."

Now, in what form did Wagner mean to carry out this vivid sketch? With *Friedrich Rothbart* he had inclined towards the spoken drama: was the balance dipping that way again? He himself has told us that with the abandonment of that historic subject he had come to the conclusion that the merely spoken form of play was unfitted for the "Drama of the Future"; yet the poem of his *Siegfried's Tod* was already completed, and still some hidden influence held him back from either setting *it* to music or composing another sheet of notes for several years to come. At this time of intense fermentation, both inner and outer, the decision cannot have been quite so simple and direct as it appeared to him in the later, calmer days of Zurich, when the main issue would tend to swallow all the side ones—chronologic accuracy with regard to details, that had already fallen into the background, being of less importance than a clear statement of the general result. In this regard it may be remembered that a few minor touches were added to *Rothbart* itself after completion of the *Siegfried's Tod*; so that we cannot say that its abandonment was absolutely final just yet, or that the idea of a spoken play was set aside for good and all. For my own part (W. A. E.) I can but see in the five-act form of *Jesus of Nazareth*—a form so long discarded by the author in his musical dramas—an affinity to the five-act sketch for a "merely spoken" *Rothbart*; and the likeness becomes still more pronounced when we discover that these two sketches, and these alone among his artistic works, are followed by a lengthy commentary, or exposition, of a more or less abstract nature. In its first conception, therefore, I feel bound to view the "poetic sketch" of *Jesus of Nazareth* as the scaffold for a spoken play, possibly to be relieved and enhanced by incidental music. But it remained a work entirely apart, an experiment that ended where it had begun; most beautiful in its classical simplicity of outline, and deeply interesting as a contribution to its author's inner history, yet without direct effect of any kind upon his *art*. As drama, it never passed beyond the phase of preliminary sketch, nor was it published until after

Wagner's death. It was a purely intimate idea, and the only stage on which it could ever be enacted was that of its author's brain: "I sought to vent my revolted feelings in the sketch of a drama, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Two overwhelming objections, however, withheld me from filling out the preliminary draft: the one arose from the contradictory nature of the subject-matter, in the guise in which it lies before us; the other from the recognised impossibility of bringing such a work to public hearing" (*P.* I. 380).

Yet the work was by no means abandoned at once. In the notebook containing the manuscript scenario we have also a mass of social, ethical and philosophic reflections, specifically referred to its several acts, and certainly *originating* in the intention to "fill out" its dialogue. These reflections and outlines of speeches cover more than twenty pages (reckoned in type), constituting Section II. In turn they are followed by a third section, of almost equal length, consisting of nothing (with one exception) but a collection of texts from the New Testament, written out in full, grouped under headings "For Act I" and so forth, and arranged under each several act-heading in the order they take in the Bible—"Mark" not appearing in any act until *all* the texts required from "Matthew" have been transcribed, and so on. Obviously, therefore, the project must have occupied Wagner's thought for a considerable time, and passed through various phases. Though, in the absence of any date on the MS., the dramatic sketch itself may correctly be assigned to Christmas 1848 or thereabouts, its exegesis, i.e. Sections II. and III., must have been pursued well into the Spring; possibly receiving its final touches so late as the early autumn of 1849, between the fair-copying of the *Wibelungen* essay and the commencement of *The Art-work of the Future*, when we read in a letter to Liszt (Oct. 14, 1849), "Subjects which I should have been willing to hand over to Paris (such as *Jesus of Nazareth*) prove impossible for the most manifold reasons, upon a closer consideration of the practical aspect." In fact the method of arrangement of the texts in Section III. points to at least this portion of the manuscript being a fair copy from some intermediate memorandum; whilst there are passages in Section II. as closely related to a portion of *The Art-work* (compare *P.* VIII. 316-7 with I. 199) as other passages are distinctly allied to an article on "Man and Society" published in February 1849 (compare *P.* VIII. 310-1

with 229 *ibid.*). It is thus apparent that, albeit the dramatic sketch was an isolated incident in Wagner's *art*, it was closely associated with a most important development in his conscious *thought*. With it began that deeper search into the basis of Society and its relations to the Individual, that exploration of the realm of ethics and metaphysics, which was to lead to the pregnant though discursive prose-works of the next three years, and through them to the erection of that stupendous fabric, the drama of the *Ring des Nibelungen*.

Here we have the key to Wagner's final reason for abandoning his *Jesus of Nazareth*: "The story must be put to too severe a strain, if I wished to make it bear my modern reading; its popular features must be tinged and altered with a deliberation more philosophic than artistic, in order to shift them from the wonted point of view to the light in which I had seen them. On the other hand, the only thing that could give this subject the interpretation I intended, was just our modern conditions; and that interpretation could only be of effect if it were set *precisely now* before the people, and not *hereafter*, when these same conditions should have been demolished by that very Revolution which should open out the only possibility of publicly producing such a drama" (*P. I.* 380). The sketch, so clear and simple in its contours when seen by the poet, was gradually becoming encrusted by the thinker with "interpretations," such as must inevitably kill it as a work of art; instead of a drama, it was developing into a Socialistic manifesto, a Revolutionary homily.

Of its possible application to events of the hour we can detect traces even in the original draft: for instance, Pilate's "skilful manipulation of party-discord," and his representing to Caiaphas "how tranquilly the Jews might live under Cæsar, in full possession of their Constitution"; the Priests, i.e. the aristocrats, congratulating themselves that the tribute to Cæsar, in other words taxation, weighs only on the common people, not on them; the distinction between Jesus, above all "party," and a vulgar "demagogue" like Barabbas; and the spirit in which the Roman soldiers express their contempt for the mob. Then in the very first note of Section II., a long paragraph devoted to the character and mission of Jesus, we read: "The people fell away from him—the aristocracy, he fain would abolish, persecuted him . . . the mob consistently reclaimed Barabbas—the man of its party."

As we proceed through this enigmatic Section II., however, we come to lengthy disquisitions on Oaths, Law, Sin and the rights of the Senses, Love, Marriage, Society, Property, Freedom, Egoism and Communism, Gratitude, Death for one's country—with the significant comment, "But Jesus further teaches us to break through the barriers of patriotism and find our amplest satisfaction in the weal of all the human race," Death being "the highest love-offering, the offering of our personal being itself in favour of the universal" (*P. VIII.* 316-7). Finally we have Section III., where certain texts are emphasised by underlining, of which we may draw attention to just these three: "Let none say of his goods that they are his, but let all be in common among you" (*Acts iv*); "So let your superfluity supply their want, that thereafter their abundance also may supply your want, and there may be equality" (*II. Cor. viii*); and "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?"—which Wagner explains in a most unusual manner: "No man can become richer in himself than he is, but in his brethren he can become more than a thousandfold of what he is" (*P. VIII.* 329).

This tendency, developing in Wagner's private meditations on the life and teachings of Jesus, was soon to form the basis of that much-misconstrued *Art-work of the Future*—an art-work to be alike the common expression and the common satisfaction of a "common need." But in the meantime it was leading him in a direction diametrically opposed to the creation of any work of art; and—be it said with all humility and reverence—the apodictic verbiage of Saints Paul and John had as much to do with the obfuscating of his literary style of the next year or two, as had Feuerbach's dialectics themselves. The *Jesus von Nazareth* thus became an impasse, from which he had to fight his way back with many a wound from right and left; yet the very effort it cost him was to strengthen all his mental powers.

Just as the question "Dramatist or Musician?" seemed thus to be acquiring an answer that must paralyse the art of either, an unexpected rescuer had leapt into being. At the very moment when the Dresden stage was shut, for years to come, to Wagner's operas, the little theatre of Weimar took the field, eventually to save him to his twofold art; whilst the "sad and solitary position as artist-man," which had drawn him to the lonely Man of

Sorrows, was changed as by magic through discovery that in Liszt he had won alike a friend and an apostle. With the account of this almost miraculous intervention we may close a chapter that has slowly been settling into the deepest gloom.

When Wagner paid his brief visit to Weimar last August, Liszt had heard no more than his *Rienzi*, though he had been presented some time before with the *Tannhäuser* score. The idea of turning Weimar at once into a temple of the Wagnerian muse can scarcely have suggested itself to either of the two friends, for Liszt had first to make his footing firm, alike in Court and orchestra; but Wagner promised Princess Wittgenstein—who appears to have had some passport affairs to attend to in the Saxon capital—a *Tannhäuser* performance at Dresden on Sept. 10 or 11. On the 6th of that month he sends word to her through Liszt that, owing to an indisposition of Tichatschek's and the star-engagement of another tenor, Formes, he cannot keep his word for a week or so. On the 19th he definitely announces the performance for the 24th, and invites both Liszt and the princess to come over for it. Liszt's Weimar duties prevented his accepting, but the princess seems to have embraced the opportunity; to judge by her letter to Wagner of Feb. '49, in which she gives effect to a "long-cherished wish to thank him for his kind attentions during her visit." Whether in consequence of her eloquent reports, or of his own initiative, on November 12 Liszt conducts the *Tannhäuser* overture at Weimar; the *only* performance outside Dresden since Mendelssohn's mangling of that tone-poem at Leipzig. No letter alluding to this first public act of Liszt's in Wagner's cause has been preserved in their *Correspondence*, but it may be presumed that the work aroused considerable interest in the Weimar court-circle; for the next we hear, on good authority,* is that the

* Lina Ramann, in her *Life of Liszt*, endeavours to fill the gap with a recollection of Princess Wittgenstein's, how she had had a long tussle with Liszt before she could induce him to accept the opera, Liszt hanging back "out of consideration for Meyerbeer and Berlioz, whose friendship would be lost him through *Tannhäuser*." But this is so unlike Liszt's character, that we can attach as little credence to it as to its theatrical sequel, of "Liszt retiring to his little oratory, and returning deadly pale after the sacred cause of Art had conquered"; especially as the same dispute between Liszt and the princess is alleged to have arisen over *Lohengrin*! The dear princess's reminiscences must be taken with that grain of salt so necessary as a corrective to her too ebullient epistles and other writings.

opera itself is chosen for the birthday of the Grand Duchess Maria Paulowna, February 16: it being the custom to grace that occasion with some new production—last time it was *Martha!*

Early in January 1849 the Weimar Intendant, von Zigesar, writes to Wagner for permission to produce *Tannhäuser* (a letter apparently not preserved), and sends his stage-manager Eduard Genast to Dresden, to settle details. For one, the author's honorarium: Wagner waives it. For another, the solo, band, and chorus, parts: Lüttichau is only too delighted to lend the Dresden theatre's own copies—he had no further use for them, we know. "Laden with notes worth their weight in gold," as the envoy punningly puts it, Genast returns to Weimar, followed by a letter from Wagner to Liszt. How much of a surprise to its writer was the whole transaction, we may gather from the opening words: "My hearty thanks for the good impression you retain of me. For a long time I had been meaning to send you a line, but somehow it never came to the scratch. May it not be too late to-day!—So, in this evil time you propose to go through the drudgery of getting up my *Tannhäuser*?" This is the letter of Jan. 14, 1849, from which we have already quoted a passage alluding to Wagner's present "humiliation" at Dresden; so that we need not wonder at its not exactly brimming over with joy. When a man has been driven to the verge of despair, he is bound to be sceptical of the first token of securer ground; but "If any circumstance could afford me a hope of success, it is that *you* have undertaken the task. With you a thing will succeed a little, I'm convinced.—I'm very pleased that you have fixed yourself at Weimar for the present, and hope that it will be for the thorough good not only of Weimar, but also of yourself: it will keep us somewhat near each other, too." How it all sounds like the voice of a drowning man. Can he believe that this last straw will save him? Weimar—hm! little Weimar; but Liszt can't possibly intend to coop himself up there for good. In this sea of troubles what shall the small success avail him, except as a mark of human sympathy?—Bide a wee, poor disconsolate man!

A fortnight later there comes to Dresden a certain Herr Halbert, probably a member of the Weimar company, conveying Liszt's desire to borrow the *Faust* overture. In a letter announcing its

despatch,* Wagner remarks, "You will now have to go through Kapellmeister-sufferings of the most approved description,—that I can well imagine, and my opera is just the thing for it, to anyone who gives it his affection. Learn the taste of those sufferings! They are my daily bread." On the 8th of February he writes Zigesar a letter equally tending to prove how little the Weimar project was of *his* seeking: "I admit that I should not have considered the present a time to find sympathy for my works; and less on account of the instant commotion in the world, than of all higher earnestness having long departed from the public's interest in the Theatre, making place for the most superficial quest of entertainment." For this lack he charges Managers in general, "for as one brings up a child, so will it grow; and theatre-goers are certainly not less subject to the influence of bringing-up." A little farther on we observe that *Tannhäuser* has become almost a thing of the past, to him, "a work that perhaps may be exposed to the public's disfavour for quite other reasons, residing in its own defects." Listlessness and resignation form the prevailing note of all this anticipatory correspondence.

But at Weimar they were not to be disheartened. Rehearsals had begun in earnest immediately after Genast's return with the parts; the thousand and one difficulties, inevitable at a minor theatre, were being patiently surmounted by the loyalty of Liszt and his colleagues. Nevertheless, six days before the festal anniversary the tenor cast for the principal rôle, the "invalided Götze," declared his physical inability to fulfil his exacting task. The ship seemed foundering in sight of land. Liszt and his handful of devoted enthusiasts, already won in course of preparation of the work, were in the most painful predicament. There was only one way out: at all costs Tichatschek must be procured. So Genast posted off again to Dresden, to coax the famous tenor. Tichatschek himself was only too willing, but would his Intendant grant the necessary eight-days leave? Wagner could do nothing in the matter, his relations with his chief being by this time strained to within an inch of

* In the *Wagner-Liszt Correspondence* this letter is dated "Dresden, 30. Jan. 48"; but the year is manifestly either printed incorrectly or written so, since Liszt thanks Wagner for receipt of the *Faust* overture "February 9, 1849."—W. A. E.

the breaking point. Genast therefore had nothing to rely on but his own persuasive powers and the courtier's ingrained averseness to disoblige a friendly prince. After magnifying the inconvenience to which the temporary loss would put the Dresden theatre, Lüttichau granted the coveted permission, and Genast tore off to Tichatschek's rooms with the exulting cry "I've got you!"

February 16, 1849, accordingly became a date never to be forgotten in the annals alike of Weimar and Wagnerian art. On a smaller scale, but even more important in its after-effects, it was a repetition of *Rienzi's* first production at Dresden. From Liszt to the humblest scene-shifter, everybody concerned was filled with a zeal that made success a foregone conclusion; and once more Tichatschek stands out a tower of strength. Referring to this first Weimar performance and its repetition on the 18th, Liszt writes to Wagner on the 26th: "My very best regards to Tichatschek; he was admirable as artist, and full of heart as friend and comrade." Nor was the audience behind-hand: breaking through the etiquette imposing silence in presence of the Court, over and over again it made the walls ring with applause.

It was the first step *Tannhäuser* had taken beyond the Dresden circuit, and Liszt was not the man to let it stay the last. Not only did he arrange for Tichatschek to return in May and give the composer himself the opportunity of witnessing the local triumph of his work; but, scarcely had the echoes of its last chorus died away, than he set to work, with von Biedenfeld's co-operation, and sent a glowing account of the opera to the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*; proving how determined he was that the light of his friend should no longer lie under a bushel.

The effect on Wagner, when Tichatschek returned with news of the event, may best be judged by comparing his letter of Feb. 20 with those preceding it. The "verehrtester Freund" is replaced at once by "Lieber Freund Liszt," despair is turned to exultation, and all the gratitude of a rebounding heart finds vent: "No theatre in the world had condescended to my four-year-old *Tannhäuser*. It needed *you*, to come from the ends of the world and settle down at a tiny court-theatre, immediately to set to work and help your sore-tried friend to move at last a little farther. You neither talked nor treated much, but went straight

to the unwonted task, and led your people through my work. . . . Its success alone was your object: and there lies the strength of your character and ability,—with you it *has* succeeded. If I have judged your splendid deed aright, I hope you will also understand me if for the moment I simply cry to you ‘I *thank* you, dear friend!’ But you did not merely wish to help my work; you wished to help myself as well. You knew my present situation, that I am little more than a lonely and forsaken man, confined to his own resources; you wished to gain me *friends*. . . . Dear friend, you have raised me up as if by magic. . . . What I have said is from the bottom of my heart, and tears are in my eyes.” The contrast with his Dresden plight was too affecting, as we shall discover next chapter, and well might tears of gratitude stream down his cheeks.—Nor are the minor agents in this miracle forgotten. A week later Wagner writes again to Liszt: “I still must beg you to convey to all the company, whose successful zeal has so very much indebted me, my greatest and sincerest recognition. How many, and for how much, have I not to thank! So I’m looking forward gleefully to *May*, when I shall certainly come to you: then from my fullest heart will I bring forth aloud what breath will let me. In *May* then!”

In *May* he came, but on no “leave of absence.”

THE REVOLUTIONARY.

Strange company and Theatre-reform.—Eduard Devrient ; newspaper polemics.—Advice to the orchestra, and its consequences ; Lüttichau surpasses himself.—Articles for the “Volksblätter.”—Intercourse with Michael Bakunin.—Last concert at Dresden : Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.—Expected “revolution.”

Wagner never either sympathised, or imagined himself in sympathy, with what we mean since 1848 by the “democratic” or “republican” party. Yet in the political endeavours of the year 1848 there was at any-rate an undertone, perceived by hardly any of those democrats and republicans, that was bound to fascinate a man in earnest for the progress of humanity. . . . In truth there is only one appellation for Wagner, that of “revolutionary.” Revolutionary, i.e. destroyer of the old, and upbuilder of the new, is he through and through—nothing else.”

THEODOR UHLIG (Neue Zeitschrift, July 26, 1852).

“A REVOLUTIONARY because of the Theatre.”—When Genast made his first *Tannhäuser* visit to Dresden in January 1849, he had to suffer a shock to his nerves : “After Wagner had acquainted me with his wishes in respect of tempo and scenery, and our business was settled to mutual satisfaction, I invited him to accompany me to Hempel’s in the Brüdergasse,” evidently for a friendly glass of wine. “He took me to another house, previously unknown to me, in the same street. No sooner had I entered, than felt-hats (*Heckerhüten*) told me into what manner of company I had fallen. From the speeches of these bearded gentry I could only conclude that Constitutional Monarchy to them was a thing of the past, and a Republic the sun at which they meant to warm themselves in future. For all the uncomfortable sensation it gave me, I could but laugh in my sleeve when one began to talk of ‘feeding princes’ ; for I knew the individual, and that he drew the greater portion of his income

from the Royal purse. I had a good mind to serve him out, but reflected in what place, and what society I was, and held my peace. The incident made it clear to me, however, that the worst was to be expected. Not till I got back to the pavement, did I feel at all at ease."

A queer entertainment to offer a stranger. What can have been the meaning of it? An answer is not far to seek.

Since June of last year, down to the date of this story—which may be accepted as substantially correct, though incomplete—there is not a particle of evidence that Wagner had been mixing in political company of any kind; these tub-thumpers were as uncongenial to him as to Genast. Since June, also, his scheme for reorganising the Dresden theatre on a national basis had been in abeyance; the time was neither ripe nor opportune. But now that the Direction of the Court-theatre had broken *its* side of the tacit understanding, by thwarting him in every way as man and artist, freedom of action had morally returned to him. Compromise and temporising with the theatric powers that be, had proved quite futile; an energetic course must be adopted. There were rumours that Lüttichau was about to retire from the Intendancy, on completion of his twenty-fifth year of office (1824-49); whether these rumours were true or false—events proved them false—at the beginning of 1849 the new Saxon Landtag assembled, with an overwhelming Left, and at any moment the Civil List might come up for discussion. No time, therefore, was to be lost, if the theatre-subvention was to be rescued and turned into a real advantage to the State. Wagner expected "ill-feeling to be displayed by a considerable number of the Deputies" toward any state-endowment of the theatre (see letter to Uhlig of Sept. 1850): what more natural, then, than that he should himself attend a meeting of some democratic club or other, in all probability a branch of the Vaterlandsverein, and feel the pulse of these Deputies? Especially as his friend Roeckel had just been returned to parliament in the Radical interest,* and might help him to win support against the time

* Roeckel tells us that, in order to qualify for a seat, he had been obliged to purchase a small property in Dresden, "a tiny house which he never had occasion to see."—As to the probable motive in taking Genast to this democratic meeting, it is instructive to refer to Wagner's letter to the Weimar Intendant, von Zigesar, of Feb. 8.

when the question should be raised in the House. If it was not on an errand of this kind, we fail to see what motive Wagner could possibly have had in taking the highly correct Stage-manager of another Court-theatre to an entertainment so little to his taste.

Dates fully bear out this hypothesis. Though that Theatre-reorganisation plan of his had been slumbering since last June, early in January 1849 we have two or three articles from Wagner's pen* in support of a cognate scheme by a "colleague" at the Dresden theatre, Ed. Devrient. To that gentleman we must first devote a word or two, as he will come into Wagner's life again at a later period.

Second in seniority of three actor brothers—nephews of that greatest of German histrions, Ludwig Devrient—Philipp Eduard Devrient (born 1801) had been originally trained for commerce, but forsook it for the stage. First appearing as a barytone singer, he next became a character-actor; a calling in which he displayed "great study and intelligence, but little fire or inspiration," according to Brockhaus' *Conversations-Lexicon*. After many years spent on the Berlin boards as actor and regisseur, he accepted the Chief Stage-managership of the Dresden Court-theatre in 1844, but laid it down in 1846, as we have already seen, owing to friction with his younger brother Emil, an actor of far higher gifts, but an intriguing disposition. Nevertheless he retained a seat on the General-Direction, and continued to appear in higher comedy. Author of several short-lived dramas, he is best known out of Germany as the librettist of Marschner's perennial *Hans Heiling*, a text once offered to friend Mendelssohn. A general estimate of his ability is afforded us by R. Prölss in his *Gesch. des Dresd. Hoftheaters* (pp. 505-6): "Even in his best efforts so much premeditation was always visible, as to chill and disturb one's enjoyment. With so keenly observant a mind, this could not stay hid from himself. But he squared the account by maintaining that natural genius—which he confounded with its eccentricities—was the root of all evil in the development of the art of acting; the true prospering of which he made dependent on the

* Save for the "Vaterlandsverein" document of June 1848, he had not written to the papers for over two years; in fact, his Dresden period is very sparsely represented in *this* field of activity.

conscientious diligence of middling talent." And Prölss cannot, in this case, have been very far out; for Wagner writes to Uhlig in 1852 (Letter 63): "How can a man who is all method, understand my natural anarchy? . . . He's completely wanting in naïvety; he has not a drop of artist's blood in his body. Ought one to call him an artist? He proves how far a clearly-calculating compiler can go without a spark of productivity. The new, the spontaneous, must ever stay foreign to him: he has no heart for it—i.e. his heart reaches just as far as the theatre-school,* and no farther. . . . He is hide-bound, bourgeois, cowardly; or, to sum up, deplorably weak.—My intercourse with him—now I remember—was one long martyrdom." Yet the man was a respectable *historian* of his art, for his *Geschichte der deutschen Schauspielkunst* (5 vols. Leipzig 1848-74) soon came to rank as a standard work, and Wagner himself repeatedly mentions it with approval, not only now, but in after years.

The third volume of this history of Devrient's appeared towards the end of 1848, and it is thus that he concerns us; for Wagner sent the Augsburg *Allgemeine Zeitung* (the German *Times*) a laudatory review on January 8, 1849. Beginning with a passage regarding the Vienna theatre already quoted (p. 254), Wagner presently transports us to the period of the Germanic Address: "It is to be hoped that so soon as the free State shall have shaken down a little, it will recognise a duty toward itself in assuring to itself the uncommon efficacy of the Theatre for attaining the noblest and freest object, the object of the State itself. . . . If we are not mistaken, the present is the very moment for drawing the State's attention to its task"; and winds up with an appeal "to the State, to recognise its highest interest in the Theatre, and provide that it shall freely and beneficially exercise its high vocation as an honoured member of our civic institutions" (*P.* VIII. 218-21).—Although not published at the time, through no fault of Wagner's,† this article is thus of documentary importance; for it dates to a nicety his renewed concern with "public life," and moreover supplies us with its immediate motive.

* Devrient had published a pamphlet "Ueber Theaterschule" in 1840.

† The MS. alike of the article, and of a covering letter signed "Richard Wagner, Kgl. Kapellmeister," remained for years in the possession of a member of the *Allg. Ztg's* staff. Both autographs are now at the Wagner Museum, Eisenach. The article itself was first printed by Ludwig Nohl in 1877.

But Devrient had also been lately commissioned by the Prussian Ministry to prepare a scheme of reform for the *Berlin* Court-theatre, with which he had previously been many years connected, and of which Wagner observes in the article just-cited that, "as a result of 'March,' its Intendant was moved by cat-calls to give good classic pieces." This minor treatise of Devrient's is entitled "Das Nationaltheater des neuen Deutschlands: eine Reformschrift von Eduard Devrient," and was published by J. J. Weber, printed by Otto Wigand, at Leipzig, about the beginning of 1849—both printer and publisher then belonging to the "party of progress." In this instance there cannot be a shadow of doubt that Wagner lent its author notions from his own reform-scheme (drafted last May), for that letter to Uhlig says "In D. there is not a trace of the revolutionist"; in fact the "long martyrdom of intercourse with a man whose heart can reach no farther than the theatre-school" is only to be explained by his presumable efforts to screw up Devrient's courage to the sticking-point. Look at that title again: "National Theatre of the New Germany," and say if it really emanated from the timorous brain of a Devrient: the only wonder is, that he should have been prevailed on to accept it. Then take the following passage; if Wagner did not dictate it, it was the Devil: "The conditions of hitherto have no duration any longer. The German People, at its head its Princes, must make up its mind what it wants from its play-houses. If they are to provide it with nothing more than a place of entertainment, a resort for killing time, for rendezvous and the display of toilets—item, a satisfaction of the lust of the eye, or of the need of being moved to tears or laughter,—why the enormous sums diverted from the country's means to such frivolous establishments? In that case, let those pay for their pleasure, who enjoy it; withdraw all subvention, farm out the theatre, and set the mischief to shift for itself on the path of industrial speculation." If Devrient wrote those words without dictation, he must have been hypnotised by Wagner; for the whole style, to say nothing of the thought, is characteristic Wagnerian of 1848-9.

When we come to the details of the plan, we find them borrowed as plainly as can be from Wagner's own proposals to Oberländer, though the Play is necessarily here the main consideration. Here, as there, we have—raising of the existing *Court* theatre to the rank of a *National* Theatre, under supervision by the Minister of

Cultus, with affiliation of every playhouse in the land ; a republican constitution, under the administration of an *elected* management consisting of an actor, a kapellmeister, and a playwright ; declaration that the Theatre is a *State*-department, therefore to be independent of monetary profit. The only part that can be positively assigned to Devrient's initiative, is the proposal for a "theatre-school" ; and to that extent Wagner, in turn, may have been indebted to *him*. But when it comes to the question of an Intendant, we have Wagner in full sail again, the true ship borne on the Devrient waves : "If one considers the multifarious special knowledge, ability and experience, required in the conducting of a theatre, it is easy to understand that they are not likely to be found in men who have qualified as lords-in-waiting, court-marshals, masters of the horse or hounds, army-officers," and so on.

This brochure, also, was championed by Wagner in a letter to the press—inserted in that "detestable rubric" which only needed palm-oil, whether the cause was good or bad. Devrient's reform-plan had been attacked in a Berlin journal, and the anonymous attack reprinted in the Dresden *Anzeiger* ; whereupon, just after writing his review of the History, Wagner re-enters the lists with an article entitled "Theatre-reform," which duly appeared in the *Anzeiger* of Jan. 16. Considering that this "Theatre-reform" article must have been written on the evening of the same day as that doleful letter to Liszt, it bears striking testimony to Wagner's innate power of recovery ; for it is full of sting and pithy humour. Take the following, for instance : "As we could not possibly think of putting the Ballet-master or Machinist at the head of affairs, we should have to turn our gaze towards the teeming host of 'connoisseurs.' Under this resplendent name is gathered almost everything that has received its breath from God ; as to the worth of its 'knowledge' you may go ask poets, painters, musicians and so forth, what their daily experience has been. But have we ever seen an art-struck Major of Hussars appointed to the control of an Academy of Painting ? No,—and our 'stage-friend' ["Scenophilus" was the attacker's pseudonym] seems to go the length of admitting that the orchestra should be conducted by a musician, not a lawyer. Merely a company of actors is to be directed by a learned lord-in-waiting, a skilful banker, or perhaps a clever journalist ?—As a fact, it is people of this sort, who

have hitherto been entrusted with the control of theatres" (*P.* VIII. 223).

It is quite invigorating to catch a glimpse of the lighter vein, in these days of storm and stress; one feels certain that a man who can plant his riposte so neatly as that, "will not be crushed so easily by anyone." But the more serious side is not neglected: "Through your finicking rules and regulations, ye precious 'practicals,' ye have brought things to such a pass that stage-companies now scarcely know that they are banded for a *common* end of art, that one thing alone can lead them to their goal, the *feeling of community*. Ye have hounded one against the other, rained favours on the incompetent who flattered you [e.g. that Ritter-cross for Reissiger], rejected the zealous who contravened your 'practice.' Thus have ye undermined all fellowship. Sullen, careful only for his personal good and others' harm, the unit has severed himself from the whole, forgotten that he can serve the higher ends of his art in naught but combination with his comrades. And thus was bound to arise, at last, the state of things that makes you smile contemptuously at the 'unpracticalness' of proposals which simply aim at re-establishing that spirit of community yourselves have shattered" (*ibid.* 224). Here we have a foretaste of that "communism" which forms the basis of *The Art-work of the Future*. Of more direct consequence is the proof it affords of the connection already existing in Wagner's mind between "Art" and "Revolution": with the recrudescence of his own scheme for Theatre-reform, and his active advocacy of Eduard Devrient's, he was simply striving to contribute his quota to that work of "building up the new" which he felt to be of such immediate moment.—Seeing that both these articles were written in the first half of January 1849, there is nothing any longer to surprise us in the fact that Wagner went to a meeting of a democratic club when Genast came to Dresden.

The article in the *Anzeiger* of Jan. 16 was followed next day by a feeble reply, to which Wagner made instant rejoinder* (*Anzeiger*, Jan. 18) of about equal length with his original article, on both occasions using an eccentric pseudonym: "J. P.—F. R., actor out of employment." A key to the enigma is

* Neither the reply nor Wagner's rejoinder has been reprinted, so that we are unable to give any further particulars about them.

furnished by young Kietz, who thus records the whole event: "At seven o'clock one bitter winter-morning Wagner entered my ice-cold garret, to my no small astonishment, just as I was getting my breakfast ready. On my table lay the Goatherd's song from *Tannhäuser*, of which I was just about to make a copy; on the wall I had chalked a theme from Gluck's *Iphigenia*, to stamp it on my memory, much to Wagner's amusement—the *Tannhäuser* notes I thrust out of sight as soon as he entered, for fear of being laughed at. Telling me that the object of his visit was to ask a favour, he gave me his article on 'Theatre-reform' to read, and begged me to take it in his stead to the office of the *Dresdener Anzeiger*, as he wished his authorship to stay unknown: should the gentlemen inquire who had written it, I was to give *my* name. So we set off to the Old Market. On our road he gave me ten thalers to pay for the insertion, and assured me I need be under no anxiety; he would undertake that I should get into no trouble over the manuscript: as guarantee he might further tell me that Eduard Devrient was entirely of one mind with him, and would join him in seeing the matter through. Wagner waited outside; I went upstairs and handed in the manuscript, which was glanced through and accepted without the smallest fuss: so I laid the requisite ten thalers on the table, thinking to myself, 'What a waste of good money; how long it would keep *me!*' The article made a huge sensation, and raised a vast amount of dust in Dresden. Two days later, when I appeared at the office with the *second* article, they asked me who the author really was. I gave my own name, which of course was received with great incredulity; whereupon I also left them my address. Wagner had signed the article with the initials J. P. F. R., and jokingly told me they stood for 'Jean Paul Friedrich Richter.'"

A man must be in earnest about his opinions, when he pays hard and hard-earned cash to get them published. So much weight, in fact, did Wagner attach to the affair, that he tried to get the former of this last pair of articles reprinted in some important *Berlin* newspaper, as it was from Berlin that the first attack had come. On the selfsame day as his early morning call on Kietz he sent a copy, or printer's proof of his article to Carl Gaillard for this purpose, with a few explanatory lines and a personal inquiry: "Tell me now, on *which* side do you stand? To all presumption, we are going the same way; or the oddest

changes must have come over our previous views. Are you for 'passivity' or 'activity'? I scarcely can doubt but that I shall find you in step"—the very last message to the Berlin friend before his premature decease.

Kietz has told us that this *Anzeiger* business "raised a deal of dust in Dresden," and we may take it for granted that Wagner's veil of anonymity was quickly penetrated; for he alone, not Devrient, had to suffer. At anyrate the jackals of the Press soon scented out his own Reorganising project, and Dresden egged on Leipzig to protest against it. "Leipzig is mentioned," says a Dresden purveyor to the *Signale*, "and more particularly its Conservatoire of Music; which would have to be *removed* from Leipzig to Dresden, to become anything decent. As its Director, presumably Herr Wagner would then imbue his pupils with that clearness and solidity of composition so conspicuous in his works. Let the gentlemen in Leipzig keep a sharp lookout." Vigilance on the part of the Leipzig gentlemen, however, was quite unnecessary; for Oberländer, doubtless with the best intentions, by now had thought needful to send Wagner's draft on a circular tour round the Court. Long afterwards, when the author regained possession of his manuscript, certain marginal notes revealed to him "that it had been received with scorn in those circles to which the Minister had thought it his duty to communicate it. I thus discovered that the fear of detriment to the Theatre from the side of the Deputies, which had moved me to make my proposals, had been considered altogether groundless in those circles, as one already knew better how to deal with such attacks" (*P.* VII. 322). It must have been about the second week in February that Lüttichau was shewn the mirth-provoking document, with the result that he treated its author to another "humiliation" of the most abominable nature—so large a part did this hapless Reform scheme play in Wagner's destinies.

