

The Love Affairs of Great Musicians, Volume 2 eBook

The Love Affairs of Great Musicians, Volume 2 by Rupert Hughes

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Page 1

FRANZ LISZT

“Liszt, or the Art of Running after Women.”—NIETSCHE.

Liszt’s life was so lengthy and so industriously amorous, that it is possible only to float along over the peaks, to touch only the high points. Why, his letters to the last of his loves alone make up four volumes! And yet, for a life so proverbially given over to flirtations as his, the beginnings were strangely unprophetic. He had reached the mature age of six before he began to study the piano; compared with Mozart, he was an old man before he gave his first concert—namely, nine years. Then the poverty of his parents and the ambition of his father found assistance in a stipend from Hungarian noblemen, and he was sent to Vienna to study. When he was eleven years old, after one of his concerts, Beethoven kissed him. He survived. Then on to Paris and duchesses and princesses galore. Here he became a proverb of popularity as “Le petit Litz”—the French inevitably gave some twist to a foreign name, then as to-day, when two of their favourite painters are “Wistler” and “Seargent.”

Liszt’s childhood was therefore largely fed upon the embraces and kisses of rapturous women, even as was the young Mozart’s, the difference being that it became a habit in Liszt’s case. Even then he used to throw money among the gamins, as later he scattered it in how many directions, with what liberality, and with what princeliness, and from what a slender purse!

The father and mother had gone to Paris with him; but soon the mother went back to Austria—she was a German, the father alone being Hungarian. With his father the lad remained, and found him a severe and domineering master. But in 1827 he died, leaving his sixteen-year-old son alone in Paris. That stalwart self-reliance and sense of honour, which gave nobility to so much of Liszt’s character, now showed itself; he sold his grand piano to pay the debts his father had left him, and sent for his mother to come to Paris, where he supported her by giving piano lessons. Then, as later, he found plenty of pupils, the difference being that then, as not later, he took pay for his lessons, though not even then from all.

Here he was at sixteen, tall and handsome, and with a face of winsomeness that never lost its spell over womankind. Sixteen-year-old that he was, he was a man of great fame, and the grind of acquiring technic was all passed. Moscheles had already said of him in print: “Franz Liszt’s playing surpasses everything yet heard, in power and the vanquishing of difficulties.” Here he was, then, young, beautiful, famous, a dazzling musician, and Hungarian. What do you expect?

It makes small difference what you expect, for the reality was that his heart was eager for the seclusion of a monastery; his soul pined for religious excitement only! At fourteen he had begun to rebel against his nickname, “Le petit Litz.” It was with the



utmost difficulty that his father had been able to keep him from making religion his career, and giving up his already glittering fame. Never in his life did he cease to thrill with an almost hysterical passion for churchly affairs and ceremonies.



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At fourteen he had dedicated his first composition to the other sex. It was a set of "exercises," and the compliment was paid to Lydia Garella, a quaint little hunchback, whom he used afterward to refer to as his first love. But it was later, when he was giving lessons to support his mother, and just turned seventeen, that he drifted into what was really his first love. The Comte de Saint Crieg, then Minister of the Interior, had an only daughter, the seventeen-year-old Caroline. The young comtesse' mother gave her into Liszt's charge for musical education. The young comtesse was, they say, of slender frame and angelic beauty, and deeply imbued with that religious ardour which, as in Liszt's case, often modulates as imperceptibly into love, as an organist can gradually turn a hymn into a jig, or an Italian aria into a hymn.

The mother was fond of presiding at the music lessons, and of leading the young teacher to air his views about religion and life, and she watched with pleasure the gradual development of what was inevitable, a more than musical sympathy between the daughter and the teacher. But the romance seemed to win her approval, and when suddenly she saw that she was soon to die, she made a last request of her husband, that he should not refuse the young lovers their happiness. He allowed his wife to die in confidence that the affair met his approval, but without the faintest intention of permitting so insane a thing as a marriage of his daughter with an untitled musician. His business affairs, however, kept him away from home, and from thought upon the subject. After the death of the mother, the comtesse and the pianist met and wept together; then resumed their music lessons, reading much between the lines, and far preferring dreamy duets to difficult solos.

Liszt had read little but music and religion; the slim, fair comtesse had read much verse and romance. So she was his teacher in that literature which would most interest a brace of young lovers. There was no one at home to note how late he stayed of evenings, and one night he returned to his own house to find it locked and his mother asleep. Rather than disturb her, he spent the night on the steps. Another evening, Franz and Caroline found parting such sweet sorrow, that when he reached her outer door, he found it locked for the night. He was compelled to call the porter from those slumbers which only doorkeepers know, and this man was doorkeeperishly wrathful at having his beauty-sleep broken; he growled his rage. This is the only time recorded when Franz Liszt failed to respond to a hint for money. His head was too high in the clouds, no doubt. The servant, thus suddenly awakened to the impropriety of affairs, hastened the next morning to inform the comte that his daughter was studying the music of the spheres as well as that of the piano, and that her lessons were prolonged till midnight.

The next time Franz came to teach, the ghoulish porter gleefully informed him that his master wished to speak to him. The comte was most politely firm, and murdered the young love with most suave apologies for the painful amputation. The difference in rank, it went without saying, put marriage out of the question, and, therefore, all things

considered, he could not derange monsieur to the giving of more music lessons,—for the present, at least.



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The young musician took the *coup de grace* bravely; without a word he gave the comte his hand in mute acceptance of his fate, and bowed himself out. The true bitterness of his loss he sought to hide by fleeing to the Church. His love had been pure and ardent. It had been found impossible. His hopes had been put to death; therefore an end to the world. He bent his burning head low upon the cold steps of Saint Vincent de Paul, and resolved to renounce the world. He wrote ten years later, and still with suffering: "A female form chaste and pure as the alabaster of holy vessels, was the sacrifice I offered with tears to the God of Christians. Renunciation of all things earthly was the only theme, the only word of that day."

Caroline, too, sank under the bitterness of the loss. She fell dangerously ill, and when she recovered she thought only of the convent; but her father, who had so easily exiled her lover, knew how to persuade her to marriage. A few months later she became Madame d'Artigou; they say she gave her husband no affection, and that her heart was still, and always, Liszt's; while in his heart she was for ever niched as the young Madonna of his life.

For the present the shock of sacrifice threatened his whole career, and his life and mind as well. Again the monastery beckoned him, and now it was his mother's turn to oppose the Church in its effort to engulf this brilliant artist. After a long struggle he yielded to her, but for a time he was a recluse, and his melancholy gradually wore out his health; until at length he was given up for a dying man, and obituary eulogies actually were published. But as Mark Twain wrote of himself: "The reports of his death were greatly exaggerated."

When Liszt gave up all hope of entering the Church, he began a restless orgy of effort for mental diversion; all manner of theories and foibles allured him.

As Heine said of him, his mind was "impelled to concern itself with all the needs of mankind, impelled to poke its nose into every pot where the good God cooks the future." The theatre offered for a time another form of dissipation than his religious hysteria. He hated concerts, and compared himself to a conjurer or a clever trick poodle; he took up with the Revolution of 1830; Saint-Simonianism enmeshed him; later he fell under the spell of the Abbe Lamennais. Then Paganini came to Paris and fascinated and frightened Liszt, as he frightened the world with his unheard-of fiddling. It was his privilege to drive Liszt back to the piano with an ambition to rival Paganini; as rival him he did. Next Berlioz and romanticism fevered his brain, and then in 1831, the twenty-year-old Liszt and the twenty-one-year-old Chopin struck up their historic friendship, and the two men glittered and flashed in the most artistic salons of Paris. It was about this time that the Polish Countess Plater said, speaking of the genial Ferdinand Hiller and the two cronies:



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"I would choose Hiller for my friend, Chopin for my husband, Liszt for my lover."

There seems to have been a snow-storm of love affairs at this period. It is impossible even to name the flakes. Gossip of course gathered into the catalogue every woman whom Liszt saw more than once; but we need not pay this tribute to malice by mentioning the names of all of Liszt's hostesses. Among those who may be more definitely suspected of being made victims by, or victimising, him is the Comtesse Adele Laprunarede, afterward Duchess de Fleury. She, of course, was, as De Beaufort says, "sparkling, witty, young, beautiful." Her home was lonely and rural; her husband was very old; Liszt, to repeat, was a musician and Hungarian. The old comte was blind enough to invite him to spend the winter months at his chateau. For a whole winter Liszt was kept there in her castle a prisoner, with fetters of silk. The old comte seems never to have suspected. When Liszt eventually, like Tannhaeuser, mutineered against the charms of the Venusberg and returned to Paris, he wrote many letters to the comtesse, in which, as he himself said, he gained his "first practice in the lofty French style."

But this intrigue was followed by his appearance in the procession of George Sand's lovers. Ramann, in his biography, writes of the curious state of society of the Paris of this Revolutionary period: "Women were beginning to demand freedom and to experiment with the writing of perfervid romances, which questioned the very foundation principles of marriage and made a religion of Affinity."

George Sand was a chief crusader against the curse of monogamy. She practiced this anarchy in the guise of religion, as the old crusaders out-heathened the barbarians, and raided civilisation in the name of the Cross. George Sand's gospel, summed up briefly by Ramann, is as follows:

"'Love,' says the authoress, 'is Christian compassion concentrated on a single being. It belongs to the sinner, and not to the just; only for the former it moves restlessly, passionately, and vehemently. When thou, O noble and upright man,' she continues, with deceitfully fantastic warmth, 'when thou feelest a violent passion for a miserable fallen creature, be reassured that is genuine love; blush not therefore! so has Christ loved who crucified him.' According to this view, the love that sins from love must be virtue. One can scarcely be alarmed then when she says: 'The greater the crime, so much the more genuine the love which it accomplishes;' or, when Leone Leoni, steeped in passion and crime, but talented and adorned with manly beauty, exclaims to his beloved, 'As long as you hope for my amendment you have never loved my personal self.' It also appears to correspond with this casuistry of erotic fancy, when the heroes of her tragedies, of sky-storming earnestness, but adorned with all unnatural qualities, give themselves up to the latter as to an intoxicating spell, and in the delirium of self-delusion hold sin for virtue, and the unnatural for higher truth and beauty. With this creed, experimental love was a logical sequence, and great constancy was already to be unprogressive stubbornness. 'All love exhausts itself,' said Sand in 'Lelia'; 'disgust

and sadness follow; the union of the woman with the man should therefore be transitory.”



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If the putting of preachment into practice is virtue, George Sand was the most virtuous of all novelists, for the hotel of her large and roomy heart was for the entertainment of transients only. It was in 1834, when Liszt was twenty-three and Sand thirty, that he was caught in the vortex swirling around “the fire-eyed child of Berry.” Alfred de Musset introduced Liszt to her, as later Liszt passed her on to Chopin—or should we say she discarded the poet for the Hungarian, as later the Hungarian for the Pole? it would be more gallant and quite as true. Like Chopin, Liszt was at first repelled at the sight of George Sand. But soon he was entangled in that “cameraderie” which was the fashionable name for liaison in that time.

From her the Comtesse de Laprunarede had borrowed him for her snow-begirt castle, and when he returned to Paris there was another woman there, awaiting her turn to carry him off. This was the Comtesse Marie Catherine Sophie d’Agoult, who was born on Christmas night, in 1805, and therefore was six years older than Liszt, whom she met in 1834. It was not till six years later that the comtesse took up literature as a diversion, and made herself some little name as an art critic and writer, choosing, as did George Sand, a masculine and English pen-name, “Daniel Stern.”

The comtesse had been married in 1827; her marriage settlement was signed by King Charles the Tenth, the Dauphin, and others of almost equal rank. The comte was forty-five, she only half his age. He seems to have been a by no means ideal character, and she found her diversion in the brilliant society she gathered into her salon. For some time she seems to have been fascinated by Liszt before she could reach him with her own fascinations.

Indeed she was always the pursuer, and he the pursued. This is the more strange, since, at least at first, she was extremely handsome. Ramann has thus pictured her:

“The Countess d’Agoult was beautiful, very beautiful, a Lorelei: slender, of lofty bearing, enchantingly graceful and yet dignified in her movements, her head proudly raised, with an abundance of fair tresses, which waved over her shoulders like molten gold, a regular, classic profile, which stood in strange and interesting contrast with the modern breath of dreaminess and melancholy that was spread over her countenance; these were the general features which rendered it impossible to overlook the countess in the salon, the concert-room, or the opera-house, and these were enhanced by the choicest toilets, the elegance of which was surpassed by few, even in the salons of the Faubourg St. Germain. That fantastic dreams were hidden behind the purity of her profile, and passion, burning passion, under the soft melancholy of her expression, was known to but a few, at the time that her connection with the young artist began.”



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Her “Souvenirs” justify the accusation of unusual vanity as the mainspring in her motives, but if it were only her passion for conquest that made her seek Liszt, she was punished bitterly. In 1834 she captured him, and the preliminary formalities of flirtation were hastily overpassed. But once they were embarked on the maelstrom of passion, they seem to have been of exquisite torment and terror to each other. Liszt fell into a period of atheism which, to his constitutionally religious soul, was agony. As for the comtesse, death entered upon the romance and took away one of her three children. For awhile she was only a broken-hearted mother, and the intrigue seems to have had a moment’s pause, but only to return.

Now, however, it had for Liszt something of unfreshness and monotony. He determined to break loose, and in the spring of 1835 told the comtesse that he was going to leave her. She, however, would not consent. He yielding as gracefully as he could, took a lodging in a quiet part of the city, where his life consisted of music, literature, and the comtesse, who visited him incessantly. Her love had quite infatuated her, to take the tone of the time; nowadays we might say that she found it so serious that she desired to make it honest. The means she hit upon were such as might strike a foolish woman as an inspiration. Believing that the long way round was the short way home, she thought to atone for her past foibles by casting them into sudden insignificance—to clear the sultry air by a thunder crash.

When Liszt heard that the comtesse planned to leave her husband, and even her children, and go into foreign exile with him, he felt that the comtesse was taking the bit into her teeth with a vengeance, but saw as he would on the lines, and cry “whoa” as he would, the runaway comtesse still insisted on running away.

Liszt called on her mother to interfere; she was run over. He appealed to her former confessor; his staying hand was shaken loose. He called on the venerable family notary; the old man was upset by the roadside—as I shall be also if I do not release this runaway metaphor.

The comtesse’s mother persuaded the daughter to leave Paris for Basle, hoping that a change of scene would bring a change of mind; Liszt followed. It seems to me, however, more probable that the mother, learning that her daughter was determined to leave Paris with Liszt, went with her in the desperate effort to save appearances. But, however that may be, we find the comtesse and the mother at one hotel, and Liszt at another. A few days later, Liszt returned to his hotel to find his room choked with the comtesse’ trunks, and to learn that the mother had gone back to Paris in despair. The comtesse had, as they say, “brought her knitting” and come to stay.