By way of prelude:—The Kapelle had lately formed itself into a club, without any political programme, but merely to guard its own interests. This "Kapellverein" assembled regularly every Friday evening at an inn rejoicing in the name of "The Lamb." As one of the two rulers of the orchestra, Wagner naturally was not a member, but equally naturally he would honour the club with his presence from time to time, in response to repeated in-

vitations. Early in February he appears to have been summoned to a conference with Lüttichau, to answer certain calumnies directed against him from various quarters, and in particular by his colleague Reissiger ; consequently he was anxious to disabuse the minds of his subordinates also. There could be no better opportunity than one of the meetings of this club ; he therefore got it assembled for once on a Monday afternoon, February 12. After clearing himself of the said accusations (particulars are quite immaterial) without any personal allusion to the authorities of the theatre, he let his audience into the secret of his plan for reorganising the whole institution—also a very natural proceeding, as the bandsmen's interests were largely involved in it. Further, there having been a deal of grumbling of late about the excessive demands for entr'acte music, caused chiefly by Gutzkow's requirements, Wagner consoled the members of the orchestra with hopes of better times, when they would be freed from this unnecessary hardship, and counselled them to submit to it meanwhile in patience.

Now, that there were traitors in the orchestral camp, we know ; very few ; but one suffices. The whole affair, with the usual embellishments, was reported to Lüttichau within twenty-four hours. Already fuming at the Reorganisation project, he seized on this pretext to summon Wagner to another conference in the bureau of the theatre on February 14—an ugly valentine—with Secretary Hofrath Winkler as recorder. The latter's protocol has been reproduced by Robert Prölss, and shews to what a pitch official insolence and despotism could mount in Dresden ; a pendant worthy of Lüttichau's letter of a year ago to the King. The conference began at 12 and lasted till 2.30 ! It was nothing more or less than a furious tirade on Lüttichau's part, interlarded with baseless charges all tending in one direction : namely, to drive Wagner to throw up his engagement in disgust, and thus relieve the management of an irksome appointment-for-life. To read this beautiful protocol, one would imagine that Lüttichau was dealing with a scene-shifter ; not a word is there in it of recognition of the splendid service rendered by the Kapellmeister, or the solid benefit the composer had conferred on the Court-theatre with two of his operas at least. As said, the colourable pretext was that meeting at The Lamb : the Intendant professes to be outraged by its having been called and held "without his know-

ledge or permission."—Mind you, these are a Hofrath's official minutes; otherwise one might have thought them a ridiculous caricature, especially at a time when everybody in Saxony was allowed to hold meetings of the most "dangerous" nature, both public and private, on every conceivable subject.—Wagner very properly replies that there was nothing out of the way in the Kapellverein holding a meeting for once on a Monday, instead of its usual Friday, and that he had been "impatient to contradict aspersions cast upon him by his colleague Reissiger." He is next accused of having told the assembled bandsmen "the direct opposite of what had been arranged by the General-Direction at the last conference"—here Prölss leaves his hero Lüttichau in the lurch, with a damaging "?".* Then the Intendant has the effrontery to tell the Kapellmeister to his face that "in all the time he has been here, he has been of no manner of use; as he himself must admit, since it would be impossible for him to name a single instance to the contrary." And thus we are brought to the real pinch of the shoe: "If he had meant to be of any use, as was his duty, why had he handed to Minister Oberländer last summer a plan of theatre-reforms, without first submitting it to the General-Direction, as he certainly ought to have? He can scarcely mean to say that his proposals had not always been accepted." But that was just it, as Lüttichau's guilty conscience whispered him; even the minor scheme for reorganising the orchestra, foreshadowed so long ago as Wagner's letter of January 1843, had been pigeon-holed for months in 1846, and at last rejected undiscussed.—Then the Intendant complains of "slovenly performances of operas and church-music, which he had already found fault with on sundry occasions,† and had several times been observed with displeasure even in the highest quarter" (?). His next shot is that, beyond the engagement of his own niece Johanna, Wagner had not made the smallest

* In his meagre reference to that earlier conference, held "on the Saturday" (Feb. 10-?), Prölss says it was arranged that the bandsmen should settle among themselves *who* were to be the two dozen detailed for entr'acte service: with this arrangement Wagner's advice to them did certainly *not* conflict.

† Prölss himself adds a footnote to the effect that he has "found but *one* complaint of the kind in all the archives of the theatre," and sums up the whole catalogue of charges with the remark, "That Lüttichau went too far in these accusations, is beyond all doubt. They are at variance even with his own Report of February 8, 1848."

serviceable proposal of singers, operas or the like, during all his term of office ; so that the object of his appointment, and the motive advanced in his written declaration of Jan. 5, 1843, had not been fulfilled." Lüttichau's reference to Wagner's letter of stipulation (see i. 357) is ominous ; but of that more anon. Let us first hear what the accused has to say in self-defence.

We can scarcely believe that he remained still as a mouse during this storm of invective ; yet the sober record by the Secretary gives no hint of any loss of temper on Wagner's side. In a manner all the more disconcerting for its dignity, he replies that "for his part he is little satisfied with the Direction's policy of hitherto, for in his opinion its aim should be to give none but classical music [surely a mis-hearing of the worthy protocolist's], and operas such as *Martha* [just then the rage] ought not to be admitted to the repertory at all." Further, he animadverts on the anomalous situation created by the selection of the operatic programme being entrusted to the new stage-manager, a certain Schmidt—a fact sufficient in itself to make us cordially endorse his strictures on the conduct of affairs. As to the objection to his conducting, "he can only regard it as a personality, since nobody is in a position to dispute his adequate knowledge of music."

Finally we come to the resurrection of a clause in that letter of 1843 : namely, "It would be impossible to me to insist on a further fulfilment of the contract, should I myself become aware, or should your Excellency find yourself forced to the conclusion, that I am not in a position to justify so great a confidence." This resurrection was the card with which Lüttichau, who had obviously been looking up documents with a fixed end in view, now artfully hoped to trump the appointment-for-life. Wagner points out that the intention of the clause was only to apply to the first year, in place of its being publicly declared a trial-year, as customary at Dresden ; and anyone who reads the context will bear him out. Lüttichau is not so easily to be reasoned out of his dirty trump : "It is not so expressed in the letter, and the word of an honest man should hold good for all time" ; yet he evidently is not quite sure of his ground, for he proceeds to scold Wagner again about his financial entanglements, "which alone are enough to imperil his whole position." Wagner replies that they have recently been brought into order (by a private arrangement), but "he feels himself that he is not

sued to his servitorship, and would gladly retire if he were not restrained by care for his wife and household affairs." The interview is terminated by Lüttichau seizing on the hint, agreeing that Wagner is unsuited to his post, and reserving to himself the right so to inform his Majesty at his own convenience.

A most disgraceful scene, on Lüttichau's side of it, without a single redeeming feature. And it all stands on record in the Dresden Court-theatre's archives. What the poor old Hofrath protocolist could tone down to nothing more seemly than this, must indeed have been enough to make the veriest lackey blush. The poet-composer of *Tannhäuser*, just after being refused a hearing of his *Lohengrin*, is twitted with having "never been of any use" to the mephitic Dresden theatre; the greatest conductor of his age, in fact the father of Modern Conducting, is taxed by a von Lüttichau with not knowing his business! The whole thing was a transparent pretext, a vamped-up case. Unable to find the smallest breach of contract in the Kapellmeister's conduct, Lüttichau had determined to rid himself of this life-engagement by wearing out Wagner's patience as speedily as might be. But he was playing a more difficult trout than he had been accustomed to. Wagner simply stayed on.

It is not often that we get two signed accounts of a dispute, from opposite points of view, so completely harmonising as this protocol and the letter Wagner wrote to Liszt just six days later. Having given the view from without, we therefore will pass to the view from within. A portion of that letter of February 20 has already been quoted, its main substance dealing with Liszt's production of *Tannhäuser* at Weimar on the 16th and 18th. To no one can the contrast have been more striking, than to the writer, for he continues: "Dear friend, at this moment of all others you have raised me as by magic. For—and I don't tell it you as a mere grievance, but to convince you of the strength of that impression—in the very week in which you were producing my *Tannhäuser* at Weimar, I had to suffer such shameful insults from my Intendant that for several days I had a battle with myself as to whether I should bear it any longer; whether for sake of the slice of bread my servitorship gives me here to eat, I should go on exposing myself to the most infamous treatment, and not rather bid farewell to art and earn my bread as a mechanic, at least to be removed from the

despotism of the wickedest stupidity. Thank God, the news from Weimar, with Tichatschek's messages and reports, have set me on my feet again. Once more I have courage to support it! *For that also I thank you.*" Let those who are so fond of prating of the boundless benefits conferred on Wagner by the Saxon Court and its precious theatre, reflect an instant on these two concurrent evidences of the basest meanness in high quarters and the noblest courage on the "servant's" part.

Just one touch more, before we wash our hands of high and mighty Herr von Lüttichau for the present.—Not even to the Weimar production of his *Tannhäuser* could Wagner go, for "In the past week it was quite impossible to me to ask my torturer for any kind of favour, such as a trifling leave. Otherwise I would gladly have come, if only to pass a couple of inspiring hours with you, and to convince you of my joy in you."

There are weeks in this extraordinarily eventful twelvemonth, to which nothing save a regular diary could render justice; yet for clearness' sake it is necessary to group a little, at the expense of overlapping. We must therefore retrace our steps a few days, in order to inquire into the origin and authorship of a newspaper article which appeared on February 10.

Reference has already been made to a weekly paper started by August Roeckel at the end of August 1848. A contemporary, Dr B. Hirschel, in his "Sachsens jüngste Vergangenheit" (Freiberg, April 1849), speaks of it as "Roeckel's classic Volksblätter, a truly popular production: flying envoys of a democratic fire-spirit, its issues preach with irresistible logic—somewhat doctrinaire, 'tis true, but incisive and intelligible—the lessons of the Free State and social reform." That can scarcely be called an illuminating criticism, yet the word "doctrinaire" rather confirms my previously expressed opinion that *Wagner* never had much to do with this journal. However, following up a clue supplied by another democratic paper, the *Leipziger Reibeisen* of July 24, 1849, Dr Hugo Dinger has discovered two articles in the *Volksblätter* as to Wagner's authorship whereof there can be no possible doubt, namely in the issues for Feb. 10 and April 8, 1849; and the historian certainly owes him a debt of gratitude for having incorporated them in his somewhat floundering

R. W.'s geistige Entwicklung (pp. 232-53).* For, although the *Volksblätter* are said to have circulated by thousands, copies of this journal are now so extremely rare that Dr Dinger is in all probability the only modern writer who has had an opportunity of inspecting the whole series, 36 issues in all. He has also hypothetically assigned to Wagner one or two other extracts from this selfsame journal; but they lack the true Wagnerian ring, and are too disjointed to enter our purview. With the two entire articles the case is very different, for they contain sentences almost exact replicas of which are to be found in the master's literary remains (see preface to *P. VIII.*). They need not here detain us long, however; it is rather the fact and dates of their appearance, that have a bearing on this stage of our story.

On February the tenth we have the first of these two *Volksblätter* articles, entitled "Der Mensch und die bestehende Gesellschaft"—"Man and established Society." Since it deals with Education, though in very general and abstract terms, we may consider it an extension of one part of that Theatre-reform scheme with which we have just seen the author so actively concerned again. There comes in the appositeness of one date: for, a couple of days before this article's appearance in print, Wagner writes to the Weimar Intendant, Feb. 8: "As we educate a human being, so will it grow up, and a theatrical audience is certainly not less amenable to the influence of training." Another feature about the date is that it was followed, two days later, by that orchestral meeting at the sign of The Lamb, when Wagner unfolded portions of his Theatre-reform to the members of the Kapelle, and encouraged them to hope for better times. Here again we see how intimately his views on art-reform were allied with those on a reform of Society as a whole. And there is yet one other point of contact: namely, with the commentaries on *Jesus von Nazareth*, some parts of which were evidently jotted down at the selfsame time. From every direction, therefore, Wagner's art was drawing him once more towards the whirlpool of politics.—For the matter of this "Man and Society"

* They will be found translated in extenso in *Prose Works VIII.* pp. 226-38. The only copies of the *Volksblätter* in the British Museum are Nos. 1 and 2, bound up with a collection of contemporary democratic papers. Those numbers are very poor stuff.—W. A. E.

article, its refrain is "The battle of Man against existing Society has commenced"; its main thesis is, "Men are not only entitled, but bound to require Society to lead them to ever higher, purer happiness, through perfecting their mental, moral and corporeal faculties." As a characteristic passage, we may quote from the exordium, "These latest struggles of a privileged Nobility in Prussia and Austria, this last upflickering of Royal Prerogative fed on a brute force that daily melts away before Enlightenment, are nothing further than the death-throes of a body from which the soul, its life, has flown already, nothing beyond the last mists of night set scudding by the rising sun" (*P.* VIII. 227).

As Wagner's second *Volksblätter* article did not appear till April, we shall defer all consideration of it for the present, and ascertain what was happening to him meanwhile. Officially, he was hanging on as best he might to his only means of livelihood, his Kapellmeistership, and conducting whatever operas were set down for him. Thus when young Kietz escorted him home after a *Martha* performance, he was told that such things were all in the day's work, "he conducted the stuff, and dismissed it from his mind when it was over." In this department there is nothing of importance to record, down to the annual Palm Sunday concert. Nor do we hear of any other public step. He was just waiting and expectantly watching, like his "Wanderer" that was to be: things could not continue much longer in their present state. Apparently the prospect of doing anything with his Theatre-reform plan had become more and more hopeless. In any case the questions agitating the Saxon Landtag were of no nature to permit the calm discussion of any artistic project, and toward the end of February the Oberländer (or Braun) Ministry resigned, to be replaced by a reactionary Cabinet including the subsequently-notorious von Beust; Feb. 24, to be exact, a black-letter day in Wagner's calendar, for we find him underlining its anniversary in a letter to Uhlig two years later.

On the first of March we have a letter to Liszt, the *last* from Dresden, beginning with the passage, "We seem to be in thorough accord with each other. If the world belonged to us two, I fancy we might give its people much delight." Liszt being no social reformer, these words of course apply to nothing but art. They are of further importance, however, as they help to date a jotting in the posthumous papers: "Were the earth given over to

me, to organise human society to its happiness thereon, I could do no else than grant it fullest liberty to organise itself. That liberty would arise at once from the demolition of everything opposed to it"—a note immediately followed by another on "Revolution," and a third, already quoted, "Where fulfilment is altogether denied to desire, there is death" (*P.* VIII. 370-1). Thus we have another peep into the laboratory of Wagner's brain; for the last idea is palpably related to the leading motive of *Jesus von Nazareth*. Not only was the last-named work abandoned about this time, as we shall see in a moment, but that "longing for death," induced by the combination of public and private troubles, seems to have stricken Wagner for a while, like Hamlet, with almost complete paralysis of action.

Of this gloomy interval we have a record in the *Communication*: "Already I had so far made up my mind about the character of the contemporary movement, that I saw we must either remain completely rooted in the Old, or completely break ground for the New. A clear glance upon the outer world conclusively taught me that I must altogether give up my *Jesus of Nazareth*. This glance, which I cast from my brooding solitude upon the political world outside, now shewed me the near-approaching catastrophe. In face of the already openly and shamelessly proclaimed defiance of the outlived Old, which fain would maintain itself at any cost, my earlier plans, such as that for a Theatre-reform, could not but now seem puerile to me. I abandoned them, like everything else that had filled me with hope and thus deceived me as to the true state of affairs. With a foreboding of the inevitable decision which, do what I might, must confront me also, were I to keep faith with my nature and opinions, I now gave up all drafting of artistic projects; every stroke of the pen, that I might have driven now, seemed a mockery to me when I no longer could belie or numb myself with any hope of art. Of a morning I left my chamber with its empty desk, to wander alone in the open, and sun myself in the waking Spring; midst its waxing warmth to fling from me all self-seeking wishes that might still have chained me with fallacious visions to a world whence all my soul was driving me so passionately forth" (*P.* I. 380-1). To anyone who knows what Spring and morning meant for Wagner, in regard of creative work, there can be nothing more pathetic than that single detail of an "empty desk."

The "already openly-proclaimed intention of the outlived Old to maintain itself at any cost." Roeckel also tells us that it was "the openly declared Reaction which entered with the summoning of the Beust Ministry, that roused Wagner's attention once more" to the political movement; and Roeckel himself introduced him soon after to a man in whom the spirit of "the New" seemed clothed with flesh and blood, the Russian Michael Bakunin. Curiously enough, Bakunin rounds off Wagner's Dresden period at both ends; for he was residing in Dresden at the time of *Rienzi's* production—leaving it just before Wagner's appointment as Kapellmeister—though the two men never came into any kind of contact till the present Spring. Not till March of 1849 did this stormy petrel return; so that we may brush aside at once the nonsense talked about his moulding of a pliant mind: that "Man and Society" article had appeared early in February—to say nothing of all the other "revolutionary" documents already instanced. What fascinated Wagner was the man's whole personality. Junior to himself by but a year, this virile type was bound to wake the admiration of one who was longing to find a hero among living men to equal the heroes of his ardent imagination; for hero-worship was as great a characteristic of Wagner as of Carlyle. Yet we must not be supposed to imply that Wagner sat at Bakunin's feet, even during the bare two months of their acquaintance: on the contrary, it was "the love of the strong for the strong," the pleasure of meeting a man after his own heart, a man far nearer to being his equal in intellect and will than any of the literary, artistic or political, Dresden set, save Gottfried Semper.

To those who knew this extraordinary Russian in the present phase of his career, he seemed the very harbinger of a world-wide social revolution. "A man of rare power of brain and force of character, united with an imposing personality and fascinating address, it was easy to him to make the young enthusiastic for him everywhere, and to attract even men of riper years," says Roeckel of him, in harmony with other contemporaries. "But his glowing fancy, in union with the unconscious ambition of a grand nature that felt itself predestined to command, very often deceived him as to the actual state of affairs. His immediate object was a combination of Slavonic and German democracy against the Russian Czardom, at that time the sheet-anchor of Absolutism; and his numerous

personal relations with men of like mind in all the Slav provinces of Austria, as also in Russia and Poland, made that goal seem nearer to him than it really was . . . so that he imagined himself at the head of a powerful and widely-branched association, through which he thought to set the most enormous force in action." His soaring plans undoubtedly had something grand about them, were it only for their daringness. According to his own words, his ultimate aim was "a general federation of European republics." To reach this end, all existing European forms of State, the whole Civilisation of the West, must be demolished: "Down with the artificial barriers violently erected by Congresses of despots after historic, geographic, commercial or strategic, so-called necessities. No longer shall there be any other boundary between the nations, than that which corresponds with Nature, which the sovereign will of the peoples themselves prescribes for reason of their national idiosyncrasies."*

Bakunin had come to Dresden under an assumed name, that of "Dr Schwarz," as he was 'required' alike by the Russian and the Austrian governments. Early in March 1849 he arrived from Leipzig, and put up at first in Roeckel's apartments, No. 29 Friedrichstrasse, directly facing Wagner's. As may be imagined, many days did not elapse before Roeckel introduced him to his opposite neighbour, who naturally took a lively interest in this *rara avis*, a man not only of imposing physical stature and indomitable courage, but many-sided in his culture and cosmopolitan of experience. A generation later (at table in the summer of 1878) Wagner recalled the herculean figure of this uncommon visitant, his pure Slavonic type, the lion's mane of flowing hair, the surprising whiteness of his skin, revealed one day in the act of undressing; his audacious energy and marvellous powers of physical endurance, as subsequently evinced by his adventurous escape from Siberia, journeying on foot till he reached the Amur and found an English vessel to bear him into safety. Combined with it all, was the most delicate regard for others; for in after years, when staying in Switzerland, he studiously avoided calling on the master at Tribtschen, not to give rise to fresh gossip,—oddly enough, he was then considered a Russian spy, and fell into the humour of it by signing one of his notes "espion russe." On Wagner's

* 17. *Anniversaire de la Révolution Polonoise. Discours par M. Bakounine*, Paris 1847; cited by Dinger, p. 166*n*.

daily rambles in the Spring of 1849 (still according to this reminiscence) he was frequently accompanied by Bakunin, secure in those lonely by-ways from unwelcome encounters. Nearing town on their way home, Wagner would feign to be tired, and hail a droschke, to smuggle his companion to his temporary domicile.

As to that domicile itself, and certain afternoon or evening gatherings there, the wildest rumours spread abroad after the Dresden insurrection had been quelled, even found their way into secret State-archives.* In itself it was perfectly natural that Bakunin, a political refugee, should deem it more prudent to exchange the initial hospitality of Roeckel for a quiet lodging of his own. This he appears to have found in a one-storeyed building tenanted by an individual named Naumann, and situate in the "Royal Menagerie Garden"—ironically appropriate for the "leonine" one. Now, Naumann's house was just the thing for a man obliged to live incognito, being approachable from four different sides, the Ostra-strasse, the Milchgarten, the Kammergut, or through the Gehege (plantation). Thus, also, rumour had it that quite a considerable assembly could be held there, without giving rise to suspicion by the confluence of large numbers toward one entrance. Perhaps, in fact presumably, Bakunin did hold select meetings there; and very likely Wagner was present at

* To these State papers relating to the trials of Roeckel, Bakunin and others, and the inquiry into the part supposed to have been played by Wagner in the Dresden rising, Dr Hugo Dinger has been allowed access, with presumable permission to fish out whatever he chose for reproduction. A most extraordinary proceeding, on both sides, and one that cannot be too emphatically condemned! For Wagner was not represented in any way at the inquiry, and therefore no cross-examination of witnesses was possible; neither was the legal process, whatever its nature, conducted in presence of a jury. The whole thing is consequently reduced to the status of mere gossip, and nothing could more flagrantly contravene the principles of equity, than this amateur reopening of a judicial case after the defendant not only had been amnestied, but was already *dead* and buried. The evidence adduced against Wagner in these "acts" is of the most trivial, weak, and unsubstantiated character; but, at the risk of magnifying its importance by suppression, I, for one, decline to have a finger in such a tainted pie.—W. A. E.—On the point of 'going to press' with the above, I have received the October number of Vol. III. of the *Zeitschrift der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft* (1901) containing an abstract of these "acts," so far as they concern Wagner, drawn up by his own lawyer in 1863. This thoroughly business-like document I shall reproduce in the Appendix.—W. A. E.

some of them,—unless we are to suppose that, after seeing Bakunin home, he scampered off like a startled hare so soon as a third party announced himself; but what was discussed or transacted at such meetings, not a soul has been able to discover. Meetings were being held everywhere, without let or hindrance, throughout all Saxony; but nobody seems to have got any farther than talking. Had there been any deep-laid plot, the May insurrection would scarcely have proved so futile and abortive. Not even the most elementary preparations were made for its success; everyone seemed looking for a “revolution” to create itself, forgetting that that sort of thing can *not* be made with rose-water. In any case, we have Bakunin’s own loyal testimony, from his examination at the Königstein (Sept. 19, 49—see Dinger), that “he had recognised Wagner as a phantast from the first, and, though he had often enough talked politics with him, he had never concerted with him any plans of action.”

Fatal for Wagner as was the interpretation subsequently placed by the Saxon police on his acquaintance with this Russian, that acquaintance must have been the greatest consolation to him at the time. Here was a man who could answer big ideas with big ideas, not whittle them into party formulæ. It was precisely the same, on a different line, as with Liszt: here was a man worth the talking to. A purely human friendship: even that casual remembrance of the whiteness of Bakunin’s skin attests it; thus might the author have remembered his “Siegfried.” Writing to Malwida von Meysenbug in 1862, after the exile’s escape from Siberia, Wagner says: “What you tell me about Bakunin has interested me much; I could see the whole man before me. He is, and remains, a colossal fellow. One must really take the bear as book, to account for such a nature”; and a few months later, “Politics, and whatever else the Devil’s stuff may call itself—believe me, I and you were never made for it; even Garibaldi is not; and still less Bakunin; but quite certainly Louis Napoleon.” So little had Wagner seen of any real conspiring by Bakunin, that he could write to Uhlig in August of this 1849, “Do you happen to know anything of the state of the police inquiry? The fate of Heubner, Roeckel and Bakunin, troubles me much. Anyhow, *these* men ought not to be imprisoned. . . . Woe to him who acts with lofty purpose, and for his deeds is judged by the police!”

And Wagner in turn must have exercised a certain fascination over his new friend, diverting his thoughts awhile from politics to art, as may be judged from that little jotting in the posthumous papers: "Arrived at the point of disgust with our civilisation, Bakunin felt a longing to become musician." Paradoxical as this may sound, it has an explanatory parallel in the *Beethoven* essay of 1870: "As Christianity emerged from the Civilisation of the Roman world, so Music emerges from the chaos of modern civilisation. Both say, 'Our kingdom is not of this world.' In other words: we come from within, ye from without; we spring from the essence of things, ye from their show.—Let any one experience for himself how the whole modern world of Appearance, which hems him in on every side to his despair, melts suddenly to naught when he but hears the first few bars of one of those godlike Symphonies. . . . Most seriously, this is the effect that Music has on our whole modern civilisation; she cancels it, as the light of day the lamp-gleam" (*P. V. 120-1*).

That solace, of a Beethovenian symphony, was to be Wagner's once again in Dresden. For the third and last time he conducted the immortal Ninth at a Palm Sunday concert, April 1, 1849. Its effect on the audience was more impressive than ever. Like a song of the sons of the morning, its titanic last movement struck a responsive chord, in this month when every mind was strung to highest tension; never can "Seid umschlungen, Millionen!" have conveyed so direct a message. Young Hans von Bülow was one of the hearers; his reference to the concert in a letter of five weeks later (Leipzig, May 7) is noteworthy under more than one aspect: "Only a few weeks back I heard the finest of all music in the [Old] opera-house; and that is now a prey to the flames, the beautiful city the scene of grisly slaughter! Heaven grant that from the bloody seed may flower something fair, divine, eternal!" But the effect on Bakunin, who attended the concert at his personal peril, is that which most concerns us; and here again G. Kietz can satisfy our curiosity. On one of his long rambles out of town, Wagner painted for his boyish companion a glowing picture of the personality of this apostle of Social Revolution, and quoted his enthusiasm about the Choral Symphony: "All, all, he said, will pass away; nothing will remain; not only music, the other arts as well, even your

Cornelius,*—but one thing will endure for ever, the *Ninth Symphony*.”

It was the last work ever performed in the Old Opera-house at Dresden. There was to have been another concert on Sunday, May 6, under Wagner and Reissiger, for the benefit of the soldiers wounded in Schleswig Holstein. That concert never came to pass, as May the 6th found Dresden in an uproar and the Old Opera-house in flames. But there is a curious tale connected with it. The programme was to have included Beethoven's *Eroica* and Berlioz' *July-symphony*. The apposite choice of the latter was Wagner's, of course; he had praised it more than once in Paris (see vol. i). No band parts, however, were procurable in Dresden; so the orchestral committee resolved to send an envoy to Berlin to borrow them. The flautist M. Fürstenau, a friend of Wagner's and our authority for this story, volunteered to undertake the journey; but, to everyone's astonishment, Wagner suddenly declared that it would be labour wasted, for a revolution would infallibly break out meanwhile, and where would the *Kapelle* be then? Fürstenau set out, notwithstanding: on his return from Berlin he found the prophecy fulfilled.

What did it mean? The exact date of the remark, a point so seldom heeded by remembrancers, would help us here; but as the concert is announced in the *Anzeiger* of May 2, and Fürstenau did not return until the revolt was almost ended, we may certainly assign it to about the first of May. On the 2nd Wagner writes to Roeckel, then in Prague, “People have but one other fear, namely that a revolution may break out too soon,”—a sentence that appears to have formed the principal ground for his banishment, as disturbances commenced next day. But, if we may rely on the remembrance of Fürstenau (now dead), surely the one expression should be interpreted in the light of the other. The Saxon authorities interpreted the one as evidence of Wagner's complicity in some deep-laid plot: the other reduces that supposition to a sheer absurdity; for no conspirator would go blabbing secrets to a body of mixed political leanings, such as an orchestral committee. Clearly in each case this ‘dark saying’ is the per-

* Wagner shared his young friend's admiration for this painter; see Letter 69 to Liszt (1851), “Besides Cornelius' *Nibelungen* print, Beethoven alone adorns my study-wall.”

fectly innocent conclusion that any man, with the smallest eye for cause and effect, might have drawn from the state of affairs in Dresden at the end of April and beginning of May. It did not need a soothsayer, to predict that the summary dissolution of the Saxon Landtag on April 30, and the obstinate refusal of the King to ratify the Reichsverfassung, would instantly lead to serious trouble. Nevertheless, the fact of Wagner's giving voice to such an opinion in semi-public constitutes the strongest proof that he was neither personally concerned, nor in sympathy, with any scheme for stirring up rebellion,—even were it more possible to demonstrate the pre-existence of any such plot. The case is on all fours with his taking a staunch conservative like Genast to that democratic club last January; it is the Wanderer's "to heed I neared, and not to handle" (*Siegfried*, act ii).

This was *not* the Revolution that Wagner was dreaming of, and of which he continued to dream after the Dresden rising had long been suppressed. His ideal was something far sublimer than a Reichsverfassung; though that might be welcomed as a palliative. Still higher than Bakunin's, did his fancy soar; so that even that apostle of No-Government considered him a "phantast." Fantastic, no doubt, he would be called by every politician, just as our Ruskin still is scoffed at; but the ideas of men like these are the ones that soak into the soil, and swell its fruit hereafter. Years later, in description of his attitude towards the movement of 1849 he quotes from Thomas Carlyle, who characterises the outbreak of the first French Revolution as "the Spontaneous Combustion of a nation sunk into torpor, abeyance and dry-rot. There is the next mile-stone for you in the History of Mankind! . . . The oath of Twenty-five Million men, which has since become that of all men whatsoever, 'Rather than live longer under lies, we will die!'—that is the New Act in World-History. New Act,—or, we may call it *New Part*; Drama of World-History, Part Third. If Part *Second* was 1800 years ago, this I reckon will be Part *Third*. . . . Celestial in the one part, in the other infernal. For it is withal the breaking-out of universal mankind into Anarchy, into the faith and practice of *No-Government*,—that is to say (if you will be candid) into unappeasable revolt against Sham-Governors and Sham-Teachers. . . . Millennium of Anarchies;—*abridge it, spend your heart's blood upon abridging it, ye Heroic Wise that are to come.*" To this Wagner adds, "I

believed in Revolution, and in its ineluctable necessity, with certainly no greater immoderation than Carlyle" (*P.* I. 24); but he omits to mention the coincidence, that he, too, had quite recently connected it with that "Part Second of 1800 years ago."

Yes: that sketch for a drama on the subject of Jesus of Nazareth had gradually developed into a notebook for reflections on every conceivable social problem, for the expounding of New Testament texts in the light of burning questions, not exactly 'of the day,' but remaining unsolved until that day—in fact, till ours, and beyond? For instance, "Lay not up for thyself treasures, whereby thou stealest from thy neighbour, and makest him to starve: for when thou hast thy goods safeguarded by the law of men, thou provokest thy neighbour to sin against the law. . . . Shew love unto your neighbours, and all these things shall be added unto you; for God hath made the world to your honour and riches, and what it holdeth is for your delight, each man according to his need. . . . Who heaped up treasures such as thieves can steal, he was the first to break the law, inasmuch as he took from his neighbour what his neighbour had need of. Who then is the thief: he who took from his neighbour what his neighbour had need of, or he who took from the rich man what he needed not?" (*P.* VIII. 304).—How it reminds us of the Riga episode ten years ago, when Wagner pleaded for the poor delinquent who had filched from Minna's mouldering stage-finery!—Again, "Human Society next sought deliverance through *the Law*: it fastened the notion of Good to the Law, as to something intelligible and perceptible by us all. But what was bound fast to the Law, was only a moment of the Good; and, since God is eternally generative, fluent, mobile, the Law thus turned against God's self" (*ibid.* 311). Or, from yet another standpoint, "Honour your body, keep it clean, fair and healthy, so honour ye God; for your body is God's temple, that in it he may delight"—where we have a forecast of the closing words of *Art and Revolution* a few months hence, "So let us raise the altar of the future to the two sublimest teachers of mankind:—Jesus, who suffered for humanity, and Apollo who lifted it to joyous honour." In the "Man and Society" article (Feb. 10) also, it was a "perfecting of man's mental, moral and *corporeal* faculties" that Wagner advocated, in the manner of the ancient

Greeks—or, we may humbly suggest, our English Public-schools—but quite against the German practice of his day.

This kind of Revolutionist is not the type we should seek among the party-politicians of a Saxon Landtag, or the blatant demagogues of a Vaterland or other spouting Club. It is the philosopher-poet, whose brain evolves from its own depths another world. And thus we find his second *Volksblätter* article (Apr. 8), "The Revolution," as pure a piece of poetry as ever clothed itself in prose.