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Paris is not easily excited over an intrigue conducted according to the established codes by which the intriguers bury their heads in the sand, as a form of pretence that nobody knows that they are billing and cooing beneath the sand, though of course everybody knows it, and they know that everybody knows it, except possibly the one other person most interested. But Paris was dumbfounded that a very prominent and beautiful comtesse should leave her husband and her children in broad daylight, and go visiting the most famous pianist in the world. The pianist was to blame, of course, in the public eye, and the whole affair was branded as a flagrant case of abduction. But, as we know now, it was the pianist who was the victim of this Sabine procedure.

Liszt's actions in this affair seemed, as usual, to be an outrage upon the ordinary laws of decency, but when the truth was learned, we find, as the world found—as usual, too late to change its opinion of him—that he did everything in his power to undo the evil into which his passion had hurried him, and to set himself right with the usual standards of society. And, as usual, he failed absolutely, because of the curious and insane stubbornness of the woman.

Some years later, even the Comte d'Agoult, as well as the comtesse' brother, the Comte Flavigny, confessed that Liszt had acted as a man of honour. The comte had obtained a legal separation from his wife, retaining their daughter. Liszt now proposed marriage. Both being Catholics, it was necessary to experience a change of heart and become Protestants. He exclaimed one day: "*Si nous etions Protestants*" but the comtesse crushed this hope with a sharp "*La Comtesse d'Agoult ne sera jamais Madame Liszt.*"

Liszt bowed to the inevitable, and kept together his many patches of honour as well as he was permitted. The comtesse had a personal income of four thousand dollars a year, which was as nothing. According to Liszt's secretary, during the time of her stay with Liszt, she spent sixty thousand dollars, the most of which Liszt earned himself by his concerts. The pianist and the comtesse soon left Basle for Geneva, where they remained till 1836, with the exception of one journey to Paris, which Liszt made for a concert. But he returned rather to literature than to music, as on another occasion did Wagner.

For five years Liszt and the comtesse travelled about Switzerland and Italy, he occasionally being convinced that he was seriously in love with the woman who had been so imperious and unreasonable. A few conservatives outlawed him, but there were people enough who forgave him, or approved him, to give him an abundance of society of the highest and most aristocratic sort.

In 1836 his old flame, George Sand, visited Liszt and the comtesse. They toured Switzerland on mules. George Sand has described the wanderings in her "*Lettres d'un Voyageur*," where *Franz* represents Liszt, *Arabella*, the comtesse, and where one may read a poetic description of the comtesse' beauty even after being drenched with rain. Beauty that is water-proof is beauty indeed!

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It is in this book of hers that Sand prints such illuminating epigrams as these:

“There are great errors which are nearer the truth than little truths.”

“The most beautiful creations of genius are those which succeed to the epoch of the passions. The experience of life ought to precede art; art requires repose, and does not suit with the storms of the heart. The finest mountains of our globe are extinguished volcanoes.”

“If you wish to arrive at truth, be reconciled to what is contrary; the white light only results from the union of the coloured rays of the spectrum.”

“The oyster boasts and says: ‘I have never gone astray,’ Alas, poor oyster! thou hast never walked.”

When Liszt had made his concert trip to Paris, the comtesse had awaited him at Sand’s home. Then, after his famous duel with Thalberg—the weapons being pianos—he joined the group at Nohant, where Chopin and Sand, and Liszt and D’Agoult, and such guests as they gathered there, led a life of elaborate entertainment which made Nohant as famous as another Trianon. Meanwhile, there was going on a duel, the weapons of which were not pianos, but those invisible stilettoes with which two women conduct a deadly feud, and politely tear each other’s eyes out. George Sand was famous then beyond her present-day esteem, and she was a woman of vigour almost masculine and of a straightforwardness which was almost an affectation. She loved to go about in boots and blouse, and to ride bareback; she smoked cigars, and wrote at night. The Comtesse d’Agoult was eminently feminine. She would rather have spent one thousand francs on a gown than on anything else under heaven, except another gown. She had in her certain literary capabilities, not very marvellous, to be sure, but strong enough to provoke jealousy of the overpraised Sand, who had also, incidentally, been on very intimate terms with the present lover of the comtesse.

Unhappy is the lover who tries to play peacemaker between two of his mistresses. This is enough to bring lava from any “extinguished volcano.” Liszt, after almost vain efforts to avoid downright hair-pulling, decided to take the comtesse away from Nohant. He seems to have sided with her against Sand, and said afterward: “I did not care to expose myself to her insolence” (*sottise*). Chopin, however, took sides with Sand, and it is said that his heart chilled toward Liszt, who spoke bitterly of this estrangement, but on Chopin’s death wrote a biographical sketch full of affection, and of an admiration better balanced than the over-flowery style which marks all of Liszt’s writings.



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When the comtesse left Nohant, which Liszt never saw again, they went to Lyons, where he gave a concert for the benefit of the poor and working people. For what purposes of benevolence indeed did Liszt not give concerts! So great and so discriminating and so self-sacrificing was his charity, that it would almost plead atonement for a million such unconventionalities as his. He was not content to devote the proceeds of a single concert to some object of charity, but even gave money, and whole tours. Besides this concert at Lyons, and various others, one might mention the concert given for the flood sufferers at Pesth, and for the poor of his native town, and the concert tour by which he made Beethoven's monument possible at Bonn. Add to this the other sums he scattered to poor artists like Wagner from his meagre purse, and you will see one reason why women, who are more susceptible and perceptive of such qualities of character, were almost as helpless to resist Liszt's personality as he theirs. Even when he was "la petit Litz," he was found holding a street-cleaner's broom while he went to change a gold piece. And in his later years, his servant always filled two of his pockets with coin, one with copper, and one with silver; and the man used to say that when his master came home at night, the copper mine was usually untouched, but the silver deposit exhausted.

It was in Lyons that the comtesse began her literary career, by a French translation of Schubert's "Erl-Koenig." She later obtained a considerable fame, as I have said, under the name of Daniel Stern. In the fall of 1837 Liszt and the comtesse went to Italy, where, especially at Bellaggio, they appear to have been genuinely happy. He seems to be describing himself when he writes:

"Yes, my friend, when the ideal form of a woman floats before your dreaming soul, a woman whose heaven-born charms bear no allurements for the senses, but only wing the soul to devotion, and if you saw at her side a youth of sincere and faithful heart, weave these forms into a moving story of love, and give it the title, 'On the Shores of the Lake of Como.'"

To us, who think of Liszt always by his last pictures, presenting him in his venerable age, it is hard to remember that at this time he was only twenty-seven. It was at this time, too, that he wrote the only composition he ever dedicated to the comtesse. In later years, it was almost the only composition of his that she would praise; it was a fantasia on the "Huguenots." The two lovers continued their wanderings through Italy and Austria, he giving concerts for the flood sufferers and the Beethoven monument and she travelling with him. While in Rome in 1839, the comtesse had borne him a son, Daniel, having previously given him two daughters,—Blandine, who married the French statesman, Emile Olivier, and died in 1862; and Cosinia, the famous wife of Wagner. All three children had been legitimised immediately upon their birth.

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Meanwhile, he and the comtesse were drifting apart, in spite of these three hostages to fortune. It is difficult to justify Liszt's desertion of the woman, except by slandering her memory, and it is difficult to save her memory without slandering his. The cause, as explained by Ramann, is, that she cherished an ambition to be Liszt's Muse, and made strong demands for the acceptance of her opinions upon his works. We can easily imagine the situation: A sensitive, fiery composer, who is incidentally the chief virtuoso of the world, dashes off a gorgeous composition, and in the first warmth of enthusiasm plays it to his companion. She, desirous of asserting her importance, listens to it with that frame of mind which makes it easy to criticise any work of art ever created—the desire to find fault. Benevolent and sincere as her intentions may have been, the criticisms of this shallow and musically untrained woman must have driven Liszt to desperation.

It is a rare musician that can tolerate the faintest disapproval of even his poorest work, and frequently a critic lauds to the skies all of the composer's works except one or two, and then, in order to give his eulogy an appearance of discrimination and remove the taste of unadulterated gush, inserts a mild implication that this one or these two compositions are not the greatest works in existence—that unhappy critic is practically sure to find that his eulogy has been accepted as a mere matter of course, and his criticism bitterly resented as a gratuitous and unwarranted assault upon beautiful creations which his small skull and hickory-nut heart are unable to grasp.

Liszt was never especially philosophical under fault-finding, and to have a fireside critic after him, nagging him day and night, must have soured all the milk of human kindness in his heart. The comtesse was stubborn in her views, and her artistic conferences with Liszt degenerated into violent brawls. The young French poet, De Rocheaud, "assisted," as the French say, at one of these combats between an hysterical woman and a thin-skinned musician. The poet believed in Muses and such things, using as an argument that beautiful fable which Dante built on the most slender foundations.

"Think of Dante and Beatrice," exclaimed De Rocheaud. "Think how the divine poet listened to her words as to revelations. Be thou Dante, and she Beatrice." "Bah, Dante! bah, Beatrice!" cried Liszt, "the Dantes create the Beatrices. The genuine die when they are eighteen years old."

At length the gipsy spirit moved Liszt to make a long continental tour to complete the depletions in his purse. He did not care to take the comtesse and the children with him. With much difficulty he persuaded her to go to Paris and live with his mother, since she was on bad terms with her own family. Later he succeeded in reconciling the comtesse with these, also. After the death of her mother, the comtesse inherited a fortune, but Liszt continued to support the children.

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The comtesse died of pleurisy in 1876, at the age of seventy-one. How long these sweethearts of musicians last!

Thus closes the chapter of Liszt's affairs with the Comtesse d'Agoult. It had lasted, all things considered, surprisingly long—five years.

A pleasant note of character was sounded by Liszt, which rings him to the difficult love affair of Robert Schumann. In one of his letters, Liszt tells how fond he had been of Schumann and Wieck and his daughter Clara. Then came the famous struggle between father and suitor for the possession of the girl. Liszt took Schumann's side, because he thought he was in the right; he even went so far as to break off all intercourse with Wieck—who took his revenge by publishing ferocious criticisms on Liszt's playing.

In 1845 Liszt wrote a letter of calm, cool friendship to George Sand, his "Dear George." For years he roved Europe, flitting from ovation to ovation, from flirtation to flirtation. But he was drifting unwittingly toward the grand affair of his life. A woman—the woman—was waiting for him in Russia. Mr. Huneker says of Liszt and the Comtesse d'Agoult: "Every one knows that he was as so much dough in her hands." So, in a more than different way, we shall find him—who had slain his hecatomb of hearts—helpless in the power of his one great love. Again he is first compelling, then compelled.

February 8, 1819, in Monasterzyka in Kiev, Carolyne von Ivanovska was born. She was the only daughter of a rich Polish nobleman. The parents soon separated, and the child's life was divided between them. The father brought her up, as La Mara tells, as if she were a boy. He made her the companion of his conversations late into the night; and, in order to make her the more congenial a comrade, he taught her to ride wild horses and smoke strong cigars. Then the other half of the year, she was the ward of her "beautiful, lovely, elegant" mother, who doted on society, and introduced her daughter to the capitals and the salons of Europe.

So, says La Mara, "under constantly changing surroundings, now in the midst of the world, now in the deep solitude, Carolyne von Ivanovska lived her first years."

When she was seventeen, her father bought her a husband, the son of the Field Marshal Fuerst Wittgenstein, and on May 7, 1836, she gave her hand to the Prince Nicolaus von Sayn-Wittgenstein, seven years her senior. He was at the time a cavalry captain in the Russian army, a handsome, but intellectually unimpressive man. To quote La Mara again: "From this marriage the Princess Carolyne gained only one happiness: the birth of a daughter, the Princess Marie, on whom she centred the glowing love of her heart."

While the two fathers-in-law lived, the children-in-law were kept together; but the old men soon went their way. Then the young wife gave up attempting to endure the



unhappiness of her home, and sought solace from her loneliness in the full blaze of literary and artistic society. In February, 1847, Franz Liszt floated in across her horizon, “*auf Fluegeln des Gesanges.*” Of course, he gave a concert in Kiev for charity. Among the contributions, he received a one-hundred-rouble note—about \$75. Liszt desired to thank the good-hearted one in person—Kismet!



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Even if the princess had not been beautiful, La Mara thinks she would have overwhelmed Liszt with “her wonderful eloquence and her unbelievable intellectuality.” It was a case of congeniality at first sight. There were many meetings. The concert affected the princess deeply (when she died she bequeathed that programme to her daughter). The day after the concert, she heard a Pater Noster of his sung in the church. Liszt talked of his plans for compositions. He said he wished to express in music his impressions of Dante’s “Divina Commedia,” with a diorama of scenic effects. To fit out the diorama, it needed about \$15,000.

The princess, carried away with the idea, offered him the money from her own purse. The diorama was never built, but it required a great many conferences, and it seemed appropriate that Liszt should visit her at her estate, Woronince. He arrived on the tenth birthday of her little daughter, Marie. This was in February, the same month of their first meeting. But he could not stay many days, as his concert tour took him to Constantinople and elsewhere. But in the summer and again in the autumn they met, and they celebrated together his birthday and her saint’s day.

She there and then resolved to give up her life to him, and to marry him as soon as might be. She believed in the autocracy of genius, and felt that she recognised her mission in the world—to follow and aid this maker of music. Separation from her husband was tame, but this was a horrifying breach of conventionality, such another as the Comtesse d’Agoult had smitten Paris with thirteen years before. But none the less, in April, 1848, she took her daughter and left Russia, after she had provided herself, by the sale of a portion of her dowry, with a sum, as La Mara says, of a million roubles—equal to about \$750,000—a tidy little parcel for an eloping couple.

For her husband and mother-in-law she left letters—it would seem that there must have been little else to leave—explaining that she would never return. At the same time she instituted divorce proceedings, and announced that she was asking the Church to grant her freedom. Being a Catholic, it was necessary for her to persuade the Pope himself to permit her to wed Liszt. In the meanwhile, her husband went to the Czar and loudly bewailed the loss of his daughter and all his money. The old story—“My daughter! Oh, my ducats! Oh, my daughter! Oh, my Christian ducats! Justice! the law! My ducats and my daughter!”

The princess fled across the Russian border, just at the time of the Revolution of 1848. At the Austrian boundary Liszt’s faithful valet met her; in Ratibor she found Liszt’s friend, the Prince Lichnovski, who some months after fell a martyr to the revolution. He conducted her to Liszt. A few days later they visited the prince for two weeks at one of his castles. The troubles of the revolution and the barricaded streets drove them from the country to Weimar, where Liszt had been given the post of Kapellmeister.



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It was this third-rate town that became the birthplace of a new school of German opera, for years the hub of the musical universe. Here in Weimar the princess lived thirteen years. She placed herself under the protection of the Grand Duchess of Weimar, Maria Polovna, the sister of the Czar and a friend of her childhood. She chose the Altenburg chateau for her home. A year later, Liszt, who had found a neighbouring hotel too remote, took up his home in one of the wings of the chateau. Here he spent the most profitable years of his artistic life. His twelve Symphonic Poems, his Faust and Dante Symphonies, his Hungarian Rhapsodies, and many other important works, including also literary compositions, he achieved here. The irritation he had felt at the superficial meddling, and domineering criticism of his would-be Muse, the Comtesse d'Agoult, was changed to such a communion as the old Roman king Numa enjoyed with his inspiring nymph, Egeria.

During the princess' stay in Weimar, constant pressure was brought upon her to return to Russia to arrange a settlement of affairs. She feared returning to that great prison-land, which cannot be easily entered or left, lest they should forbid her return to Liszt. Even threats to declare her an exile and confiscate her goods, would not move her. Eventually the property she had inherited from her father was put in her daughter's name, by the Czar's order—an arrangement Liszt had long pleaded for in vain. The husband's feelings were mollified by the appropriation to him of the seventh part of her property, and the arrangement of a guardianship for the daughter.

The prince, being a Protestant, now proceeded to get a divorce, which he obtained without difficulty. He speedily married a governess in the household of Prince Souvaroff. None the less, the struggles went on for the freedom of Princess Carolyne. In 1859 her daughter, Marie, was married to Prince Constantin zu Hohenlohe-Schillingsfuerst, aid-de-camp and later grand steward of the Austrian emperor. Now that the daughter was safely disposed of, the princess took active steps for her own freedom. She chose, as a pretext for the dissolution of her marriage, the statement that she had entered into it unwillingly at her father's behest. Her Polish relatives were shocked at the idea of divorce, and brought witnesses to prove that the first years of her marriage were peaceful and content. But in spite of this the divorce was granted in Russia, and the Pope gave it his sanction.

The princess, however, was not satisfied with a merely technical success. She would consummate her marriage with Liszt in a blaze of glory and with all the blessings of religion upon it. In the spring of 1860, she had gone to Rome to further her divorce proceedings. Liszt was to arrive and be married on his fiftieth birthday, the princess then being forty-two. All went merrily as a marriage bell. It is generally believed that Liszt's "Festklaenge" was written for this occasion as a splendid orchestral wedding festival of triumph.



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Accordingly, at the proper time, Liszt went to Rome—as he thought. Really, he was going to Canossa. The priest was bespoken, and the altar of the church of San Carlo al Corso decorated. On the very eve of the wedding, when Liszt was with the princess, they were startled to receive a messenger from the Pope, demanding a postponement of the marriage, and the delivery for review of the documents upon which the divorce had been granted. The papers were surrendered, and the disconsolate princess gave way to a superstitious resignation to fate.

It seems that the amiable relatives of the princess, chancing to be in Rome and hearing of the wedding, determined to prevent it at all cost. Before the Pope they charged her with securing the divorce by perjury. The princess had friends at court, who could have procured the satisfactory conclusion of the matter. The Cardinal Hohenlohe offered his own chapel for the marriage. But the princess was as immovable in her new determination as she had been in her old.

She had resisted for thirteen years the efforts of the Russian court to decoy her back to Russia. For the next fifteen years she resisted Liszt's ardent wooing to marriage. Even when, on the 10th of March, 1864, her former husband died and gave her that divorce which even Rome considers sufficient, she would not wed. Her stay of one year in the Holy City had brought her into the whirlpool of Church society and Church politics. She turned her voracious intellect toward theology; and the interests of the Church, as La Mara says, grew in her eyes far more important than the petty ambitions of art.

The woman with a mission had changed her mission. Knowing how powerful was her influence over Liszt, she thought to begin her new work at home, and it was on Liszt that she practised her first churchly seductions.

In his youth it had taken all the power of his father and mother to keep him out of the Church; small wonder, then, that when, in the evening fatigue of his life, the woman of his heart beckoned him to the candle-lighted peace of vespers, he should yield.

Religion had always been as much an art to him, as art had been a religion. By papal dispensation Liszt was admitted into Holy Orders on the 25th of April, 1865, and the Cardinal Hohenlohe, who had not been granted the privilege of marrying Liszt, was given the privilege of shaving his head and turning him into a tonsured abbe.

There was a great sensation in 1868, when Liszt, who had thirty years before run away from Paris with a comtesse, returned as a saint, and in full regalia conducted a mass of his own, at Saint Eustache. The critic and dictionary-maker, Fetis, declared that the whole affair was simply an advertising scheme of Liszt's. But Liszt was taking himself seriously. The Pope had called him "My dear Palestrina," and he desired to reform church music as Palestrina had done.



The fact that this ecclesiastical passion was brief, does not prove that it was not sincere; in Liszt's case it would rather prove its sincerity. And by corollary the fact that it was sincere, rather proved that it would be brief.



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The artistico-ecclesiastical life, or, as the German puts it so much more patly, "*das kloesterlich-kuenstlerische Leben*," began to wear upon him. For a time Liszt remained in Rome, taking a dwelling in the Via Felice; later, in June of the year 1863, he moved to the Oratorio of the Madonna del Rosario, where the Pope, Pius IX., visited him to hear his miraculous music. He saw the princess often, usually dining with her, and letters fluttered thickly between his home and hers in the Piazza di Spagna, and later in the Via del Babuino.

Liszt was never a man for one of your gray existences. He was homesick for Weimar, and was a constant truant from Rome. But he had duties enough with his ambition as a composer and conductor, and his cloud of pupils whom he taught without price. To his excursions we owe four volumes of letters to the princess. The volumes average over four hundred pages each of smallish type. They are in French, and have been all published, the last volume appearing in 1902, under the editorship of La Mara. Also a publication of the princess' letters has been announced by her daughter, who wisely believes that in a matter which has become the gossip of the world, the best defence is the fullest possible presentation.

In Liszt's letters there is not much of the grand style he had affected after his first elopement with De Laprunarede, though there is much that is hysterical:

"How it is written above that you should be my Providence and my good angel here below! I incessantly have recourse to you with prayers, supplications, and benedictions."

"My words flow always to you as my prayer mounts to God."

"Since I must not have the bliss of seeing you again this evening, let me at least tell you that I will pray with you before I sleep. Our prayers are united as our souls." (Nov. 4, 1864)

"Next to my hours in the church the sweetest and dearest are those I spend with you." (Feb. 18, 1869.)

"My ancient errors have left me a residue of chagrin that preserves me from temptation. Be well assured that I tell you the truth and all the truth." (Nov. 10, 1870.)

But to attempt a quotation from these letters would be like proffering a spoonful of brine, and saying, "Here is an idea of the ocean." The letters are full of minute details of their busy lives and of other notable people. There is much, of course, about music and travel, and a vast amount of religious ardour. There is also much expression of the utmost devotion and loneliness. Years of this life of reunion and separation went on.



Writing to the princess on the 21st of June, 1872, he mentions Wagner, whose marriage to Cosima von Buelow (*nee* Liszt) scandalised the world and alienated even Liszt. There are biographers who deny this, but in this letter to the princess, Liszt encloses Wagner's letter of most affectionate appeal for reconciliation, and with it his answer, giving his long-withheld blessing. Describing this reunion with Wagner, Liszt is moved to say to the princess:



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“God will pardon me for leaning to the side of mercy, imploring his and abandoning myself entirely to it. As for the world, I am not uneasy as to its interpretation of that page of what you call ‘my biography.’ The only chapter that I have ardently desired to add to it, is missing. May the good angels keep you, and bring me to you in September.”

Through many others of his letters rings this vain “*leit-motif*” like the wail of Tristan. But nothing could remove the spell the Church had cast upon the princess.

She sank deeper and deeper into seclusion, and during the twenty-seven years she lived in Rome she left her home in the Via del Babuino only once for twenty-four hours. She grew more and more immersed in the Church and its affairs. Gregororius said she fairly “sputtered spirituality.” She began to write, and certain of her essays were revised by Henri Lasserre, under the name, “Christian Life in Public,” and were widely read, being translated into English and Spanish. Her chief work was a twenty-four-volume study bearing the thrilling title, “Interior Causes of the Exterior Weakness of the Church.” This ponderous affair she finished a few days before her death, with hand already swollen almost beyond the power of holding the pen.

Here in Rome, as in Russia and at Weimar, where she was, there was a salon. But she grew wearier and wearier of life, and weaker and weaker, until she spent months and months in bed, and would rarely cross her door-sill. To the last she and Liszt were lovers, however remote. And his letters are rarely more than a few days apart. He continues to sign himself, even in the final year of his life, “Umilissimo sclavissimo.” His last letter concerned the marriage of his granddaughter Daniela von Buelow to a man with the ominous sounding name of “Thode.” Daniela was the daughter of Liszt’s daughter, Cosima, by her first husband. The marriage took place at Wagner’s home, “Wahnfried,” in Bayreuth.

It was appropriate that Liszt should spend his last years in the company of this Wagner, for whose success he had been the chief crusader, as for the success of how many another famous musician, and for the charitable comfort of how numberless a throng, and in what countless ways! It was doubly appropriate that his last appearance in public should be at the performance of “Tristan and Isolde”—that utmost expression of love that was fiery and lawless and yet worthy of the peace it yearned for and never found.

Liszt died on the 31st of July, 1886. His will declared the princess to be his sole heir and executrix. She outlived him no long time. On the 8th of March, 1887, she died of dropsy of the heart. She was buried in the German cemetery next to St. Peter’s, in Rome. Her grave bore the legend:

“Yonder is my hope.” At her funeral they played the Requiem, Liszt had written for the death of the Emperor Maximilian. She had wished that this music should “sing her soul to rest.”



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CHAPTER II.

RICHARD WAGNER

Surely, one would say, if love were ever to be the woof of any life, it must interweave the life of this man Wagner; for he gave to every whim and fervour of the passion an expression so nearly absolute that we are driven almost to say: Old as music is, and ancient as love songs are, music never truly gave full voice to desire in all its throbs until Richard Wagner created a new orchestra, a new libretto, a new music, a new harmony, and a new fabric of melody.

“Tristan and Isolde” seems to be so nearly the last word in dramatised love that it seems also to be nearly the first word. From the Vorspiel’s opening measures, gaunt and hungry with despair and longing, to the last measures of the Liebestod, sublime with resignation and divinely sad with the apotheosis of adoration, this opera sounds every note of the emotion of man for woman, and woman for man.

Surely, you would say, the creator of this masterwork must have had a heart thrilled with mighty passion for womankind; surely he must have lived a life of strange devotion.

But how often, how often we must warn ourselves against judging the creator from his creations, the artist from his art. In his letter to Liszt, announcing his intention to write this very opera, Wagner said:

“As I have never in life felt the real bliss of love, I must erect a monument to the most beautiful of my dreams, in which, from beginning to end that love shall be thoroughly satiated. I have in my head ‘Tristan and Isolde,’ the simplest, but fullest, musical conception. With ‘the black flag,’ which waves at the end, I shall then cover myself—to die.”

The truth was that Wagner, as so many another creative genius, spent his love chiefly upon the beings that he begot within his own heart. Every genius is more or less a Pygmalion, and his own imagination is the Aphrodite that gives life to the Galateas that he carves. I have shown by this time that certain musicians have been most excellent lovers, and there would be documents enough to prove Wagner another, but we know it for a fact that his one great passion was for his art. There is not recorded anywhere, I think, another such idolater of ideals as Richard Wagner. To his theory of the perfect marriage of music and poetry, he sacrificed everything,—his heart’s blood, his sensitiveness to criticisms, his extraordinary fondness for luxuries, his sense of pride, and to these he added human sacrifice,—his wife, his friends, and any one who stood in his way. He made himself a pauper, and begged and borrowed every penny he could scrape from every friend who could be hypnotised into supporting his creeds. As a result, after years of humiliation such as few men ever did, or ever cared to, endure,



after a battle against the highest and the lowest intellects, he attained a point of glory which hardly another artist in the world's history ever reached. He reached such a pinnacle that critics were not lacking who said that he often threatened to give Art a more important place in the State than Religion.



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Nothing but the most complete success, and nothing but the most beneficial revolution could justify such a creed or such a life as Wagner's. Both were eminently justified. He reaped a superb reward, but he earned every mite of it. When his days of power and of glory came, however, he spent them with another woman than the one who had gone through all his struggles with him; had suffered all that he suffered, without any aid from hope, without any belief in his personality or his creeds, supported only on the courage and the dog-like fidelity of a German *Hausfrau* to her *Mann*.

Wagner was as plainly destined for war as any Richard the Third, born with hair and teeth. For he was born in the midst of the Napoleonic wars at Leipzig, in 1813, and the dead bodies on the battle-field were so many that they raised a pestilence, which carried off Wagner's father when the child was six months old; and also threatened the life of his elder brother and of the babe himself. His life was one long truceless war. He once said to Edouard Schure: "The only time I ever went to sea, I barely escaped shipwreck. Should I go to America, I am sure the Atlantic would receive me with a cyclone."

Wagner's first love was his mother. In fact, Praeger, his Boswell, said: "I verily believe that he never loved any one else so deeply as his *liebes Muetterchen*." She must have been a woman of winning manners, for, though she had seven children, the oldest fourteen, she got another husband before her first one was a year in his grave; the second was an actor. Wagner was so fond of his mother that through his life he never could see a Christmas tree alight without tears.

There were other loves that busied his heart. He was remarkably fond of animals, particularly of dogs. He suffered keenly when his parrot Papo died; he wrote his friend Uhlig: "Ah, if I could say to you what has died for me in this devoted creature! It matters nothing to me whether I am laughed at for this." His dog Peps died in his arms, and he wrote Praeger: "I cried incessantly, and since then have felt bitter pain and sorrow for the dear friend of the past thirteen years, who has walked and worked with me." One of Wagner's last plans was to write a book to be called "A History of My Dogs." Anecdotes galore there are of his humanity to dogs and cats and other members of our larger family.

Wagner had also a famous passion for gorgeous colours; his music shows this. He liked fine stuffs peculiarly, and even in his pauperdom wore silk next to his skin. When fortune found him, he made a veritable rainbow of himself with his dressing-gowns, and even with many-coloured trousers. His stomach was not so fond of luxury, and he was not addicted to wine or beer, and for long periods drank neither at all. He injured his health by eating too fast, though this was not, as in Haendel's case, from gluttony, but from absent-minded interest in his work. Yet there is something strangely human and captivating in the story that, when he was eight years old, he traded off a volume of Schiller's poems for a cream puff.



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Wagner's career shows a curious growth away from his early ideas. He was at first an artistic disciple of Meyerbeer, and not only drew operatic inspirations from him, but was saved from starving by Meyerbeer's money and by his letters of introduction; later he came to abhor Meyerbeer's operas, and to despise the man himself and his ways. Wagner earned himself numberless powerful enemies by his fierce hatred for the Jewish race, and by his ferocious attack in an article called "Judaism in Music." Yet his first flirtation was with a Jewess, and it was not his fault that he did not marry her. She lived in Leipzig, and was a friend of his sister. She had the highly racial name of Leah David, and was a personification of Jewish beauty, with her eyes and hair of jet and her Oriental features. It has been remarked that all of Wagner's heroes and heroines fall in love at first sight.