Conceived under the reverberation of the strains of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and Schiller's glorious Ode to Joy (in other words, "to Freedom"), it is the inspired vision of a seer who believes with all his soul in the approach of some great and irresistible cataclysm, that shall purge the world and usher in an age of undimmed Happiness. Revolution is here no creation of the hands of man, no product of the schemings of plotters, no result of the debates of deputies, no outcome of the fury of a mob: she is a Goddess, Astræa Redux, an elemental power. "A supernatural force [*supernatural*, mind you] seems clutching at our quarter of the globe, intent on lifting it from its old rut and hurling it to pathways new. Ay! we behold it; the old world is crumbling, a new will rise therefrom. For the lofty goddess *Revolution* comes rustling on the wings of storm, her stately head ringed round with lightnings, a sword in her right hand, a torch in her left, her eye so stern, so punitive, so cold; and yet, what warmth of purest love, what wealth of happiness streams forth toward him who dares to look with steadfast gaze into that eye."—The timid is conjured to put aside his fears: "Unhappy man! uplift thine eyes, look up to where a thousand thousands gather on the hills in joyous expectation of the dawn! Regard them, they are all thy brothers, sisters, the troops of those poor wights who hitherto knew naught of life but *suffering*, have been but strangers on this earth of Joy; they all are waiting for that Revolution which affrights thee, their redemptrix from this world of sorrow, creatrix of a new world blessing *all*. . . . Encamped there on the heights, they strain their eyes in blissful expectation of her coming, and listen in rapt silence to the rustle of the rising storm, which fills their ears with Revolution's greeting: I am the e'er-rejuvenating, ever-fashioning Life; where *I* am not, is Death. I am the dream, the balm, the hope of sufferers. I

bring to nothing what exists; and whither I turn, there wells fresh life from the dead rock. Whatever stands, must fall: such is the everlasting law of Nature, such the condition of Life; and I, the eternal destroyer, fulfil the law and fashion ever-youthful life. . . . I will destroy the dominion of one over many, of the dead o'er the living, of matter over spirit; I will break the power of the mighty, of law, of property. Be his own will the lord of man, his own desire his only law, his strength his whole possession; for the only holiness is the *free man's*, and naught higher there is than *he*. . . . Destroyed be all that weighs on you and makes you suffer, and from the ruins of this ancient world let rise a *new*, instinct with happiness undreamt! Nor hate nor envy, grudge nor enmity, be henceforth found among you; as *brothers* shall ye all who live know one another, and *free*, free in doing, *free* in enjoying, shall ye attest the worth of life."—Finally, as the storm rolls nearer, the storm that bears winged Revolution, those thousands camped upon the hills, "In godlike ecstasy leap up from the ground; the poor, the hungering, the bowed by misery, no longer are they. Proudly they raise themselves erect, inspiration shines from their ennobled faces, a radiant light streams from their eyes; and with the heaven-shaking cry *I am a Man!* the millions, the embodied Revolution, the God become Man, rush down to the valleys and plains, and proclaim to all the world the new gospel of Happiness" (*P.* VIII. 232-8).

It were bathos, to add anything of our own to such a dithyramb. Let it therefore be nothing but a question. Does the reader honestly believe that a man who could express himself in "music" so sublime as this, was concurrently engaged in "treasons, stratagems and spoils"?

XII.

THE MAY RISING.

The Chambers oppose the Government ; a change of Ministry makes matters worse.—The Kaisership declined by the King of Prussia ; the Berlin Court encourages that of Dresden to resist the Reichsverfassung.—Summary dissolution of the Saxon Landtag.—Deputations to the King.—The Arsenal attacked ; Committee of Public Safety.—Flight of the King ; Provisional Government.—“Are you with us against foreign troops ?”—Semper’s barricades, and the street-fight.—Wagner watches operations from the Kreuz-tower.—Arrival of Roeckel.—Wagner takes Minna to Chemnitz ; returns to Dresden.—The city conquered by Prussian troops.

In common with many other persons, I deemed the Dresden insurrection the commencement of a general rising in Germany. Who can be so blind, as not to see that I there had no choice left ?

RICHARD WAGNER.

FROM its official opening in the middle of January 1849, the Landtag, and more especially its Lower House, had been in overwhelming opposition to the Ministry. The latter, true enough, included so sincere a friend of the people as Martin Oberländer ; but he was powerless to cope with the lukewarmness of his colleagues and the wire-pulling of Court officials. The Frankfort Diet, or National Assembly, had passed a set of laws entitled the “Grundrechte,” or Declaration of Rights, to apply to every State in Germany. On one pretext after another—the favourite being the absence through illness of its President Braun, the Minister of Justice—the Saxon Government refused to publish them. Oberländer himself was in favour of their publication, but, yielding to pressure from high quarters, resigned together with his [colleagues ; to be succeeded on February 24 by a cabinet in which Rabenhorst and Beust were the leading spirits, and which therefore is commonly known by the name of the latter, its most permanent factor—von Beust, late ambassador

to Berlin, retaining ministerial office for some seventeen years to come. This February Ministry was essentially "reactionary" in composition; yet almost its first act was to publish those *Grundrechte* which its far more Liberal predecessor had not been allowed to! It would pass the wit of any but a disciple of the school of Machiavelli, to arrive at the true inwardness of an action apparently so inconsequent; but it was of a piece with Saxon Court tactics throughout. The guiding policy of that Court, in which the Heir Presumptive, the King's brother Prince Johann, was said to be prime mover, appears to have been to grant to the eye what it proposed to withhold from the grasp. The details of the application of those *Grundrechte* to Saxony, what we may call the Committee stage, would have to be settled in the Chambers; so the Ministers placed every obstacle in the way of their discussion. Votes of censure were passed; but the Ministry—not one member of which was an elected Deputy!—still stuck to its guns, refusing to retire at the bidding of "*such* a Landtag." Doubtless the deputies to the Lower House were not precisely the cream of the nation's intellect; but Frankenstein had conjured up his own monster, when the franchise was extended at the end of last year. He now had determined to slay it, by fair means or foul. For the truth is, that the Saxon Court in the first instance had merely yielded to *fear*, and its courage was gradually returning under the persuasive influence of Berlin blandishments—a box of soldiers promised to a good boy.

March 28, after infinite labour, the Frankfort Diet passed its "*Deutsche Reichsverfassung*," or "Constitution for the whole of Germany." In accordance therewith the Imperial crown was offered on April 3 to King Friedrich Wilhelm IV., by a deputation that had journeyed to Berlin for the purpose. He declined it. The reason alleged, was that the offer had no legal validity; but his genuine reason, beyond a doubt, was an objection to tie his monarchical hands by new-fangled conditions. Surely Roeckel is right, when he says, "The Kaiser could not so easily have set aside, or tampered with the *Reichsverfassung*, as could the King of Prussia; for behind the *Verfassung* stood the serried German nation, in jealous vigilance." Berlin was playing quite another game: with Dresden, Munich, Vienna and Hanover, it already had secretly agreed to quash the popular movement by force.

A reservation had been made by the governments of the principal German states, when they consented to send their envoys to the Frankfort Diet: namely, that the *Verfassung*, whatever form it might assume, should not be binding on any individual State until alike the Parliament and the *Government* of that State should have approved it. The simplest method of *not* getting it approved, was eternally to defer its setting down on the orders of the day. That was the plan adopted in Dresden. On the 12th the First Saxon Chamber, on the 19th of April the Second, demanded the instant publication of this measure: on the 21st the Second Chamber, and on the 23rd the First, passed votes of censure. Censure having no effect, the Chambers refused even to consider any vote on account of finances until the *Reichsverfassung* should be tabled. Meantime Berlin came to the rescue of the Saxon Court. On April 28 the King of Prussia despatched a circular note post-haste to his Royal confederates, adjuring them to make common cause against this common danger and resist the passage of the *Reichsverfassung*, offering them *immediate military aid* should they require it. That same Saturday the King of Saxony signed an order *dissolving* the Landtag. Against the protests of the presidents of both Saxon Chambers, the order was carried into effect in parliament on Monday the 30th by a simple Commissary, without a single Minister being in attendance! Beust and his employers had flung down the glove, fully prepared for their challenge being taken up, as we presently shall see. Not only was the Landtag dissolved, however. The very next day the Cabinet itself fell to pieces, its majority (Held, von Ehrenstein and Weinlig) retiring before Beust and the Minister of War, von Rabenhorst, "the head and heart of Reaction." That was playing at Constitutional Monarchy with a vengeance. But, alas for Germany, it was the way in which she had been treated by her Princes not only before, but ever after the great War of Liberation.

How directly this Dissolution was inspired by the timely offer of help from Berlin, is proved by the fact that a decree recognising the *Verfassung* had actually been transmitted to the Royal printers on April 28, but subsequently withheld—its publication being "hourly expected" in political journals of the 29th and 30th. Minister Held himself explained to a deputation bringing a monster-address on May the first, i.e. the day after the dissolution,

that he and two of his colleagues had voted for the measure, and had retired on account of its non-publication. But the cat is most naïvely slipped from the bag by Minister von Friesen (who joined the Cabinet a few days later), when he expresses his astonishment that "after the Governments of Austria, Prussia and Bavaria had rejected the Reichsverfassung, and it thus could form no more than a basis for future negotiations, its unconditional recognition and publication in Saxony should have been demanded by such honourable, intelligent and loyal men, who moreover in their capacity of Ministers were fully informed of the state of affairs" (*Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben*, by Richard Freiherr von Friesen, 1880, page 124).

In his two-volume oratio pro domo (*Aus drei Vierteljahrhunderten*, Stuttgart 1887) von Beust attempts to justify his strategy by the plea that the May-revolt was no rising of the "good Dresden berger"—a rather mistimed mimicry of his dear clients the "Bürger"—but "an outburst craftily prepared with the assistance of foreign revolutionary elements and personages," and that "the refusal to promulgate the Reichsverfassung fortunately made the bomb explode before its time." Unfortunately for Beust's contention, the subsequent list of political prisoners shews a preponderance of the local *educated* classes, with a large proportion of magistrates and other men of official or professional standing. And Count Waldersee, Commander of the Prussian troops despatched to Dresden, undisguisedly declares it as his opinion, that the King of Saxony "knew perfectly well that his refusal must result in civil war" (*Der Kampf in Dresden*, 1849). On the part of the Government, therefore, no reconciliation was intended, but war to the knife, war before the Saxon people, the people of all Germany, should have time to organise a formidable resistance. Thus Beust has a double guilt on his head; for his present truckling to his old friend Prussia very nearly plunged Saxony into armed conflict with that kingdom at the end of 1850, and actually in 1866, when Beust himself had to leave the country and enter the service of Austria.* The ready offer and despatch of Prussian troops, stigmatised by the Frankfort

* For further particulars I must refer the reader to my little brochure "1849," here quoted at greater length by Herr Glasenapp. Suffice it to say that the *next* Saxon Landtag was dissolved a twelvemonth later for the identical reason, namely its demand that the Verfassung should be ratified.—W. A. E.

Diet at the time as "a grave breach of the peace," was the first decided step in a far-sighted policy that ended in the virtual subjection of Saxony to Berlin.—There we drift into regions beyond our scope. Let us get back to the state of affairs in Dresden at this juncture.

The eyes of the Saxon Government were fully open to the consequences of its duel with the Landtag. On the day *before* the dissolution, a Sunday, not a soldier was allowed to absent himself from the city, heavy ordnance was placed in position, and two mobile divisions of Prussian troops were despatched to the frontier with orders not to await further instructions from Berlin, but to march on Dresden the very instant a verbal message reached them thence. A significant omission, on the other hand, was that of any issue of ammunition or orders to the "Bürgerwehr," or Communal Guard; von Beust not being quite so sure of his "good Dresden berger" in 1849 as he pretends some forty years later.

Monday, April 30, both the Saxon Chambers were dissolved: not before they had composed their previous differences, and united in most serious warnings to the Government as to the temerity of its action, winding up with three cheers for "German unity and freedom, and the Reichsverfassung in protection of both!" During the next couple of days there was an endless procession of deputations, Town-councillors, local bodies, clubs and so forth, bearing petitions to the King. The capital took front rank in these demonstrations, but similar prayers and monitions came from Leipzig, Chemnitz, Freiberg, Zwickau, and all the larger towns—a crying rebuttal of the "mere agitator" plea. To all implorings, all legitimate demands, the King replied with an unshaken "No!"; automaton pulled by hidden strings, that he was. Knots of people gathered early round the entrance to the palace, awaiting the return of deputation after deputation, only to hear the same remorseless answer at second-hand. The retention of the two most reactionary members of the Cabinet, together with growing confirmation of the rumours of Prussia's strong-armed intervention, were raising the temperature of the multitude to fever-heat. The air was charged with electricity. The King relented not.

Wednesday, May 2.—The general foreboding of a speedy catastrophe is reflected in a letter of Wagner's of this date; a

most important document, in its eventual consequences for himself. On Black Monday, before the sitting of the Landtag came to actual end, Roeckel had been called out of the chamber by a few acquaintances, who represented to him that the passages and approaches to the house of legislature were lined by police-agents and soldiers, and that his personal liberty was endangered, in pursuance of that earlier arrest, unless he vanished from the city while still protected by his mandate of Deputy. By his own account, he wanted to take refuge in Berlin, but Bakunin insisted on his going to Prague, where the Russian fallaciously believed he had a considerable following. So Roeckel made off at once, without even returning to his home; his morning farewell to wife and children, he says, was the last he saw of them for thirteen years. On his way to Prague he must have written home, or to Wagner, with the request that something—heaven knows what—should be forwarded him. At anyrate there is an element of mystery in the whole affair, and that mystery would be deepened in the eyes of the Saxon police by Wagner's answer; an answer which Roeckel, with imprudence almost tantamount to private disloyalty, actually retained on his person down to the time of his capture on the 7th. That letter of Wagner's we now will lay before the reader* :—

DEAREST FRIEND,

It is to be hoped you have arrived safely in Prague. At this moment I am very much excited and distracted after a regular rumpus with Römpler and Katz, to whom Minkwitz has given no proper instructions as yet: nevertheless I believe I may thoroughly reassure you, since, according to my provisional arrangements, no interruption of the series will now take place.†

* As an exception to my rule of having nothing whatever to do with the secret "acts" of the Saxon archives. The present case, the *only* one involving documentary evidence, stands in a different category; for the copy of this manuscript obtained by Dr Hugo Dinger from the Saxon authorities is accepted by Richard Wagner's heirs as that of a presumably authentic document, and they have already sanctioned its reproduction in a brochure by Mr H. S. Chamberlain entitled "Echte Briefe" etc. (Bayreuth 1894).—W. A. E.

† Röpmpel and Katz were printers of the *Volksblätter*; Minckwitz, president of the Vaterlandsverein, was a lawyer and Roeckel's advocate. It should be added that *no* further issue of the *Volksblätter* appeared after Roeckel's departure.

Dearest friend, come back as soon as ever your lady-patient * makes it possible to you ! Here things are most unquiet ; all the clubs, the whole of the Communal Guard,† even the regiment quartered here, "Prinz Albert," have made the most energetic declarations for the German Verfassung : so has the Town Council. People are making up their minds for a decisive conflict, if not with the King, at all events with Prussian troops. People have only one fear besides, namely that a revolution may break out too soon. Under such circumstances, reactionary steps by the Government are not to be thought of, nor is there anywhere a sign of such a thing.

Hungarian hussars have arrived in Freiberg from Bohemia. Everybody is declaring for them, in addresses. In short, the greatest commotion prevails here, and with all my heart I would advise you to return *very soon*, as your wife and children, under such circumstances, are in great disquietude. For that matter, your wife is well, and Schubert is by no means pressing ; so all goes well ; only the political disquiet makes her uneasy, and the protection of her husband is much craved by her (your wife).—Moreover, your patients in Limbach must be longing for you.—

Your wife could not see to the things before to-day, and this evening they will go off. What you particularly wanted, I have forbidden to be put with them, for reasons which I take upon myself.

At this moment I can write you nothing further, saving : Come back as soon as possible.

Your

Dresden, 2nd May, 1849.

R. W.

A letter of enigmas. Those "Hungarian hussars," for instance ; we hear nothing of them in contemporary accounts, and can only suppose some allusion to political refugees from Austria. As to the something "particularly wanted" by Roeckel, we are entirely in the dark, unless we are to lend credence to the very flimsy tale of hand-grenades ordered by the ex-Musikdirektor ; in which case, we may applaud Wagner's wisdom in forbidding their despatch.‡ However, it is quite useless our attempting, at this distant date, to decypher a private letter

* "Deine Patientin," some catchword the meaning of which we cannot hope to guess ; possibly originating in Bakunin's assumed name of *Doctor Schwarz* and here applied to the situation in Prague. Or is it a misreading ?

† The *Deutsche Allg. Ztg.* says, "At noon to-day (May 2) there were meetings of the various battalions in six different places ; the result being, that the entire Communal Guard has voted unanimously in favour of the Reichsverfassung, and has resolved to hold a parade on the 4th [? 3rd], to swear fealty to it." ‡ See Appendix, p. 415.

that bears such marks of flurry : remembering its opening lines, we need not wonder at its partial incoherence and 'non sequitur.' Even as regards the "fear of a revolution" (see p. 322 *antea*) we cannot clearly gather whether that fear is entertained by the Town-council etc, by Roeckel's friends, or by the Government itself, which would thus be deterred from taking "reactionary steps," i.e. making arrests and precipitating a revolt before its Prussian allies have arrived—"Man," or "people say," is so indefinite. It has been surmised that a "revolution" was planned for May the 20th, to involve all Saxony; but not a tittle of evidence in support of that theory has been discovered hitherto: idle gossip, like so much else.—To sum up: the letter is that of an onlooker "distracted and excited" by the cumulative stress of events, and longing for the return of a friend more directly concerned in the movement. But its very incoherence would make it an object of grave suspicion to the authorities, should it ever fall into their clutches; and for this reason, as said before, it was most culpable of Roeckel not to have destroyed it at once.

To return to outer facts.

Thursday, May 3.—About one o'clock (according to the *Deutsche Allg. Ztg*) alarm-bells are rung for a general assembly of the Communal Guard, to receive the answer of the King about the Reichs-Verfassung. That answer is not forthcoming, however, and the parade is countermanded by order of Lenz the Communal General, a fashionable draper and purveyor to the Court. With exception of a company or two retained to guard the Rathhaus, the battalions already drawn up on the Altmarkt, or Old Market, fall out with three cheers for the Verfassung. Meanwhile the mob is crying for "arms," apparently in consequence of an inflammatory manifesto by the Vaterlandsverein; the Town-Senate has decided to assemble at 4 P.M. and appoint a Committee of Defence against Foreign Troops—so obvious is it that Prussian assistance is about to be employed in the suppression of Saxon liberty. On the other side, companies of infantry are marched into the King's palace, or Schloss, and artillery is rattled across the bridge from the Neustadt, or new town, to the old, or principal quarter of the city. An immense throng of people surges through the streets, open-air harangues are held, the mob is worked to a ferment by reports of Prussian

interference, and a commencement is made toward the barricading of thoroughfares. All the elements of a serious conflict are therefore present, but so far nothing actively hostile is attempted by the people, who are said to have been totally unarmed, with women and children among them, and without any semblance of organised leadership. At any rate two of those afterwards punished as ringleaders were not in Dresden on this day: Roeckel, as we know, was in Prague; and Bakunin, by all accounts, was absent from the city for a few days ending the 4th, or as some say, the 5th.

Around the Arsenal the crowd demanding arms for self-defence became so great that its mere physical impetus burst into splinters a light wicket-gate of wood beside the guard-room, about 3 P.M. And thus began the six-days war, in which the first blood was drawn by the Royal troops—a statement not disputed by the Court's defenders. Instead of the most elementary precaution, namely that of posting a squadron of cavalry to protect the approaches to the Arsenal, the Government had preferred to lure the helpless people to their doom. A drastic cure, not prevention, was the motto of Rabenhorst and Beust. The officer in command of the Arsenal infantry, a Lieut-Colonel von Pohlenz, gives the order to fire, and five corpses, including that of an aged man, are the first sacrifices to Governmental surgery. The mob replies with a hail of stones, their only weapons; a battalion of the poor nondescript Communal Guard arrives on the scene, with the intention of restoring peace, but is fired upon by the infantry, and takes to its heels. The crowd moves off, and drags its five dead bodies through the city, exposed on open drays. A sorry commencement.

We catch a fleeting glimpse of Richard Wagner about this hour. Certain companies of the Communal Guard had been detained before the Rathhaus, or Town Hall, in the Altmarkt, evidently as a safeguard for the Town Council, which, as we have seen, was to assemble in solemn conclave at 4. Among these companies was the Academic Legion: "In its ranks stood I, with many other artists," says Gustav Kietz, "guarding the Rathhaus. Suddenly we saw Wagner crossing the market-place. Professor Rietschel, who was stationed with us, called out to him, 'Herr Kapellmeister, how goes it in the city? Can you give us any news?' To which Wagner replied, '*Die Gemeinheit*

offenbart sich,¹ and hurried away. Shortly afterwards the wagon with its first load of dead was trundled past us, amid the greatest tumult, and from a balcony near the Rathhaus was heard the Schröder-Devrient's famous 'Cry for vengeance.'*—*Die Gemeinheit offenbart sich*: an oracular saying most difficult to fit with an English equivalent, but indicative of supreme disgust. "Commonness," "vulgarity," "low-mindedness," "is revealing itself"—or more tersely, "Lowness is rampant." Just the kind of ejaculation we should expect from a man who had been dreaming of the reign of Universal Happiness; but to *which* side does it apply? Remembering the close of his message to the King last June; "a gloomy, terrible foreboding invades my mind, that the war will soon be waged by the raw element of the Masses only," we can but answer, To the mob. Had Wagner heard as yet of the firing by the soldiers and consequent loss of life, we cannot imagine his employing no stronger epithet. The wild harangues of declaimers at street-corners, the placards of the Vaterlands-Verein, the shouts of a seething crowd, were fulfilling his worst apprehensions of mob-rule. To what would it lead? The remarkable thing, is that after this first brief turbulent day the people should have relapsed into so much quietness and order, under the sobering influence of danger; but at the first blush it was "*Die Gemeinheit offenbart sich*," whichever part we take.

It will have been observed that Kietz informs us he was stationed in front of the Rathhaus when he saw Wagner crossing the Altmarkt, and that the Kapellmeister "hurried away" after answering Rietschel's question: ergo, Wagner did not *enter* the Rathhaus. This should dispose of the tangled tale that Tzschirner, a member of the new-fledged Committee of Public Safety (the title finally substituted for that of "Committee of Defence" etc.), having given an order to hoist the black-red-yellow banner of the new "Reich" upon the roof of the Rathhaus,

* For this most natural cry of horror, the impressionable artist had to suffer in after years at the hands of the Saxon police, who accused her of having "instigated the people to build barricades." With its usual want of taste, the *Signale* of June 5, 1849, flippantly remarks: "Mme Schröder-Devrient, also, is said to have played a rôle in the Dresden street-battle: she waved her handkerchief. Whether she waved it for the Red Republic, or the Reichs-Verfassung, we are not aware."

and ring the alarm, "Richard Wagner, engineer Heine and others present" rushed off to execute it, "and themselves pulled the bell-ropes at the Kreuz-church during the attack on the Arsenal," an attack that followed the first affair there within an hour or so.

This second Arsenal affair, unlike its predecessor, was an actual *attack* on the part of a crowd infuriated at sight of the first victims. Yelling for "arms," and reinforced by a volunteer rifle-corps, the people break in the principal gate with a "ladder-wagon" (a term sufficiently descriptive of the primitive form of cart to be seen every-day conveying beer-barrels etc. in German towns) such as had just been used for transporting their dead. They are received with a cannon-charge of grapeshot, which kills or mortally wounds over a score of fresh victims, and scatters the mob for the rest of the day. For the rabble were but sheep without a shepherd, as Waldersee himself admits, and the Communal Guard had no gunpowder.—The position of this hapless Communal Guard is most unclear in all accounts, themselves more or less conflicting. It appears to have fallen between two stools, an attempt to control the mob, and an equally futile menace to the military. One can never be quite sure what it was doing, in its collective capacity, and probably it was not sure itself. Anyhow, members of it run off to the Rathhaus, and demand ammunition; whereupon their commander, Lenz, declares that he has none. The manifest untruth incenses the citizens assembled; Lenz lays down his command, and is saved from maltreatment only by being hurried off to temporary confinement. In place of Lenz, the Town Council appoints Heinze to full command, a radical member of the recently-dissolved First Chamber, and formerly Lieut. Colonel in the Greek army.

During this second affair at the Arsenal another deputation of members of the Town Council had arrived at the palace. Beust and Rabenhorst, called away from the Royal table to receive them, merely shrugged their shoulders at the warnings and entreaties of these city-fathers, though that discharge of grape-shot shook the palace-walls in course of the brief interview. A second deputation fell in with another from Leipzig and yet another from the Communal Guard, all on similar errands bent, while the blood-stained bodies of the slain were that instant being carted past the palace-gates amid cries of execration. One word from the King would have laid the tumult and put an end to

bloodshed once for all; but that word remained sternly unspoken; "the King cannot go back on his word."

No further hostilities took place that day, on either side; and we may as well remark at once, that throughout the insurrection there was no attempt at plunder or wilful destruction of property: Lenz' shop was wrecked, it is true, owing to the indignation of the crowd, as explained above; but even Beust admits that the persons who broke into his forsaken house, in vain search of political documents that had all been removed, did no further damage than "skilfully to cut from a curtain enough velvet to make a waistcoat of," apparently by way of souvenir and trophy. Yet things by now had come to such a pass, that retreat was impossible on the side of the citizens. Judging by later events, arms and ammunition must have been procured from somewhere. Presumably the scanty stock at disposal of the Communal Guard was served out to its members; in a city of the size of Dresden there of course would be gunsmiths with a modest store; and private individuals would furbish up their fowling-pieces. The whole rising was woefully amateurish; but the best must be made of it. What is certain, is that barricades were hastily erected during the afternoon and night, and rocket-signals sent up from the Kreuzthurm, or tower of the Kreuz church, answered by bonfires on the surrounding heights. On the Government's side, the troops were confined to barracks, to obviate contamination by the populace; reinforcements were ordered up from other garrisons in Saxony, and the Prussian confederates were implored to march on at full speed.

Friday, May 4.—At break of day the King, his Consort and his Ministers, fled the city. On foot in the 4 o'clock mists they crossed the bridge and gained the Neustadt, where a steamer lay in readiness to convey them to Königstein, a fortress some sixteen miles up stream. One can scarcely blame the King and Queen for escaping from a city in uproar, though their persons were not, nor were likely to be, exposed to danger; but the Ministers, as their subsequent colleague von Friesen declares, were in duty bound to remain; their flight accordingly has more the appearance of an abduction and imprisonment of the King, lest his heart should relent and grant the people's prayer. Moreover, this sudden withdrawal from the capital of all constituted authority, save the military, amounted to a tacit avowal that it

had been abandoned to its fate. All possibility of parley or negotiations was abruptly cut off, and law-abiding citizens had no one to whom to appeal for guidance. As Friesen puts it, "The police and other officials were left without instructions, or even any knowledge of the Ministers' departure, save what might be gained from exaggerated rumours in the streets. Can one blame them, if in these circumstances they likewise held their hand? Through the precipitate departure of the Ministers without leaving behind them any kind of orders or instructions, every subordinate was deprived of lawful ground of action, and Dresden was abandoned to anarchy; not only Dresden, but all the land."

About an hour after the King's departure a few desultory shots were fired in the neighbourhood of the palace, through an archway in which the principal street (the Schloss-strasse) leading to the Altmarkt and Rathhaus was connected with the bridge across the Elbe. But this was practically all the firing that occurred that day: for the following reason. So soon as the report of the King's departure had been confirmed, a deputation of the Town Council, accompanied by Communal Guard Commander Heinze and his adjutant v. Zychlinski, proceeded to the palace in search of some member of the Government with whom to confer. After an hour of fruitless hunting for any official with a shred of responsibility, they gave it up, but arranged a five-hours truce with the General in command of the garrison, von Schulz: an arrangement for which, significantly enough, Schulz was punished next day by his command being transferred to General von Schirnding.

During this interval of truce occurred the *sole* authenticated *action* by Richard Wagner during the whole disturbance; an action with little or no result, but thoroughly characteristic of his nature, and eloquent of the light in which he viewed the situation. It is recorded by two trustworthy witnesses, each more or less concerned.

Upon hearing the first shots fired this Friday morning, Wagner could no longer stay idle at home; moved by a very natural curiosity, he set off for the Rathhaus, to learn the progress of events. On his way thither he is said to have met Bakunin, who had been absent from Dresden for about four days; but that is a detail quite void of bearing on our anecdote. Let us hear what our first witness depones. R. Römpler, printer of Roedel's

Volksblätter, narrates how he met Wagner at the Rathhaus on the morning of this May the 4th,* and was asked by him if nothing could be done to ascertain the leaning of the Saxon regulars. It ended in Wagner himself suggesting the printing of strips of paper with "Are you with us against foreign troops?" in bold-faced type, and ordering them to be sent him at the Rathhaus. "About an hour after the printing had been finished," Römpler continues, "I returned towards the Rathhaus; on my way, I saw the posters pasted on street-corners and the *inner* sides of the barricades. In the market I met Wagner again, and asked if he had remarked how his strips had been used. As he hadn't, I begged him come with me and convince himself. 'My God!' he then cried, 'What idiot did it?' So we went together to my printing-house in the Ostra-Allee, where he waited while another batch of two-hundred slips was printed, which he carried off under his arm. I followed him, to see what he really meant to do. I saw him climb the barricade beside the Old Opera-house, and make straight for the military stationed on the palace-yard and bridge. With his own hands he distributed the strips among the soldiers, then turned his steps toward the Brühl Terrace, where he passed out of sight; but I afterwards heard he had done the same thing there. That he was not made prisoner at once, or maybe shot, is a marvel."—Our second witness, Gustav Kietz, fully bears out this account, for he tells us: "I made use of the short period of truce to walk to the Brühl Terrace, to see for myself whether it and the Neustadt were swarming with troops, as alleged. There, in front of the Academy, I met Wagner for the last time. Under his arm he had a big bundle of posters, part of which he gave to me, bidding me distribute them among the military as unobservedly as possible. Upon the bills stood in large type, 'Are you with us against foreign troops?' I set to work at once, when a captain suddenly stopped me and tore the bills from my hand; luckily he dismissed me with the caution, 'Deluded lad, be off!'"

It was a risky experiment, but who knows that its success might not have averted all the bloodshed of the next few days, and opened a road for peaceful solution of the political, or rather, the

* "Eine Erinnerung an Richard Wagner," in Püttmann's *Australische Kalender für 1890*, Melbourne, reprinted in the *Mus. Wochenblatt* 1894, p. 322. Römpler died at Melbourne in 1892, "a hot-head and democrat to the end."

national crisis? As yet there had hardly been more than the merest commencement of hostilities on either side, and the interval of truce might easily, in fact *must*, have been prolonged, had the Dresden garrison refused to continue in arms against its fellow-countrymen. According to the compact already implicitly entered into by all the German governments who had sent envoys to the Frankfort Diet, it was a contravention of the national law for one German State to employ force against another: consequently the invasion of Saxony by Prussian troops, on whatever pretext, in itself must absolve the Saxon soldiery from obedience to those who enjoined complicity with such an act; their duty was to protect the Saxon people against invaders, not to encourage them. All this was tersely summarised in the simple words, "Are you with us against foreign troops?" Had the Dresden garrison but heeded that appeal, there can be little doubt but that the soldiery throughout the land would have followed its example; and, faced with so completely changed a situation, the General from Berlin must perforce have withdrawn his troops across the frontier, leaving the King of Saxony to settle with subjects personally attached to him the terms of a *modus vivendi*—terms already formulated in that *Verfassung* which he had been on the point of granting when his Berlin cousin stiffened his back for him. Nor would it have been the first time that a patriotic sense of shame in the Saxon rank and file had turned the day, after their leaders had joined hands with the country's foe: when Richard Wagner was but a six-months babe the Saxon troops had saved their fatherland, and Europe too, by defection from the monarch who had leagued himself with Bonaparte (see vol. i). But this time such a possibility appears to have been foreseen—though, to judge by subsequent trials for participation in the May-revolt, an indefinite number of the regulars *did* desert. Not only had the regulars been carefully shut off from any mingling with the populace, but from the first day of the fight (yesterday, to wit) they are said to have been richly plied with spirituous liquors by their superiors; according to the bitter self-upbraidings of many of these soldiers in after days, if we may take Roeckel's word for it, "wine had flowed so freely that they had not the courage to go over to the people." Whether we believe that tale in full, or not, we are further told that, in consequence of alleged excesses of the regular troops during the

next few days, the young women in some parts of Saxony for long refused to dance with any soldier—a homely sign of popular feeling.

As for Wagner himself, this fruitless endeavour shews that by now his “choice” was made; he had ranged himself on the side of the defenders for weal or woe, whatever his previous opinion of the desirability of recourse to violence, or his estimate of the intrinsic value of the measure that had struck the spark. How could he have done otherwise, since he tells us that he “never could but take the side of the suffering party, and in exact degree as it was engaged in resisting any kind of oppression” (*P. I.* 355)? Yet it is as a private mediator, that this story shews him, not as an agent or leader; the same position he had occupied in that Germanic Address.—Breaking his oath of allegiance, you say, and inciting others to break theirs? But what did the whole British nation do with its oath of allegiance to James the Second?—There are oaths and oaths: the King of Saxony had dashed that oath to pieces when he broke his own, when he called in the troops of a neighbouring power at whose hands his kingdom had suffered such humiliation and loss not long ago, and again when he left his capital without a semblance of executive after arbitrarily dissolving the legislature.

It was to remedy this anomalous condition, that a meeting was summoned by the Committee of Public Safety for midday on this selfsame 4th of May, still during the truce. All the available members of the late Landtag assembled in the great “Sessions-hall” of the Rathhaus, and elected from among their number a “Provisional Government” of three: Karl Todt, a *Geh. Regierungsrath*, or Privy Councillor; Otto Leonhard Heubner, a *Kreisamtmann*, or Bailiff of the district court, of Freiberg; and advocate Samuel Eduard Tzschirner, a lawyer from Bautzen. Had the thing been plotted in advance,* we should certainly have expected to meet quite other names upon this list: that of Minckwitz, president of the Fatherland Club, for instance. But the only actual democrat of the three was the Radical deputy Tzschirner. The King and Government having gone away ‘with no address,’ some sort of authority must be installed; and to the credit of this Provisional

* As afterwards pretended, on the solitary evidence of an expert who declared that the seal of this Provisional Government (not used *at first*, if at all) could not have been engraved in less than a fortnight!

Government it must certainly be placed, that never was an insurrection so kept within the bounds of social order.