He began it. His first view of Leah plunged him into a frenzy. "Love me, love my dog," was an easy task for Wagner, and he was glad of the privilege of caressing Leah's poodle, and of mauling her piano. He never could fondle a piano without making it howl. Now Leah had a cousin, a Dutchman and a pianist. Wagner criticised his execution, and was invited to do better. The man hardly lived who played the piano worse than Wagner, and the result of the duel was a foregone defeat. The last chapter of this romance may be quoted from Praeger:

"Wagner lost his temper. Stung in his tenderest feelings before the Hebrew maiden, with the headlong impetuosity of an unthinking youth, he replied in such violent, rude language, that a dead silence fell upon the guests. Then Wagner rushed out of the room, sought his cap, took leave of Iago, and vowed vengeance. He waited two days, upon which, having received no communication, he returned to the scene of the quarrel. To his indignation, he was refused admittance. The next morning he received a note in the handwriting of the young Jewess. He opened it feverishly. It was a death-blow. Fraulein Leah was shortly going to be married to the hated young Dutchman, Herr Meyers, and henceforth she and Richard were to be strangers. 'It was my first love sorrow, and I thought I should never forget it, but after all,' said Wagner, with his wonted audacity, 'I think I cared more for the dog than for the Jewess.'"

Wagner entered the university at Leipzig and for a time went the pace of student dissipations; he has described them in his "Lebenserinnerungen." He took an early disgust, however, for these forms of amusement and was thereafter a man, whose chief vices were working and dreaming.

One of his early creeds was free love; and though he gave up this theory, his works as a whole are by no means an argument for domesticity. In fact they are so devout a pleading for the superiority of passion over all other inspirations, that it is astounding to hear Wagnerians occasionally complain of modern Italian operas as immoral—as if any librettos could be immoral in comparison with the Nibelungen Cycle.



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Wagner's first libretto, "The Wedding" (Die Hochzeit), horrified his sister so, that he destroyed it at her request. His third, "Das Liebesverbot," was based on Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure," with the slight distinction that where Shakespeare's play is a preachment for virtue, Wagner himself said that his libretto was "the bold glorification of unchecked sensuality." Years afterward, admirers of his put the work in rehearsal, but gave it up as too licentious. This apostle of unrestrained amours found himself most prosaically married and involved in the most commonplace struggle for daily bread, when he was only twenty-three.

In 1833, at the age of twenty, Wagner had taken up music professionally, and got a position as chorus-master. In 1834, he became musical director at the theatre in Magdeburg. The company, made up principally of young enthusiasts, who worked day and night, rehearsed Wagner's opera, "Das Liebesverbot." The first night there was a crowded house, but the troupe went all to pieces. The next night was to be Wagner's benefit. Fifteen minutes before the curtain rose, he found the audience consisted of his landlady, her husband, and one Polish Jew. A free fight broke out behind the scenes; the prima donna's husband smote the second tenor, her lover, and every one joined in; even that small audience was dismissed. In this company *die erste Liebhaberin* was Wilhelmine Planer, one of twelve children of a poor spindle-maker. When the Magdeburg company went to pieces, Wagner went to Leipzig and offered the opera to a manager, whose daughter was the chief singer. The manager said that he could not permit his daughter to appear in such a work. Eventually, Wagner drifted to Koenigsberg, where he became director of the theatre, and where Wilhelmine had found a position. The two had become engaged in Magdeburg, and they were married at Koenigsberg, on November 24, 1836.

The theatre soon followed the example of that at Magdeburg and went into bankruptcy. During the honeymoon year, Wagner had composed only one work, an overture, based on "Rule Britannia." At that time "The Old Oaken Bucket" had not been written. He then drifted to Riga, where he became music-director and his wife a singer. Now his relentless ambition seized him and he determined to consecrate the rest of his life to glory. His wife found herself consecrated to poverty and the fanatic ideals of a husband, to whom starvation was only a detail in the scheme of his life,—a scheme and a life for which she had neither inclination nor understanding.

Wilhelmine, or Minna, as she was called, is described as pretty by some and as of a "pleasing appearance," by others. The painter Pecht called her very pretty, but blamed her for a sober, unimaginative soul. Richard Pohl calls her a prosaic domestic woman, who never understood her husband, and who might have been an impediment to his far-reaching ideas, if Richard Wagner could have been impeded in his career by anything. Wagner himself seems to have been genuinely fond of her, though never, perhaps, deeply in love with her. He called her an "excellent housewife," who lovingly and faithfully shared much sorrow and little joy with him.



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The young couple lived at Riga in an expensive suburb, whence it was said they could reach the theatre only by means of a cab, though Glasenapp denies this story. Minna brought to her husband not a penny of dowry, and he brought to her a number of debts, and a hopeless lack of economy. The first year he tried to get an advance of salary, and offered to do anything, "except bootblackening and water-carrying, which latter my chest could not endure at present." Then he decided that fame and fortune awaited him, as they usually do, just over the horizon. The only trouble with the horizon, as with tomorrow and the will-o'-the-wisp, is that it is always just ahead.

When the Wagners applied for a passport, to leave Riga, they did so in the face of certain suits for debt. They were told that they could have the passport as soon as they showed receipts for their bills. That was too ridiculous a condition to consider, so Minna disguised as a peasant woman, and a friendly lumberman took her across the border as his wife. The friends of Wagner took up a purse for him, and by elaborate manoeuvres got him across the Russian border in disguise. He reached the seaport of Pillau, found his wife and his dog there, and set sail in a small boat.

Thus he embarked for the future, "with a wife, an opera and a half, a small purse, and a terribly large and terribly voracious Newfoundland dog." The composer, his wife, and the dog were all three outrageously seasick. They arrived finally after violent storms in London, where the chief event was the loss of the dog. When he came back, the three decided that Paris offered a better chance, so thither they went. Meyerbeer befriended them with letters of introduction and much encouragement, on the receipt of which the cautious couple diluted their few remaining pence in champagne.

Wagner began to write songs, which he offered to sell for prices ranging from \$2.50 to \$4.00; he asked the publisher obligingly to grant him the latter sum, "as life in Paris is enormously expensive"!

Wagner was so poor that about the only thing he could afford to keep was a diary. Here he wrote down alternate accounts of his abject poverty and of his abnormal hopes. In Villon's time, the wolves used to come into the streets of Paris at night. They were not all dead by 1840, it would seem, for one of them made his home on Wagner's doorstep. He wrote in his diary that he had invited a sick and starving German workman to breakfast, and his wife informed him that there was to be no breakfast, as the last pennies were gone.

In one of his moments of desperation, he brought himself to the depth of asking Minna to pawn some of her jewelry. She told him that she had long ago pawned it all. She faced their distress like a heroine. Wagner used to weep when he told of her self-denial, and the cheerfulness with which she, the pretty actress of former days, cooked what meals there were to cook, and scrubbed what clothes there were to scrub. For diversion, when they had no money for theatres and the opera, the genius and his wife and the dog could always take a walk on the boulevard.

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Wagner could not play any instrument, not even a piano, and so he tried for a position in the chorus of a cheap theatre; but his voice was not found good enough for even that. His long sea voyage had given him an idea for an opera, "The Flying Dutchman." He was driven to sell his libretto for a hundred dollars to another composer.

It would not do to follow Wagner's artistic progress in this place; that is an epic in itself. Finally, however, he managed to get his "Rienzi" written and accepted in Dresden. He scraped up money enough to go back to his Fatherland, and to take his wife to the baths at Teplitz, her health having broken under the strain of poverty. It is at this period that he closed an autobiographic sketch, with these words: "In Paris I had no prospects for years to come, so in the spring of 1842 I left there. For the first time, with tears in my eyes, I saw the Rhine; poor artist that I was, I swore eternal allegiance to my German Fatherland."

But his German Fatherland seems to have sworn everything except allegiance at him. From this moment he emerged into fame, or rather into notoriety; he thrust his head through the curtain of obscurity, as if he were a negro at a country fair, and with remarkable enthusiasm the whole critical fraternity proceeded to hurl every conceivable missile at him. It was well for him that his skull was hard.

"Rienzi" made an immediate success. But he was in his thirtieth year before even this unwelcome success was achieved. It is typical of the indomitable greatness of the man that even thus late in life, and after all his trials, he could put away from him success of such a sort, and turn back into the wilderness of exile and ignominy for years, until he could find the milk and honey land of art, which only his own magnificent fanaticism and the unsurpassed friendship of one man, Liszt, inspired him with the hope of reaching.

To the woman, Minna Planer, who had cooked his meals, washed his clothes, and darned his socks, this refusal of prosperity was a final blow of disenchantment. She had understood him little enough before, but now she lost track of him altogether. Her feelings were those of Psyche, when she found that her lover was a god with wings and a mania for flight. So far as concerned the further marriage of their minds, he now disappeared for her into the blue empyrean; when she sought to embrace his soul, she clasped thin air.

As for Wagner's heroism for his art, has there ever been anything like it? Some of his operas he did not see performed for years and years. He saw hardly the hope of winning his crusade this side the grave of martyrdom. That he believed in presentiments will be understood in his powerful feeling throughout the composition of "Tannhauser," that sudden death would prevent his finishing it. The world knows the value of these presentiments. Mendelssohn, too, in his letters tells of receiving on one occasion a letter which he feared to open, so



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strong was his feeling that it contained disastrous news. When at length he found courage to rip the envelope, the news was of the best. If, by chance, either of these presentiments had proved true, who would have been satisfied with the explanation of mere coincidence? The value, however, of Wagner's presentiment lies in the fact that, in spite of his despairful misgivings, he persevered in his ideals, and, if there has been never so great a triumph granted a musician, it is perhaps largely because no other musician so relentlessly worshipped his artistic ideals or sacrificed to them with such Druidic ruthlessness.

Carl Maria von Weber paid great heed to his wife's artistic advice, and called her his "gallery." But there are wives and wives, and however deeply our humanity may sympathise with poor Minna Planer, our love for evolution can only rejoice that she was not permitted to tie her husband down to the narrow-souled ideals of the good-hearted, stupid little housewife she was. Wagner understood her far better than she understood him. He sympathised with her even in her resistance to his career. To the last it made him indignant to hear her spoken of slightly.

Wagner's appeals for money to his friends, who supported him in his moneyless art, are constantly mingled with tender allusions to Minna. When he would borrow Liszt's last penny, he usually wanted a large part of it for Minna. I do not find him convicted of ever using rough language to her. She was not so patient. Wagner's friend, Roeckel, wrote to Praeger in reference to the agony Wagner suffered from the gibes of criticism:

"I keep it always from him; Minna is not capable of withholding either praise or blame from him, although I have tried hard to prove to her that it deeply affects her husband, whose health is none of the strongest."

When he was implicated in the revolution of 1849, and was forced to flee for his life, he escaped in the disguise of a coachman, and finally, with Liszt's ever-ready aid, reached Zurich. As soon as he found himself there, he borrowed further money from Liszt, to send for Minna, who had remained behind and "suffered a thousand disagreeable things."

Wagner had been supporting her parents, and he borrowed sixty-two thalers more to help them. When Minna did not come immediately, Wagner wrote an anxious letter of inquiry to a friend.

Surely, there can be nothing tenderer than his allusion to her in another letter to Liszt:

"As soon as I have my wife I shall go to work again joyfully. Restore me to my art! You shall see that I am attached to no home, but I cling to this poor, good, faithful woman, for whom I have provided little but grief, who is serious, solicitous, and without



expectation, and who nevertheless feels eternally chained to this unruly devil that I am. Restore her to me! Thus will you do me all the good that you could ever wish me; and see, for this I shall be grateful to you! yes, grateful!... See that she is made happy and can soon return to me! which, alas! in our sweet nineteenth-century language, means, send her as much money as you possibly can! Yes, that is the kind of a man I am! I can beg, I could steal, to make my wife happy, if only for a short time. You dear, good Liszt! do see what you can do! Help me! Help me, dear Liszt!"



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At last she came, and he wrote Heine a letter of rejoicing. But once with him, she began again her opposition to his high-flying theories. She wanted him to write a popular French opera for Paris. She was humiliated at his borrowing for his self-support, and could not see much glory in his creed: "He who helps me only helps my art through me, and the sacred cause for which I am fighting." He seemed more than afraid of her opinion, and wrote to Uhlig:

"She is really somewhat hectoring in this matter, and I shall no doubt have a hard tussle with her practical sense if I tell her bluntly that I do not wish to write an opera for Paris. True, she would shake her head and accept that decision, too, were it not so closely related to our means of subsistence; there lies the critical knot, which it will be painful to cut. Already my wife is ashamed of our presence in Zurich, and thinks we ought to make everybody believe that we are in Paris."

At last, she nagged him into her theory, although he fairly loathed writing a pot-boiler, and considered it the purest dishonesty. He went to Paris, but returned, having been able to accomplish nothing. On his return, he wrote in his "A Communication to My Friends," that a new hope sprung up within him. His friend Liszt was then directing the opera at Weimar.

"At the close of my last Paris sojourn, when I was ill, unhappy, and in despair, my eye fell on the score of my 'Lohengrin,' which I had almost forgotten. A pitiful feeling overcame me that these tones would never resound from the deathly pale paper; two words I wrote to Liszt, the answer to which was nothing else than the information that, as far as the resources of the Weimar Opera permitted, the most elaborate preparations were being made for the production of 'Lohengrin.'"

It was in "Lohengrin" that he first put in play his theory of the marriage of poetry and music, his idea being their complete devotion, with poetry as the master of the situation. He believed in independent melodies no more than in strong-minded wives. He lived this artistic theory in his own domestic relations, and it was not his fault that Minna, his melody, found it impossible to live in the light upper air of his poetry. He was so discouraged, however, by this time, by finding no encouragement at home, and a frenzy of hostility from the critics,—a frenzy almost incredible at this late day, in spite of the monumental evidences of it,—that for six years, after the completion of "Lohengrin," he wrote no music at all.

He felt that he must first prepare the soil of battle with the critics in their own element—ink-slinging. On this fact Mr. Finck comments as follows:

"Five years,—nay, six years, six of the best years of his life, immediately following the completion of 'Lohengrin,'—the greatest dramatic composer the world has ever seen did not write a note! Do you realise what that means? It means that the world lost two or three immortal operas, which he might have, and probably would have, written in these

six years had not an unsympathetic world forced him into the role of an aggressive reformer and revolutionist.”



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He received some money, and more fame, and still more enemies as a result of his powerful literary tilts against Philistinism. Then he took up the Nibelungen idea, planning to devote three years to the work; “little dreaming that it would keep him with interruptions for the next twenty-three years.” For the accomplishment of this vast monument he asked only a humble place to work. He wrote Uhlig:

“I want a small house, with meadow and a little garden! To work with zest and joy,—but not for the present generation.... Rest! rest! rest! Country! country! a cow, a goat, *etc.* Then—health—happiness—hope! Else, everything lost. I care no more.”

He found all in Zuerich, where he and his wife rowed about the lake, and accumulated friends. He found special sympathy in the friendship of Frau Elise Wille, a novelist. Perhaps she was more than a friend, for one of his letters to her is superscribed “Precious.”

But all the while he suffered much from erysipelas and dyspepsia, and was occasionally moved with violent despair to the edge of suicide, for he was exiled from his Fatherland, and he was an outlaw from the world of music, which he longed to enlarge and beautify. He compared himself to Beethoven:

“Strange that my fate should be like Beethoven’s! he could not hear his music because he was deaf.... I cannot hear mine because I am more than deaf, because I do not live in my time at all, because I move among you as one who is dead.... Oh, that I should not arise from my bed to-morrow, awake no more to this loathsome life!”

Financial troubles and the discouragement of his wife were still among the most faithful torments. His letters to Liszt are abundant with alternations of artistic ecstasy and material misery. It is worth recording that, “my wife has not scolded me once, although yesterday I had the spleen badly enough.” To add to his misery, Minna became addicted to opium. In 1858 he wrote Liszt:

“My wife will return in a fortnight, after having finished her cure, which will have lasted three months. My anxiety about her was terrible, and for two months I had to expect the news of her death from day to day. Her health was ruined, especially by the immoderate use of opium, taken nominally as a remedy for sleeplessness. Latterly the cure she uses has proved highly beneficial; the great weakness and want of appetite have disappeared, and the recovery of the chief functions (she used to perspire continually) and a certain abatement of her incessant excitement, have become noticeable. The great enlargement of her heart will be bearable to her if only she keeps perfectly calm and avoids all excitement to her dying day. A thing of this kind can never be got rid of entirely. Thus I have to undertake new duties, over which I must try to forget my own sufferings.”



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The young pianist, Tausig, visits him, and he thinks of him as his son, saying, "My childless marriage is suddenly blest with an interesting phenomenon." But the young Tausig gives him unlimited cares, and "devours my biscuits, which my wife doles out grudgingly even to me." His allusions to Minna are always full of tender solicitude, though it is evident that she wears upon him. His temper, peculiarly violent at the slightest opposition, must have been a serious problem under her open disbelief in his genius and his creeds; and yet he thought he could not prosper without her.

In 1860 he is again borrowing money for her, and writing to Liszt:

"According to a letter; just received, D. thinks it necessary to refuse me the thousand francs I had asked for, and offers me thirty louis d'or instead. This puts me in an awkward position. On the one hand I am, as usual, greatly in want of money, and shall decidedly not be able to send my wife to Loden for a cure, unless I receive the subvention I had hoped for."

These letters to Liszt make a remarkable literature. The two men were bound together by such artistic sympathy, and Liszt was so much a soldier for Wagner's crusade, and so ready with financial help, that he was more than friend or brother. It was, in Wagner's own phrase, "the gigantic perseverance of his friendship," that endeared him beyond words to the struggler. Even Minna seems to have been extremely fond of Liszt—what woman was not? It was to Liszt that she was indebted for rescue from downright starvation. More than this, Minna's parents were supported *via* Liszt, and it somewhat beautifies the otherwise unbeautiful spectacle of Wagner's splendid mendicancy that, when he borrowed, it was as much for his wife and her parents as for himself.

Liszt was not the only friend in need. There was Frau Julie Ritter, who sent him money from Dresden for several years.

This brings us to a time of stress when Minna began to suffer from the fickleness of some one nearer to her than fortune. Wagner began to cast meaning glances over the garden wall. As Mr. Henderson says: "He was as inconstant as the wind, a rover, and a faithless husband. His misdoings amounted to more than peccadilloes."

It was in Zuerich that Wagner gave Minna some other causes for uneasiness than his habit of being late at meals. Hans Belart, in his "Wagner in Zuerich," refers to Wagner's flirtation with Emilie Heim, the wife of a conductor, who lived so near the Wagners that their kitchen-gardens adjoined. Emilie was a beautiful blonde with a beautiful voice, and she and Wagner were wont to sing duets together, as he wrote them; and she was the soloist in a concert he gave. How much cause Minna may have had for jealousy, we can hardly know, but it seems certain that she felt she had a sufficiency, and that she made so much ado about it that Wagner found it advisable to move. In later years he and Emilie met again. Wagner gave her the pet name of "Sieglinde," and told her that



she should illumine his Walhalla as Freia, the eternal, blue-eyed, gold-haired goddess of spring. According to Belart, Minna was the inspiration for Wotan's virtuous but nagging wife Fricka!



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Frau Wille was another torment to Minna, but Frau Wesendonck was more. Belart even implies that Minna grew so jealous of the Wesendonck that she poured out her woes to a dancing-master named Riese, who revered Meyerbeer. When Minna, who was at least, says Mr. Finck, as well advanced as the eminent critics of the time, failed to understand the music of "The Walkuere," when indeed she called it "immoral amorous asininity,"—an opinion for which perhaps the duets with Frau Heim were partly responsible,—Wagner used to slam on his hat and go for a walk, while Minna would seek Herr Riese.

The affair with the Frau Wesendonck is something of mystery, that is, if Wagner's word is good for anything. She died in 1902, and at her death Mr. Huneker summed up her affair with Wagner as follows:

"Mathilde Wesendonck is dead. Who was she? Well, she was Isolde when Wagner was Tristan down on the beautiful shores of Zurich in the years of 1858 and 1859. When he was in sore straits and had not where to lay his head, he went to Zuerich, and Mr. Wesendonck rented to him for next to nothing a little chalet. There he dreamed out the second and third acts of 'Tristan und Isolde,' and succeeded in deeply interesting Mrs. Wesendonck in them. There had already been trouble between him and his patient first wife, Minna, because of his attentions to this woman, and in 1856 the Wagners were on the point of a separation. Richard wrote to his friend Praeger in London: 'The devil is loose. I shall leave Zuerich at once and come to you in Paris,' But this time the trouble was smoothed over.

"In the summer of 1859 the attachment of Wagner and Mrs. Wesendonck had reached such a stage that Wesendonck practically kicked the great composer out of his paradise. In later years, when questioned about it, Wesendonck admitted that he had forced Wagner to go. In 1865 Wagner wrote to the injured husband:

"The incident that separated me from you about six years ago should be evaded; it has upset me and my life enough that you recognise me no longer and that I esteem myself less and less. All this suffering should have earned your forgiveness, and it would have been beautiful and noble to have forgiven me; but it is useless to demand the impossible, and I was in the wrong.'

"It is thoroughly characteristic of Wagner to regard his sufferings as so much more important than those of the husband whom he wronged. Wagner always thought well of himself. But poor Isolde is dead at last. She must have been very old and very sorry for the past. Let the orchestra play the 'Liebestod.'"

Judging from external evidences, there is reason enough to accept such a theory of the relations of Wagner and this sympathetic, beautiful woman. In fact, it stretches credulity to the bursting point to accept any other opinion. And yet, it is only fair to say that Wagner put a very different construction upon the friendship, and to confess that

stranger things have happened in real life than the purely artistic wedlock, which Wagner claimed for the intimacy of the two. Mathilde was a poet, and Wagner set to music some of her verses, notably his beautiful "Traume." Besides, she was the inspiration of his *Isolde*, and she gave him the sympathy Minna denied.



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According to a recently published article in a German review, Wagner wrote a long letter to his sister Clara, explaining why Minna had left him, and making himself out to be as thoroughly misunderstood domestically as he had always been musically. It is a long letter, but quoteworthy, the italics being mine:

“MY DEAR CLARA:—I promised you further information regarding the causes of the decisive step which you now see me taking. I communicate, therefore, what is necessary to enable you to contradict various pieces of gossip, to which indeed I am indifferent.

“What for six years has kept and comforted me, and especially has strengthened me in remaining by Minna’s side, in spite of the enormous differences in our characters and natures, is the love of that young lady who, at first and for a long time, timid, doubting, hesitating, and bashful, finally more determinately and surely grew closer to me. As there never could be any talk of a union between us, our profound affection took the sadly melancholy character which keeps aloof all that is common and base, and recognises its fount of happiness only in the welfare of the other. From the period of our first acquaintance she had displayed the most unwearied and most delicate care for me, and in the most courageous way had obtained from her husband everything that could lighten my life.

“He could not, in presence of the undisguised frankness of his wife, do anything but soon fall into increasing jealousy. Her nobleness now consisted in this, that she kept her husband informed of the state of her heart and gradually led him to perfect renunciation of her. By what sacrifices and struggles this was attained can be easily guessed; what rendered her success possible, could only be the depth and sublimity of her affection, devoid of every selfish thought, which gave her the power to show it to her husband in such a light that he, when she finally threatened him with her death, had to abstain from her and had to prove his unshakable love for her only by supporting her in her cares for me. Finally, he had to retain the mother of his children, and for their sake—who invincibly separated us—he assumed his position of renunciation. Thus, while he was devoured by jealousy she again interested him for me so far that—as you know—*he often supported me*. Lastly, when it came to providing me with what I wanted—a house and garden—it was she who by the most unheard-of struggles induced him to buy a pretty little property near his own.

“The most wonderful thing is, that I never had a suspicion of these struggles; her husband, out of love for her, had always to show himself friendly and unconcerned toward me. Not a dark look must he cast on me, not a hair ruffled; the heavens must arch over me, clear and cloudless, soft and smooth must be the path I trod. Such was the unheard-of result of the glorious love of the purest, noblest woman, and *this love, which always remained unspoken between us*, was compelled finally to reveal itself when I composed and gave her ‘Tristan,’ Then, for the first time her self-control failed, and she declared to me that now she must die.



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“Think, dear sister, what this love must have been to me after a life of toil and suffering, of excitement and sacrifice, such as mine had been. Yet we at once recognised that a union between us must never be thought of, so we resigned ourselves, renounced every selfish wish, suffered and endured—but loved each other.

“My wife with true woman’s instinct seemed to understand what was going on. She behaved indeed often in a jealous, scornful, contemptuous manner, yet she tolerated *our mode of life, which otherwise was no injury to morality*, but looked only to the possibility of knowing each other at the present moment. Consequently I assumed that Minna would be sensible and understand that she had nothing to fear really, that a union between us could not even be thought of, and that therefore forbearance on her side was the most desirable and the best. Now, however, I learn that I have perhaps deceived myself on this point; bits of gossip came to my ear; and she at last so far lost her senses that *she intercepted a letter from me* and—opened it. This letter, if she had been in a position to understand it, would really have soothed her in the most desirable way, for our resignation was its theme.

“She dwelt only on the confidential expressions and lost the sense. In a rage she came to me and compelled me therefore to declare quietly and decisively how matters stood; namely, that she had brought trouble on herself by opening such a letter, and that if she could not restrain herself, we must part. On this point we agreed; I calm, she passionate. Another day I was sorry for her. I went to her and said: ‘Minna, you are very sick. Compose yourself and let us once more talk about the matter.’ We concluded with the idea of a Cure for her; she seemed to quiet herself, and the day of her departure for the Cure was approaching; previously, however, she would speak to Frau Wesendonck I firmly forbade her to do so. All my efforts were to make Minna gradually acquainted with the character of my relations to Frau Wesendonck, in order to convince her that she had no need to fear about the continuance of our marriage, and that, therefore, she should behave herself sensibly, thoughtfully, and generously; reject any foolish revenge and every kind of spying. Ultimately she promised this. Yet she could not be quiet. She went behind my back and—without comprehending it herself—insulted the gentle lady most grossly. She said to her: ‘Were I like ordinary women, I would go with this letter to your husband!’ And thus *Frau Wesendonck, who was conscious of never having any secrets from her husband*—a thing which a woman like Minna could not understand—had nothing to do but at once to inform her husband of this scene and its cause.



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“Here, then, was an attack, in a rough and vulgar manner, an attack on *the delicacy and purity of our relations*, and in many ways a change was necessary. I succeeded only after some time in making it clear to Frau Wesendonck that, for a nature like that of my wife, relations of such elevation and unselfishness as those existing between us could never be made intelligible, for I was struck by *her serious, deep reproach that I had omitted this, while she had always made her husband her confidant*. Whoever can comprehend what I have suffered since (it was then the middle of April) must also comprehend in what state of mind I am at last, since I must acknowledge that the uninterrupted endeavours to continue our disturbed relations were absolutely fruitless. I tended Minna at the Cure for three months with the utmost care, and in order to quiet her, I, during this period, broke off all intercourse with our neighbours; in my anxiety for her health I tried everything in my power to bring her to reason and to hold views befitting herself and her age. All in vain! She persisted in the most trivial remarks, she said she was an injured woman, and she had scarcely been quieted, before the old rage broke out again. Since Minna returned a month ago, some conclusion had finally to be reached. The close proximity of the two women was for the future impossible, for Frau Wesendonck could not forget that her highest sacrifices and tenderest consideration for me had been met on my side, through my wife, so rudely and insultingly. *People, too, had begun to talk*. Enough; the most unheard-of scenes and tormentings of me never ceased, and out of regard for the one and the other, I was forced finally to decide to give up the charming asylum which such tender love had prepared for me.

“Now I needed quiet and perfect composure, for what I have to surmount is great. Minna is unable to understand what an unhappy married life we have led; she imagines the past to have been quite different from what it was, and if I found consolation, distraction, and forgetfulness in my art, she verily believes I had no need of them. Enough. I have come to this resolution with myself: I can no longer bear this everlasting squabbling and distrustful temper if I have to fulfil my life’s task courageously. Whoever has observed me sufficiently must wonder at my patience, kindness, even weakness, and if I am condemned by superficial judges I am quite indifferent to them. But never had Minna such an opportunity to show herself more worthy of *the dignity (wuerde) of being my wife*, than now, when it is necessary for me to keep what is highest and dearest. It lay in her hands to show whether she really loved me. But what such genuine love is, she never once conceived, and her temper carried her away beyond everything.



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“Yet I excused her on account of her sickness, although this sickness would have taken another and milder character if she herself were other and milder. The many disagreeable blows of fortune which she experienced with me—which my inner genius (which unfortunately I could not impart) easily raised me above, rendered me full of regard for her; I wished to give her as little pain as possible, for I am very sorry for her. Only I feel myself constantly incapable of enduring it by her side; moreover, I can do her no good thereby. I shall become always unintelligible to her and an object of her suspicion. So—separation! But in all kindness and love, I do not desire *her disgrace*. I only wished that she herself in time would see that it is better if we do not see so much of each other. For the present I hold out to her the prospect of returning to Germany as soon as the amnesty is proclaimed; for this reason she will take with her all the furniture and things. I purpose to make no slips of the tongue and to let everything depend on my future resolutions. Do you therefore stick to it that *it is only a temporary separation*. What ever you can do to make her quiet and reasonable I beg you not to omit. For—as said above—she is unfortunate; *with a smaller man she would have been happier*. Join with me in pitying her. I will thank you from my heart for so doing, dear sister!