Its first act was a perfectly legitimate one, in the circumstances: the administering to the people of an oath to abide by the Reichsverfassung and uphold it with all their might; a ceremony performed from the balcony of the Rathhaus amid cheering and ringing of bells. Whether Wagner was present at the election, is very doubtful; but it is *said* that when Dr Hermann Köchly, an "upper teacher," presented the Provisional trio to the people, on that balcony, the Kapellmeister led off the cheering for the new Government, and "looked as if he were inciting the people to follow his example"—truly shocking! At anyrate that is the last we hear of him this Friday. Presumably he passed the rest of the day in watching the highly interesting operation of erecting barricades, 108 of which were completed before nightfall.

A most peculiar insurrection! Though only five hours of truce had been stipulated for, there is nowhere any further mention of hostilities on this May the 4th. The people had already assumed a purely defensive attitude: their tactics to the end, as testified by the Prussian General, Count Waldersee. In the absence of Beust & Co., on the other hand, the royalist commander of the garrison appears to have avoided taking any offensive steps. We therefore have a moment in which to look round us, and will devote it to passing the Provisional Government under closer review.

The position of this trio was one of no small difficulty. It was a head without limbs or eyes; for it had no trained subordinates to execute its orders, and was further handicapped by none of its members possessing that intimate knowledge of topography which can only come to residents of long standing—not one of them was a Dresdener. Todt was in a terrible fright from the first, and eagerly seized the opportunity of proceeding to Frankfort, two days later, to demand the intervention of the infant Central Military Power. Tzschirner, an experienced orator, had neither a comprehensive grasp of affairs, nor that self-oblivion so essential for success in grave public emergencies. Heubner, by far the noblest Roman of the three, a man whose ardent patriotism alone had prevailed on him to accept the temporary office; a man who would willingly have laid down his life in his countrymen's cause; a man known for his clearness of intellect and justice of temper—

had not the iron will that treats the lives of other men as pawns. It is not surprising, therefore, that Bakunin's offer of assistance was readily accepted, nor that he soon became chief organiser. From that afternoon he was constantly to be found in the head office of the Provisional Government, plunged in maps and charts of Saxony, with a view to the advent of convoys etc. Though his name appears on no proclamation, his hand is visible in all the strategy of this miniature war, so far as it can be said to have had any generalship at all on the people's side; he gave orders right and left, arranged the hours of relief for the defenders of the barricades, and issued permits to their captains to burn or demolish houses offering points of vantage to attackers. Much virtuous indignation has been roused by his exclamation, "Houses? To the sky with them!"—among those who value property at a higher premium than men's life and liberty; just as if a *bombardment* of the beautiful city, with its wealth of priceless art-treasures, had not been ordered by the Ministry—though that act of vandalism was luckily delayed by the *Prussian* commander until no longer requisite.

On Friday night von Beust and Rabenhorst return to the safe part of the city, across the water, leaving their Royal prisoner at Königstein in charge of their colleague Dr Zschinsky, who appears to have joined the Ministry a day or two previously. So reckless had been that morning's removal, that even von Friesen—who went to the Block-house, or War Office, in the Neustadt later on in the day, with a view to offering his services—could be given no information of their whereabouts.* But the two bloodhounds were back in their kennel this night, and the man-hunt could open in earnest.

Saturday, May 5.—Fighting began with a cannonade by the regulars from the archway under the Schloss, breaking almost every window in the palace and a good way down the Schlossstrasse, and "putting heart into the soldiers," as Montbé, a Saxon officer, expresses it in his *Der Mai-Aufstand in Dresden* (1850). But this was rather in the nature of a preliminary feint; for the

* His formal offer was therefore made on May 5; May 6 he is invited by Rabenhorst to join the Cabinet as Minister of the Interior, and on the 7th he receives his portfolio from the King. He appears to have been the only man of moderation in this cabinet of terrorism, and consequently was treated by Beust as a lifelong enemy.—W. A. E.

Ministers' plan was, not to deliver a frontal attack on the seat of Provisional Government in the Altmarkt, but to hem the rebels gradually in, and make a wholesale 'battue' of them. Those precious Ministers were wise in their generation, since the great architect Gottfried Semper had prepared a practically insuperable check to the former alternative. Stationed with a company of sharpshooters from the Communal Guard at the chief entrance to the Market from the north, namely where the Wilsdruffer joins the Schloss Strasse, his professional instinct had chafed at the inadequacy of the barricade at such a vital corner. At last he left his post and rushed off to the Rathhaus (May 4?) to protest "against such childish nonsense, if one really meant a revolution."—"If you don't approve, why not improve it, if you can?" was the Provisional's answer. "If I can, indeed!" retorted the nettled artist, "I should be ashamed of my craft, if I couldn't do better." So he built his famous barricade, with flanking works and all the rest—enough to rejoice the heart of Sterne's Uncle Toby—and triumphantly ensured it against even that redoubtable salvo of artillery which broke the windows half-way down the street. In fine, Semper's barricade, which he defended himself for three whole days, was *never* taken from the front, and had to be turned by the demolition of houses.

That brings us to the leading feature of this singular fight. Strictly speaking, it was never a battle of barricades, or anything resembling ordinary street-warfare. The Dresden streets were high and narrow, with only here and there an open space sufficient to allow of the deploying of troops, the training of guns, or other regulation military tactics. The besieged, for so we must term the insurgents, had the chief part of the old city at their disposal, with its southern approaches all open down to almost the last day. On the other side, the besiegers had behind them the Neustadt across the Elbe, and were in full possession of the unencumbered ground on the east, north, and west of the palace, adjoining the left bank of the Elbe, with the Arsenal on their extreme left flank. Without artillery, save for a few miserable little mountain-guns brought in later by miners, the besieged were powerless to take the offensive, and remained behind their barricades or posted at windows commanding all avenues of attack. To bring their forces into line, the insurgents broke passages in the party-walls from house to house; an example soon followed by the besiegers.

And so the main fight went on from day to day, down to the morning of May 9, the opposing forces firing at each other from house-windows till barricade after barricade was taken from the rear by the besiegers, slowly but irresistibly advancing in this novel fashion. For its part, the regular garrison was reinforced not only by other Saxon troops called up from far and near, but still more effectually by the Prussians who commenced to arrive on Saturday evening, May 5, and toward the end of next week amounted to 12,000 men. The insurgents, on the other hand, had nothing but raw levies of peasants, with an occasional detachment of the outlying Communal Guard, to supplement their numbers. A most unequal combat, especially with an incompetent Communal Commander like Heinze, who appears to have possessed neither energy nor initiative, lost his head, and ended by giving himself up as prisoner on the dawning of the 8th. Yet there was plenty of pluck and dogged perseverance in the ranks of the insurgents; even the women went on with their household tasks as if used to a flying accompaniment of bullets. Some of them went farther, for Roeckel tells us of a girl whose sweetheart had been slain by one of the earliest volleys, how, "swearing to avenge him, she mounted one of the most exposed of the barricades, and stood there calmly firing off her musket with unerring aim, till at last a bullet struck her, and she too fell dead. She was not the only heroine in those days."

As we have no intention of going systematically through the history of this rebellion, we shall merely indicate its further course by the manner in which it affected our friends and acquaintances.

Let us first take ex-Minister Oberländer, the Liberal so hampered by his former colleagues; the man to whom Wagner a twelve-month since had presented that hapless scheme of Theatre-reform which already has precipitated itself into ancient history. Oberländer had no hand in the Dresden revolt, but his heartfelt sympathy with the cause at stake impelled him to make a strenuous attempt at mediation. With this end in view he went to Beust and Rabenhorst, according to Montbé, "on one of the first days of the struggle," apparently May 5, to advocate a "recognition of the Reichsverfassung." That was just what these two Ministers had set their face against. His intervention, therefore, is contemptuously declined: "Upon their refusal he

told them, 'I shall go to the King.' They answered him, 'Go then!' " *Gehen Sie!* is scarcely a courteous rejoinder from a present Minister to a past, but Beust was too sure of his position to care a fig for politeness; he knew how well his master had been primed. Oberländer went to see the King at Königstein; entirely failed in his mission; and passes from our ken.

Schröder-Devrient's tragic "cry" has already been mentioned: the recording devils stored its echoes up for future use. On Saturday morning, May 5, the Devrient left the city for Berlin: "Spring had spread all its charms on the earth, and I shall never forget the gruesome effect it had on me, to be travelling through the verdant landscape under a sky of dazzling brilliance, while the alarm-bells of the insurrection were clanging from the city in the valley down below." So she describes her flight. But the police had just as good a memory, and a perhaps still livelier imagination. Two and a half years later (Oct. 7. 51) the artist, now Baroness von Bock through a recent third marriage, returns on a visit to Dresden with her husband, not for a moment dreaming of unpleasant consequences. She is promptly arrested "for words used in the May revolt," and subjected to a criminal inquiry! True, she is released "on caution" of 500 thlr., and next December the King is graciously pleased to dispense her from further examination. Why not at once? The Saxon Court was ever so considerate to its *genuine* artists! If this is how the authorities, from the King downwards, could treat a woman for a mere "cry," after years of priceless service, we need not wonder at Wagner's "share" having been magnified into high treason. Really, the methods of this trumpety Court sometimes make one's blood boil.—Nor was the incident of 1851 without more serious results for the Devrient, as we still must call her. Owing to her Dresden "criminal process," she was forbidden by the Russian government to return to Livonia, where lay the Baron's estate, and thus had to spend a great part of each year in separation from her husband, until the disbursement of large sums of money procured a reversal of the decree in the winter of 1853! As for Dresden itself, such shameful treatment robbed it of a medallion portrait which the singer had commissioned a young Gotha sculptor to execute for the adornment of the foyer of the theatre.

There was always great affinity between this impulsive artist

and our hero. Just as Schröder-Devrient could not leave insurgent Dresden without a reflection on the Spring and its splendour, so Wagner mounts the city's highest tower to drink in the view. Three-hundred feet rears up its height the tower of the Kreuz church. On its open gallery Wagner spent the greater portion of two days. It was no place of shelter that he sought, for some seventy sharp-shooters were firing from the belfry immediately above his head, and their fire was answered from below. Someone remarked to him on the danger of his situation, with bullets flying all around him and hitting the very wall behind; he recked it not, but replied quite calmly, "Have no fear! My life is charmed." To gain an idea of the scene on which he now was gazing, let us borrow from Dr Dinger a description of the view in times of peace, and supplement it in our mind's eye with a running commentary of puffs of smoke and fire-flashes:—

"Standing in a small square at the south-east angle of the Altmarkt, the Kreuz church offers from its famous tower the finest panorama of the smiling valley of the Elbe. Far beneath lies the town, the tiled roofs of its most ancient quarter piled tier on tier in picturesque irregularity, relieved by slow-ascending columns of blue smoke. Beyond the great square of the Altmarkt we look across the serried chimney-stacks to the historic Zwinger, Schloss, Brühl Terrace, Theatre and Hofkirche," their copper cupolas all weather-toned to malachite. "Three teeming bridges span the bright blue, green-fringed Elbe. Across it lies the Neustadt, a younger quarter, spread fan-wise toward the wooded hills and emerald plateaus of the Dresdener Haide, which shuts in the horizon north-eastwards. Broad parks and long alleys of tall chestnuts alternate with white groups of houses built of scintillating Saxon sandstone. From the bosom of forests peep out the walls of stately chateaux, where the Haide slopes down to the right bank of the Elbe; and all the way to Pillnitz the undulating river-bank is strewn with vineyards, coppices, gardens, pleasant country-seats. Behind the Pillnitz chain of hills stand out the heights of Saxon and Bohemian Switzerland; at the extreme east the gleaming walls of Königstein, some sixteen miles distant, command the fertile valley. Softly rising toward the south and west, the left bank mounts terrace-like towards the Erzgebirge and the coal-fields of the

Windberg and the Zaukeroda chain. On the extreme west the river takes its leave of us between the sunny vine-clad cliffs of Lössniss and the Meissen and Coswig heights.—For ages this Kreuzthurm has been used as watch-tower over the Elbgau, and to this day six watchmen here keep constant ward for fire in Dresden and its environs, indicating by different peals of bells the region of an outburst, or signalling the probable approach of storms."

In those May days of 49, next to the Rathhaus, the Kreuzthurm was the most important station in the town. The fight down below could have no possible success if the whole countryside did not hasten to send in its Communal Guards and volunteers, with weapons and provisions; for the safe conduct of which an eye aloft was needed. Therefore the gallery of this church-tower was always full of eager watchers. Here Wagner stood hour after hour, and some say that, like others round him, he pencilled messages on scraps of paper and dropped them overboard: one of these terrible messages was to his wife for a bottle of wine, which he must badly have needed. All the afternoon and night of Saturday, and a good part of Sunday (May 6), he spent there. When daylight waned, and there was nothing to look at beyond an occasional rocket-signal or the flash of a belated musket, he whiled away the time with talking anything but politics—at least so a Dr O. Bie informs us (*Allg. Mus. Ztg* 1893, p. 439) on the authority of the other party to the conversation, a certain Professor Thum. So like Richard Wagner! Three hundred feet high in the air, in the midnight pauses of an insurrection, he discusses warmly and at length "antique and Christian views of life," the Dresden Kapelle, the Leipzig Gewandhaus, and "the madness of trying to write Absolute Music after Beethoven." On Sunday he speeds another air-borne message to his wife, for a second bottle of wine and some snuff; but this time she emphatically refuses, and sends back word that if he doesn't return at once, she will leave the house. The story goes, that no sooner had he safely reached home, than she locked the door and hid the key. For the truth of that we cannot vouch; but no more is heard of him till Monday.

The snap of rifles and growl of cannon had ceased for but a few hours of the night. The morning of Sunday the 6th found a considerable body of Prussian troops already in occupation of the

Neustadt, and tightening the assailants' grasp upon the fated city. Of his arrival on this Sunday, after posting from Prague, Roeckel has left us a vivid description. "Many a convoy"—or "reinforcement," *Zuzug*—"enlivened the road we took through Saxony. In every village the inhabitants had assembled to discuss the attitude to be adopted; everywhere they had either already decided for energetic support of the popular cause, or were on the point of doing so. At a considerable distance from Dresden one heard the thundering of cannon; closer, the jangling of bells and crackling of musketry; till the last hill revealed the town itself, with two pillars of smoke ascending to the bright May sky: the Old Opera-house, fired by an unknown hand,* and a private house set fire to by the Prussians, were in flames. It was on the afternoon of Sunday, May the 6th, that I arrived. The diligence had to halt before the gate; for barricades blocked the entrance from this side, and all the streets for a long way round. Farther on in the town, between barred houses, shuttered shops, and idle barricades, one saw the usual groups † of anxious questioners and stray fighters bringing tidings to their families or friends: the actual struggle was still restricted to the streets around the Schloss and Neumarkt. To avoid a painful meeting with my family, whom I wished to think me far away, I did not proceed to my dwelling at all, but made straight for the Rathhaus. Here I found Heubner, Todt and Tzschirner, the members of the Provisional Government, Communal Guard Commander Heinze, Bakunin and others. It goes without saying, that I placed myself at once at the entire disposal of the Provisional Government."

Roeckel goes on to tell us how these men were working day and night at the superhuman task of organising a defence of the beleaguered city. Provisions, luckily, were plentiful; for supplies of bread, meat and vegetables, were constantly pouring in from the surrounding country. But a very serious question, was the rapidly diminishing stock of gunpowder: "As in all such fights, there was no stint of shooting; the rattle of shot never ceased for an instant, on either side, even when there was no conceivable possibility of hitting a foe. The military might indulge in this

* Said to have been a preventive measure against an approach of the military from that direction.

† It will be remembered that Roeckel was a youth in Paris during the July Revolution of 1830.

noisy sport with less anxiety; the insurgents were in sorer straits, for their ammunition hardly promised to last out the ensuing day. However, the seizure of an outlying powder-mill, but weakly-guarded, in the night of Sunday to Monday, helped matters a little; whilst lead could be had, at a pinch, from the roofs or the rain-pipes"—quite reminding us of *Goetz*.

The wounded were tended in druggist shops and lazarettos; the few prisoners, for the most part suspected "spies," were lodged in the police-court. It was Heubner who undertook the passing judgment on these latter: it being a difficult matter to procure the attendance of their accusers, they themselves were called upon to state the case, and, under conditions so favourable, were naturally restored to liberty at once. Even captured soldiers were simply disarmed and allowed to go free: it was magnanimously assumed that they were attacking the people against their will; and the assumption was so far justified, that in no case did they break their parole. One member of the Communal Guard was charged with having fired upon the people; the crowd was clamorous for summary conviction: "Then," as Roeckel tells the tale, "Bakunin rose to the full height of that rigour and blood-thirstiness ascribed to him by his veracious enemies. In harsh tones he enjoined silence on the accused, who was making more and more of a failure of his shambling defence, then stepped behind him and whispered what he best had say; while others sought to pacify the wrath of his accusers. And thus this revolutionary court-martial ended with a prompt discharge of the trembling wretch." A rose-water revolution, indeed! Yet no reliable authority on the other side has anything less humane to relate of the insurgents' conduct, outside the stern necessities of actual warfare.

Those "pitch-wreaths" which Roeckel has been accused of weaving for incendiarism of the city, and more particularly of the Old Opera-house?—Very well. Apart from the fact that the Old Opera-house was in flames before he entered Dresden, the object with which those "wreaths," or hoops, were *to have been* prepared, is simplicity itself. Seeing that many of the barricades were far too low, therefore easy to storm, Roeckel tells us that the idea occurred to him to crown them with tow-brands steeped in pitch, to be set alight in the event of assault. Armed with the authority of the Provisional Government, he had already

got together a certain amount of material, when he received countermanding orders, some of the town-councillors having taken fright meanwhile. As a fact, the pitch was never even melted, since the inn-kitchen in which the operation was to be performed was occupied as yet with the cooking of a meal for several hundred combatants.

It was just after this countermand had been received, that Roeckel met Wagner for the *only* time during the whole rebellion, namely on Monday morning, May the 7th. After exchanging a few words the friends parted, not to meet again for thirteen years or more; for Roeckel fell into the clutches of a squadron of cavalry that very night, while on an expedition the object of which is not quite clear.* Since Roeckel informs us that he himself was busily engaged on the 6th and 7th in visiting barricades, encouraging their defenders, and reporting to the Rathhaus, the fact of his encountering Wagner but this once goes to prove how little of an active part the latter played: otherwise he must inevitably have met his friend sooner and oftener. The last we saw of Wagner, was his returning from the Kreuzthurm at Minna's entreaty on Sunday. For the next few days we have a somewhat sketchy diary by Minna's younger sister, Natalie Planer, written down from memory shortly after, but neither over-accurate nor easily controllable.†

According to the source just-mentioned, Wagner went out early on Monday the 7th, to see for himself how things were prospering in the city, but returned home after a few hours. In this interval fell his sole encounter with August Roeckel since the end of April. But there is reason to believe that he had also visited the Rathhaus and ascertained the intention of the Provisional Government to transfer its seat from the hourly more untenable capital to the mountainous district of the Erzgebirge — Freiberg, Heubner's dwelling-place, being the point selected for a general stand, as the whole country by now was up in arms. In any case, the Friedrichstadt suburb and Wagner's own house were no longer safe quarters for a woman; ‡ so he proposed that his wife should accompany him to Chemnitz, where he could leave her under the protection of his sister Clara's husband, Herr Wolfram.

* See Appendix.

† Quoted by Dinger, but without specification.

‡ Dinger says that Wagner himself was grazed by a bullet.

Minna consenting, they took the diligence at noon, and arrived at Chemnitz toward evening. His wife once securely deposited, early next morning (Tuesday, May 8) he commenced his return journey, as he had no idea of forsaking his friends and fellow-citizens. At Chemnitz he is said by Stephan Born* to have "exerted himself zealously for the despatch of the Communal Guard from there to Dresden"—*mit Eifer für den Zuzug der dortigen Kommunalgarde nach Dresden wirkte*—an expression which tallies to a word with his own allusion in a letter to Eduard Roeckel †: "Though I had undertaken no definite rôle, I was present everywhere (*überall zugegen*), exerted myself for reinforcements (*wirkte für Zuzüge*), and on the evening before the end I returned from the Erzgebirge to the Rathhaus in Dresden, where I was asked about August on all sides, as no one had heard of him since Monday evening: to our sorrow we could only suppose he had been captured or shot."—Other accounts say that it was at Öderan, a little distance from Chemnitz, that Wagner fell in with a detachment of Chemnitz Communal Guards, who were being forced against their will to march to Dresden (together with a large number of volunteers, estimated, with obvious exaggeration, at 1400). According to Born again, these Chemnitz loiterers refused to advance beyond Freiberg, but Wagner went forward to Dresden with a message from them requesting the despatch of a member or envoy of the Provisional Government with authority to decide whether they must really throw themselves into a capital already wellnigh conquered by the Prussian troops. Though the whole episode is so hopelessly confused by different versions, this part of the tale at least affords a clue to the connection of ideas in the letter just cited: there was a definite object in Wagner's proceeding direct to the Rathhaus. For the third time we find him in the rôle of mediator.

During his twenty-four-hours absence, what with the breaking

* In the *Baseler Nachrichten*, quoted in B. Vogel's *R. Wagner's Leben und Werke* p. 24.

† August's brother, a resident in England. The letter, dated "Enge, Zurich, 15. March 51," is translated with certain inaccuracies and distortions in Praeger's *Wagner as I knew him*; but some years ago a copy of the original, certified by E. Roeckel himself, was placed at my disposal by Mr H. S. Chamberlain.—W. A. E.

down of party-walls and the storming of corner-houses flanking barricades, the regulars had advanced the grip of their callipers almost within reach of the Rathhaus itself. To the east of the Altmarkt the whole of the Moritz-strasse had thus been seized the day before, after desperate fighting; from the west had been taken the Post-Platz (adjoining the Zwinger and the Ostra-Allee) after our old friend its Angel's Club, flanking one of the strongest barricades, had been carried at the bayonet-point by a Prussian regiment of Guards. On the morning of the 8th a third Prussian battalion, a thousand strong, had arrived in the Neustadt, with more artillery and cavalry to follow. For that matter, the heavy guns had almost ceased firing the last two days, to such a hand-to-hand encounter had it come. The bayonet was now the deadlier arm, and unsparingly was it used against the defenders, according even to General Waldersee—who comments severely upon the excessive proportion of slain on the people's side, as compared with the wounded.

It was on the evening of this 8th of May, "that fatal Tuesday evening" as he calls it in his first letter to Uhlig, that Wagner came for the last time to the Dresden Rathhaus, not only out of a personal interest in Bakunin and Roeckel, but also to deliver his message from the Chemnitz Communal Guard. His visit, moreover, enabled him to render a service to one of his professional subordinates. The flautist Fürstenau had returned a few hours back, with the parts of that Berliozian July-Symphony, and, coming from Berlin, had been arrested on popular suspicion as a spy. Poor Fürstenau thus found his leader's prophecy fulfilled, but owed to him his liberation. It was Wagner's last action in Dresden, and appropriately enough connected alike with his art and his humanity. He started the same night, so we are told by Born, for Freiberg; a return journey on which he was accompanied by Hermann Marschall von Bieberstein,* a lawyer and member of the Communal staff, as envoy to those Chemnitz dalliers. But the Dresden fight was virtually over, as he must undoubtedly have been informed.

For the insurgents there was no choice left, between being trapped in the ruins of Dresden, or retreating in the best order they could. A body of 400 men from Altenburg is said to

* Whom we shall meet later on at Zurich.

have recently joined them, whilst stronger reinforcements were already on their way; but even if these raw levies could have availed the city much at any time, it was too late now. To cover the retreat, bells were kept ringing all night, guns and rifles began firing at 4 A.M.; but towards 8 in the morning of May the 9th the Kreuzthurm bells gave forth the preconcerted signal, three times three, and all but a few defenders of more distant barricades withdrew from the city by the only avenue of escape, south-westwards. When the Prussians pressed forward to seize it, the bird had flown, save for a few moulted feathers; white flags were waving from almost every window. Silence as of death had fallen on the former scene of tumult.

It was an infatuated hope, that of resuming the struggle in the Erzgebirge. Reinforcements from more distant regions were just commencing to arrive in decent strength; but the news of the fall of the capital melted their ranks into thin air, and the retreating body itself grew smaller at every mile. Prussian troops swarmed through the country, to Pirna—which had a tiny insurrection of its own—to Chemnitz, Freiberg, Tharandt, and as far as the Bohemian frontier. Prisoners were swept in by shoals, including the heads of the movement. Then began that endless “examination” of the accused, with its death-sentences “graciously” commuted to penal servitude for life; an examination involving thousands of citizens of every social class, and protracted to the scandalous length of full four years, as if the Government were bent on dribbling out its reign of terror till the whole nation were thoroughly cowed. In two months time the King exchanged his mountain fastness for the greater freedom of Pillnitz; on July 20 he pays a few hours’ visit to his capital, where he is received “with much respect” (*D. Allg. Ztg*); but he had killed the affection of his people, and it is said that he never smiled again.

Before closing the chapter and accompanying Richard Wagner on his flight, let us ask once more what active share he had in the events of this week of May? Some two or three years later his wife informed Frau Wille, at Zurich, “My husband did nothing wrong. He merely watched from the tower-top for convoys that were to come from the country to the help of the town. He *never* stood on any barricade, as people have said of him; he bore

no weapon; and only escaped by flight when Prussian troops were pouring into Dresden" (E. Wille, *Erinnerungen* pp. 45-6).

And loyal Minna, in this instance, was incontrovertibly right. Search through the various histories penned by eye-witnesses of the Dresden rebellion, you will nowhere find Wagner mentioned by anyone with a shadow of pretence to authority, save in the most casual manner as an artist pursued by warrant for his sympathy with the people's cause; nor have contemporary newspapers, of any standing or repute, the smallest reference to his "participation." As for those precious *Acten* of the Saxon court of injustice—those records of unverified statements made in the absence alike of a jury and of any representative of the accused himself—trivial as they are in their application to Wagner's case, they are not worth the paper on which Dr Dinger has indiscriminately reprinted them, when viewed in the light of the following disclosure by von Friesen, then Minister of the Interior:—

"In those days succeeding the conquest of the Altstadt I had my first opportunity of reaping a most loathsome experience, which I unfortunately have frequently had to repeat. Scarcely had my appointment to the Ministry become known in wider circles, than I was overrun with persons hitherto unknown to me, all of whom made it their business to denounce others, some of them also total strangers to me, but some very well-known and highly-respected by me. Now it was, that they themselves had seen so-and-so fighting on barricades or helping to erect the same; now, that they themselves had heard treasonable utterances; or again, and in by far the greatest number of cases, that they themselves had seen and heard nothing, but had been *told* by most reliable witnesses, whose names they must on no account divulge, that *they* had seen or heard treasonable or otherwise criminal deeds and utterances of others*: and so, out of pure love for the King and loyal devotion to the Government, they had come to demand the exemplary punishment of all those

* Von Friesen might have written this as a commentary on the 20th letter in the *Wagner-Liszt Correspondence* (June 19, 1849), and more particularly on the following sentence: "My wife, who still thinks needful to live on beneath the load of Dresden's dregs, acquaints me with a thousand abominations that represent me in the eyes of wretches as far more compromised in that rising than I am in truth." It should be pointed out that the late Dr

persons they had named. I myself in the time immediately preceding the insurrection, as also in its first few days, when I was still residing in the Altstadt, had heard not only quite innocent, but even the loyalest persons, faithfully devoted to the King, superior officials in fact, make use of expressions so heedless as only to be explained by a temporary mental aberration brought on by that time of general and quite extraordinary commotion. . . . But from the day I accepted office I determined to draw a line across my memory" (*Erinnerungen* etc., pp. 168-70).

Had the Minister of Justice, von Zschinsky, or his prompters Beust and Rabenhorst, possessed the same fairness of mind as the Minister of the Interior, we should have been spared the sorry spectacle of the arrest of nearly a thousand persons on suspicion in Dresden alone,* the condemnation of scores of respectable and worthy patriots to lengthy terms of penal servitude, and the degradation of state-archives to the level of the gossip of a reptile press they helped themselves to feed. But so little sense of decency was there in Beust, that forty years thereafter he pollutes his Memoirs with an atrocious and unwarrantable slander on departed genius.†

To return to particulars. There is no reliable evidence to gainsay Minna's protest that her husband neither bore a musket nor stood upon the barricades. We should think no worse of him, if he had; but we cannot possibly imagine the author of *Die Feen* and *Parsifal* putting his hand to a weapon of offence or destruction: it was not in his nature, it was not to his taste, —to go no deeper. That he rang bells in the Kreuzthurm, we cannot categorically deny; but there is something incongruous

Hueffer has erroneously translated "*Theilnahme*" throughout this letter as "participation," neglecting the fact not only that Wagner invariably uses it as the equivalent of "interest" or "sympathy," but in one of these very instances he attaches to it the preposition "*für*," thereby most clearly indicating that it refers to a sympathy *for*, or with, not to a share *in*.—W. A. E.

* The *Deutsche Allg. Ztg* of Nov. 29, 1849 (quoting the *Dresdener Journal* of the 27th), tells us that the preliminary "examinations" began towards the end of May and lasted to mid-October: about 900 persons in all had been arrested in the city; 250 had been handed over to their own local authorities; 236 had been released; and about 380 cases had been proceeded with—whilst 65 persons still remained in prison.—W. A. E.

† See Appendix.

in the idea of the Kapellmeister turning sexton, when there would be so many other, stronger, willing hands to do the heavy work ; nor is bell-ringing quite the simple matter the usual tattler seems to think. His position on the Kreuzthurm was the same as he adopted toward the whole émeute, namely that of a benevolent looker-on : " In those days all of us had to be prepared for the worst ; for the condition in which we were living was no longer sufferable, unless we were to become altogether untrue to ourselves. For my part, long before the outbreak of the Dresden revolution I was fit for nothing but to feel that catastrophe approaching. However, what with me was little more than contemplation (*Beschaulichkeit*), with August was action ; his whole temperament was bound to take that trend. Since the fourth day of the Dresden rising, when I saw him one Monday morning for the first and only time in that catastrophe, I have heard nothing more of him than what the newspapers have had to tell " (letter to E. Roeckel, of March '51). In a word, though Wagner's sympathies were naturally with the people in their heroic, but wellnigh hopeless struggle, for his own part " it was little more than looking on."

There remain but two tangible acts : the one (confirmed by his own lips) his distribution of those printed strips to the Dresden garrison—of which, strangely enough, the State-archives appear to have no record ; the other that imprudent letter of May 2 begging Roeckel to return, as a revolution seemed imminent. On that letter alone must have rested the police case against him. Luckily for the world, he outran the warrant-officer, though he was within an ace of being meantime captured by the troops.

XIII.

FLIGHT.

At Freiberg with Bakunin and Heubner.—To Chemnitz; a narrow escape.—From Chemnitz to Weimar.—Liszt and a rehearsal of Tannhäuser.—Warrant of arrest; Minna's agony of suspense.—Five days at Magdala; Minna's visit.—To Jena, and on into Switzerland.

Whoever has assigned me the part of a political revolutionary, with actual enrolment in the lists of such, manifestly knew nothing about me, and judged me by an outward semblance that haply might mislead a police-officer, not a statesman.

RICHARD WAGNER ("State and Religion": 1864-5).

THE Dresden rebellion is over; but we have still to get our hero out of danger. Of that process it is only the first stage that presents any difficulty. For the best part of three whole days from noon on Monday, May 7, we seem to have nothing but a continual peregrination between Dresden, Chemnitz and Freiberg; and of the middle third of this period, namely from the evening of the 8th to about midday on the 9th, all we can say with any certainty is that Wagner was somewhere between Dresden and Freiberg, perhaps even retracing his steps more than once.

We have heard of his arriving at the Dresden Rathhaus on that Tuesday evening with a message from the Chemnitz Communal Guard, and of his alleged nocturnal departure in the company of an envoy from the Provisional Government. Meantime the Chemnitz Guard had halted for the night at Freiberg, about half-way on the road to Dresden. Whether they ever received an answer to their message, is not quite clear. However, on Wednesday morning, May the 9th, they set out at last for Dresden, together with the Freiberg Guard and a company of volunteers; "but scarcely had this body of about a thousand men advanced a league, than news of the occupation of the

Dresden Altstadt by the troops sent the whole mass rolling back on Freiberg. The Chemnitz Guard very soon drew off homewards, by a cross-country road; the volunteers remained. Shortly afterwards arrived the Provisional Government, represented by Heubner alone. He wished the town defended at all costs; in vain did a civic deputation implore him to desist. He appealed to the crowd and the volunteers, who had been reinforced meanwhile by fugitives from Dresden, and they naturally agreed.* The combatants were quartered in the town; arms and military cloaks, belonging to the cavalry despatched to Dresden, were requisitioned, and the tired men dropped off to rest.

Now, if Wagner arrived at Freiberg in time to find the Chemnitz Communal Guard still there, it is not at all easy to see how he could have urged them to continue their march on the capital, well-knowing that at that moment it must be already deserted by its defenders, and that Freiberg itself had been singled out for the next head-quarters of the popular party. Therefore we can but conclude, either that he knew nothing definite as to the arrangements of the ringleaders, or that he did not leave Dresden until the same time as themselves, i.e. the morning of the 9th, when the revolt had been practically stamped out. Heubner, in fact, says that at Tharandt he met Wagner, who was on the road *from* Dresden; so that we are entirely at sea as to our hero's real movements between the night of the 8th, when he is supposed to have left Dresden, and his meeting Heubner toward midday on the 9th. All that can be said for certain, is that he got into Heubner's carriage either at Tharandt, or somewhere between that town and Freiberg.