“I shall wait here a bit in Geneva till I can go to Italy, where I think of passing the winter, presumably in Venice. Already I feel quickened by being alone and removed from all tormenting surroundings. It was no use talking of work. As soon as I feel myself in a temper to go on composing ‘Tristan,’ I shall regard myself as saved. In fact, I must do the best for myself; I ask nothing from the world but that it leave me in quiet for the works which one day will belong to it. So let it judge me gently! The contents of this letter, dear Clara, you can confidently use to give any explanations where they may be necessary. On the whole, however, naturally I would not like to have much said of the matter. Only very few people will understand what this is about, so one must know well the persons introduced here.

“Now, farewell, dear sister. I thank you again from my heart for the secret question which, as you can see, I answer confidentially. Treat Minna with forbearance, but make her gradually understand how she now stands with me.

“Your brother,

“RICHARD WAGNER.”

This is Wagner’s side of the affair, only recently made public. The translation is from the *Musical Courier*. Whatever is discarded, there remains enough to disprove Belart’s statement that Otto Wesendonck only learned of the affair from informants outside, and, finding Wagner and Mathilde together, compelled Wagner to leave Zurich immediately. Besides, even Belart admits that Wesendonck and his wife continued to live together for the sake of the children, and that years after, when he had learned to understand, he renewed his acquaintance with Wagner.



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Amazing as this story is, both with regard to the strange things it asks us to believe of the man and the woman and the husband, it is certain that there was a pretty how-d'ye-do in Zurich. Minna became so jealous that she drove Wagner, usually so tender in his allusions to her, to use the expression of the ungallant Haydn, saying that, "she was making a hell out of the home." Her outbursts of temper were so violent, and her addiction to opium had become so great, that he began to fear for her death by heart disease, and finally for her sanity. He wrote of her to his friend Frau Ritter:

"Her condition of mind became such a torment to herself and her surroundings, that a radical change of the situation had to be made, unless we were all willing to wear ourselves out unreasonably.... The state of her education, and her intellectual capacities, make it impossible for her to find in me and my endowments the consolation which she needed so much by way of compensation for the disagreeableness of our material situation. If this is the source of great anguish to me, it nevertheless makes me pity her with all my heart, and it is my most cordial wish that I may some day be able to afford her lasting consolation in her own way."

In 1856 she had left him for a time, ostensibly to take a cure. In 1859 there had been a short reunion, of which Wagner wrote again to Frau Ritter:

"This period I have also chosen for a reunion with my poor wife. May Heaven grant that I shall always feel able to carry out patiently my firm and cordial determination of treating her in the most considerate manner. I confess that my relation to this poor woman, who had so many trials, and is now suffering so much, has always spurred me on to preserve and develop my moral powers. In all my relations to her I am guided only by the deepest pity with her condition, and I hope confidently that it will always arm me with the persistent patience with which I feel called upon not only to endure the consequences of her illness, but personally to allay them."

Then he had gone to Venice to continue work on "Tristan," dreaming there in loneliness of his Isolde, the Wesendonck, whose husband has been well likened to King Mark. But Venice being within the sphere of Saxon influence, he was afraid to remain long, for fear of arrest. In 1860 he was granted a partial amnesty, and went to Frankfort to meet his wife, who had been taking treatment near Wiesbaden. Minna went with him to Paris, and was there at the time of the violent riots, which put an end to "Tannhaeuser," and doubtless to Minna's hopes of settling in the Paris she was so fond of. She began again to vent her indignation that he would not write for the gallery, and the storm grew fiercer and fiercer. Wagner had written Liszt in 1861 with renewed hope and renewed tenderness:

"For the present I spend all the good humour I can command on my wife. I flatter her and take care of her as if she were a bride in her honeymoon. My reward is that I see her thrive; her bad illness is visibly getting better. She is recovering and will, I hope, become a little rational in her old age. Just after I had received your 'Dante,' I wrote to

her that we had now got out of Hell; I hope Purgatory will agree with her; in which case, we shall perhaps, after all, enjoy a little Paradise.”



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But the hope was vain, and a friend of the family who wrote under the name of the “Idealistin” describes the—

“almost daily trouble in the intercourse, increased by the fact that the absence of children deprived them of the last element of reconciliation. Nevertheless, Frau Wagner was a good woman, and in the eyes of the world decidedly the better half and the chief sufferer. I judged otherwise, and felt the deepest pity for Wagner, for whom love should have built the bridge by which he might have reached others, whereas now it was only making the bitter cup of his life bitterer. I was on good terms with Frau Wagner, who often poured her complaints into my ears, and I tried to console her, but of course in vain.”

And now Minna, whose housewifely meekness had endured the Wesendonck tempest and all the other multitudes of trials Wagner went through, found herself unable to endure his fidelity to his artistic ideals. The quarrels grew fiercer and fiercer, until finally she left Wagner for ever, and went back to her people in Dresden, where she spent the rest of her life.

Wagner’s immortal hope was not even yet dead; as late as 1863 he wrote to Praeger from St. Petersburg:

“I would Minna were here with me; we might, in the excitement that now moves fast around me, grow again the quiescent pair of yore. The whole thing is annoying. I am not in good spirits: I move about freely, and see a number of people, but my misery is bitter.”

Minna herself seems to have toyed with the idea of reconciliation, for she wrote to Praeger, who told Wagner, and received the following bitter complaint:

“And so she has written to you? Whose fault was it? How could she have expected I was to be shackled and fettered as any ordinary cold common mortal? My inspirations carried me into a sphere where she could not follow, and then the exuberance of my heated enthusiasm was met by a cold douche. But still there was no reason for the extreme step; everything might have been arranged between us, and it would have been better had it been so. Now there is a dark void, and my misery is deep.”

A year later, Wagner’s regret is not yet dead, and he writes to Frau Wille:

“Between me and my wife all might have turned out well! I had simply spoiled her dreadfully, and yielded to her in everything. She did not feel that I am a man who cannot live with wings tied down. What did she know of the divine right of passion, which I announce in the flame-death of the Walkuere who has fallen from the grace of the gods? With the death-sacrifice of love the Dusk of the Gods (Götterdämmerung) sets in.”



And again he bewails his loneliness to Praeger:

“The commonest domestic details must now be done by me; the purchasing of kitchen utensils and such kindred matters am I driven to. Ah! poor Beethoven! now is it forcibly brought home to me what his discomforts were with his washing-book and engaging of housekeepers, *etc.*, *etc.* I who have praised woman more than Frauenlob, have not one for my companion. The truth is, I have spoiled Minna; too much did I indulge her, too much did I yield to her; but it were better not to talk upon a subject which never ceases to vex me.”

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Yet he was destined to know wedded happiness some years later. And he showed that he could make happy a woman who could understand him. As Mr. Finck comments:

“The world is apt to side with the woman in a case like this, especially if her partner is of the *irritabile genus*, a man of genius. No doubt, Minna had much to endure, and deserves all our pity; but that her husband is not to blame in this matter, is shown by the extremely happy and contented life he led with his second wife, Cosima, the daughter of Liszt, who *did love* and understand him.”

It is a proverb that the woman who marries a genius marries misery, but I think there are instances enough in this book to show that genius has nothing to do with the case. Wedded happiness is a result of the lucky meeting of two natures, one or both of which may be accidentally so constituted as to be happy in the other's society without undue restlessness. It would be just as easy to prove, by a multitude of instances, that plumbers or bookkeepers, doctors, lawyers, merchants, or thieves make poor husbands as to prove the same of musicians, artists, poets, architects, or geniuses of any kind.

The truth of the matter is always overlooked: the geniuses are revealed to the public in an intimacy non-historical characters are not subjected to. But if you will turn from reading the pages of history, biography, or memoirs, and take up any newspaper of the day, you will doubtless be astounded to find how small a percentage of the divorces, the murders, and other domestic scandals are to be blamed to the possession of genius, unless, as one might well, you recognise a special and separate genius for trouble.

Patience conquers all things, if one lives long enough, and at length even Wagner's innumerable woes were solved by the appearance of a veritable *deus ex machina* let down from heaven. But Wagner was over fifty when the tardy god arrived. It was in 1864 that he became the idol and the pet of the young king, Ludwig II. of Bavaria, who sent a courier ransacking Europe almost in vain for the fugitive, and, at last finding him, dumbfounded him with fairy promises, presented him with a villa, and treated him to a splendour few musicians have ever known, except perhaps Lully, and Farinelli, who became the vocal prime minister of the truly good king Ferdinand VI. of Spain. Wagner's relations with Ludwig were of a sort which Mr. Finck euphemises as “Grecian.” This was seemingly not the only instance in his career; but it brought him furious enmity as soon as he had found friendship.

Poor Minna never shared with Wagner his period of luxury. But it was of such magnificence that his envious foes accused him of aiming to dethrone religion from its throne, and substitute art as the Pope! Among the attacks made on Wagner at this time was the charge that, while he was lolling on a silken couch which had cost him \$12,000, his neglected wife was starving to death in Dresden. Minna was honourable enough to answer this attack with an open letter to those German newspapers which, in 1866, outjaundiced that yellow journalism for the invention of which New America has been blamed.



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Minna wrote as follows:

“The malicious rumours concerning my husband, which have been for some time published by Vienna and Munich newspapers, oblige me to declare that I have received from him up to this day an income amply sufficient for my maintenance. I take this opportunity with the more pleasure as it enables me to put an end to at least one of the numerous calumnies launched against my husband.”

A few weeks later, on January 25, 1866, she died at Dresden of heart disease. She had suffered all the miseries that earn success, without ever tasting their sweets. To say whether or not she deserved to taste the sweets would demand a more ruthless and unforgiving verdict upon one of the two unfortunates than I have the heart to render. The marriage had been the wedding of a near-sighted woman and a man who could see hardly anything nearer than the Pleiades. Neither was more to blame than the other for the fault of eyesight. It was simply a case of connubial astigmatism.

While Wagner was living on terms of strange intimacy with the young king, he was accused of Oriental luxury. The selection of the rainbow furnishings of his house and of his own dressing-gowns, which made Joseph's coat mere negligee, was not altogether his own, but showed the unmistakable guiding hand of a woman. Frau Cosima von Buelow acted as a sort of secretary to Wagner. She was the daughter of Liszt; her mother was the Comtesse d'Agoult, who wrote under the name of “Daniel Stern,” and with whom Liszt had lived for a few years. Cosima had married Hans von Buelow in 1857.

Von Buelow had in his earlier years been greatly befriended by Liszt and by Wagner. In 1850, when Von Buelow was about twenty years old, Wagner and Liszt both had written to his mother, who was then divorced, begging her to let her son take up music. Like Schumann's mother, she opposed music as a career, but Von Buelow persisted, and became Liszt's pupil. Wagner was to Von Buelow a god. It was a pitiful practical joke that Fate should have directed the god's favour toward the worshipper's wife. But those ugly old maids, the Fates, have never had a sense of good form.

As early as 1864 Wagner had written to Frau Wille, complaining of Von Buelow's misfortunes, and saying: “Add to this a tragic marriage; a young woman of extraordinary, quite unprecedented endowment, Liszt's wonderful image, but of superior intellect.” Wagner persuaded the king to make Von Buelow court pianist, and later court conductor. There are very pretty accounts of the musical at-homes of the Von Buelows and Wagner.

Then Wagner's popularity with the king eventually raised such hostility that, at the king's request, he left the country to save his life. He was again an exile. Cosima, with her two children, went with him, and later Von Buelow came, but he soon had to go to Basle to earn his living as a piano teacher, and left his family at Lucerne. There exists a letter



from Wagner's cook, telling a friend of how the king came incognito to visit Wagner, and how the house was upset by the descent of Cosima and her children. They had come to stay. At Tribschen, near Lucerne, Wagner lived with the Von Buelow family, and began to know contentment.

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The relations of Wagner and Cosima rapidly grew intimate enough to torment even the idolatrous Von Buelow. Riemann says: "Domestic misunderstandings led, in 1869, to a separation, and Von Buelow left the city." One of the "domestic misunderstandings" was doubtless the birth of Siegfried Wagner, June 6, 1869. A speedy divorce and marriage were imperative. The chief difficulty in the securing of the much desired divorce was that Cosima must change her religion, or her "religious profession," to use the more accurate phrase of Mr. Finck, who says that Wagner in his life with her, had "followed the example of Liszt and Goethe and other European men of genius, an example the ethics of which this is not the place to discuss."

Von Buelow secured his divorce in the fall of 1869. He remarried, in 1882, the actress, Marie Schanzer. Wagner and Cosima were married August 25, 1870. This was the twenty-fifth birthday of King Ludwig, and Glasenapp comments glowingly upon the meaning of the marriage:

"To the artist, who in the first great rumblings of the war of 1870-71, greeted the dawn of a new era for his people, the same hour proved to be the beginning of a new chapter. On Thursday, the 25th of August, 1870, in the Protestant Church of Lucerne, in the presence of two witnesses, one, the lifelong friend of the Wagner family, Hans Richter, the other, Miss M.v.M., the wedding of Richard Wagner to Cosima, the divorced wife of Hans von Buelow, was celebrated.

"There is no other union which Germans ought to deem more holy. None have ever been entered into with less selfishness, with higher impersonal sentiments. It united the great homeless one, who had suffered so much and so long under the heartlessness and unappreciative neglect of his contemporaries, to a wife, who stood beside the friend of her father, the ideal of her husband, with cheerful encouragement (*mit theilnahmvollster Sorge*), until she as well as her husband realised that she was the one chosen to heal the wounds which the artist had suffered in his restless wanderings and through numberless disappointments. The time had arrived when the hand of love prepared the last and never-to-be-lost home.

"This knowledge gave the noble-minded woman the courage to sever the ties, which in early youth had tied her to one of our most eminent artists, and the best of men; to give up herself to her task, to consecrate her life to him, to be the helpmeet of the man to whom through friendship and the inner voice of her heart, and the knowledge of noble duty, she had already belonged. The world did not hesitate to malign this holiest act of fidelity. Only the small and the low are overlooked, the high and the great are ever the victims."

Just two months before the marriage, Wagner had written to Frau Wille, who had invited him and his wife-to-be to visit her, an account of his feelings in the matter, which is beautiful enough and sincere enough to quote at some length:

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“Certainly we shall come, for you are to be the first to whom we shall present ourselves as man and wife. To get into this state, great patience was required; what has been for years inevitable was not to be brought about until all manner of suffering. Since last I saw you in Munich, I have not again left my asylum, which, in the meanwhile, has also become the refuge of her who was destined to prove that I could well be helped, and that the axiom of many of my friends that I ‘could not be helped’ was false! She knew that I could be helped, and she helped me: she has defied every disapprobation and taken upon herself every condemnation. She has borne to me a wonderfully beautiful and vigorous boy, whom I boldly call ‘Siegfried’: he is now growing, together with my work, and gives me a new, long life, which at last has attained a meaning. Thus we get along without the world from which we had retired entirely. But now listen: you will, I trust, approve of the sentiment which leads us to postpone our visit until I can introduce to you the mother of my son as my wedded wife. This will soon be the case, and before the leaves fall we hope to be in Mariafeld.”

A pleasant view of the new domesticity that had come into Wagner’s life is an elaborate surprise he planned for his wife. He composed with great secrecy the “Siegfried Idyll,” that most royal musical welcome that ever baby had. Hans Richter collected a band of musical conspirators and rehearsed the work. On the morning of Cosima’s birthday, the orchestra stealthily collected on the steps of the house, and with Wagner as conductor, and with Hans Richter as trumpeter, Cosima’s thirtieth birthday was ushered in with benevolent auspices, the child being then a year old. The Idyll itself, as Mr. Finck says, “is not merely an orchestral cradle-song; it is the embodiment of love, paternal and conjugal.”

A new reward for his long and stormy career was the realisation of the Bayreuth dream—the building with hands of a material castle in Spain. Besides this opera-house of his own, to be consecrated to his own works, Wagner was given a home. He and his wife left the villa at Tribschen, on the lake at Lucerne, with much regret. For there he had been able to work in perfect seclusion, under the protection and forethought of the devoted Cosima. His new villa at Bayreuth he called “Wahnfried,” setting over the door a fresco of mythological figures, symbolising music and tragedy; in whom are portrayed Cosima Wagner, his final ideal, and Wilhelmine Schroeder-Devrient, who had been his first inspiration, and also figures of Wotan and Siegfried; the former being the portrait of Franz Betz, the singer of the role, and the latter being the child Siegfried Wagner. Beneath the frescoes he put the words: “Hier wo mein Wahn Frieden fand, Wahnfried sei dieses Haus von mir benannt,”—which may be Englished: “Here, where my illusions respite found, ‘Illusion-Respite’ let this house by me be crowned.”



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In this home, plain in its exterior, but full of richness within, Wagner lived at ease with his wife and her four children. Von Buelow, the father of two of them, had found strength to be true to his first beliefs in Wagner's art crusade, and to continue his friendship with the man, though delicacy forbade his entering the home, to which he had regretfully but gracefully resigned his wife, like Ruskin, though not for the same reasons. Once he broke forth in his dilemma: "If he were only some one that I could kill, he would have been dead before this." But he could not interfere with "the great cause," and even Liszt, after some estrangement, was reconciled to Wagner.

Here Wagner's existence went tranquilly and busily on for twelve years, till he was at the threshold of his three-score and ten. And now the genius, whom we saw but lately juggling with starvation in the slums of Paris, we find a figure of world-wide fame, with an annual income of \$25,000 and the ability to travel to Italy in a private car. But this luxury was his last, for his health was on the ebb. And though he took a suite of twenty-eight rooms in the Palazzo Vendramin, in Venice, with his wife, his own two children, Siegfried and Eva, aged twelve and fourteen years, Daniela and Isolde, Cosima's two children by her first husband, and two teachers, four servants, and many guests, this was but a splendid sarcophagus; for here Wagner had but less than half a year to live. Those who would know more of the daily comforts and suffering of this time, can read it in Perl's book, "Richard Wagner in Venedig." He suffered constantly more and more from heart trouble and other torments. One day his servant heard him calling, and, hastening to his side, found him on a divan writhing in agony; his last words were: "Call my wife and the doctor." Cosima flew to his aid, but could not hold back the inevitable. When the doctor came and told her that Wagner had finished his struggle with the arch-critic, Death, she screamed and fainted. For twenty-six hours she refused to leave his body or to take any food, and could be dragged away only when she had fainted from exhaustion.

And now, the erstwhile exile, living on the pittance he could wheedle from his few disciples, died in the fame of the world. Three kings sent wreaths to his funeral, and the city of Venice twice asked for the privilege of giving him a final pageant. But Cosima strangely would have no ceremony at all, and no music. "She feared it would rend her heart in twain," says Mr. Finck, "so the procession moved along the canal in solemn silence, broken only by the tolling of the distant bell."

The railroad station was guarded as for the funeral of a monarch. The express-train was not stopped at the border of the three countries through which it passed. When the coffin was taken to the grave in Bayreuth, it was followed by the two large dogs that had shared, as so many of their fellows, the goodness of his large heart.

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As for the widow, she is still living as I write, and still unwearied in behalf of his glory. In her he had found that ideal of womankind which he had so much upheld: instant and dauntless obedience to the behest of the one great love. When he died he was even then at work upon a glorification of the sex, and the last sentence that ever flowed from his pen related to a legend of the Buddhists, granting women a right to the saintliness previously claimed by men alone.

Once he had written: "Women are the music of life," and of his "Bruennhilde" he had said: "Never has woman been so glorified as in this poem." For the reward of this trust in womankind, he had also had the privilege of saying, "In the hearts of women it has always gone well with my art."

And in his grave, where he lay, his head rested upon the long blonde tresses of Cosima, which he had so admired, and which, with final sacrifice, and as a last tribute, she had sacrificed to bury with him.

CHAPTER III.

TSCHAIKOVSKI, THE WOMAN-DREADER

Had his relations with music been as completely original as his relations with women, there would be less dispute as to the genius of this man whom the Germans call a Russian; the Russians, a German. He was the son of a well-to-do mining and military engineer, who believed in marriage and made three wives happy—in succession. The young Tschaikovski was late, like Wagner, in deciding on music, and was twenty-three before he took up instrumentation.

He was of a passionate nature, but his temper usually struck inward, and his friend Kashkin said that he "never began a quarrel or defended himself when attacked." That is not, I believe, a type to fascinate women for long, and Tschaikovski's moroseness, which bordered on morbidness and always hovered on the brink of insanity, made it perhaps fortunate for at least two women that his negotiations with them ended as they did. And so he drifted—not such a bachelor as Beethoven, yet quite as wifeless. Unlike Beethoven, who turned from one disappointing woman to another, Tschaikovski turned to men. Among his friends was Nikolai Rubinstein, the brother of the more famous pianist, Anton.

Now, Nikolai, like Anton, had tried marriage, and, after two years of quarrels with his wife's relatives and doubtless with her, had forsworn the other sex. Incidentally he had taught all day and gambled all night; so the husband was not the only gainer by the separation. Nikolai and Tschaikovski set up a menage together for a time. Tschaikovski, however, had not learned that womankind was not his kind; so he flirted a

little with the beautiful niece of one Tarnovski, for instance, and with an unknown at a masked ball. But he was chiefly music-mad and undermined his health by his overwork.



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Then in 1868, his father got after him to marry. As long before as 1859, when he was nineteen, he had suffered from an unrequited love. Now at the age of twenty-eight he cared nothing for petticoats. He had written his sister a year ago that he was tired of life, and marriage did not tempt him; he was, said he, “too lazy to woo, too lazy to support a family, too lazy to endure the responsibility of a wife and children.” But upon this ennui fell an electric spark—from the old storage-batteries, woman’s eyes.

There had come to the Moscow opera a Belgian singer, Desiree Artot, who was then thirty-three years old, a woman whose pictures make her nearly beautiful, and who is recorded as a queen of grace and a queen of dramatic and lyric song. She was witty and magnetic, and Peter Iljitsch, five years her junior, like another Chopin and another Mary’s lamb, followed her about.

One day he wrote: “She is a charmer; we are friends.” Then *tempo accelerate*; he copied music for her benefit performance; later he apologised for not writing his brother—he was all monopolised by the singer. So he went swirling into the current. He tried to keep away; they met by accident; she reproached him; he promised to call; then his inveterate timidity palsied him, till Anton Rubinstein had to drag him to her rooms by force.

Eventually they became engaged. Just as in Weber’s case, the composer demanded that the singer give up her career for his, and she and her mother objected. She did not want to be merely the wife of her husband; nor he, merely the husband of his wife. He appealed to his father, who wrote a nobly generous letter, pleading the woman’s right to her own career: a very gospel of artistic equality.

“You love her: she loves you: and that should settle it, if—Oh, this wretched if! The beloved Desiree must be altogether noble, since my son Peter has loved her. He has taste and talent, and would choose a wife of his own nature. The few years difference in age are of no moment. If your love is real and substantial, all else is nonsense. She would not want you to play the servant, and you could compose even if you travelled with her.

“I lived with your mother for twenty-one years and all that time loved with the passion of youth, and respected and adored her as a saint. If your desired one has the character of your mother, whom you so resemble, there should be no talk of future coolness and doubt. You know well that artists have no home; they belong to the whole world. Why worry whether you live at Moscow or St. Petersburg? She should not leave the stage, nor should you abandon your career. True, our future is known only to God, but why should you foresee that you will be robbed of your career? Be her servant, but an independent servant. Do you truly love her and for all time? I know your character, my dear son, but alas, I do not know you, dear sweetheart; I know your beautiful soul and good heart through him. It might be well for you both to test your love; not by jealousy



—God forbid!—but by time. Wait and ask each other, 'Do I really love him? Do I truly love her? Will he (or she) share with me the joys and sorrows of life unto the grave?'"



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Good father, good sage, gallant old man! But neither of the troubled lovers proved worthy of such golden philosophy. Desiree's travels took her away. Their parting must have been cold, for in January, 1869, Tschaikovski wrote his brother a letter, excitedly referring to the acceptance of his opera, and coldly hinting that his love affair would probably come to nothing. We remember how calmly Mozart once wrote of his operatic triumph and how passionately of his love.

The same month a telegram informed Tschaikovski that his fiancée had very suddenly become engaged to a singer in her own troupe, the Spanish baritone, Padilla y Ramos, who was two years younger even than Tschaikovski. The singers were married at Sevres, September 15, 1869.

Tschaikovski, on receiving the first news, seemed "more surprised than pained." He was still flirting desperately with grand opera. A year later he heard that Desiree was returning to sing at Moscow. He wrote pluckily:

"She is coming here and I cannot avoid meeting her. The woman has cost me many a bitter hour, and yet I feel myself drawn toward her with such inexplicable sympathy, that I wait her coming with feverish impatience."

At her performance he sat in the pit with his friend Kashkin, who says he was terribly excited, and kept his opera-glasses fastened on her always, though he must have been almost blinded by the tears that streamed down his cheeks. The two did not meet, however, for seven years, and then unexpectedly. He called at Nikolai Rubinstein's office in the Conservatory; he was told to wait in the anteroom. After a time, a lady came out. "Tschaikovski leaped to his feet and turned white. The woman gave a little cry of alarm, and confusedly fumbled for the door. Finding it at last, she fled without speaking."

In 1888 Tschaikovski went to Berlin. There Desiree was the idol of the court and public. They met now as friends. He and Edvard Grieg called at her house, and he wrote in his diary:

"This evening is counted among the most agreeable recollections of my sojourn in Berlin. The personality and the art of this singer are as irresistibly bewitching as ever."

Requiescat in pace! She had taught him the pangs of disprised love, but she had escaped misery, and she seems to have lived happily ever afterward with a husband who won eminence equal to hers as a singer. As for Tschaikovski, he had already revenged himself in kind—in worse kind—upon the sex, which had really attracted him only once.

In the year 1875 Tschaikovski's nerves had gone to pieces from overwork and his mode of life. For months he was not allowed to write down a note. And now, I think some one



must have prescribed marriage as a cure for his ills. There followed that strange affair which was a riddle as late as the time Miss Newmarch's biography appeared in 1900; a solution was then hoped from a sealed document left by Kashkin, and not to be opened till the year 1927. Tschaikovski himself had looked over his own diary, and had been so terrified at what he read that he destroyed a great portion of it before his death in 1893. In 1902, however, his brother Modeste began the publication of a very elaborate and complete biography, which partially clears the riddle. This is what we learn from that:



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In 1875 Tschaikovski was a wreck. In 1876 he suddenly wrote his brother: "I have resolved to marry—the resolve is beyond recall;" and again: "The result of my thought is the firm resolve to marry with whomsoever it may be." His photograph at this time has a worn, hunted look, and he has become addicted to cold baths, of which his new plan was the coldest of all.

In May, 1877, his friend Kashkin suspected him of being engaged. In July, Kashkin was amazed to find him married. Just once Kashkin saw the couple together. Then Tschaikovski grew very distant to his friends and eccentric in his manner; a little later he fled to Moscow, and in a few days came word that he was dangerously ill. Later there were threats of suicide, but it was all a mystery.

We know now that late in June, 1877, Tschaikovski announced definitely to his brother Anatol, that he was engaged to, and would soon marry, Antonina Ivanovna Miljukova. He said little of the girl, except that she was not very young and was very poor; she was free from scandal, however, and she loved him deeply. He hoped the marriage would be happy; and he asked the father's blessing. The father's letter showed an enthusiasm the son's lacked.

Before Anatol could reach Moscow, Tschaikovski was Benedick—July 6, 1877, he being then within three years of forty. The curious details of the courtship are told by the composer himself in a letter to Frau von Meek, a wealthy idolatress of his genius, with whom he had one of those affairs called Platonic, and of whom more later. To her he wrote:

"One day I received a letter from a girl I had known for some time. I learned from it that she loved me. The letter was couched in such warm, frank terms that I concluded to answer it—something I have always avoided doing in previous cases of this sort. Without rehearsing the details of this correspondence I must mention that the result of the letters was that I followed the wish of my future wife and called to see her. Why did I do this? Now it seems to me that some invisible power forced me to it. At our meeting I assured her that in return for her love I could give her nothing but sympathy and gratitude. But later I reproached myself for the carelessness of my action. If I did not love her and did not wish to incite her further love for me, why did I call on her and how could all this end? By the following letter I saw that I had gone too far; that if I now turned from her suddenly it would make her unhappy and possibly drive her to a tragic fate.

"So the weighty alternative posed itself: Either I got my liberty at the cost of a life, or I married. The latter was my only possible choice. So one evening I went to see her, declared openly that I could not love her, but that I would always be her grateful friend; I described minutely my character, the irritability, the unevenness of my temperament, my diffidence—finally my financial condition.



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Then I asked her if she wished to be my wife. Naturally her answer was 'yes.' The fearful agonies which I have experienced since that night are not to be expressed in words. This is only natural. To live for thirty-seven years in congenital antipathy to marriage, and then suddenly to be made a bridegroom through the sheer force of circumstances, without being in the least charmed by the bride—that is something horrible! In order to get back my senses and accustom myself to the thought of the future, I decided to go to the country for a month. This I did. I console myself with the thought that no one can escape his fate, and my meeting with that girl was fatality. My conscience is clear. If I marry without loving, it is because circumstances have forced this upon me. I cannot do otherwise. Carelessly I surrendered at her first confession of love. I should not have answered her at all."

Under such auspices, the marriage took place. It is hard to say whom we should pity the more, husband or wife; and which we should count the more insane. That which is technically called a honeymoon lasted a week in this case. In ten days the husband is writing his fellow-Platonist, Frau von Meck, that he is uncertain about his happiness, but positive that he cannot compose. He and his wife pay a little visit to her mother; then they return "home," only to part. The unwilling bridegroom must be alone to recuperate. He writes Frau von Meck:

"I leave in an hour. A few days more of this, and I swear I should have gone mad."

In ten days he is strong enough to think of his wife again; in his solitude he begins work on what he mentions to Frau von Meck as "our symphony."