Though Tzschirner and Todt had not kept their tryst, their colleague Heubner was not alone, and from another occupant of the carriage we obtain the following highly-varnished tale, as imparted to Dr Dinger by a certain Professor Semmig:—"I saw Wagner for the first time on the morning of May 9, 1849; I cannot say if it was at the moment when I met the Provisional Government in the streets of Dresden, just as I was on my way to acquaint them with the inroads of the Prussians. Here Bakunin, whom I knew from earlier days at Leipzig, accosted

* According to a Freiberg correspondent (dating "May 10") in the Augsburg *Allg. Zeitung* of May 17, 1849.

me and drew me off with them. We journeyed on foot as far as Tharandt, where Herr Heubner took a carriage. He and Bakunin occupied the back seat, I that facing them; and I fancy it was a little way farther, that R. Wagner got into the carriage, Herr Heubner presenting him to me as 'Herr Kapellmeister Wagner.'—Conversation was out of the question; before us, around us, behind us, nothing but armed hosts; what commotion! But all the noise surrounding, the hubbub and rattle of arms, were lost in the flaming words of R. Wagner. Never have I seen a man in such excitement. Perhaps the nerve-explosion that quivered through his every limb is only possible in such a measure to musical genius; but that morning everything, with the composer, was dissolved into political revolution. 'War,' and again 'War,' he cried; the only topic on his lips or in his brain; such a torrent of words, that it is impossible for me to remember it all. With nothing would I exchange the impression then left on me by Richard Wagner, the recollection of that moment when, ringed by weapon-bridling ranks, the mighty composer of the *Nibelungen* appeared to me as if Rienzi, the People's Tribune. . . . For more than half an hour did this paroxysm endure, and so overpowered was I by the tempest of speech from him who sat beside me—shall I call him Wotan, or Siegfried?—that I could not interpose a single word. That moment is one of my most vivid memories of those terrible days of storm.* Whatever deductions we may allow for exaggeration, there is something weirdly grand in the account; but it is the picture of a high-strung human being driven well-nigh to delirium by the scenes he had lately witnessed and the fatigue of two days passed in constant journeyings to and fro.

Arrived in Freiberg, Heubner proceeded to his own house, and presented his two companions to his wife as "the Russian Bakunin and Kapellmeister Wagner."† He then went off to

* *Richard Wagner's geistige Entwicklung* p. 226n.

† As related to Dinger (*ibid.* 185n) by Frau Heubner, and confirmed by a statement of her husband's. But as an instance of the inaccuracy of even the most intelligent and straightforward witness, when recalling events of so many years ago, we may quote from a letter of 1887 to Dr Kohut (published in the latter's *Aus dem Zauberlande Polyhymnia's*, Berlin 1892), where Heubner himself supplies another version: "So far as my memory carries back to that stormy time, I neither saw nor spoke to Wagner saving on one single day—May 9, 1849. With Bakunin I had left Dresden, and, in common with our

the local Town-hall, to confer with the civic authorities, leaving Wagner and Bakunin in his dwelling. They had fallen asleep on a sofa, when a stranger arrived and asked for the Provisional Government; Frau Heubner led him into the next room, and referred him to the pair of them, in her ignorance of the exact situation. The incident has no importance, save for the following characteristic touch: "Wagner roused himself first, smoothed his hair from his forehead, and muttered to himself, 'Well dreamt!'" Then with Bakunin he followed Heubner to the Town-hall, where he found him addressing the assembled populace from the balcony, and "embraced him coram publico" at the end of his speech. But the Freiberg city-fathers would have none of it, and prudently protested against their town being given over to the horrors of a useless siege; so it was decided to shift the seat of "Government" a day's march farther, namely to Chemnitz.

Dinger says that Wagner supped that evening with Heubner and Bakunin, and that it was *his* description of the state of things in Chemnitz that guided their decision; but we are unable to accept this unsupported statement,* as Wagner could have had nothing to go upon but the experience of a night there and the reluctance of the local Communal Guard to march to the front. The same authority informs us that Heubner and Bakunin begged him to accompany them in their carriage, but "tired of their purely political talk" he rose from table and strolled about the market-place, where, happening on an empty post-chaise bound for Chemnitz, he hailed it and thus arrived before them. In the main this tale is not unlikely, but all we can vouch for is the following,

retreating force, had set foot in Freiberg. While taking a brief rest in my house, in the Amtshausstrasse, where we were recruiting our strength with a glass of wine, Wagner sought us out. From here he and Bakunin accompanied me to the Town-hall, from the balcony of which I spoke to the assembled crowd. Here Wagner embraced me, and from that moment I neither know anything more of, nor ever saw him again." In Heubner's house Born himself claims to have been "embraced with effusion" by Wagner, in Born's capacity of "captain of a Dresden corps."

* To the English reader it may be as well to point out that Dr Dinger, not having entered this world at the time we are speaking of, can furnish no more than hearsay evidence when he quits the field of documentary research and personal inference.—W. A. E.

from Wagner's letter to E. Roeckel of March 1851: "I accompanied the revolt to its last extinction; it was a pure accident that I was not captured with Heubner and Bakunin, since I had only taken leave of them for a night, and was to meet them again in the morning."

Before accompanying Wagner any farther, we must follow his example and say goodbye to Heubner and Bakunin, as we shall not meet them in the flesh again.

It was indeed a providential escape, that Wagner left their company. Born takes credit to himself for having counselled the three of them not to alight at an *inn* in Chemnitz, but to seek private shelter; Heubner and Bakunin neglected that advice, to their lasting sorrow. Together with Post-secretary Martin—"a notorious Polophile, who once before had been involved in a political trial and condemned to heavy penalties, yet had not only been granted free pardon, but restored to his former position" (Augsburg *Allg. Ztg* May 16, 49)—they drove to Chemnitz on the night of May the 9th. Heubner himself relates the incident as follows: "I wished to go with the whole armed host to Chemnitz, which town the assurances of its Communal Guard had given us every hope of holding. Bakunin declared a rest to be out of the question, though we had not closed an eye for six whole days and nights. So I went with him and Martin to Chemnitz, in advance; but at night, where I thought myself secure, I was woken from sleep and seized with my companions. The armed host, to which it was alleged that we had fled, capitulated next day in the Chemnitz market-place, and then dispersed."* These three had preceded the main body of fugitives in order to make arrangements for its reception, so Roeckel tells us: "But their having come *alone*, without protection, was to be their ruin. They had discussed all measures with the leaders in the town, and laid themselves down to rest, completely exhausted, when a few venal wretches (one of whom had himself opened a subscription for arms, powder and lead, to equip the reinforcement for Dresden) entered the unguarded inn by night, surprised the defenceless men, and transported them at once via Altenburg and Leipzig to Dresden." The stories of a "desperate resistance" are unqualified concoctions: "To speak of a perilous

* From Heubner's letter to Kohut, cited in footnote, p. 361.

undertaking and no small resistance to the capture," says Heubner himself, "is monstrous brag. 'Tis no act of heroism, to overpower people upon whom sleep has at last descended after six sleepless nights and days." The name of the turncoat who betrayed the trio must be placed on record; it was a Dr Becker, a former Chemnitz 'democrat.' There were traitors even in the people's ranks, and Beust asserts that he had prior information of the route the leaders would pursue, but had taken no steps to intercept them—the motives of which omission we may interpret as we please. At anyrate it is symptomatic of Governmental fear, that these popular prisoners were not conducted back to Dresden by the shortest road, but roundabout through Altenburg and Leipzig, where they were committed to the keeping of *Prussian* troops.

What happened to Martin, we are not in a position to say; but Heubner and Bakunin were shortly afterwards condemned to death, like Roeckel. None of these death-sentences, however, were carried out. Those on Heubner and Roeckel were presently commuted by a royal act of "clemency" to penal servitude for life, Heubner being actually detained in prison for ten whole years, and Roeckel thirteen, though the former subsequently rose to civic eminence in Dresden. As to Bakunin: he was delivered to the Austrians in June next year, again condemned to death and "pardoned" to life-long imprisonment; then handed to Russia, tried again, and sent to Siberia; finally escaping to Japan in 1860, he reached London via California.

We must now return to Richard Wagner, whom we last saw posting off to Chemnitz. Naturally he made direct for Wolfram's house, where he had left his wife a day and a half previously. He reached there on the evening of this eventful 9th of May, and presumably remained under Wolfram's hospitable roof till the evening of the 10th; for he left again "when night was falling," and we must allow the poor wanderer at least one night of rest.* His host is said to have asked him, "had he taken any part in the rebellion?"—to which Wagner is alleged to have replied, "None beyond that of curiosity," adding that he intended

* We have no *dates* of any of his movements between the 9th and 13th of May, in fact hardly any data.

to return to Dresden when all was over! Obviously, if the tale of this little private court of inquiry is to be accepted at all, it must be transposed to Wagner's first arrival in Chemnitz two evenings before, after which he *did* return to Dresden; for it is impossible to imagine any object he could have had in desiring to revisit a city he long had wished to quit, now that it had become a veritable hornet's nest. Moreover, Wolfram's cross-examination would naturally have been addressed to him on his first, not his second arrival. But we *have* a hint of the kind of conversation that really passed between refugee and host; and a hint in thorough harmony with that discourse on the Kreuzthurm. Chemnitz is a chief centre of the Saxon weaving industry, and in February 1850 we have the following passage in *Art and Climate*: "It is not our climate, that has reduced the stalwart warriors of the north to deformed and slovenly cripples . . . not it, that has evolved from the health-streaming Teutons our scrofulous flax-weavers, weaved themselves from skin and bones." Cannot we see the author sitting in his brother-in-law's parlour, eagerly discussing the social problem, listening to tales of local distress, and unconsciously treasuring up a scrap of information for future use? The "scrofulous weaver" of the district round Chemnitz remains in his memory long after his perils are past, own brother to the "labourer found frozen to death on the highway" in the posthumous papers of a much later date.

But Chemnitz was only a halting-place, especially as the insurgent forces had melted to thin air after the arrest of their leaders. When darkness gathered on the 10th (?) his flight must be resumed. Into Wolfram's private coupé was he smuggled before it left the coach-house; even the coachman, busy harnessing, had no idea that he was driving anyone besides his master. How far his host accompanied him, we are not informed; but Wagner took the road by Altenburg to Weimar; and thus he kept his earlier promise to arrive in time for *Tannhäuser*—under conditions then undreamt.

It was on Sunday the 13th of May that its composer descended on Liszt's quarters in the Hotel Erbprinz, and there put up. By no means realising yet his instant danger—at least, outside the bounds of Saxony—he passed the next five days in part at Weimar, in part at Eisenach. Indeed, had not something intervened, he would actually have heard his *Tannhäuser* conducted by Liszt at

the grand-ducal court-theatre. As it was, though unable to remain for the full performance, in this strange predicament he first heard Liszt rehearse a work of his, and learnt the full artistic value of a friendship humanly-speaking as yet in its infancy: "What I had felt when I conceived this music, he felt when he reproduced it; what I had wished to say when I wrote the notes, he said when he made them sound. Miraculous! Through the love of this rarest of all friends, and at the moment when I had become *homeless*, I won the true long-sought, long yearned-for *habitation of my art*" (P. I. 388). Nor was it simply for the art, that Liszt was caring; his brain was full of projects for the artist. True to his opinion that, to succeed in his own country, a German composer must first have been hall-marked in Paris or London—almost a truism in those days—Liszt decides that Wagner must make his way to Paris with all possible speed, after a week or so of rest.*

In the meantime Liszt takes him once more to see the Princess Wittgenstein. Over the massive stone-bridge that spans the Ilm they mount through shady groves of pine to that Altenburg one of whose rooms is ere long to form a sanctuary for the manuscript scores of all of Wagner's operas from *Die Feen* to *Lohengrin*; a shrine to which future visitors are to be conducted with due reverence and bated breath. No doubt the Princess, persecuted by the Russian Tsar, had the keenest sympathy to bestow on a fellow-sufferer; but it is with Liszt himself that Wagner is concerned in Weimar. What strength this troubled meeting added to their human bond, may be judged from the tone of Wagner's letter of acknowledgment just three weeks later (June 5), one of the gems of their correspondence: "Dear friend, my memory of you and my love of you are still too enthusiastic; all I can do at present, is to shout for joy when I think of you. . . . God grant me soon the power to do full justice to my love; as yet I live too much on yours for me, so that mine expends itself, without a deed,

* In her two-volume collection of Liszt's miscellaneous letters La Mara includes a supposed epistle to Belloni, Liszt's former secretary, dated May 14, 1849, but informs us that after its original publication by Tappert in the *Neue Musik-Ztg* of Oct. 1, 1881 (from an incomplete copy), "a Belgian musical paper pronounced it spurious, for reasons unknown to Tappert." The principal reason surely is obvious. In this highly questionable letter Liszt is made to gush about the music of *Lohengrin*, albeit on the 29th of the month Wagner is "curious to hear Liszt's opinion" of a score he is only just sending him!—see Letter 17 in the *Wagner-Liszt Correspondence*.—W. A. E.

in naught save exclamations." Yes: Liszt had already embraced the rôle he was to preserve in this alliance for the rest of their lives. There was much that he could do for Wagner, and little, in the worldly sense, that his friend could do for him: but in the realm of art that friend had opened up a revelation. Liszt takes his side of the unuttered bargain as a matter of course, and henceforth all his influence and energies are placed at the disposal of the mightier genius.

To a lady of still higher rank than Princess Wittgenstein was a visit paid during these few days at Weimar; to its reigning Grand Duchess, Maria Paulowna. Is the reader astonished that, in less than a week from the Dresden rebellion, Wagner should be presenting himself at court? If so, he by no means grasps the artist's attitude to the nominal rulers of Germany throughout, or the smallness of his sympathy with those who would dethrone an honest Prince. It was the courtiers who tied the King of Saxony's hands, and walled him off from his people, that Wagner would fain abolish; with perfect sincerity he could afterwards say that he had no ingratitude to reproach himself with, as regards his sovereign. In February next year he can see no incongruity in writing to Frau v. Lüttichau in praise of Heubner himself, and explaining how "the King not only would have done well to call him to the ministry—as he originally intended—but even now, he could do no better than to make Heubner's acquaintance and friendship" (Letter 8 to Uhlig); whilst a month from this visit to Maria Paulowna he writes to Liszt, "You I can personally assure that the feeling manifested by my uncloaked sympathy with the Dresden rising is very far from that ridiculously fanatical character which sees in every Prince an object worthy of persecution. Did I share in this curious fanaticism, I should naturally have experienced some scruple when I approached the Grand Duchess of Weimar with perfect unconstraint." The very fact of its being intended that Wagner should be present at the performance of *Tannhäuser* on May 19 proves how thoroughly the broad-minded Grand Duchess gauged the composer's position: to her it must have been clear that this was no vulgar agitator, but a man the honesty of whose convictions had placed him in temporary conflict with the social powers that be, a man who loved his hood-winked sovereign, but detested the placemen with an aversion perhaps no greater than her own.—As to material results of the audience, for

the nonce they were confined to a still more active interest in the composer's works ; hereafter they extended to repeated endeavours to bring about his amnesty, for the fruitlessness of which the Court of Weimar cannot bear the blame.

Liszt being obliged to leave Weimar for three days, Wagner goes for a jaunt to Eisenach, to make himself acquainted with the actual scene of his *Tannhäuser*, presumably with a special permit from the Grand Duke. From the battlements of the still-ruined Wartburg he looked down on the road along which he had entered Germany seven years before, seven years of service rewarded, like Jacob's first seven, by nothing but the hand of Leah. As the sun kissed the green sward of Thuringia, to him it was a farewell to all thoughts of Home, that home which every fibre of the heart of man and artist seven years had yearned for.

We now must shift the scene awhile to Friedrichstrasse No. 20.

As soon as her husband had left Chemnitz for good, Minna returned to Dresden, to take care of the house and his priceless manuscripts. Though the city had capitulated, and quiet been restored, it was a plucky act of the little woman's, in striking contrast to that swooning at a Paris concert-failure some eight years back. Let us remember it when we come to another side of her relations with her husband. "After the revolution was ended," says the younger Kietz, "my first visit was naturally to the Wagners, where I found Minna alone. With sobs she told me of her husband's flight, his innocence etc. ; that he had only done the same as every other dweller in the suburbs—impatient to know what was going on, he had run into town to see for himself, and so on. It made an infinitely sad impression on me, to hear the parrot in the adjoining room calling its 'Richard ! Freiheit !' during this mournful recital. Might not Wagner at that moment have been taken prisoner ?"

Indeed his arrest was no contingency to be lightly dismissed. Shortly after Minna's return a warrant-officer appeared at the flat in the Friedrichstrasse (seemingly on Tuesday, May 15), and informed the poor woman that he had orders to make seizure of Wagner and search through his papers : for three days, he was happy to say, he was allowed to keep the warrant back ; meantime would she please write to the Herr Kapellmeister, "If he meant to come, let him come at once ; if not, let him stay where

he was." In the greatest alarm she took the friendly hint—that warrant-officer ought really to go down to posterity with more than a bare initial "M."—and wrote her husband to leave Germany post-haste. Instead of any reply to her warning, she received a letter from Richard, saying that he wished to *say good-bye to her* before he left, and, pending her arrival, was as well as circumstances permitted, taking solitary walks in a delightful country. Appalled at his nonchalance, she sent a second letter, once more relating to him what had occurred, and imploring him to flee at once. Wagner also sent a second letter,* renewing his entreaty that she should come to him, but without a word of reference to her alarming message. On Friday the 18th, with Liszt's return to Weimar, the mystery is solved. Neither of Minna's letters had reached her husband; directed under cover to Liszt, they had both arrived in his temporary absence, and his valet of course had put them away with his master's other correspondence.

Meanwhile the three days' grace had expired, and at any moment the *Steckbrief*—or warrant of apprehension—might be published throughout all Germany. The idea of Wagner's waiting to hear his *Tannhäuser* next evening had to be promptly dropped; the two friends sat up late into this Friday night, cudgelling their brains to discover some hiding-place in the neighbourhood where the fugitive might wait for a farewell meeting with Minna—a point on which Richard was inflexible. At last it occurred to Liszt that on the same floor of the Hotel Erbprinz there was staying Professor Siebert, a physician from Jena; the good doctor was admitted to the consultation, and his prescription proved effectual. At Magdala, no particular distance from Weimar, he had a friend by the name of Wernsdorf; to him should Wagner make off, with a letter of recommendation. Not an instant too soon, for the warrant was published in the *Dresdener Anzeiger*—our old acquaintance of the "detestable rubric"—on Saturday the 19th (two days after Semper's), and apparently was notified in all the German capitals the selfsame morning. At anyrate Wagner says in that letter to E. Roeckel: "I was waiting in the street for Liszt, who had gone in to

* In view of the short space of time, both pairs of letters must have crossed in the post, to say nothing of the other complication.—W. A. E.

make inquiries of someone, when he returned and bade me leave Weimar at once, as my warrant had already been published." His new host, J. Wernsdorf, shall take up the tale* :—

"It was toward noon of May 19, 1849, that a one-horse fly from neighbouring Weimar drew into my court. From it stepped out a gentleman in the thirties, of medium height, in a light brown coat, with a grey knapsack hanging from a broad green band. After a brief greeting, the gentleman came into my room with me and presented a letter containing these hurried lines, 'Herewith you will receive Herr Professor Werther from Berlin, and will entertain him according to arrangement.' In spite of the absence of signature, I recognised at once the writing of an old acquaintance and political sympathiser, Hofrath Professor Siebert of Jena, since dead. Through a preconcerted agreement with Dr Siebert as to similar cases, those few lines made clear to me at once that their bearer was a political refugee, for whose safety and welfare I was to exert my utmost power. After I had conducted my guest to his chamber, he turned sharp round and said to me, 'I suppose I may be frank with you? I'm Kapellmeister Wagner of Dresden. Only think! my *Tannhäuser* is to be given at Weimar to-night, and I'm forced to turn my back on it, to hide from the police.' † I assured my honoured guest that he was equally welcome under any name, and that I would do my best in any circumstances to save him from annoyance by the police; finally, I begged him to make himself at home in my simple establishment." Wernsdorf here explains that, what with his agricultural and his political preoccupations, he had never heard the name of *Tannhäuser*, any more than that of Wagner. Then he continues:—

"My valued guest reposed awhile, and appeared at our family-table punctually at the dinner-hour. After I had taken the opportunity of introducing him as Professor Werther from Berlin

* *Aus Richard Wagner's Leben*, an article by Oekonomierath J. Wernsdorf in the *Chorgesang* of 1886 (editor, W. Gottschalg).

† See Liszt's letter to Carl Reinicke of May 30, 1849: "Wagner qui devra probablement perdre sa position à Dresde, par suite des derniers événements, est venu passer quelques jours avec moi ici. Malheureusement la nouvelle de son Steckbrief est arrivée le jour de la représentation du '*Tannhäuser*' ; ce qui l'a empêché d'y assister."

to my table-guest Dr med. Rostock, the latter spoke of a mass-meeting to be held that afternoon in our vicinity. Dinner over, Wagner insinuated to me that he should like to attend the assembly unobserved. Friend Rostock most obligingly complied with the wish, finding my guest and self a fairly good place opposite a platform raised above the village-well, where concealed from the eyes of the crowd partly by the half-open door of a shed, partly by the barrels of a beer-house, we were able to catch every word of the speakers and watch the whole proceedings undisturbed. The main theme of the fulminant harangues was a call to armed assistance of the hard-beset champions of freedom in Baden, where insurrection was then in full swing. Profiting by an interval, Wagner begged me to come for a walk, and we withdrew as quietly as possible. Scarcely were we in the open again, than he burst out with, 'This meeting displeases me much, for it cannot possibly avail the speakers' ostensible object. Their over-charged enthusiasm is not transmitted in the smallest degree to the multitude present: at the foot of the tribune sit a round score of professional claqueurs, applauding even when there's nothing at all to applaud; the mass itself doesn't display the faintest interest, and seems quite impervious to the rhodomontade.' On our homeward path we studiously avoided any further contact with the futile meeting." These tub-thumpers were never to Richard Wagner's taste. How could they be? Yet he would go and hear them, here as formerly in Dresden, out of "curiosity." The Wanderer again! From Liszt and his Grand Duchess to these beer-frothed demagogues, was a step from the sublime to the ridiculous; no wonder he was silent upon politics for the rest of his stay with his new host.

"In further intercourse with the artist," continues Wernsdorf, "I expressed my regret that I had no better instrument to offer him than a somewhat decrepit old grand piano; he replied, 'To me that makes no difference; the orchestra is what I best like playing.' I did not fully grasp his meaning till I had the supreme delight of hearing his immortal *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* at Weimar under Liszt's magnificent conducting. Wagner passed the 21st of May very quietly with myself and my wife; we read, or chatted about affairs at Weimar: upon his Dresden associations he was *silent*, though he might have known that I should have responded to his confidences with a little understanding.

After we had retired to rest about an hour, I was awoken by the wheels of a carriage, suddenly coming to a stop under my window. I guessed that it had something to do with my protégé—whether for good or ill? I feared the latter. Gently opening the case-ment and peeping out, I heard a woman's voice, 'Are we there already?'—answered by the driver, 'This is the Kammergut.' As the police rarely make use of female assistance, my fears were quickly dispelled, and I ran down to open the gates. In the darkness of the road I found a lady leaning out of a fly, and asked her, 'Are you by any chance inquiring for Professor Werther of Berlin?' After a moment's hesitance at the unfamiliar name, she replied 'Yes,' alighted at my request, handed me her scanty travelling-effects, and came into the courtyard, which I carefully closed again. Here I was able to answer her question, 'Is my husband asleep?' with a reassuring 'Sound!' My good wife, who hadn't the remotest notion that she was entertaining the wife of a political refugee, gave the fancied Frau Professor Werther a hearty welcome, and I went up with the lamp to her husband's bedchamber. When I had roused him with 'Get up, friend Wagner; the Frau Kapellmeister has arrived,' he started bolt upright, stared wildly round him, and ejaculated in a tone too loud and peevish, 'What! The woman?'—At one bound he sprang out of bed, but remained standing a moment, striking his forehead with the hollow of his hand; then much more gently, as if to calm his agitation, he added, 'My God!—it's my birthday!' The greeting of husband and wife was fairly cold; but, tea having been hastily brewed, we all sat promiscuously chatting until 3 in the morning. The married couple then retired to their room, and did not appear among us before noon next day. After dinner I ventured to conduct them by an unfrequented path to a beech-wood, whence they returned towards evening. That must have been the saddest birthday Meister Wagner ever passed.* Frau Wagner left us on the morning of May 23."

The above would give the impression that Minna's sudden apparition was a surprise to them *all*; but allowance must

* This same six-and-thirtieth birthday, May 22, 1849, dates a letter of Wagner's to his half-sister Cæcilie Avenarius (according to Oesterlein's catalogue). Four weeks later (June 18), having no further news of his wife, Wagner begs Liszt to "write to her per Eduard Avenarius, Marienstrasse, Leipzig."

generally be made for these little loosenesses of memory. The fact, proved by those letters to his wife, is that Wagner had delayed his departure from Germany expressly for the purpose of bidding her a last farewell; the only element of shock, to speak by Wernsdorf's account, would naturally be supplied by an arousal from the first lethargy of sleep. It was for something more critical than a birthday-greeting, that Minna had arrived, and any "coolness" there may have been at the beginning of their encounter would not have startled those who knew them better. For a long time past, and more particularly in the last few stressful weeks at Dresden, Richard Wagner's wife had fallen into an attitude of more and more decided opposition to her husband; quite unable to appreciate either his aims or rank as artist, she would have had him relinquish every higher aspiration for sake of retaining a salaried berth under conditions degrading to any man of spirit. What internecine strife had thus invaded an erewhile peaceable, if somewhat humdrum home, perhaps will never be disclosed; but we have a suggestion of it in a remark once dropped by Richard at dinner in the presence of Gustav Kietz, "Other people are so lucky as to have their enemies outside their house, but my bitterest foe I have at table." In less than a month from this mournful birthday of leavetaking, and on the very day after a heart-rending letter about his "poor wife," of whom he has "not had the smallest tidings for nearly four weeks," Wagner writes to Liszt the following words: "My wife is suffering, and bitter! But I have hopes of her in time" (June 19). Truly his "heart is greater than his common-sense," as he expresses it in the first of the two letters just cited; for Minna's was one of those natures which Time cannot cure without curdling. Full of anxiety for her husband's personal safety, and self-denying enough to brave the inconvenience of crossing the Saxon frontier at a time when every traveller was a suspect, one can see her spoiling all the virtue of the act by that look on the face which stabs with the unuttered words, "I told you so!"

If it was self-sacrifice on Minna's part to journey for this farewell to her husband, what shall be said of *his* affection, in endangering his liberty, perhaps his life, for sake of one last kiss before he fled his country? In his next few letters all his thoughts are with his wife; his wife from whom he might be severed for heaven knew how long. To O. Wolff he writes just

seven days after: "That wonderful Liszt must also look after my poor wife. I am longing to get her out of Saxony, and particularly out of that d—d Dresden. So I have hit on the idea of finding her and her family * a modest refuge somewhere in the Weimar district—perhaps on one of the grand-ducal estates,—where with the salvage from our goods and chattels she might find a new home for herself—perhaps also for me, in the future."† But Minna was not quite so ready to tear herself from philistine Dresden. Can the obstinate creature have imagined that, by dint of a little cringing here and there, her husband might ere long regain his forfeited servitude, and she continue to enjoy the style of "Frau Königliche Kapellmeisterin?"

That Steckbrief should have promptly clapped an extinguisher on all such notions. Liszt sent a copy to Magdala, and Wagner shewed it to his host with the comment: "Just think of the vulgarity! The Steckbrief has actually arrived: medium stature,‡ brown hair, wears glasses. Why! anybody might look like that." Perhaps, however, it was no stupidity, but an act of kindness on the part of a police-official, that the description was so indistinctive: the second Steckbrief, of four years later, goes into minuter particulars. Nevertheless the thing meant business, and Weimar friends had lost no time in elaborating a method of escape. To the fore throughout this crisis, Liszt appointed a rendezvous at Jena, whence Wagner was to make his way by Coburg through Franconia, avoiding the railroad. "To the fringe of the forest dividing Magdala from Jena I conducted my departing guest. There I committed him to the care of a trustworthy guide, and said goodbye, with a wish that he might safely overcome the perils of his further journey"—so Wernsdorf concludes his account, and to him we also bid goodbye.

On Thursday, May 24, the day after Minna had left him, Wagner arrived in Jena. Here he found Liszt with a friend of Liszt's, the talented improviser Professor O. L. B. Wolff, busy

* Her sister Natalie, for certain; possibly also her parents, whom, as he tells Liszt in July, he had been entirely supporting for some time.

† Letter 17 in *Wagner-Liszt Correspondence*, "Zurich, May 29, 1849."

‡ Since Dr Dinger has informed us that the Saxons as a rule are *short*, we can understand the otherwise inexplicable description of Richard Wagner as of "middle height."

arranging for his safe-conduct. Through their instrumentality he obtained from a certain Professor Dr Widmann the loan of a passport,* and after spending a night at Jena with the Wolffs—Wolff's "wife and mother" subsequently coming in for his grateful remembrance—he set out May 25 on his tedious four-days journey. Arrived at his temporary destination, he sends Wolff a letter full of gratitude (May 29): "he cannot put his hand in his pocket without being reminded of friend Wolff's obliging forethought." His journey had been slow enough. Reaching Coburg the first day (Friday, May 25), he had been unable to start again for Lichtenfels till Saturday morning: "Luckily I got through everywhere unnoticed. Only at Lindau, where I arrived about midnight, did they ask for my passport at the gate. I received it back next morning without ado, adorned with a *visé* for Switzerland." On Monday morning the 28th he crossed the Lake of Constance to Rohrschach, and half an hour after quitting the steamer he had mounted a diligence for Zurich—safe on Swiss soil at last.

So ended the terrible month of May, his natal month. Since the May of 1848, the half-way epoch in his life, it had been for him twelve months of social ferment and disquiet, a year of the most abominable humiliation in his office. No power in the world should make him don a livery again! Whatever the outlook, at least it was emancipation. "With nothing can I compare the feeling of wellbeing that invaded me—after the first painful impressions had worn off—when I felt myself free, free from the world of torturing, never-granted wishes, free from the relations in which those wishes had been my sole, consuming sustenance! When I, the outlawed and pursued, was bound by no consideration more to a lie of any kind; when I had cast behind me every hope of that vainglorious world, and could proclaim with no muted voice that the artist I despised *it*, that world of canting care for Art and Culture, from the bottom of my heart; when I

* Dinger's little romance of Minna's scouring the country for a whole week in search of a passport for her husband, till at last she borrowed one from Widmann, cannot hold water for an instant: firstly, Minna only left Magdala on the 23rd—apparently to return to Dresden—and her husband had obtained the passport and set out for Switzerland just two days later; secondly, it is returned by Wagner to *Liszt's* friend Wolff, for restoration to its owner. Minna had no hand in the loan whatever.

could tell it that in no one of its veins did there flow one drop of true artistic life-blood, that it could not draw one draught of human cultivation, breathe out one whiff of human beauty—for the first time in my life did I feel thoroughly free, feel hale and hearty, what though I knew not in what lurking-place the morrow might dispense to me the air of heaven" (*P. I.* 381-2).

APPENDIX.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES.

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Page 4. MINNA WAGNER.—So little is known about the days of Richard Wagner's courtship, that the following extract from the *New York Tribune* of August 29, 1891, to which my attention has only recently been drawn, may prove of interest to the reader :—

“Among the visitors at Bayreuth this year is Frau Josephine Rudolph, who was the travelling companion of Frau Materna when she visited the United States in 1882. Frau Rudolph is the daughter of Tichatschek, the tenor singer at Dresden who was the first Tannhäuser. Tichatschek was one of Wagner's most intimate friends from the Kapellmeister days of the poet-composer till the tenor's death in 1878. The two kept up a brisk correspondence all through the years of Wagner's banishment, and it was in the attic of Tichatschek's house that the parts of the Symphony were found which Mr Seidl was intrusted to write out in score while he was a member of Wagner's household. Many of the old singer's manuscript treasures have been dissipated, but Frau Rudolph still has 22 of the composer's letters written to her father and one written to his first wife, besides a number of autograph compositions dating back to his study years in Leipzig and the first of his operas that found performance. These Frau Rudolph is willing to sell, a fact to which I call attention in the hope of interesting autograph collectors in America. The letter to Wagner's first wife was written before marriage, and is peculiarly interesting. She was an actress, and had evidently quarrelled with the manager of the theatre because the part of Juliet had been given to a rival. She had left Magdeburg, where Wagner was conductor, and gone to Berlin. Evidently, too, she had had a lover's quarrel with Wagner, for the letter is full of protestations and pleadings, which culminate in a threat to cast aside all work and abandon himself to dissipation unless she return and take him back in her affections. Then he formally offers her his hand in marriage.”

Into whose hands that letter of proposal may now have fallen, the *Tribune* correspondent, Mr H. E. Krehbiel, is unable to inform me ; lucky man, to have seen a genuine love-letter from the pen of so great an expounder of the passion ! The depth and permanence

of Richard Wagner's attachment to his "poor wife" is proved by hundreds of references to her in his letters of the next quarter of a century, though the marriage can by no means be said to have been a happy one, perhaps on either side; but the last word on this subject can never be pronounced until the day when the whole collection of the master's letters to his first wife shall be given to the world—should that day ever come.—W. A. E.

Page 6. FERDINAND HEINE'S impressions of the FIRST NIGHT OF RIENZI.—From this letter to the German group of Paris friends we glean the liveliest particulars :—"I played the part of old Everywhere and Nowhere, in the crush-room, the buffet, the boxes, the pit, just to gather all sorts of opinions, and scarcely could credit my ears. Here ancient note-gobblers, counterpoint-hens, put their heads together and declared that with this opera Wagner had placed himself at once upon a line with the most-approved masters of all ages; there Italianolaters such as that fat Graf Solms & Co., who twitter down Beethoven, Marschner and so on, like sparrows, were saying it was even better than their heavenly Donizetti etc. I was nigh going crazy for joy. . . . You and the Paris friends ought to have seen Wagner that evening. He was like a shadow, cried and laughed in one breath, embraced everybody he came across, while the cold sweat stood on his forehead. At the first call he flatly refused to appear; I had to give him a mighty shove that sent him flying out of the slips, but not an inch farther than the impetus reached to; then he did a regular scuttle back from the roars of the public. Luckily he has a famous nose, as you know pretty well, and the left half of the audience was able to feast on the sight of at least its tip [p. 136 *antea*]. His poor little wife didn't want to go to the theatre at all that night; mine took her under her capacious wing, and sat her down beside her in the box. The faithful soul had so worried herself, in company with her Richard, that she looks quite grey and pinched. All the better will the reward taste.—Another joke I must tell you: so that Wagner might literally rest on his laurels next night, his wife put a few laurel-leaves in the bed, immediately under . . . ! He fell asleep in a trice, and never discovered the profanation till next morning" (*Mus. Wochenblatt*, 1892, p. 358).

Pages 9 and 28. SCHLADEBACH'S SCANDALOUS CRITICISMS.—As a representative specimen of the kind of opposition to which Wagner was subjected throughout the whole of his Dresden period, we reproduce, curtailed by about a third, a Schladebachian review of *Das Liebesmahl der Apostel* :—

"The composer's name is probably not a total stranger to the majority of our readers; for somewhere about three years since, when his *Rienzi* and *Fliegender Holländer* were first put on the stage, people

neglected no means, not merely of making that name known, but of raising it to the stars as that of the new, long yearnfully-awaited Messiah of Opera; and at that time signs and wonders in reality took place, for the Dresden public—notorious for its coldness—screwed itself up, or allowed itself to be screwed up, to a tidy enthusiasm. That enthusiasm still holds significantly on, at least in part; consequently it was a precaution against a healthy, unbribed verdict.” The Doctor’s logic is so woefully threadbare, that it involuntarily lets out the very truth he is striving to conceal; but he patches it up again with downright falsehoods. “However, that a manufactured fame like this, a baseless castle hastily thrown up by short-sighted cousins and adulating friends for sake of a consideration, and by every possible means except artistic ones, cannot long defy the ravages of time—that an enthusiasm fanned in the manner suggested must soon die out, like a fire of straw, to make place for a sobriety the more unpleasant: this also has proved itself here once again. We are far from wishing to gainsay to the composer ingenuity of idea, a certain poetic talent, and thorough study of everything that can make an effect, in the modern sense of the word. But a really specific musical talent he possesses not; and where this or that may seem new to the less-experienced, it is either an imitation of Berlioz’ mannerism (without his originality) or deliberately strained-for, baroque, and thereby tending to disgust one. Wagner’s inventive power is feeble. Depth of feeling, truth of sentiment, he lacks in a high degree. This may easily be proved in respect of melody and harmony. As to the former, there is an almost total want of healthiness and freshness, apart from the fact that the composer repeats himself ad nauseam in the chief melodies of his several works; a thing one can by no means dignify with the predicate of ‘personal style.’ With regard to harmony, however, nobody will convince us that an entirely purposeless and baroque modulation aiming merely at effect, a roaming through every key without plan, repose or substance, or a constant laboured toiling with chords of the ninth, evinces power of invention, depth of feeling, refined taste, or even mere technical adroitness; which latter is so conspicuous by its absence, that the most atrocious jars and sins against musical syntax are not seldom demonstrable. With justice it has already been objected in another quarter”—by the same *pen*, Dr S.—“and not exactly by a pedant, that Herr Richard Wagner, Königl. sächs. Kapellmeister, does not even know his musical orthography (but what should a genius have to do with such schoolroom trash!), and certainly if his ‘unforgettable teacher,’ to whose ‘widow’ this Biblical Scene is dedicated, could hear it, he would turn in his grave!”—A long harmonic sequence is next ticked off.—“Anyone who uses up so many means (subsequently, also, a truly oppressive mass of instruments, intended for nothing but to impose on unintelli-

gent hearers) imbues us with no particularly favourable prepossession for his ability; he simply documents [*sic*] an inner poverty, we might almost say beggarhood, unable to conceal its rags even beneath the tinsel of a cloak of royal purple. That the composer knows absolutely nothing of song and its principles, therefore does not understand writing for the voice, and least of all for the masculine choir,—of this an incontrovertible proof here lies before us. He treats the singing voice like any instrument; and as he not seldom writes very hard, if not altogether inexecutable things for these, one may judge how the human voice is strained by him against all natural limits. We can advise no union whose members do not positively desire to go out of their way to ruin their voices, chest and lungs, to get up one of Wagner's compositions; apart from the fact that this Biblical Scene—which bears an extraordinary likeness to a grand-opera finale, and everywhere glaringly documents the composer's inability to write in the severer style—demands a choral mass only obtainable through the assemblage of a large number of male-vocal-unions. If only for this outward reason, the work might have remained unprinted; and were the composer (he is also author of the text, for that matter a very successful one) not Royal Saxon Kapellmeister, in all probability it would have. It is with regret that we have set up a warning-board. The work appeared some little time back, and we should certainly have passed it by in silence, had we not felt a fear lest the fabricated fame of its composer might perhaps mislead a few unions into studying this work; for, naturally, the truth already fairly recognised in nearer circles, that Herr Kapellmeister W. does not owe his renown to his allegedly eminent musical talent, but that an incredible amount of self-glorification and vain presumption is mixed in it, fostered by so-called friends and flatterers to the artist's harm—this truth has not so generally spread abroad, since the composer spares no pains, no sacrifice, to get himself beslavered in all sorts of newspaper articles. That kind of fame, to be sure, explodes as quickly as a soapbubble. Such manœuvring lies far from the true artist, and is positively unworthy of one. But for this very reason the truth must the more decisively step forth in criticism, gradually to put an end to that defilement of art, or at least to assist the duped public to clearness about it in special cases.—Dr. J[ulius] S[chladebach].” From the *Teutonia*, “literary-critical leaves for German male-choirs,” edited by J. Otto and Dr J. Schladebach, Dresden; 1846, pp. 60 et seq.

To pass over the peroration as too disgraceful for comment (*cf.* 134-5 *antea*), it should be noted as typical of all the older anti-Wagnerian tactics, that people are warned against so much as studying one of Wagner's works! As for the impossibility of performing the *Liebesmahl* without “the assemblage of a large number of male-vocal-unions,” we have only to refer to Liszt's letter after the

Ballenstedt festival of 1852: "*Das Liebesmahl der Apostel* was satisfactorily rendered by the Pauliner choir from Leipzig, under its conductor Langer. I was truly delighted with it, and mean to repeat this glorious work so soon as a good opportunity offers. Though outward success and a certain (really, very uncertain) *relish* have become to me but secondary considerations with works that stand decidedly *above* the public, yet it was agreeable to see that success and that *relish* confirmed to one's heart's desire.—The choir was not very numerous, about 120, but well balanced, and the whole sounded splendidly" (*W.-L. Corr.* Letter 80).

Page 92. FIRST SKETCH OF DIE MEISTERSINGER.—The details of this earliest draft, presented years ago to Frau Mathilde Wesendonck, we borrow from an article contributed by Albert Heintz to the *Allg. Musikzeitung* (1895, pp. 609-11):—

The scene of the *first act* is laid in a chapel of the Sebaldus church at Nuremberg; not, as now, in the Katharinenkirche. "End of vespers,—one hears an organ-voluntary. A young man approaches a rich young burgher-maiden,—she has been expecting him, and warns him to be cautious." The young man, mostly styled "der Junker"—i.e. young noble—is described as the son of an impoverished Ritter; as yet he has neither Christian name nor surname; indeed the only names as yet determined are those of Hans Sachs, of "Frau Magdalene," housekeeper to the "oldest of the Singers-guild" (the eventual "Pogner"), and of "David," Sachs' apprentice. There is no mention as yet of the young noble's instruction by David in the rules of Master-song. At the meeting of the Mastersingers, Hans Sachs (instead of "Kothner") is "law-giver for the time being"; but already we have the roll-call, the proposal of Pogner—as *we* must call him—and the dispute with Sachs about consulting the people. The Marker is not as yet accommodated with a curtained desk, but directs an apprentice to score on the black-board each "fault" as the singer makes it. Sachs reads out the laws of the guild "with a tinge of irony"; the Junker's first question is, "In what tone shall I sing; that of Siegfried and Grimmhilde?" The masters are shocked, and shake their heads. "Very well, then: in Wolfram's tone of Parzival?" Fresh horror, and fresh head-shaking. The Marker bids him, "Sing as it stands in the laws that have been made known to you." The Junker collects his wits, and sings at first embarrassedly, but gradually with more and more abandon. His song is in praise of Poesy etc. The Marker keeps on crying halt, and having faults crossed. The more inspiredly the young man sings, the more faults are scored against him—Hans Sachs regards him with sympathy and the Marker with irony. Increasing confusion of the Junker; more and more faults and interruptions;—at last the Marker asks

if he has finished: "Not yet! Not yet!" The Marker: "The board is finished, though!"—Hans Sachs endeavours to defend him, then makes fun of the Masters; quarrel arises. Sachs challenges the Marker himself to sing, and *he* will note how many faults he makes, in his own way. The Marker loses his temper, twits him with being cockered by the common herd, and points to the bad shoes Sachs has made him. "You shall remember it," says Sachs aside. Dissension ensues; "time" is called, and it is solemnly resolved, "The stranger has un-sung himself." The young noble rushes out, dumbfounded. The meeting breaks up in disorder.

For the *second act* the main contours of the later poem are already fixed; but the charming dialogue between Sachs and the maiden is not yet foreshadowed. In fact she remarks to her lover, "Don't trust him! He's a false man; father has often told me as much."

At the opening of the *third act* we find Hans Sachs in his workshop, sitting by a window, leaning back, surrounded with big folios; at a second window sits David, busy over a pair of lady's shoes. Sachs moralises on the decay of Poetry: "he, a mere cobbler, is the only one who still draws breath in the realm of the great German past, and so on." David is called from without by Frau Magdalene; with gestures addressed to the opposite house, he tries to silence her. Sachs notices it, and scolds the apprentice for not sticking to his last. Frau Magdalene calls David again; to vex her by assumed indifference, he sings his master's cobbler-song. Sachs first gives an irritated start, then softens at the thought of popular appreciation, and finally chimes in *himself*. The Junker makes his entry, from an inner room. Sachs presumes that he understands by now, how much the master had acted in his best interest. The Junker: "I'm ashamed of myself. No doubt, you were right! But what am I to do now?" Sachs promises so to manage matters that the lover shall win his lady in fair combat. Sachs asks what he has written hitherto; the Junker confesses that they have mostly been heroic poems, in which he had celebrated the great Kaisers: "See here, here!" Sachs: "No love-ditty?" "O yes, my latest. See!" Sachs carefully reads through the poem (the orchestra plays the melody sung later thereto) and, after a little thought, exclaims "You're a born poet!" *Yet he considers the age unmeet for poet's work, and advises the young man to study the writings of Luther and Ulrich von Hutten, and defend with the sword what he learns from them.* "For long to come," Sachs prophesies, "people will pay no more heed to Poetry; with other weapons will they fight, with reason and philosophy, against ignorance and superstition; and with the sword will one have, again, to defend these new weapons."—"Agreed, master," replies the Junker, "but just now I want a wife!" Sachs answers, "You shall have her; trust me for that!" The damsel appears, in quest of her shoes; she

begins heaping Sachs with reproaches; the Junker defends him. Sachs consoles the pair of lovers, and builds on a happy issue; he dictates their conduct, and they promise him obedience. Now follows the scene with the Marker, as in the later text; but the abstraction of the Junker's poem, left on the table, happens more from accident than intention. At first Wagner meant Sachs to offer the Marker a song he *himself* had written in his younger days, a ditty known to no one; but he afterwards writes on the margin: "Perhaps Sachs might feign not to have the slightest idea to whom the poem belongs: maybe to the young nobleman, who already is over the hills and far away. It seems an enchanted song. Have a care how you fit the right tune to it!"

Change of scene. S. John's meadow, outside the gates of Nuremberg. Processions; populace; sports and pastimes. The Mastersingers march on. The Marker sings the Junker's song; his rendering does not fit it. Comical effect; the people laugh the singer down. Sachs praises the poem, and blames the Marker's delivery. The Marker accuses Sachs of palming off on him a worthless song. The people demand that Sachs himself shall sing it; he declines, as a love-song would ill become him. The Junker now steps forth, and offers to sing it. The Masters raise objections, but the people—egged on by the bride-elect, David and Magdalene—cry, "Eh! Why not? Let's hear him!" After much dispute the young Ritter begins, and ends to a storm of applause. The Mastersingers themselves feel bound to assign him the prize, recognising that *he alone* could have been the poem's author. The Junker accepts the prize, but rejects the rank of Mastersinger. Hans Sachs instructs him in the merit of the Masters, and thereby wins his protégé to the Singer-guild. "Music comes; the bridal retinue is quickly marshalled. Sachs leads off the bride, and the procession—pipers in advance—moves off toward the city." Signed: "Marienbad, 16. Juli 1845. Richard Wagner."

Page 107. NEUE ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR MUSIK RE TANNHÄUSER.—In November 1845 this journal, with which Schumann had severed connection over a twelvemonth ago, devoted two whole numbers to a screed on Wagner's latest opera. In illustration of the degrading buffoonery already in vogue, we furnish a few extracts:—

"The defects of the poem spring to the eye of themselves. Of exposition there is not a word. At the beginning of the opera, Tannhäuser is in the Venusberg. The prefatory note in the text-book informs us that only those in whose hearts sensual lust was already rampant, were liable to the seduction. Apart from the obscenity, it is quite incomprehensible how this could have been the case with Tannhäuser, who, as we afterwards learn, already loved Saint Elisabeth, here turned into the Landgrave's niece, and must have been chastened by her counter-love and protected against evil

temptations. He seems, however, to have clean forgotten Elisabeth, though he remembered the glad sound of bells and so on. To extricate himself from the power of Venus, he says: My salvation rests in *Maria*! Involuntarily we look at the playbill, to learn who this *Maria* is. . . . The name of Saint Elisabeth, his lady-love, might surely have lain nearer to his recollection; especially as it is she, as thereafter appears, who really mediates his soul's salvation."—The bad taste of this critic is only equalled by his ignorance, "saints" not being canonised until at least after their death.—"So soon as Elisabeth herself is named, Tannhäuser is violently affected; in the second act he makes her a declaration of love, but immediately afterwards, in the Contest of Song, forgets all about her and sings the praises of Love's Goddess. After Elisabeth's intercession he sinks crushed by remorse, and makes a pilgrimage to Rome. His hopes having miscarried there, he precious soon consoles himself by seeking out Venus again. Wolfram's admonitions to the fear of God are all in vain: then he names Elisabeth, whom we had seen not a moment before, but who meantime has suddenly died, and already is being borne to her rest. Tannhäuser sinks of a heap once more, and dies with the words: Holy Elisabeth, plead for me! This is the principal character in the opera, round whom all revolves, and for whom we are to interest ourselves. Elisabeth is partly a saint, proclaiming herself in the second act indeed as an instrument of the Most High, partly a lovesick, timorous maiden who prays for death, and dies when her all, her Tannhäuser, does not return; she, likewise, wakes no sympathy. . . . So much for the poem, to shew its entire lack of character-drawing. . . . With respect to the music we must acknowledge that in details Herr Wagner has seen the error of his ways, which made him seek the height of effect in a deafening, blaring instrumentation. . . . As for Style, either he is not yet at one with himself, or it is a want of invention that makes the greater part seem far-fetched and bombastic, nay, positively against all beauty. More the result of industrious reflection, than of ardent inspiration, the music mostly leaves one cold and indifferent, even if one finds the frequently-employed tone-painting appropriate to the situation."—The third act comes off the worst. Despite its cut, "Elisabeth's prayer is much too long; and Tannhäuser's endless scene is suited to the situation, but tedious and enervating, so that one longs for it to close. The chant of the Pilgrims, who went away sin-laden and come back atoned and blessed, is too far-fetched; moreover it is a mistake for them, although with other words, to return with the same lamenting tones that only fitted their mood of departure. . . . In the overture the Pilgrims' chant predominates, broken here and there by a weird whirring of violins and high stringed-instruments, which refers to the scene in the Venusberg, and therefore touches mere subordinate

elements; for the rest, it is unintelligible, and just as void of actual ground-colour as the whole subject."—Such was the verdict of what had until lately been the oasis in musical journalism.

Pages 107 and 112. DR HERMANN FRANCK.—Brother of the German bookseller in Paris, Albert Franck—c/o whom Wagner had his letters directed in 1850: see Letters 5, 7 and 11 to Uhlig—, Dr Franck was a friend of Liszt's and Chopin's, and an intimate of Hans von Bülow's parents during his Dresden years. Young Bülow meets him later in Berlin, and writes as follows to his mother (May 24, 1850): "Dr Franck desires to be most kindly remembered to you. . . . He is very amiable, and has a certain genial originality; there is much to be learnt from his judgment. Curious is his life of utter solitude; I should like to know what he really occupies himself with: I almost imagine he writes. Music he never hears now, and practises as little. He told me, 'Two days do not pass without my being able to reproduce in my fancy, with complete satisfaction to myself, the best and finest music. I've heard much and well, and the memory of it has stayed alive in me.' Last winter he had gone to the Italian Opera for once in a way, to hear *Don Giovanni*; every note had been a crime, and if he had had powder and cartridges at hand, he would have blown the whole shop into the air. He's a Radical, but only as a practical and highly sober-minded man. I relieved him of his hearsay mistake concerning Frau von Lüttichau's 'radical' leanings, and told him the March-mania for German Unity had resolved into mere tenderness for Prussia and disdain of the petty Saxon misère."

Page 113. MORITZ VON SCHWIND.—In one of Dr H. Franck's contributions to the Augsburg *Allgemeine*, dated the 18th October 1845 (the day before the production of *Tannhäuser*), we read: "Schwind had had a distinguished reception on his visit here; but the hope of seeing him called to our Academy was postponed to an indefinite future by the vote of that body. That hope has been revived, however, by the presentation of a numerously-signed petition to the King." In his later Munich period, owing to friendship with Franz Lachner, Schwind became one of Wagner's most determined foes, and notoriously took a peculiar pleasure in openly belittling his efforts. As in many another case, the master by no means repaid him in similar coin: "On the contrary," says J. Lang, "he valued Schwind's creations very highly, and repeatedly declared that the *Seven Ravens* (Weimar) and the *Melusina-rondels* (Belvedere, Vienna) were the most poetic works of German painting for a long time past. Certainly, Schwind was a better draughtsman than painter, his colour being tame and dun, but his designs shewed high talent. The said failing Schwind shared with great Peter Cornelius, whom Wagner ranked sky-high above the admired and press-coteried W. v. Kaulbach, whose famous frescoes in the stair-well of the new

Museum at Berlin he considered overladen with theatrical claptrap. In particular, Wagner very sharply criticised K.'s *Destruction of Jerusalem* (repeated from that in the Neue Pinakothek at Munich), calling it an arbitrary concatenation of three stage-groups that outvied each other in straddling poses; the *Hunnenschlacht* pleased him best of all six frescoes" (J. Lang, in his "Commentary on the Letters of Prof. Moritz v. Schwind"—see Wagner Museum, No. 3589). Among his many other works, Schwind furnished cartoons for stained glass in the cathedral of Glasgow and a London church of S. Michael (Chester Square?), painted the high-altar-piece for the Munich Frauenkirche, and frescoes in the loggia and foyer of the Vienna Opera-house.

Page 205. BERLIN PRODUCTION OF RIENZI.—Leaving aside the Berlin papers, we may select from those of Leipzig the would-be brilliant *Signale*, its "Nante" being the pseudonym for R. Wuerst, a pupil of Mendelssohn and David. Wagner's "careful and very energetic conducting" is first attested, then "Nante" gets into full swing:—"Think of it! An orchestra of 24 violins and so on, doubled wind, actually 4 trumpets, three trombones and a tuba, not forgetting a serpent and janissaries. And for five hours long, from six to eleven o'clock, with few interruptions, this giant-orchestra continues to make the utmost possible din; eh! at festive moments the stage itself is given a band of 50 men with 8 big drums, or a sixteen-foot organ-pipe; not to reckon the singers, as it mostly is quite immaterial whether they sing or merely stretch their mouths.—Imagine further, that you have got to listen to this, without the refreshment of more than *two* retainable melodies at the outside; imagine further all the numbers of this opera formless, the melodies baroque and the plot wearisome to a degree—and you will grant me that even an excellent performance cannot make amends. In the dramatic respect, to be sure, the opera offers something acknowledgeable, but in the musical *downright nothing*. Why does Herr Wagner write an opera at all, if he doesn't mean to make music?"—That was in the issue of November 3, 1847; the 17th of the month brings the following: "There is no other news, save that the people who at first were crowding to hear 'Rienzi,' have now to be driven into the opera-house by gensd'armes, lest the opera be played to empty benches. Already it has been proposed to send the imprisoned Poles to 'Rienzi,' since one expects from this famous opera a better effect on the evil-doers than from the Pennsylvanian system at first applied to them. Myroslawski is said to have turned pale with fright, when they told him of the decision to bring him to confession by means of 'Rienzi'" and so forth.

Page 251 (cf. pp. 54 and 141-2). THE PUBLISHING ENTANGLEMENT.—In an article contributed by a Herr Ludwig Schmidt to the

Zeitschrift der Internationalen Musik-Gesellschaft for this present month of October, 1901, we are supplied with a mass of particulars from the papers of the late Dresden lawyer Franz Adolf Schmidt relating to the further course of this transaction. According to these documents, Wagner had undertaken by a contract dated June 25, 1844, concerning the three operas *Rienzi*, *Der fliegende Holländer* and *Tannhäuser*, "to provide the necessary capital for the printing of his works, whilst Meser was to publish them at a commission of 10% on the net receipts." Who the *first* advancers of the capital may have been, does not appear; but it would seem that in 1848—when Wagner was threatened with bankruptcy in this matter—Dr Pusinelli, the actor Kriete, and the oboist Hiebendahl (see vol. i, 343), came to his rescue; at anyrate their names are mentioned in these documents as the "creditors" to whom he made over in 1853 (Sept. 30) all his "literary property" in those operas, together with the ownership of all existing plates and copies of the text and music, reserving to himself only the performing rights.* In 1856 Meser died, and Hiebendahl soon afterwards "left the creditors' ranks," being replaced by "Herr Ritter;" evidently one of Frau Julie Ritter's two sons. Since 1856 music-seller Hermann Müller of Dresden had been conducting the business in the interest of the "cessionaries," and in 1859 (May 13) they sold to him for 3000 thalers all their rights in the business—an amount less by 2000 thalers than the sum mentioned by Wagner to Liszt in 1848 as still remaining to be cleared; but we must suppose that part of the debt had since been liquidated by sales through Meser and Müller. By this last deed of conveyance, however, the rights over the *full scores*, together with the performing rights, were expressly reserved to Wagner.—F. A. Schmidt's papers (to which we shall return anent the Dresden insurrection) further deal with a misunderstanding between Müller and Wagner as to the permission granted by the latter to Flaxland of Paris in 1860-1 to publish a French pianoforte-score; though Wagner's creditors, before the sale to Müller, had agreed to his taking such a step in their interest. This latter part of the correspondence is occasioned by a law-suit threatened by Müller in 1863; it thus is apparent that for *twenty* years was the composer to be plagued! by his unlucky Dresden venture.—W. A. E.

Page 297. WAGNER ON TANNHÄUSER, FOUR YEARS AFTER.—From a letter of the master's addressed to Baron von Biedefeld in 1849, the *Bayreuther Tageblatt* of July 22, 1901, has reproduced the

* The initials "P" and "Kr" are frequently to be met in Wagner's *Letters to Uhlig* etc. in this connection. In my index to that volume I hazarded the erroneous guess, that "P" there stood for Pohl; but the above makes manifest that it stands for Pusinelli.—W. A. E.

subjoined extract. Liszt, busy rehearsing *Tannhäuser* for its Weimar première of February 16, had evidently put the addressee in postal communication with the author. In Liszt's letter of the 26th, Biedenfeld is mentioned as having polished up the "few lines" on *Tannhäuser* contributed by Liszt to the *Deutsche Allgemeine* (p.298 *antea*), and Wagner sends him a message of thanks on March the first. In 1850 B. wrote an unassisted article on *Lohengrin*, apparently a foolish one, and took offence at something Wagner said by way of rectification, whereupon Liszt tells Wagner, March 1, 1851: "B. is a nobleman who has wasted many years on making himself a literary nondescript. If he had either owned or acquired the needful talent, as nobleman he would by now have earned himself a name on this side. As it is, he remains a sort of amphibia." That is the kind of person on whom too many of Wagner's letters were thrown away.— Before reading the extract, which confers on these Notes a useful chronologic link between the master's artistic and revolutionary periods, it should be remembered that *Lohengrin* now stood complete, the poem of *Siegfried's Tod* had been read aloud, and the dramatic sketch of *Jesus von Nazareth* lay drafted in his writing desk:—

"The work itself [obviously *Tannhäuser*] already is alien to me ; only, I remember that it was the first to bring my artistic procedure to actual consciousness. All along I have rebelled against the immense apparatus of action, situation and plot, with the most lavish accessories from every available art, such as painting, plastics, gymnastics and so on, being employed for nothing but to stamp a string of taking melodies upon the public's memory. I convinced myself that the only end to justify such vast expenditure should really be nothing cheaper than *the dramatic artwork* itself, and that Opera stood even higher than the Play in this, that to all other means of expression it added the richest of all, most manifold and inexhaustible, the means of Music. Now, the Greeks, and perhaps even a portion of our Middle Ages, could lend the Play the help of Musical expression without much altering the Drama's self in its essentials : but in our age, since the heroes of Absolute music—i.e. of music severed from poetry—and finally Beethoven in particular, have raised this art's capacity of expression, above all through the orchestra, to an entirely new artistic height, scarcely dreamt by Gluck himself, Music's influence upon the Drama will surely have become of weight, as she naturally has claims to make for the unfolding of her wealth. Drama itself must therefore expand to [take in] the [new means of] expression ; and the discovery and development of this capacity in it, to match the wealth of musical expression, to me seemed possible to none save the musician. If accordingly I raised the musician into a poet too, the less could I let him lose from sight the true main aim of Drama itself ; it was only for sake of this highest of all artistic objects, you see, that his

special art—of music—had been called in at all. And thus his proper scope must seem to me : fully aware and most intimately conscious of the wealth of musical expression, to will nothing other than the Drama itself ; naturally, however, a Drama such as could not come to light without that consciousness of music on the poet's part. To make my meaning altogether clear, I will refer you to a principal scene in my *Tannhäuser* : the Minstrels' contest. Manifestly, and in especial to bring about the catastrophe through this scene, the poetic aim must and should predominate here : to have let the singers outbid each other in vocal arts, embellishments and cadenzas, might have been the purpose of a competitive concert, not that of a dramatic combat of ideas and feelings. On the other hand, the dramatic effect of this Battle of the Bards, in which the whole full nature of the combatants comes out, could never have been realised without that highest and most varied means, of Musical expression ; and it has been my satisfaction to perceive that just this so audacious scene aroused the liveliest and most cumulative interest of the audience at every representation : consequently, I had the triumph of seizing by the *thought* an *operatic* public most estranged therefrom, not merely by the *sensation*.

“To recapitulate in brief : my line I have struck as a musician who, starting from a conviction of the quite exhaustless wealth of Music, wills the highest work of art : to wit, *the Drama*. I say ‘will,’ to indicate an effort : whether I can, I am certainly unfit to judge ; and if I am mistaken, it can only be due to my feeble power, but not to a lack of right will.”

Dresden, 17 Jan. 1849.

Fully to estimate the value of this declaration, the style of which is a little cumbrous, it should be compared with the letter to Hanslick of Jan. 1, 1847 (pp. 175-6 *antea*).—W. A. E.

Pages 257 and 313. WAGNER, AND ROECKEL'S VOLKSBLÄTTER.—Remembering Wagner's Vaterlandsverein Address of June 1848, in which he had sung the praises of the house of Wettin with such enthusiasm, it may be asked how he could bring himself a few months later to write anything for the *Volksblätter*, seeing that Roeckel had there approved (No. 5) the Vaterlandsverein's action in striking out of its articles of creed the clause in favour of retention of the monarchy ? It is by no means an easy task to deal with a journal of this class, practically extinct as the dodo, and represented by nothing but excerpts culled at random in support of a personal theory ; especially as their assembler, Dr Hugo Dinger, has an incorrigible habit of confounding dates, blending to-day with yesterday, the future with the past, for all his cry of “evolution.” However, through the simple expedient of restoring to their chronologic sequence two quotations the order of which Dr Dinger has arbitrarily reversed (*R. W.'s geist*,

Entw. p. 145) we may gain an answer to the puzzling question. In No. 13 of the *Volksblätter* 1848—the issue for about November 18, as nearly as we can calculate in absence of the journal's date—an editorial article asks the Saxon people: "You build, in fine, on the rectitude of your King? What power has he? Is he free? Did not Könnertitz keep house in Saxony for 16 years?" But, by the second week of January 1849 (No. 2 for that year) the *Volksblätter* has so far mended its ways as to say, "Our King is just; he will put his hand to no deed of violence against the people's rights." To what can we attribute this change of tone, if not to the private influence of Roeckel's friend Wagner? Incidentally, it bears out my hypothesis (p. 285 *antea*) that relations with Roeckel were *renewed* about Christmas; and it may be reasonably assumed that Wagner insisted on some such recantation being printed, before he consented to contribute that article in the second issue for February 1849 which all three of us agree in assigning to him.—W. A. E.

Page 320. WAS THE DRESDEN RISING PRECONCERTED?—In a book of over 300 pages, *Der Mai-Aufstand in Dresden*, "epitomised from official sources" by A. von Montbé, first-lieutenant on the Royal Saxon General-staff, and published barely a year after the events it records, we have a highly circumstantial account of that insurrection, or Rising, as viewed from the Government side, but *without one word concerning Richard Wagner*. Now, in their zeal to prove that the rebellion had been carefully preconcerted, these loyalists invariably overshoot the mark, proving nothing beyond its deliberate provocation by the Saxon Government; but none of them has unwittingly adduced so plain a proof of the insurgents' utter lack of anything to be dignified by the name of a preconceived plan, as the letter of Bakunin's triumphantly flourished by Montbé—who nevertheless appears to be a perfectly truthful and honourable author. This letter of Bakunin's is wellnigh pathetic in its mute confession of fatuity, its harping on the writer's bugbear *Russia* (which had nothing whatever to do with the German reactionaries), and its childish counting up of means; written only three days ere hostilities began, it shews that nothing but the vaguest *talk* of resistance had as yet been indulged in, and certainly no measures taken to organise an armed revolt. Let me quote it in extenso, as given by Montbé (pp. 4-5), who notes that it is unaddressed:—

"Dear and esteemed Friends,

The bearer of this letter, Roeckel, deputy to the Second Chamber just dissolved, one of the chief leaders of the democratic party in Saxony, I recommend to you as one of my best friends and a thoroughly reliable and excellent man. He comes to you to confer with you, and together with you to combine the Czech movement with the movement in Germany.—We have no more time to lose,—there

remains very little time to us, to prepare the thing. If a rising does not take place soon, the Russians will come; for the Reaction in Europe is following a plan, and the backbone (*Stütze*) of all reactionary undertakings is Russia.—Here we have entered into connection with a Magyar agent; in 2 or 3 days we shall presumably receive money from Paris; then we will send you a sum; how much, will depend on what we receive ourselves. I have very much wished that you would come here, to confer with us, i.e. with the aforesaid Magyar, with 2 Poles who have arrived from Paris to work with us, and with myself.

“If it is yet possible, do come to Dresden, and address yourselves to Wittig, editor of the *Dresdner Zeitung*,—Ostra-allee, office of the *Dresd. Ztg.*”

“Farewell, and speedy au-revoir. Your

M. BAKUNIN.

“30th April, Dresden, 1849.

Burn this letter at once.”

Did ever one read so weak a thing? Yet the Saxon Government's champions maintain that an insurrection had long been arranged to take place on May the 10th—or May the 20th at latest! Judging by a letter such as this, it might have been expected next blue moon. The terrible conspirators, to whom Roeckel was to present this naïve effusion, were a handful of Prague students without any influence whatever, as he soon discovered; and so careless were the whole posse of them, that even Bakunin's request to burn the letter was not observed! Roeckel tells us that an immense amount of time and money was wasted on an inquiry into this Prague mare's-nest, a special official being sent to Dresden by the Austrian Government, and so on; yet nothing could be made of it, and it was neglected in the counts upon which he was convicted. The only name this letter gives, beyond Roeckel's own, is that of Wittig, who, Montbé informs us, had taken an active part in the Vienna street-fights, and on May 7 leads a party of Dresden insurgents in one of the numerous side-street engagements, therefore could scarcely have been a chief organiser. As for the “2 Poles,” Montbé gives their names as “Feldmann and Chranowsky” in a comic-opera touch introducing “a number of unknown persons in the Rathhaus chamber about May 5, who developed a weird activity with the Russian Bakunin, separated from the rest of the assembly, behind a fire-screen.” As to Bakunin himself, nobody seems to know what became of him between April 30 and May 4 or 5; so it may be presumed that he had gone in search of another mare's-nest. Not till “the third day of the rebellion, May 5,” did he return, according to Montbé, “promptly to assume the leadership of the movement,” considerably to the annoyance of the conscript-fathers. So that all the important steps in this insurrection

were taken without the assistance of either him or Roeckel, neither of whom was very much loved by the people for his ultimate share in it—see *D. A. Z.* July 31, 1849, “Bakunin was unable to rouse the smallest sympathy among the populace here,” also July 8, 1850, where the severity of the sentence upon Heubner and Roeckel is animadverted on, but the correspondent adds that “Roeckel is as relentlessly condemned by public opinion as by the tribunal,” and that at a time when everybody was clamouring for a general amnesty.—Finally, it should be observed that Wagner is not so much as distantly alluded to, in this letter of Bakunin’s; the motley little band of internationalists would scarcely have been much to his taste, though he had formed a personal friendship for their self-appointed chief.—W. A. E.

Page 350. AUGUST ROECKEL’S SHARE IN THE RISING.—As it was his long-standing intimacy with Roeckel, and more especially R.’s retention of a certain “thou”-ing letter of his, that made Wagner a suspect in the eyes of the police, it will be as well to state the counts on which the judicial verdict against Roeckel is alleged to have been based. These Roeckel summarises in his *Sachsens Erhebung* (pubd 1865) under eight heads; Praeger—who claims to have “the official accusation of my friend before me,” but of course had nothing save Roeckel’s book, nor even was directly a friend of *August’s*—gives most of these counts incorrectly. Roeckel’s own printed version of them reads as follows:—

“The specific points of accusation against me ran in brief: 1) that I placed myself at disposal of the Provisional Government immediately after my arrival in Dresden; 2) that I carried out in various places the commission, entrusted me, of connecting the barricades by breaking passages through houses; 3) that at nightfall I found shelter for several auxiliaries (*Zuzügler*), and also accompanied Lieutenant-Colonel Heinze later to the barricades when he gave out the parole; 4) that I carried out the order to prepare tar-hoops, as far as the procuring of the material, whereupon its execution stayed unfulfilled in consequence of a countermand; 5) that I conducted to the Rathhaus a reinforcement arrived from Zittau, as also 6) captives from the police-house, where they had been detained, before the Provisional Government (for the purpose of their liberation); 7) that I attended a military council regarding a proposed sortie; 8) that on the evening of May 7 I had gone out with Communal Guard officer Zychlinski to guide into the city an announced reinforcement of Werdauers, on which road [or expedition?—*auf welchem Wege*] I was taken prisoner.—My conferences in Prague they had had to leave out of account, and could do so the more easily as the above made me equally attainted with the crime of high treason and furnished ample ground for my sentence of death.”

Though this was a fair amount of work for any ordinary man to get

through in barely 30 hours (reckoning from "the afternoon of May 6"), it was all of a very subordinate character, and elsewhere in his book Roeckel virtually regrets that he had been unable to do more : "And so my efforts were limited to petty impotent attempts, that can have had but little influence on the issue of the fight. I visited barricades, encouraged to endurance, established connections between the houses by a breaking-down of party-walls, got neglected positions manned ; and there would have hardly been call to mention my own quite insignificant co-operation, had not the lying malice of our enemies seized on one fact that seemed well-adapted for sensational distortion" —that fact, of course, being the tar-hoops mentioned in "count 4" and already dealt with in our text. The only question is, how far these eight "counts" really correspond to the official indictment, or verdict? Obviously they are recited from memory, and at anyrate some comment of Roeckel's own has found its way into them ; in "6," for instance, we have a bracketed clause : ought not the latter part of "4" to be similarly enclosed, as it is of the nature of a defence, not an accusation? My reason for the larger question will be found in the immediately succeeding note, addressed to the substance of the above "count 8."—W. A. E.

Page 352. ROECKEL'S CAPTURE AND FATE.—In his *Sachsens Erhebung*, from which the above extracts are taken—a work written some fifteen years after the insurrection, and therefore hardly to be accepted as impeccable history, to say nothing of embittered feeling—Roeckel supplies the following somewhat melodramatic account of his capture :—

"On the 7th of May, toward 11 at night, came information that at a village in the neighbourhood of the Plauenscher Grund a strong convoy (*Zuzug*) had arrived, which was anxious to be conducted safely to the city. One of my friends undertook this service ; as, however, he was not quite acquainted with the district, whereas I had often rambled through it on my walks, I accompanied him. The problem was, to avoid a very strongly guarded powder-magazine lying between the city and that village. We set out ; only, in the darkness of the night, further aggravated by a downpour of rain, we missed our way, and, with our uncertainty as to the position of the military out-posts, the greatest caution was advisable. A miner, who encountered us, and claimed to know the roads, expressed his willingness to be our guide. He, who seemed beyond suspicion, was to walk a little distance in advance, and warn us by signal of any danger. Thus we trudged on in silence for about a quarter of an hour, when the miner struck up his tune, and immediately there rang from his direction, 'Halt ! Who goes there ?' We stood still, and waited if our guide would come back ; as he did not, we concluded he was captured—which indeed was the case—and struck another direction. This led us to the Elbe, on the bank of which we saw light still

burning in a village-tavern. To gain information about our road, we stepped in. Only a few of the inmates were up, among them a very aged woman and a young man, who, as soon as he had learnt our purpose, volunteered himself as guide. They hospitably refreshed us with food and drink, and upon our bidding farewell to the good souls, the old sibyl spoke these ominous words, 'I shall not light you, for your path leads into night.' Scarcely five minutes later, and her prophecy had fulfilled itself; the night of the dungeon lay before me.—In the darkness we had scarcely gone a hundred paces, than suddenly again, and this time close in front of us, a double 'Halt! Who goes there?' rang out, troopers came galloping towards us, and fired off their carbines. Startled, we fled, became separated, and I had not got far before I tumbled into a field-ditch. Thinking myself safe there for the moment, I meant to wait till the alarm had subsided, and at the same time to consider my next move; when soldiers with torches, hurrying up at the sound of shot, came closer and closer, and surrounded me. The troopers presumably had seen me fall, believed me wounded, and put the pursuers on my track. I surrendered; my friend and the guide had made off.—Although unarmed, recognised by no one, and therefore by no means to be taken for an enemy as yet, but simply for a harmless wayfarer, nevertheless in presence of the officers, and undeterred by them, I was thrashed and struck in the face by the one, hit with the butt end of the gun by the other, the whole way to the powder-magazine."

[Here I must interrupt Roeckel's story, the opening whereof, after mature reflection, I cannot accept as it stands. There are very few persons whose memory is sufficiently well-cultivated to enable them to recall with accuracy events of fifteen years gone by, and here there is evident confusion of the writer's own recollections with various happenings of those days recorded by other people in a different connection. To begin with, for all its genre-painting, the story is very hard to make a consistent mental picture of; and where there is incoherence, there mostly is more substantial error. Let me take first the dark and stormy night: Montbé speaks of rain early on the 8th, whilst the calendar certainly proves that there can have been no moon; but, with darkness so intense that Roeckel could lose his way in a district he knew well, it is extraordinary that he and his friend should have sent their first guide a little in advance of them, to warn them of danger ahead: unless the guide had a lantern with him—which would have exposed him to the very peril they were trying to avoid—they would run the risk of missing him as well. Again, although this darkness is insisted on throughout, the dragoons, from whom Roeckel had fled some way into the fields, are presumed to have *seen* him fall, and to have directed other soldiers, who *meanwhile* supplied themselves with torches, to the very spot where he lay

like a senseless log!—So much for the inherent improbability of the romantic accessories of the account. I now come to the question of the expedition's *object*, which Roeckel declares to have been the bringing-in of a 'convoy' from the neighbourhood of the Plauenscher Grund, i.e. a district described by Baedeker as commencing "2¼ miles S.W. of Dresden, a very picturesque portion of the valley of the Weisseritz, bounded by rocks on both sides." Now, these 'convoys,' as a rule, were *not* conducted into Dresden by night, for the very good reason that the city's gates were kept closed by the insurgents to guard against surprise: Montbé in fact (p. 122) reproduces a proclamation of the Dresden Town Council dated "Dresden, May 5, 1849," in which "The honoured commanders are requested, for the safe-conduct of the wagons with bread and provisions, which the surrounding districts have been begged to send in, to post men before and at the Dohnaischer, Plauenscher, Pirnaischer and Rampischer gateways tomorrow and the following days from ½ past 5 in the morning." Any convoy of Werdauers, or reinforcement from Werdau—as the body in question is described in Roeckel's summary of the counts against him—after arriving at the Plauenscher Grund, would necessarily have to make for the Plauenscher Schlag, or gateway, at the south-west angle of old Dresden; this road is described by Montbé as being the only one still open to the insurgents as late as the morning of next Wednesday, and that by which their main body made its final escape—in which all accounts agree. All notion of the necessity of circumventing a strongly-guarded powder-magazine must therefore be dismissed: yet a powder-magazine eventually enters the story. Where was it? Near the Elbe, some distance to the *north-west* of the old quarter of the city, beyond the Friedrichstadt suburb, and under the command of Rittmeister v. Uckermann (Montbé, 280), the same whose men took Roeckel prisoner on this Monday night, May 7 to 8 (*ibid.* 288); Roeckel himself tells us that he was captured near the Elbe and taken to a powder-magazine (*vid. sup.*). A body of men coming from the south-west towards the city, by a direct main road, could not possibly have fears of a magazine situated to the north-west; nor could Roeckel and his friend have gone in the latter direction *to meet them*. He had missed his way? Possibly; but a tributary of the Elbe, the Weisseritz, lay between the Plauen road and the very distant part where he was captured; a stream which Major-General von Mangoldt and his mounted vedettes were unable to cross, early on Wednesday morning, to make a closer reconnoitre of the first bands of fugitive insurgents (Montbé, 293). Moreover, we shall presently find the miner, Roeckel's *first* guide, already a prisoner in the same magazine he himself is taken to, though R. and his friend had "struck another direction," leading them to the Elbe, after losing him! Finally, the "convoy" itself: what had become of it? As may be seen by the Town Council's proclamation,

none ever arrived from the Friedrichstadt direction, for topographic reasons ; and this one simply evaporates from Roeckel's tale. We are never told either that he met it, or that he did not ; but we ultimately discover that the only people who "became separated" were himself, his companion, and his second guide.—To sum up : the only possible conclusion, is that the "reinforcement of Werdauers," or the "strong convoy near the Plauenscher Grund" (the same thing), is a mere figment of Roeckel's over-heated imagination. The road originally taken by himself and friend must have lain in quite a different direction, commencing near his own abode in the Friedrichstadt ; whilst the object of the expedition was indisputably other than that suggested to him by a memory at fault. A little later I may hazard a guess at that object ; for the present, Roeckel's lapse of memory may be excused by the total confusion into which Dr Dinger also is plunged, many years after, by his efforts to grapple with local topography, though himself a resident in Dresden. Dealing with Wagner's return to that city on the Tuesday night, he tells us, "Wagner ward auf Umwegen nach Tharandt geführt, und fuhr nach Freiberg. Unterwegs in Öderan," and so on, appending a footnote to his "geführt," namely, "Der Sohn des Gasthof-Wirtes 'Zum Steiger' [at Tharandt?], der nachmalige Kellner Halm war es, der Wagner auf nächtlichen Umwegen, um dem Militär auszuweichen, dem Röckel in die Hände fiel, und das im Plauenschen Grunde den Insurgenten nachstellte, den Pfad wies"—a combination of incongruities which it is so impossible to disentangle that I shall not attempt to translate it, though it may possibly afford a clue to Roeckel's adoption of the Plauenscher Grund, from a tale of either Wagner's or the waiter Halm's, into his own story ; unless we are to attribute the whole romance to a negligent loan from Montbé, who brings Plauen and the magazine into one conclusive sentence in a manner to entrap the unwary : "Not to be obliged to limit the patrolling to the left bank of the Weisseritz, occupation of Plauen with its passage across the Weisseritz would have been absolutely essential to Colonel von Oppell ; only, the weak company of infantry he found at the powder-magazine [*near the Elbe*, where he arrived on Sunday night] would not suffice for that further detachment" (*Mai-Aufstand* 286).—W. A. E.]

To resume Roeckel's account at the place where we dropped it.—

"Arrived at the magazine enclosure, they pushed me into a big room first, where already were some fifty captives, among them our miner. On my arrival my pockets were emptied—hat and glasses I had lost through the soldiers' fisticuffs en route—and, in consequence of the papers found upon me, I soon was brought before the commanding officer. Here also, where none save officers were present, the juniors were not ashamed in presence of their chief to imitate the common

soldiers and make a bound man the target for their trials of strength, till at last the Colonel mildly bade them stop. Since my name by now was known here, this unworthy conduct can only have had the object of proving the enthusiastic loyalty of Messrs the officers."

[Again I must pull Roeckel up ; not so much to throw doubt on the credibility of such behaviour on the part of persons whom we must assume to have been gentlemen (therefore incapable of so far forgetting their caste), as to draw attention to the papers found in his pockets. Elsewhere in his book he informs us, "In the commotion, I had omitted to destroy the two letters given me by Bakunin—which I merely shewed in Prague, but did not part with—as also the notes received from Richard Wagner and others about the outbreak of disorder in Dresden. They were found as soon as I was captured, and led to many complications." Now Bakunin had expressly asked the addressee of at least one of those letters to "burn it at once"; yet Roeckel, with the same reckless disregard of his friend's safety as he manifested in the case of the letter from Wagner, had reclaimed it and carried it upon his person for a whole week of imminent danger of arrest! Do you think that one of those officers would thus have proved his "loyalty?"—W. A. E.]

To continue :—"One of the papers found on me seemed to give rise to great uneasiness. Among other things, to wit, I had once begun to jot down the requisite arrangements for a sortie, but had been interrupted after a few lines, and thrust the paper in my pocket. The Colonel demanded full information concerning this plan, the where and when of its execution, and threatened extreme measures in case of refusal, yet at last had to content himself with this explanation."

[Which is more than *we* are obliged to. In the same passage of Montbé's book to which I have already referred regarding General v. Mangoldt's operations in the small hours of Wednesday morning (May 9) we read : "All information received, as well as a paper found before on prisoner Roeckel, pointed to the rebels intending to make their main dash out (*Durchbruch*) from the Friedrichstadt. Major-General v. Mangoldt therefore returned to the powder-magazine, and continued to observe the Friedrichstadt." At last we are drawing near a reasonable explanation of Roeckel's capture in that part of the suburbs, but must momentarily turn aside to Communal-Guard-Commander Heinze's movements on this same night of May 7 to 8.—Count J. G. von Waldersee, the General in command of the troops sent in by Prussia, also published in 1849 a book upon this insurrection, entitled *Der Kampf in Dresden*. On page 199 of that book we find that about 5 A.M. on Tuesday (May 8) Commandant Heinze lets himself be seen in the inner Pirnaische Gasse, which had been in the hands of the troops since Sunday, and is taken prisoner : "To escape being shot by the soldiers, to whom he divulged his identity, he declared that he

had important information to give ; a declaration which he nevertheless is said to have by no means substantiated at the later judicial inquiry." This white-livered creature (eventually condemned to death, then imprisonment "for life," for his pains) *had* some information to give, however ; for the *D. A. Z.* of July 1, '49, reports that papers of Heinze have been found, containing plans of operations for the street-warfare, with marginal notes by another hand : upon Heinze's stating that the notes were made by a first-lieutenant Schreiber, the latter also is promptly arrested. A pretty set of informers, some of them ! No wonder Wagner had little to do with the political refugees in Switzerland. But that's by the way. The *D. A. Z.* of the end of July 1850 (p. 1667) gives a long account of Heinze's share in the rising, containing the pregnant words : " He was openly denounced as a traitor to the cause, and suspiciously watched by staunch adherents of the Provisional Government." We may recall count 3 in Roeckel's summary, that he had " accompanied Lieut. Colonel Heinze to the barricades when he gave out the parole," and may now opine that he was ' shadowing ' him. Nor does that exhaust the Heinze episode, for Montbé gives another version of the Commandant's capture, to this effect : soon after midnight of Monday, the vedette on the Pirnaischer Platz saw two men, who, when challenged, said they were going to the Neustadt (in the hands of the troops from the first) ; Heinze's cloak falls open and reveals his uniform, whereupon he is seized ; his companion, " supposed to have been Candidate v. Zychlinski," Heinze's adjutant, escapes. Montbé further informs us that at 10 P.M. on Monday, Heinze had " beaten the appel for a reconnoitre." Now we can bring in count 7 of Roeckel's summary, " that I attended a military council regarding a proposed sortie " : connecting it with that paper found in Roeckel's fatal pocket, sketching out a sortie from the Friedrichstadt, we arrive at the only plausible elucidation of his presence in the district bordering the Elbe. Roeckel speaks of " about 11 P.M." as the time he set out on his expedition with his friend ; that is near enough, in all conscience, to the 10 P.M. when Heinze had ordered a reconnoitre. Moreover, when Roeckel was caught, there were already " some fifty captives " under arrest at the powder-magazine, in an unfrequented neighbourhood and on a dark night, which fully bears out my theory that a reconnoitre was made in *that* direction, and would account for the " uneasiness " caused by the officers' discovery of his jotting. There could be but one reason for a sortie from the Friedrichstadt : not escape, for the road lay open all the time towards the Erzgebirge, whither the insurgents ultimately retired ; but an attack on that powder-magazine of which we have heard so much, and which Roeckel himself had previously introduced into his book as " a weakly-guarded powder-mill " he alleges to have been taken by the insurgents on Sunday night, though Montbé makes clear that it was held to the last, even against

“a fairly large sortie of rebels from the Friedrichstadt.” See here! On Sunday, Heinze had declared to the Town Council that “he could not answer for the fight’s not being ended by tomorrow midday” (Montbé, 194); they were running desperately short of ammunition. An attack on this powder-magazine would be their forlorn hope, and a reconnaissance in force might well have been attempted on *Monday* night.—As to Zychlinski (the last shred of Roeckel’s “count 8”), who figures somewhat singularly as escaping twice over between late Monday night and early Tuesday morning, whilst each of his two several companions was captured, there would be ample time for him, after luckily missing Roeckel’s fate, to get back and report to his superior officer Heinze; yet in that case we should have expected something more definite to be known about Roeckel on Tuesday evening at the Rathhaus (Wagner’s letter to E. R.)—eventually (May 9) Zychlinski and the new Commandant Born led the escort accompanying Heubner, Bakunin, and the main body of insurgents on their withdrawal from Dresden.—One final word on this expedition’s object: the ‘convoy’ story quelled, there is only one alternative to the above hypothesis. That alternative is suggested by a Dresden report appearing in the *D. A. Z.* under date “May 7,” i.e. this Monday afternoon or midday (“cannonade till 11 A.M.” is mentioned), to the effect that the whole of the eastern and north-eastern quarters of the old city are now in the hands of the troops, and that “it is expected the triumvirate and other leaders will decamp to-night.” The *triumvirate* did not so decamp, but next day the same journal informs its readers that Heinze and “several leaders” have been captured.—W. A. E.]

For all his inaccuracies and other faults, we must not let poor August stand shivering any longer:—

“I was led away again, to a small closet that served for storing wood and coal. A young lieutenant gave final proof of his valour by knotting the cords on my hands, already tied behind my back, with such expenditure of force that they cut deep into my flesh, and the veins swelled almost to bursting. Thus was I thrust into the pitch-dark room, and shut in. Completely worn out by the exertions of the past two days, I soon fell fast asleep. Early next morning the door was opened, and, with a few other prisoners, I was led to the front of the house, where a mounted guard stood ready to conduct us farther. An old captain wellnigh blushed for shame when I shewed him my hands, then swollen black; he undid the knots himself, and ordered my hands to be bound in front, and no tighter than needful. Ropes were also attached to my arms, the ends given to the two troopers on either side of me, and, after I had been provided with the gymnast-cap (*Turnerhut*) of one of the captives left behind, we set off towards the Elbe. The troopers in charge of me seemed to

sympathise with me more keenly than they would have cared for their superiors to observe. They knew me, made the difficult march, at times a run between the horses, as easy as they could for me, and whispered now and then a word of hope for better times and final victory of the right. This was my first experience of men who, at a moment of burning decision, yet had no hesitation in devoting their strength to the service of a cause condemned by their own conscience, instead of manfully standing up for the recognised right—with scarcely more peril than thus threatened them also. Later, to be sure, I was often to find fresh occasion for serious reflections on this thoroughly demoralising influence of our whole State-system on all who come into any sort of dependence on it.

“Near shore a steamboat lay in waiting for us, manned by Prussian soldiers, to receive the captives. The caution as to special dangerousness, with which the leader of our escort handed me over, prompted a few Prussian non-commissioned officers to teach me in *their* way the unconditional obedience due by every Saxon to *his* King, and as a result of their method of bringing up good subjects, my beard had already been fairly thinned by the time a superior officer put an end to the practice. From a lament of his, as to the amount of bloodshed and the loss of so many dear friends, I could but conclude that the Prussian troops already had suffered severely. Later official statistics as to the insignificant loss of the military in dead and wounded, however, were by no means to be reconciled with this involuntary utterance.”

[Roeckel would have made a good pro-****; but thirteen-years incarceration for a political offence was enough to warp the judgment of the fairest-minded man. Not that I should venture to dispute the substantial truth of many of his denunciations; yet there would be a natural tendency to exaggerate every hardship, as the brooding solitude of prison life ran on. With regard to certain cases of brutality on the part of the soldiers, Prussian and Saxon captains threw the blame on one another, and exonerated their own troops; but some of these Dresden demagogues were obviously so insolent in manner and intemperate in language, that the human nature beneath the uniform might now and then break loose. A letter in the *Augsb. Allg. Ztg* of May 22, 1849 (p. 2347) cites instances of military excess, and adds: “It further happened that prisoners were sorely maltreated during transport; Musikdirektor Roeckel—who had issued a pamphlet warning his military brethren that they would one day be called before God’s judgment-seat to answer for their preservation of their oath to the colours!—is said to have had his bushy beard plucked out.”—W. A. E.]

Roeckel proceeds: “The boat passed a little distance off my dwelling, from whose windows my poor anxious wife looked toward

it with foreboding, while the children exulted at the glitter of the helmets ringing me round. We were landed on the opposite bank, and first taken to the Neustadt Rathhaus; from which, however, they brought me without delay to the strong guard-house by the Leipziger Thor. Here, with 2 or 3 others, I remained in my soaking clothes for several days, in a small dark room."

Roeckel goes on to describe his feelings during the next 24 hours, with the din of the fight still raging near him, and so forth; but we need merely refer to it as fixing the date of his capture.—His poor wife had to leave Dresden in a very few days,* by the peremptory advice of Police-actuary Heink (subsequently Governor of Waldheim), and it was she who ultimately procured his pardon. But what I cannot understand, is Roeckel's assertion, in another part of his book, that he never went near his wife or children during the insurrection. He surely might have found a moment for *that*, with his "insignificant rôle" in it! And how are we to reconcile such a statement with his wife's looking out upon the distant steamer "with foreboding"? The last place to look for a traveller from Prague, captive or free, would be the Elbe. Unless that touching domestic picture is to be set down as theatrical claptrap, we can only conclude that he obeyed the first dictate of nature, and at least bade a hasty farewell to his wife as he hurried through the Friedrichstadt on Monday night. Here it is a question of character, against a venial confusion of memory.

Already, perhaps, I have lingered too long with a minor personage; but events have made August Roeckel a psychologically-interesting figure. Let me condense the remainder of this episode into a line or two.—Forgetting that he was kept "for several days in a small dark room," Roeckel tells us on another page that two days after his capture he was taken to the Frauenkirche (once the scene of *Das Liebesmahl*), where from three to four hundred prisoners were cooped; "silence, or you'll be shot," he says, was the order given from the altar by an officer, whilst "the insults of a half-pay General von Berge were as vile as those of the soldiery." Next, he was removed to the Gewandhaus; thence to the Palace of Justice; and thence to the Cavalry-barracks, where he remained in a cell till his removal to the fortress of Königstein. According to the *D. A. Ztg* this last removal took place August 28, three closed carriages conveying Heubner, Roeckel and Bakunin, strongly guarded. Roeckel himself says that he was constantly cross-questioned, to discover particulars of his "confederates"; this is confirmed by the *D. A. Z.*, which adds that "he has refused to turn informer." The same journal of Jan. 22, 1850, states that sentence of death on these three men has now

* She had arrived at Weimar by the time Wagner had to leave there in haste (May 19), according to his letter of 1851 to Eduard Roeckel.—W. A. E.

been published by the Court of First Instance, Roeckel in particular protesting against the absence of any jury—trial-by-jury having been instituted in Saxony Nov. 1848 and expressly enjoined for political offences by the *Grundrechte* of March 1849. May 2, 1850, the sentence of death on the three is ratified by the Court of Second Instance, also in the absence of any jury. Bakunin soon after is handed over to the Austrian Government; whilst the sentences on Heubner and Roeckel are commuted to penal servitude for life, and these two are removed to the Waldheim convict-prison toward the end of June 1850.—W. A. E.

Page 356. WAGNER'S SUPPOSED SHARE IN THE REBELLION.—In some quarters much attention has been paid of late to a couple of letters in the *Briefe von Hans von Bülow* (vol. i, Breitkopf und Härtel 1895), the fact being mostly overlooked, or concealed, that young Hans could only speak from the merest hearsay, at a distance, and was in a great state of nervous excitement at the time. Hans writes from Leipzig to his mother May the 7th, 1849: "Here, day and night, there is immense commotion and hubbub of all kinds; yesterday such notable excesses, that eight people were killed and many wounded. . . . These last days I have been in a state of mind which God forbid ever recurring. I thought I should go mad; and might have, with a little better will. To-day I have been quite stupefied. Study and music are quite impossible to me for the moment—I wish I were no human being, but a silly unreasoning beast, not to feel the emotions that rack me. Happy one of our comrades, who, struck by a bullet yesterday morning in Dresden, succumbed at once! . . . If only yourselves may not be suffering in Dresden! I'm so concerned for you, though you are tolerably remote from the scene of carnage; could I but come over, to hear a kind, tolerant word! O that Wagner be not shot! I can't think of it without the most passionate tears. He stands, I fancy, in the 4th battalion of the Communal Guard, and never *shirks his duty*, even though it call to death!" About a week later (acknowledging a letter from his mother "of the 10th, received yesterday")—i.e. *after* the insurrection had been quelled—he says, "I'm sorry for having written you lately in such great excitement; but it was the first time I had been so close to the horrors of an unavoidable civil war. The next, I shall be ever so much calmer. Nor was it exactly the horrible, though necessary strife—soon to recur everywhere—that so violently alarmed and almost unhinged me, as the uncertainty about the issue, and a not ungrounded fear of the brutality of the victors. . . . As to Wagner, I know a good deal more than you. Here Rietz told people in the Conservatoire that Wagner had been Secretary to the Prov. Government; Meser, whom I met yesterday in Booksellers'-mart, could not precisely say he had been Secretary, but assured me he

[W.] had taken a considerable share. Ritter had a letter from his mother yesterday, saying Wagner had gone away with his wife—the people in his house either didn't know whither, or wouldn't tell. A student saw him speaking to the people from the balcony [Rathhaus]—the operas of the high-treasoner thus are banished for ever from the Royal repertory—for *his* punishment—and he himself perhaps is far from out of danger. Hedenus [the Bülow's doctor] shewed also great enthusiasm, visited and bandaged the wounded of the popular party; in short, the best men of Dresden."

It will be seen that all young Bülow has to tell, are odds and ends of *gossip*. He has swallowed them with an avidity as great as that displayed by Wagner's enemies, but of a diametrically opposite kind; for he goes on to express his opinion about a certain "X" who had not fought: "The unit, even the greatest man, of most importance, ought not to rate himself too high and good for food for cannon." We may be permitted to differ on that point with the mettlesome youth.

Page 357. CABINET-MINISTER COUNT VON BEUST AND RICHARD WAGNER.—"As I can't help seeing by all reports, I've gained a pretty character! Lately—so I hear—I have even been accused of setting fire to the Old Opera-house and another Dresden building," writes Wagner to Liszt the 9th of July 1849. Years afterwards, when Roeckel had been discharged from prison, the same accusation was brought against *him*; he crushed his calumniator with proofs of the impossibility of such a thing—the buildings were in a blaze while he still was on his road to Dresden, May the 6th. After Wagner's final and complete amnesty in 1862 the lie, slightly varied, was revived in his regard by enemies who stuck at nothing. So widely did it spread in time, that I myself (W. A. E.) was solemnly assured not ten years back, and by one of the sincerest and most ardent of Wagner's admirers, that the master had burnt the King's palace; needless to say, I flatly refused to believe it. I went a little farther; but of that more anon. First let us listen to the man who, of all others, should have been the last to propagate the slander.

In his memoirs *Aus drei Viertel-Jahrhunderten*, published in 1887—four years after Wagner's death—Friedrich Ferdinand Graf von Beust to give him the full benefit of his title) writes as follows:—"His Dresden friends were of opinion that it was the visions of an overwrought imagination that inspired the composer of *Rienzi* with the idea of playing in his own person for once the Tribune of the People; and in the honour of his name I will believe it, as that will easiest permit a milder judgment on his base ingratitude towards the King. People have connected my not unknown dislike of Wagner's music—a dislike, for that matter, which applies only to his later, not to his first creations—with the events of 1849; yet wrongly. I should know how to separate the thing from the person; which latter, moreover,

had not to complain of me. Wagner, who was condemned to death *in contumaciam*, in the first years after his flight had stayed in Switzerland and then in France, and received an invitation to Weimar. The Saxon Government was as entitled to demand his extradition, as the other [German] Governments would have been bound to comply. I did not hesitate to procure that a reassuring consent was given. A few years later, in consequence of the intervention of the family Tichatschek—the famous tenor was the first founder of Wagnerian fame—friends of Wagner's first wife, an excellent woman, I procured the King's pardon for him, which enabled him to come to Dresden. I must acknowledge that he prevailed on himself to pay me a visit of thanks ; the only time I ever met him. I greeted him with the words ; ' It rejoices me, if I have been able to do anything agreeable to you, Herr Wagner. You certainly will not wish, accordingly, to inflict any disagreeable thing on me ; therefore I beg, no demonstrations.'—' I do not understand you,' was the answer.—' Hm ! I continued, ' Still you remember what happened in 1849 ?'—' Ah ! that indeed was an unfortunate misunderstanding !'—' A misunderstanding ? Can you be unaware that there exists among the Acts a paper (*Blatt*) written by you, in which you boast of the arson at the Princes' Palace, luckily attended by no serious consequences ?' Whether he may have sung to it : ' Frisch, Feuer, Flamme, fröhlich und fürchtbar,' I do not know."—Yes, Count Beust ; and *we* don't know the answer Wagner gave you !

Beust records no answer, and fancies he has rounded off a capital story by that odiously flippant parody of Wagner's *Stabreim* ; as if the reputation of departed genius, " the honour of his name," were a mere plaything to a statesman who had turned so many coats. But—from beginning to end the tale is false. The conversation with Beust never proceeded on any such lines, as will be proved to demonstration in my next note ; Wagner never was condemned to anything, since he never was tried ; and Beust neither sent reassuring messages to Weimar in those " first years after Wagner's flight," when it would have been of immense importance to the artist to superintend the production of his *Lohengrin*, nor certainly for some months (if at all) after that visit of 1862, at which Wagner personally asked him to ! Care in fact was taken, as we shall shortly see, that a fresh and aggravated warrant of arrest should be published in 1853 at the very time the Hereditary Grand Duke of Weimar himself went to Dresden as a mediator. One hardly knows *how* to characterise such a tissue of misrepresentations. Upon first reading Beust's statement, after my attention had been drawn thereto by Praeger's book (where it is treated as gospel), I remarked in my little brochure 1849 : *A vindication* (pub. 1892) " I simply do not believe in the existence of this '*Blatt*' (von Beust does not even say whether it was a letter, a scribbled message, or a printed

sheet) . . . the statement as to a death-verdict upon Wagner is sufficient in itself to demolish the remainder of von Beust's account"—to avoid repetition, I may here omit the reasons I gave; in place of "death-verdict" I ought to have said "death-sentence," but that is immaterial to the issue. I then charitably offered the friends of Beust the hypothesis that he had confounded the dramatist with a certain "*journeyman-baker Wagner*; this young man *was* condemned to death for various acts of sedition, and is accused by Montbé of *incendiarism*." My supposition, of course, was hooted by a portion of the English press; but at the very time my little book was being printed in England, a large volume was also being printed in Germany, *Richard Wagner's geistige Entwicklung* by Dr Hugo Dinger. Neither Dr Dinger nor I then knew of the other's existence, yet this is what he writes on his 191st page: "In the Acts [or judicial archives] there is not the smallest anchorage for Herr von Beust's assertion. No condemnation of Wagner ever occurred, according to the Acts. Herr von Beust presumably did not reflect that according to current Saxon law, nay, even according to martial law, sentence could not possibly have been passed on a fugitive inculpate without a hearing and judgment. I therefore conjectured that a confusion of persons must lie at bottom of Count Beust's remarks, and hunted in books and journals of those days for a possible namesake of Wagner's. In several brief notices of the democratic press I found a certain Woldemar Wagner mentioned, who was condemned to death for sedition etc. at the beginning of 1850. This man was son to a Dresden paviour, and confectioner's-help by his own trade. He appears to have been one of the wildest and worst of the Barricade hands. Among other charges, he is accused of having murderously shot Lieutenant von Krug behind a well-house during the attack on the Arsenal, May the 3rd. Accused also of plundering an officer's house, he is described in fact as an incendiary. Now, it is likely that this individual, whom Montbé describes as in the highest degree an ill-reputed and dangerous character, reported to the Provisional Government either the fire in the Zwinger-strasse, or that at the Princes' Palace in the Kleine Brüdergasse, simply signing himself 'Wagner.' Herr von Beust, in the pressure of business, would have fallen into the regrettable malheur of not keeping quite distinct the persons of the sugar- and the tone-artist." Dinger naturally means, in Beust's recollection, for they cannot have been mixed in the official records. But it is no question of distinguishing between a "sugar- and the tone-artist"; it is one of distinguishing between an abandoned wastrel and the greatest genius of the age; and no one, who had occupied positions so responsible as the many held by Beust, should have dared to omit the precautions needful to obviate such a "regrettable malheur." Hare-brained frivolity has never yet gone this disgraceful length.

To continue Dinger's account: "Upon inquiry in official quarters, also, my views of this case have not been confuted. According to a comprehensive declaration of the Royal District-Court (*Amtsgericht*) of Dresden, based on the circumstantial Acts preserved there, 'No manner of sentence on Königl. Kapellmeister Richard Wagner was ever passed. On the other hand, confectioner's-help Heinrich Wolde-mar Wagner of Dresden—see Acts, *Lit. W.* No. 56—was examined in the criminal department of the Dresden Town-Court (*Stadtgericht*), and condemned to death on March 18, 1850, by the Royal Court of Appeal, the verdict being High treason; that verdict was confirmed by the Royal Higher Court of Appeal on May 17, 1850, but His Majesty was graciously pleased to commute the death-punishment into penal servitude of the second class for life; according to record by the Governor of the Royal Penitentiary at Waldheim of October 14, 1857, in pursuance of the Royal pardon Wagner was discharged from that establishment that day." Dr Dinger—for whose researches, when conducted on lines so unexceptionable, we cannot be too grateful—goes still farther. He has unearthed the 'pleading' of this H. W. Wagner, as published by his advocate, and finds that Woldemar admits having "shot hard from a house in the Kleine Brüdergasse, and from a barricade in the Grosse Brüdergasse," the very situation of the fire in question. This in itself explodes the whole of Beust's abominable accusation.

Now contrast these dates. In 1857 the disreputable ne'er-do-weel is pardoned and discharged; not till 1862 is the un-sentenced glory of his fatherland permitted to return to Saxony, nearly two years after the rest of Germany, including Austria, lay free to his foot! The public scandal of such ostracism had become too great at last, and the Saxon Prime Minister was bound to give way; though one would have thought, for his own reputation's sake, he might have attributed his final relenting to higher grounds than the intervention of private persons.* Yet Beust, who held two successive Kings of Saxony in leading-strings, has the impudence to declare that Richard Wagner had "nothing to complain of" as concerns himself!

The next two notes, when taken together, will *pulverise* Beust's statement; but it still remains to convict him out of his own mouth. On page 34 of his *Erinnerungen zu Erinnerungen* (published 1881 as a counterblast to von Friesen's memoirs) are to be found these words: "Private conversations are a source which historians both ancient and modern have always been ashamed to use; but our author seems

* That it really was Minna, and therefore probably through Tichatschek (or his "family," as Beust says), is apparent from Wagner's letter to Roeckel of April 5, 1862: "My wife has just procured me the full Dresden amnesty."—W. A. E.

to set especial store on them." Possibly Beust would have deemed the remark only applicable to his equals ; a worm of an artist might be trodden beneath his shifty feet with any pair of boots he pleased. But there are statesmen and statesmen, and this is how his former colleague von Friesen sums up the results of Beust's policy, alike Saxon and German : "A sheer return to the old order of things, as they stood before the year 1848 ; an order no longer answering the demands of the age, nay, already proved and recognised on all sides as wholly untenable. The consequences were therefore the same both here and there : universal discomfort, a brooding on shattered hopes and expectations, and a vague indefinite dread of coming events that no one could forecast. No one had any further confidence in the duration of existing conditions ; but every section cast the blame upon the other ; and thus arose a deep disunion in the [larger] nation, that hindered all advance, and could profit none save the enemies of Germany and the foes of political order in general. Though, as regards the inner relations of the separate country, some improvement might still be awaited from a gradual clearing of opinions and the progress of education—with regard to Germany as a whole, things stood in sorrier, far more mournful case. Here men of deeper penetration already began to fear that a *peaceful* solution of the German Question was scarcely to be hoped for any longer" (*Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben*, p. 296).—W. A. E.

Page 358. THE JUDICIAL INQUIRY INTO THE CASE OF RICHARD WAGNER.—In the body of the text I declined to touch the tangled gossip culled by Dr Dinger from the "Acts" of the Dresden law-courts, for two reasons : one being, that those Acts were not open to public inspection, consequently were unverifiable ; the other, that the accused was in no way personally represented either at the judicial or the amateur inquiry. Since the printing of the greater portion of the present volume, however, a quite invaluable document has been made public, namely a declaration drawn up by the master's own legal adviser after a belated inspection of those Acts (belated, though a whole generation earlier than Dinger's) ; an inspection undertaken *in consequence of the very calumny* dealt with in the immediately-preceding note, and a quarter of a century before that calumny had been stamped with the flagitious approval of an Ex-Cabinet-Minister.

From the papers of the late Franz Adolf Schmidt, now preserved in the Royal Public Library at Dresden, the *Zft d. Internat. Musik-Ges.* has printed in its issue already-mentioned (p. 389 *antea*) a letter of Wagner's, together with the draft of Schmidt's answer of June 1863. I propose to recite that answer first, and then proceed to the request that called it forth. Lawyer Schmidt writes as follows :—

"I have prepared an abstract of those depositions of witnesses, in the somewhat extensive archive, that are suited to afford a point of

accusation ; drawn up in the summary form of a certificate I enclose it to you, leaving you to make whatever use of it you choose. I am delighted to be able to avouch, that for the charge sprung upon you in Vienna, of having attempted to set fire to the King's Palace, there is not even the remotest foundation in the Acts of Inquiry.

"*Attestation.* By request of the composer and former Kapellmeister Richard Wagner, and on the basis of minute investigation of the Acts of Inquiry of the former Kgl. Stadtgericht of Dresden, Criminal Division, into his alleged complicity in the Dresden May-rising of the year 1849, I hereby certify that none save the following charges against Herr Wagner are recorded in the Acts ; charges the majority of which, moreover, are founded on nothing but the verbal statement of a single unsworn witness :

"*a*) In re the time before the Rising.

"Herr Wagner is said to have taken part in the year preceding the insurrection in discussions in his garden, which discussions formed the basis of the pamphlet on 'Folk-arming' subsequently published by Musikdirektor Roeckel ; he is further said to have been present at meetings with Bakunin toward Easter of the year 1849, and about the same time, or still earlier, to have ordered from a tinman of this place about 500 hand-grenades—for that matter, according to the tinman's evidence, most undangerous ones—and to have received delivery of at least a portion of them.

"*b*) During the Rising.

"Herr Wagner, during the insurrection, was seen by various persons in the chamber of the so-called Provisory Government. Further, he is said to have incited a Communal Guard reinforcement, alike at Oederan and Freiberg, to pursue its march on Dresden, and in Dresden to have led through the streets a reinforcement arrived from Zittau. To Roeckel, who was in Prague during the first days of the insurrection, he is said to have written a letter in which appears the passage : 'people have but one fear, that the insurrection might break out too soon.' On the 6th of May 1849, consequently on a day of the insurrection, Herr Wagner was seen on the Kreuzthurm ; there he is said to have observed the position of the troops and the approach of popular reinforcements, to have written down the result of his observations, and to have dropped the written notes beneath, attached to stones. Watchmen are said to have then picked them up, and conveyed them to the Provisory Government. Finally—without, however, there being any mention in the Acts of Herr Wagner's privity thereto—a box was to have been transported to his dwelling, which box proved to belong to Bakunin.

"*c*) After the Rising.

"After the rising in Dresden had been subdued by the military, Herr Wagner went away from Dresden ; between Tharandt and Freiberg

he fell in with Heubner and Bakunin, and proceeded with them to Freiberg, where he stayed for some time in Heubner's house.

"Other accusations bearing on a complicity of Herr Richard Wagner in the rising aforesaid are not to be found in the Acts; in particular, there is nowhere even a suggestion that Herr Wagner made the attempt, or had the intention, to set fire to the King's Palace or any other public or private building in Dresden."

In contradistinction to Dr Dinger's rambling extracts from these Acts—strewn broadcast here and there, but adding nothing material to the above—Schmidt's statement is clear and dispassionate; that of a lawyer who has been ascertaining for a client the very utmost extent of the charges officially recorded (quite a different thing from proved) against him. With proper professional exactitude he distinguishes between "*war*" and "*soll*," between "was" and "is said, or supposed to"; he also supplies us with the long-sought information, strangely neglected by amateur-Justice Dinger, that most of the evidence was unsupported, and, apparently, *none* of it given *on oath*. Is any further comment necessary? Perhaps, for those to whom the bare mention of a thing in an official ledger is its positive proof.

Under "*a*" will be found the ghost of a charge which, after long deliberation, I followed Herr Glasenapp's example in not incorporating in the body of this volume, since it is hardly the biographer's bounden duty to lend his ear to every vulgar breath of slander, and, as Casca says in *Julius Cæsar*, "for my own part I durst not laugh, for fear of opening my lips and receiving the bad air." In this case, too, Wagner's bitterest enemies had never taxed him with the thing; whilst no book or journal of the period—and I had consulted all the *respectable* authorities—had a word to say about hand-grenades having been found or used in connection with the Dresden rebellion. True, Dr Dinger had unearthed one rag, *Die Fackel* (a contemptible broadsheet to which, in common with the *Freimüthige*, von Friesen says Beust was inspirer), with a remark about Roeckel in its issue of July 14, 1849, "in whose dwelling, by the way, a shrapnel was found." If that was all his researches in contemporary literature could reward him with in this direction, I wish Dr Dinger joy of it: it is about as convincing as his remark anent Bakunin's lodgings, "There, according to the Acts (pp. 5 and 20), presumably a 'depôt was held of gunpowder, ammunition, particularly shrapnels'" (*R. W.'s geist. Entw.* 179)—where the "presumably" (*mutmasslich*) may be considered unique, especially as this ingenious author does not tell us *who* presumed so, whether himself, the recorder of the Acts, or some third party. Apart from these completely negligible utterances, however, Dr Dinger cited from the Acts the unsupported evidence of that tinman (or pewterer—*Zinn-giesser*); but what did he do with it? He chopped it into two foot-notes, appending one to his 167th page, the other to his 180th (in a

non-indexed book, too), and actually divided the tinman himself into two, calling him on the former page "X," on the latter "W. O.," leaving the unsuspecting reader, who might not have detected the same practice in other cases, with the impression that *two* witnesses had spoken. As if that were not sufficient multiplication, he then proceeded to pepper these grenades over two or three other pages of his book, and argue from them as demonstrated facts—demonstrated, if you please, by the sole unsworn evidence of this anonymous tinker *under arrest*, as his champion admits! In no civilised law-court would 'King's-evidence' be taken into consideration by a judge, unless supported either by circumstantial evidence or by that of a non-inculpate party. And Dinger does not inform us that the charge ever entered even the verdict on Roeckel, the principal accusee; still less that it was accepted by the Court of Inquiry as having validity against Wagner, who never came up for trial. It was mainly owing to this indiscriminating attitude of Dr Dinger's, coupled with his tendency to make a little go a good long way—warming it up afresh from time to time with another garnish, now giving it in 'quotes,' then breaking off at a vital point into oblique narration—that I originally rejected his testimony in toto, as quite worthless to the serious historian. The late F. A. Schmidt, however, having drained the Acts (or, as the French would call them, *dossier*) to their very dregs, in conscientious discharge of the commission Richard Wagner gave him in 1863, my duty takes another aspect; I must make a verbatim translation of those two aforesaid footnotes of Dinger's:—

On page 167 of *R. W.'s geistige Entwicklung*, to the sentence "People were hoping for risings in the Erzgebirge, in Wurtemberg, Baden, Silesia, Prague and Berlin" is appended the note: "'Minded at first to go to Berlin, which we still expected would take the initiative, Bakunin persuaded me to visit Prague.' Roeckel, *Sachsens Erhebung*, p. 143.—From the Acts of Inquiry against Roeckel, contained in 'Acta against the quondam Kapellmeister Richard Wagner, of this place, for complicity in the local May-rising in the year 1849. Königl. Stadtgericht at Dresden. Department for Criminal matters 1856, Cap. II. a, *Lit. W.*, No. 63,' it results (*ergiebt sich*) that Roeckel had ordered hand-grenades in March before Shrovetide, and that several times. That the missiles were sent in part to Berlin, in part to Leipzig (compositor X.), Chemnitz, Committee of the *Social-republik. Blätter*, in part to Prague (to unknown persons). The maker of the grenades, X. in Dresden, likewise in custody, most positively affirms these particulars; Roeckel definitely admits nothing but the consignments to Y., and makes inadequate evasions." Here, you see, it is all oblique, except the title of the document; which nevertheless has no *page* number given it—that being reserved for another place. We are expected to take the summariser's word for its being a faithful abstract, for all this

deduction really "resulting," i.e. being *proven*; yet he actually omits to say who sent the hand-grenades away. A very serious omission: for, of the two cities mentioned in the beginning of the note, Berlin has no representative, and Prague is represented by "unknown persons." If the maker himself sent those goods to Prague (and in the other note we learn that it was *he* who sent them to Leipzig), he must have known the name of the consignee: if he did not, how could he know they were sent there? As that elementary sort of question never seems to present itself to Dr Hugo Dinger's mind, I cannot trust to him in the oblique. Let us try the direct form, or rather, as much as we get of it in his other note.

On pages 178-80 of the same work Richard Wagner is grotesquely paraded as the Faust to August Roeckel's Mephistopheles, 179 detonating into 180 with "Thus he let himself be led by Mephisto Roeckel into a Witches' Kitchen—the workshop of the tinman X.—where Roeckel ordered hand-grenades." To this is appended the note we are after:—"The mysterious ordering of hand-grenades forms a main incriminating point (*ein hauptsächlichliches Belastungsmaterial*) in the Acts of Inquiry. On page 52 the prisoner W. O. makes deposition (*gibt zu Protokoll*): 'In all I cast perhaps 1400-1500 grenades, yet I cannot declare those numbers with certainty.—All these I made before the disturbance that took place here.—Before Easter of this year I sent away about 24 to 26 of them, on orders previously received by me, to a comrade in Leipzig. The rest of the said 140 to 150 I prepared, on previous order, for Musikdirektor Roeckel and Kapellmeister Wagner, somewhere about the same time.—The rest, which Wagner and Roeckel together ordered, were to be sent to Prague to a friend of Roeckel's, whom I am not in a position to name.' Roeckel admits indeed an order of hand-grenades, denies, however, that he had ordered any to Prague. 'It may be, that I (Roeckel) was once with Kapellmeister Wagner at O.'s; nevertheless I do not remember it; the ordering of hand-grenades I must dispute.' Upon Roeckel's positive denial, and assertion that there must be some confusion of persons, Roeckel is confronted with O. O. maintains the correctness of his statements most positively, whereas Roeckel gives evasive answers or downright denials. Roeckel, 'It may be that I once was at your place with Wagner; of the ordering, however, I know nothing; perhaps Wagner gave the order; I know nothing of the whole affair.'—A parcel of grenades was not sent away, but deposited (*deponiert*) in Dresden. During the insurrection an order came to O. to fill them. O. cannot assert precisely whether Wagner or a Herr M. brought the order."

There we have the full extent of the accusation, to which Dinger, acting as voluntary counsel for the prosecution, has devoted far

more attention than to the defence. Observe how he neglects the feature, emphasised by Schmidt, that these grenades were "according to the tinman's evidence most un-dangerous." One would have thought that might throw some light on the case, especially as it was long before the days of dynamite, even if this solitary informer's unsworn deposition were to be taken as gospel. But from beginning to end Dr Dinger's report is open to grave objections. He does not say against *whom* this "mysterious ordering," as he himself calls it, "forms a main incriminating point," or in *whose* eyes it so forms. If in the eyes of the judges, he assuredly could have fished up more than one passage from the Acts in this connection : for we now detect that the first footnote is simply a summary, a transplanted cutting, so to speak, of the second ; there we were given the title of the dossier, here merely the number of a page ; there X., here W. O. ; but the text above says X., thus naïvely letting the cat out of the bag.—I lay stress on these and like omissions, from no spirit of cavilling, or what the hasty critic is so fond of calling "special pleading," but because access to those official Acts is rightly denied to the public. If we are to have chapter and verse at all, in such grave matters, we *must* have them consistently and systematically : not dribbled out here the chapter without the verse, and there the verse without the chapter, as in these two specimens ; for the comparison of data is our only means of checking evidence, and such tainted evidence, most one-sidedly set forth. Dr Dinger has no bias against Richard Wagner : quite the contrary, so far as we can conclude from his having taken endless pains in the attempt to trace his "mental development" (*geistige Entwicklung*) ; but he *has* a bias, and a not unnatural bias, in favour of the novelty and importance of all his imagined 'finds,' as also in favour of the bureaucracy that accorded him so exceptional a privilege ; he snatches with alacrity at almost anything set down on foolscap paper, and unquestioningly elevates it to the rank of an incontrovertible fact. Moreover, the deplorable carelessness of this only modern initiate into the mysteries of those half-boiled Acts is stamped on wellnigh every line. In his footnote summary on page 167 he had said that Roekkel gave orders for these grenades "several times" ; in the note to page 180 he cites but *one* alleged instance, though he has presented it in such a manner as to look like two. F. A. Schmidt has told us "about 500" grenades ; Dinger quotes from the protocol "1400-1500," then in the same quotation gives "the said 140-150," leaving us completely in the dark as to *which* is the quite unpardonable misprint. He omits sentences (or clauses?) at will, and does not indicate his omissions by the accepted ". . ." or "— — —" (elsewhere used by him), but by a single undistinctive 'rule,' or dash ; thus an amplification, or correction, of one of O.'s statements is lent the

semblance of a fresh assertion. Worst of all: he alleges that Roeckel made "evasive answers," and again that he admitted one order of these missiles; but he does not reproduce his culprit's *words*. It is the most sensational incident he has to report, and he reports it in the most sensational manner. If he meant to give so much, he should have given *all*, in literal quotation, and allowed us to draw our own conclusions, whether he chose to assist us in that mental exercise or not. As it is, we are entirely at sea. Did Roeckel admit anything, after all, or not? The poor man may have been a very difficult, or incoherent witness, but his defence at least was worthy of as much attention as the tinman's charge: that tinman whose social standing may be inferred from his allusion to a Leipzig "comrade"—*an einen Genossen in Leipzig*—who, of course, is none other than the "composer X." of Dr Dinger's earlier note.

As to Wagner, the principal object alike of Dinger's and our own inquiry, there is nothing further to be deduced from this very fishy evidence, than that he possibly may once have gone to O.'s shop—to get a kettle repaired, perhaps—in the company of Roeckel. If Roeckel, however, did order grenades to be sent to a nameless individual in Prague, it must have been that they were to be addressed c/o himself there: in that case, far from abetting him, Wagner absolutely stopped despatch. Talking of "the things" (wearing apparel is thus described in German private correspondence, as well as in English) which Roeckel's wife is sending off to Prague, Wagner remarks in that letter of May 2, "What you particularly wanted, I have forbidden to be put up with them, for reasons which I take upon myself." That is a hypothesis to the full as good as Dinger's, in explanation of the "mystery." But I should much have liked to see O. under *Wagner's* cross-examination: I'd wager those hand-grenades would soon have made a pretty explosion among the tinman's pots and pans.

To return to Schmidt's professional abstract:—Still under "*a*," we have Wagner's alleged presence "at meetings with Bakunin." That Wagner was on terms of personal intimacy with the Russian ideologue, we know from his own mouth; from Bakunin's we know that he "entered into no confederacy with him," and therefore we must exclude him from any possible meeting of plotters. But there is something ugly, not for Wagner, in another member of the "*a*" group, the record of his "participation in discussions which formed the basis of Roeckel's pamphlet on Folk-arming." That pamphlet had been openly presented to the Ministry some months before the insurrection; but who could have been the eavesdropper "in Wagner's garden," to mix him up with the affair in a Court of Inquiry? Unfortunately it was, as it could only have been, Roeckel himself; under arrest, and under examination, he was imprudent enough to drag in his friend's name (according to "Acts pp. 30-32," see Dinger *ibid.* 180). Every allowance must be made for a

prisoner harassed by inquisitors, and perhaps thrown off his guard ; the slightest hint, or slip of the tongue, would be pounced upon at once. Moreover, Roeckel shewed so indomitable a spirit down to the end of his wellnigh thirteen years' imprisonment, that no one can refuse him the full tribute due to dogged endurance. Nevertheless, in the admission aforesaid there is a certain want of loyalty, the loyalty of friend to friend in times of trouble, that finds a counterpart in his "perhaps *Wagner* gave the order," as also the preservation of those letters from Wagner, Bakunin and others, and should somewhat modify the conventional view of Roeckel's devotion.

Coming to "*b*," we have a definite statement, that Wagner "was seen by various persons in the chamber of the Prov. Government." In the text we have already noticed his occasional visits to the Rathhaus, to learn the progress of events ; but the various persons who saw him there—were they, too, accomplices ? The fact is, almost the whole of the town might at different times have been *seen* in the chamber of the Prov. Govt ; for the room was constantly thronged to its utmost capacity by eager inquirers. If Wagner was nothing more than "seen" there, according to the Acts, we may dismiss for good the theory that he was in any sense a leader of the movement : otherwise we should expect to be told that he was charged with *doing*, giving orders, or "acting as secretary," as Herr Rietz kindly misinformed his colleagues of the Leipzig Conservatoire.—The question of guiding, or encouraging, "reinforcements" has also been dealt with in the text ; where we have further given in extenso the letter to Roeckel of May 2, 1849. At the time Schmidt drafted his summary and for a whole generation thereafter, merely an excerpt from, not even a verbatim copy of, this letter was to be found in the Acts, the original having been handed over to the Austrian Government when Bakunin was transferred to its tender mercies !—With regard to the Kreuzthurm, no doubt Wagner was up aloft there for many hours ; but who were the informers with such phenomenal eyesight as, either from above or below, to watch the scribbling of these messages, their dropping over the parapet by Wagner, and their conveyance to the Rathhaus ? Here again, Schmidt uses "*soll*," thereby proving that not one of those alleged notes had been actually produced in court.—Finally we have that box of Bakunin's, which "was to have been transported" (*hat transportirt werden sollen*) to Wagner's dwelling at some time during the week of revolt. Almost the only real weight to be attached to this point is its testimony to the minuteness of Herr Schmidt's examination of the archives ; for Dinger, with all his morbid craving for incriminatory material, does not so much as hint at this. The intention of transporting the box, on behalf of whomsoever, was evidently not carried out, as may be legitimately concluded from the form of statement. What, then, became of it ? Perhaps I can throw

a little light on that. On page 1505 of the *D. A. Z.* for 1850 (Leipzig, July) a story of supposed treachery of Roeckel to Bakunin is quoted from the *Breslauer Zeitung*, together with a démenti from the *Dresdener Zeitung*; according to this démenti—and the editor of the *Dresd. Ztg* would know something about the affair, for he was son of Bakunin's last landlady—the mysterious box contained *nothing but clothes* and like harmless effects, and was reclaimed by the police (upon whose information?) from the proprietor of the Reussischer Garten (a café?) in the Antonstadt, Dresden Neustadt, who had detained it as security for an unpaid bill of Bakunin's. This episode may serve to illustrate the bagatelles that found their way into Dresden judicial records; yet we can scarcely blame the authorities for leaving unturned no stone that might afford a possible clue to future discoveries.

As "c" adds nothing to our previous knowledge, I may conclude my comments on the result of the late F. A. Schmidt's most valuable investigation by drawing the reader's attention to its *negative* side. Almost immediately after Minna's return from Chemnitz to Dresden a police-agent presented himself at the Wagners' rooms, with orders to search her husband's papers (p. 368 *antea*); yet neither Schmidt nor Dinger has found in the Acts even a suggestion that any document, or other object, had been seized there! Either a very circumspect "conspirator" indeed, this Richard Wagner; or else, as he consistently describes himself, the merest "looker-on."

And now that we know the utmost pennyweight of the *primâ facie* case against Wagner, we can better appreciate that letter of his to Schmidt which resulted in the ex-accused being for the first time furnished with a statement of his alleged offences. The letter is dated "Berlin, 20. Febr. 1863," and commences with some private business details quite irrelevant to the present issue. It then continues:—

"But I have another request, honoured Sir. Would you kindly undertake for me the task of procuring an abstract of the judicially recorded incrimination-points as to my complicity in the Dresden rising of the year 1849. I have been advised by high-placed well-wishers . . . to take this means of countering the continued calumnies of X, namely, that I then attempted to set fire to the King's palace in Dresden; which appears so grave a measure of complicity in those events, that every effort in my favour is met by the reply from highest circles, With such a man one can have nothing to do, and so on. Now, it is quite impossible that a serious denunciation of this sort can be on record against me; consequently through such an abstract I should place my well-wishers in the position to contravene X's insinuations. Should, however, a charge of this kind have really been lodged against me in the law-court, I should deem it necessary to have that point at last submitted to a real examination. Perhaps

you will think it necessary to enter into communication with Cabinet-minister Baron von Beust in this regard. At the audience he granted me last November in Dresden I already addressed him a pressing entreaty to set the Government of my well-wisher the Duke of Saxe-Weimar at ease by some obliging declaration, to the effect that, if the Duke resolved to take me into his service in any way, no manner of offence to the Saxon Court would be recognised therein. Herr v. Beust solemnly promised me to discuss the subject with His Majesty. I am informed from Weimar, however, that no tranquillising declaration of the kind has been conveyed to Minister von Watzdorf there; and, from several indications, I am forced to conclude that great uneasiness in this regard still prevails at the Court of Weimar. It therefore would be rendering me a very gratifying service, if at the same time you could move Herr von Beust on this side to a conciliating and tranquillising intervention in my behalf!"

Addressed to his private solicitor, those are the words of a man with a perfectly clear conscience on the score of *any* grave or material complicity, and at last we see what line the conversation at that interview with Beust had really taken; for Beust himself has told us that he met Wagner only *once* in all his life. The subject of incendiarism was not even broached then; an old Dresden squib of 1849 that had long ago burnt itself out; not until after that meeting, was the calumny rekindled into flame. What actually happened, was that Wagner asked Beust the very smallest possible favour, a mere word to reassure the Grand Duke of Weimar that his protection of Wagner, *now fully amnestied*, would not offend the touchy Saxon Court. That simple easy word was never sent—or if ever, not until it could no longer be of any service; whereas the very slander Schmidt was sent to Beust to get exploded, the slander for which Schmidt could not find one jot of evidence or remotest foundation in the Acts, is given a fresh lease of life a quarter of a century later by the backbiting statesman himself! The only possible apology for such an entire reversal of the truth, would be that the ex-Minister's memory had become clouded with advancing age, leading to a wild confusion of fantastic glimmerings of the wrong ends of facts, a sort of mental cataract; yet, scarcely six years before his scurrilous tale was printed, he had boasted of possessing "an uncommonly good memory, as has often been remarked" (*Er. zu Er.* p. 15, published 1881).

As to the Vienna "X," quite a mirror of truth by comparison, we may all make a pretty shrewd guess.—W. A. E.

Page 374. THE WARRANT OF ARREST.—In the Dresden *Anzeiger* of May 17, 1849, appeared the warrant against Gottfried Semper, "medium height, about 40 years old, sallow complexion." Two days later, namely May 19, the same journal printed the warrant against Richard Wagner; next day, May 20, it was reprinted in the *Leipziger*

Zeitung, and presumably in other German newspapers, though no mention is made of it in Brockhaus's *Deutsche Allgemeine*. In his *Richard Wagner* Mr Chamberlain reproduces a facsimile of a copy in the contemporary *Dresdener Journal*, which is word for word the same as that in the aforesaid *Leipziger Zeitung*, and, we may certainly assume, in the original publication :

“*Warrant of Arrest.*”

The King's Kapellmeister somewhat more closely described below

Richard Wagner of this place

because of essential participation in the late seditious movement in this city is to be brought up for inquiry, but to date has not been to be reached. All police-authorities therefore have their attention drawn to him, and are desired to arrest Wagner, in case of encountering him, and to report the same with utmost speed.

Dresden, the 16th May 1849.

Town-Police-Deputation,

VON OPPELL.

Wagner is 37-38 years old [incorrect], of middle stature, has brown hair and wears glasses.”

It really reads like farce, though the above translation has in no way exaggerated the clumsy mildness of this document. The date of publication, too—*three days* after signature, as promised Minna—bears out the view that no great importance was originally attached to Wagner's capture, though the police were already in possession of the only compromising fact against him, that letter of May 2 to Roeckel. June the 14th, 20th and 28th, the warrant was reprinted, but with no increase of severity. In fact its first line would rather point to something having been purposely omitted on reflection, for we can scarcely term the description at the warrant's end by any means a “close” one. What it was at first intended to say, is evident from the draft of a ‘signalement’ attributed by Oppenheim to a certain Rath B. (see *Frankfurter Zeitung* June 16, 1877): “Wagner is 37-38 years old, of middle stature, has brown hair, open forehead; eyebrows, brown; eyes, grey-blue; nose and mouth, proportioned; chin, round, and wears glasses [this is not the translator's fault]. Special characteristics: in speech and movement quick and hasty. *Clothing*: overcoat of dark-green buckskin [*sic*], trousers of black cloth, vest of velvet; silk cravat, ordinary felt-hat and boots.” The actual warrant, as will be seen on comparison, has only preserved the first few colourless words of this description; precisely as though the chief officer had kindly run his pen through everything at all distinctive.

The *Deutsche Allg. Ztg* of July 14, 1849, mentioning Richard Wagner's name for the first time since the trouble began, simply reports from the semi-official *Dresdener Journal*, “Kapellmeister Wagner and

Professor Semper have had their names struck off the list of Court-officers, since they have not presented themselves." So that even still higher quarters have not yet begun to treat the ex-Kapellmeister as a very dangerous person. But that was during von Friesen's tenure of the Ministry of the Interior. Richard Freiherr von Friesen resigned in October 1852,* and Beust became Home Secretary, as we should call it, in addition to his former office of Foreign minister. Now tolerance was soon cast to the winds. In the *Allgemeiner Polizei-Anzeiger* of June 1853, under the rubric "Politically dangerous individuals," the Saxon Ministry makes

Proclamation.

"*Wagner, Richard*, formerly Kapellmeister at Dresden, one of the most prominent adherents of the party of Destruction, who is under warrant of arrest for participation in the revolution at Dresden in May 1849, is said to be intending to set out for Germany from Zurich, where he is residing at present. In behalf of his apprehension a portrait of Wagner, who, in case of being encountered, should be arrested and delivered over to the Royal Town-court in Dresden, is here appended."

What had Wagner been doing in the interim, to cause this fresh alarm? Nothing more serious than writing a few æsthetic-sociologic books which hardly anybody read, and the Saxon authorities had never interfered with—though in December 1852 the sale of certain works by Bruno Bauer, Feuerbach, Ruge and so on, had been prohibited. But through the Weimar and other minor Courts he had long been seeking *permission* to visit Germany from time to time for a performance of his operas, and had quite recently protested against Lüttichau's supposed intention to give, i.e. to mutilate his *Lohengrin*. Then, too, he had just conducted a brilliant series of three 'Wagner-concerts' at Zurich, and on *June the second* the *D. A. Z.* had quoted their programme, adding the disastrous remark: "It is said that Wagner proposes to bring forward these 'characteristic examples' of his music in several cities of Germany also, by degrees, and will shortly publish them with the musical introductions expressly written for Zurich. After the last concert Wagner was honoured with a banquet, and the presentation of a silver goblet on the part of the ladies." Nothing could have been more premature, or more tactless, than the attribution to Wagner of such an intention. Just then the Ducal family of Weimar was particularly anxious to get his outlawry repealed, and last April Liszt had written him: "The Court here is very favourably disposed

*He re-entered the Cabinet in 1858 as Finance-minister, under Beust. After Beust's disgrace in 1866, von Friesen took over the department of Foreign Affairs, and in 1871 became himself Prime Minister, retaining that position until 1876.—W. A. E.

to you, and you may rest assured that every possible step will be taken to procure your return to Germany. A few days ago I spoke again to our Hereditary Grand Duke about it, and he told me positively that he would actively take your part." Again on June the 8th, "The day before yesterday there was a little court-concert here in honour of the King and Queen of Saxony.—Unfortunately I must somewhat doubt that the steps already taken will lead to the desired result—however, there is still a hope before my departure, and I must wait for it. The Hereditary Grand Duke is shortly going to Dresden, and has repeatedly promised me his earnest intercession in this matter." Then, in a paragraph dated "Leipzig, June 18," we read in the *D. A. Z.* (p. 1183) that the Her. Gd Duke of Weimar has already reached Leipzig and gone straight on to Dresden, to attend the marriage of Prince Albert of Saxony—so that the intercession might be immediately expected, and in all probability was mentioned to Beust (already virtual ruler of Saxony) within the next day or two. But that premature announcement of June the 2nd had put Beust on the alert, leading to the proclamation in the police-newspaper already quoted (the *day* of the month we do not know), and now he takes the wind out of the Weimar sails by promptly getting the aggravated Warrant of Arrest reprinted in his tool the *Freimüthige Sachsen-Zeitung*; as we may see by a letter of Liszt's, dated June 23, enclosing to Wagner a message of warning from an unnamed Dresden friend—the *Freimüthige* being there cited as "to-day's," therefore not more than two days stale by the time Liszt forwards the disconcerting news.

Could any conjunction of dates be more conclusive? This Beust, who prides himself on having sent "reassuring messages to Weimar in the first years after Wagner's flight," had actually waved a warrant in the face of that court, and thereby crushed the exile's hopes for many a year to come! Nor is that quite all the lesson we may learn from dates. Not six months later, young Bülow has been successfully appearing at a concert in Berlin, and writes to Liszt on December 11, 1853: "How is one to fight against Hülsen, Dorn, Taubert, and above all His Majesty [of Prussia], who detests Wagner, and habitually excises from Wieprecht's programmes every morsel of the music '*du scélérat*!'" This was the same King of Prussia who not so long ago had expressed his delight with *Rienzi* and *Tannhäuser* at Dresden, and specially commanded the production of *Rienzi* at Berlin. But what else could be expected, when, far from sending reassuring messages, Beust had maliciously republished an old warrant with the added stigma of "one of the most prominent adherents of the party of Destruction"? If that were the opinion of the Government of the artist's own fatherland, how could the others but believe it? "Nothing to complain of," indeed! Why! to Beust the persecuted Wagner owed the dislocation of the best part of his life.—W. A. E.

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In this index figures denoting the tens and hundreds are not *repeated* for one and the same reference, excepting where the numerals run into a fresh line of type : thus

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N.B. In German names K and C are often interchangeable.

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