He goes hunting in the woods, while the lonely bride hunts furniture for their home. By the middle of September, Tschaikovski is brave enough to return; he is pleased to find a home of his own, with all clean and neat. For a few days, even a robbery by servants, and the necessity his wife is under to go to the police-court, do not disturb him, or, at least, so he writes. But hardly more than a week can he stand his wife's society. He determines to kill himself, and stands up to his chin in the ice-cold river, afraid to drown himself, and yet hoping to catch a fatal pneumonia.

His old frenzy seized him; insanity beckoned to him again. Alleging that a telegram had called him to St. Petersburg, he fled from his home, September 24, 1877.

His brother met him at the St. Petersburg station, and hardly knew him. Taken to the nearest hotel, he went into hysterics, and was unconscious for forty-eight hours. The doctor said travel was necessary. The wife was provided for, and, leaving her forever, Tschaikovski fled to foreign countries barely in time to save his sanity. To the last he absolved the poor wretched woman of any slightest blame for his behaviour. His brother, in a biography, completely frank up to this point, now grows reticent, except to

release the wife of all blame. So you must satisfy your curiosity by imagining some abnormal state of mind, which you will regard cynically or pityingly, as your manner of mind impels.



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The last touch to this tragedy was the sordid tinge of poverty. The wretched man alone in Switzerland was without means. Now Frau von Meck, with great secrecy, offered him an annual income of 6,000 rubles—about \$4,500—purely in payment, she said, of the delight his music had given her. He accepted a gift so graciously and gracefully made. Tschaikovski was thenceforth an institution fully endowed.

Modeste says that without this relief from anxiety Tschaikovski would have died. He wrote to the benefactress: "Let every note from my pen henceforth be dedicated to you."

This was not the first time she had aided him. A strange, notable woman, she; a true phenomenon—or a phenomena, as one would be tempted to say who had even less Greek than I or Shakespeare, if such an one exist.

Nadeschda Filaretovna, being poor, had married a poor railway engineer; they lived carefully, and raised eleven children. A railroad investment brought them a sudden wealth, soaring into the millions. In 1876 she lost her husband, but all of the children and the riches remained to keep her busy. She lived in almost complete seclusion.

Tschaikovski's strenuous music penetrated her solitude and her heart. The stories of his small income touched her. She planned schemes to fill his purse, ordering arrangements of music and paying for them munificently. Yet she would not receive the composer personally, and when they met in public they did not speak or exchange a glance.

In Du Maurier's perfect romance, Peter Ibbetson and the Duchess of Towers lived their hearts out in a dream-world. So Frau von Meck and Peter Iljitsch lived theirs in a letter-world.

In 1877, before his marriage, learning of his financial troubles, she had offered to pay him well for a composition. He had said he could not conscientiously degrade his art for a price. So she paid his debts to the extent of three thousand roubles. This he could accept. These theories of art!

It was to her that he unburdened in his letters the wild scheme of his marriage. It was to her that he poured out his soul in endless letters not yet publishable entire. Their life apart seems to have been continued to the end. During his last years, after a period of travel, he lived almost a hermit, dying in 1893, only three years over fifty. Whatever posterity may do with his music, he has left a life-story of strange perplexities, in which apparent frenzies of effeminacy and hysteria, of passionate terror and helplessness at self-control fall in strange contrast with the temper of his music, which at its gentlest is masculinely gentle and at its fiercest is virile to the point of the barbaric.



I am haunted by the vision of that poor Antonina Ivanovna, helpless to keep silence in her love, and winning her bridegroom only to find, like Elsa, that her Lohengrin could not give her his Heart. And almost more harrowing is the vision of the composer, with womanish generosity, giving himself to the one that asked, and finding that love cannot follow the mere placing of a wedding-ring. So he stands in the icy river, and its gloom and cold are no more bitter than the despair in his own mad heart. It is Abelard and Heloise without the love of Abelard or the joy Heloise knew for a while at least.



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CHAPTER IV.

THE HEART OF A VIOLINIST

“From this did Paganini comb the fierce
Electric sparks, or to tenuity
Pull forth the inmost wailing of the wire?—
No catgut could swoon out so much of soul!”

—*Browning, “Red Cotton Night-Cap Country.”*

Many people have based their idea of the moral status of musicians and the moral effects of music upon a certain work by Tolstoi, who is no more eminent as a crusader in the fields of real life and real fiction, than he is incompetent as a critic of art. His novel, “The Kreutzer Sonata,” is musically a hopeless fallacy. And Tolstoi’s claim, that Beethoven must have written it under the inspiration of a too amorous mood, is pretty well answered by the fact that Beethoven, who was so liberal of his dedications to women, whenever they had inspired him, dedicated this work to two different violinists, both men.

It is said that he first inscribed it to George Augustus Polgreen Bridgetower, a mulatto violinist, who, being lucky enough to be born in Europe, was not ostracised from paleface society. This can be only too well proved by the fact that Beethoven—who spelled the man’s name “Brischdower”—after dedicating the sonata to him, found that the Africo-European had been his successful rival in one of those numberless flirtations of his, in which Beethoven always came out second. Indignant at his dusky rival’s success, Beethoven erased his name from the title-page and substituted that of Rudolphe Kreutzer. The curious thing about this great piece of music, known to fame as the “Kreutzer Sonata,” is that Beethoven had never seen Kreutzer, and that Kreutzer never played the sonata.

I have not discovered whether or no Kreutzer was married; he probably was, for he died insane. A German composer, Conradin Kreutzer, with whom he might be confused, had a daughter whom he trained as a singer. As for Bridgetower, he married and had a daughter.

But speaking of violinists, what would become of them if there never had been makers of violins, especially such luthiers as the Amati? Yet all I know of the Amati is that they formed a dynasty, and doubtless fell in love on occasion, though how, or when, I do not learn.

The great Antonio Stradivari, however, began his love-making like David Copperfield, by falling in love with a woman ten years his senior, when he was only seventeen. She was Francesca Capra; her husband had been assassinated three years before, leaving



her a child. The boy Stradivari and the widow were married July 4, 1667, and on December 23d, a daughter named Julia was born. Francesca bore Stradivari six children. Her second child was a son named after her, Francesco; but Francesco died in infancy, and the name, in spite of the omen, was given to the next son, who followed his father's profession, but never married. The next child was a daughter, who died a spinster; the next was a son, who became a priest, and the next a son, who died a bachelor. The failure of all their children to marry does not indicate a particularly happy home-life, but this is mere speculation. We only know that Stradivari's first wife died, after a marriage lasting thirty-four years.



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A year and a half later Stradivari married a girl fifteen years his junior; Antonia Zambelli was, indeed, born the very year Francesca's first husband had been assassinated. Antonia bore Stradivari five children: a daughter, who died at the age of twenty; a son, who died in infancy; a son, who died at twenty-four; a son, who became a priest and lasted seventy-seven years, and, finally, a son, Paolo, the only child of Stradivari that seems to have married, and certainly the only one who handed down the family name. How happy Antonia was with her husband, we do not know. "As rich as Stradivari," became a proverb. She died at the age of seventy-three, and Stradivari survived her less than one year; this may have been because he was overcome with grief; or because he was already nearly ninety years of age.

In the workshop of Stradivari was a fiddle-maker named Andreas Guarnieri, who had two sons, Pietro and Giuseppe, who had a son named Pietro, and a more famous cousin named Giuseppe, who was a dissipated genius, and blasphemously gave himself the nickname, "del Gesu." Of him there is a pretty fable, that once being sent to prison for debt, he won over the jailer's daughter, and she brought him stealthily wood and implements with which he made the so-called "prison fiddles," of whose curious shape Charles Reade said: "Such is the force of genius that I believe in our secret hearts we love these impudent fiddles best; they are so full of chic." As Giuseppe called himself "Gesu," so there was a member of the famous violin-making family of Guadagnini who was called "John the Baptist," and of whom I only know that he belonged to a large family.

TARTINI

But to turn from these unsatisfactory violin makers to violin players: I know nothing of the great Corelli's personal history; his pupil Geminiani is said to have led a life full of romance. Philidor spent his years chiefly in the intrigues of chess-playing. The great Tartini, whom the devil visited in the dream he immortalised in his famous Sonata del Diavolo, had a checkerboard career. As a young university student he fell in love with a niece of Cardinal Cornaro, and married her in secret. Like Romeo, his romance brought him separation and exile. His parents cast him off; the cardinal made his life unsafe. He fled from Padua, and took up the violin to save him from starvation. "And some have greatness thrust upon them."

One day, as he was playing at the monastery where he was in retirement, the wind blew aside a curtain just as a fellow townsman was passing. He took home the news, and by this time resentment had died out so much, that Tartini and his young wife were permitted to resume their romance. They went to Venice. Later his ambition for the violin caused them to separate, but finally they returned to Padua to live. Burney says that his wife was "of the Xantippe sort." His love story somewhat suggests that of Desmarests, who also had to flee for his life in consequence of a secret marriage, and who was twenty-two years appeasing the wrath of the aristocratic family.



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A contemporary violinist and composer was Benedetto Marcello, whose melodramatic affair has been described by Crowest and may be quoted here, with full permission to believe as much of it as you please.

“Marcello was the victim of a hopeless passion for a beautiful lady, Leonora Manfrotti, and on the occasion of her marriage to Paolo Seranzo, a Venetian of high rank, Marcello was unwise enough to send her a rose and a billet-doux containing words more complimentary to the lady’s beauty than to her taste in the choice of a husband. This epistle, coming to Seranzo’s notice, caused him so violent a fit of jealousy that he tormented his young wife by supervision and suspicion to such an extent that she actually sank under his ill-treatment and died. Her body was laid out in state in the church ‘Dei Frari,’ and here Marcello seeing it, learned the ill effects of his rash passion. He fell into a state of melancholy madness, and at last, having with the craft and ingenuity of a madman succeeded in stealing the body of his love, he conveyed it to a ruined crypt in one of the neighbouring islands, which, bearing the reputation of being haunted, was seldom visited by any one. Here, watched only by a faithful old nurse, he sat day and night watching the dead form of Leonora, singing and playing to it as though by the force of music he would recall her to life.

“Long ere this, Venice, and indeed Italy, was full of excitement at the composition of some unknown musician (no other than Marcello). Among other admirers of this music was Eliade, twin sister of Leonora, and resembling her so closely that even friends could scarcely distinguish her. Eliade had even been effected to insensibility by the strain of the unknown, and hearing one day a gondola pass, in which a voice was singing one of the songs which was an especial favourite, in such a way as she had never heard it sung before, she followed and traced the gondola to the deserted island. A visit to this island resulted in a meeting with the old nurse, and a few explanations. The ingenious woman contrived to take advantage of a short absence of Marcello, and, substituting the living sister for the dead one, awaited the mad musician. This time, however, his usual invocation was not in vain: as he called on Leonora to awake, a living image arose from the coffin, and Marcello, restored to happiness by the delusion, was quite content with the exchange when he found out that, although the lady was not Leonora, she was a devoted admirer of his musical skill, and professed an ‘affinity of soul’ for him, in which her sister had been wanting. Their happiness was short-lived, for Marcello died a few years after their marriage.”

This has a faint resemblance to the romance of “The Quick or the Dead,” with a certain vice-versation.

LOUIS SPOHR



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To come back to earth: The eminent violinist, Spohr, and his pupil, Francis Eck, made an extensive concert-tour together, in which they rivalled each other almost more in their rapid series of amorous adventures, than in their more legitimate concert work. While in St. Petersburg, Eck met the daughter of one of the members of the Imperial Orchestra, and began a flirtation, which she took so seriously that her father gave him the alternative of matrimony or Siberia. After some hesitation he chose matrimony. Had he foreseen the sequel, he would doubtless have greatly preferred Siberia, for his wife was a virago, and collaborated with his ill-health to guide him to the madhouse.

Spohr may have profited by Eck's experience, when some years later he met the beautiful and brilliant Dorette Scheidler; she was eighteen years old, and played that most becoming instrument, the harp, as well as the piano and violin. They appeared together in a court concert, and on the way to her home, in the carriage, he made the not particularly original proposition: "Shall we thus play together for life?" She, with hardly more originality, wept her consent upon his shoulder. They were married without delay, and began a series of very successful concert-tours. They seem to have been happy together for twenty-six years, and they reared a large family. Her death in 1832 broke down his health for several months. But two years later, he then being fifty, he married the skilful pianist, Marianne Pfeiffer, over twenty years his junior. They also made a brilliant concert-tour together.

PAGANINI, THE INFERNAL

Paganini, as everybody knows, sold his soul to the devil for fame. He made the best of the gamble, as he usually did when he gambled; for the poor, innocent Lucifer got only a fourth-rate soul, while Paganini secured a fame that will not be surpassed while fiddlers fiddle.

Gambling was not Paganini's only vice. In spite of the fact that he will always be almost as famous for his multiplex ugliness as for his skill, women found him fascinating, and kept him busy. When he was only seventeen, a beautiful dame of Bologna abducted him and held him prisoner in her country chateau, as once Liszt, his rival in technical fame, was kept a few months. Can there be any secret technical virtue in being kidnapped thus? The fair Bolognese kept Paganini captive for three years in this retreat, where he fed upon scenery, love, and music. For her sake he practised her favourite instrument, the guitar, and worked miracles with it as with the violin. At the age of twenty, Paganini broke the spell and resumed his gipsying, persuading the public, and not without reason, that he was aided by magic. He lived for many years with the singer, Antonia Bianchi, who bore him a son, Achille, whom he legitimised. Antonia was devotion itself, until she was gradually driven to a jealousy that was almost fiendish, and led to a separation. Paganini himself tells this story:



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“Antonia was constantly tormented by the most fearful jealousy. One day, she happened to be behind my chair when I was writing some lines in the album of a great pianist, and, when she read the few amiable words I had composed in honour of the artist, to whom the book belonged, she tore it from my hands, demolished it on the spot. So fearful was her rage, she would have assassinated me.”

When he died, he left his son a fortune of \$400,000. Surely this sum alone proves the justice of the popular belief that he had sold himself to the devil, and, knowing it, none can doubt the story Liszt quotes in one of his essays concerning the G string of Paganini's violin: “It was the intestine of his wife, whom he had killed with his own hands.” There is no record of the secret marriage, but there is record enough of the superhuman power of the melodies he drew from that string.

DE BERIOT, SONTAG, AND MALIBRAN

Among the chief contemporaries of Paganini was De Beriot. When he was not quite thirty, he found himself in Paris at the time of the deadly vocal feud between Sontag and Malibran. The rivalry of the two singers was ended by the influence of music. One night, singing together the duet from “Semiramide,” each was so overcome at the beauty of the other's voice and art, that they embraced and became friends.

De Beriot had an equally strange experience with the two women. He fell madly in love with Sontag, slight, blue-eyed and blonde as she was, and then only twenty-five. But De Beriot paid his court in vain, because at this time Sontag was engaged to the young diplomat, Count Rossi; as it would have hurt his influence to be engaged to the child of strolling players, the engagement was kept secret, until the count could persuade the King of Prussia to grant her a patent of nobility. When they were married, she gave up the stage, and travelled from court to court with her husband, singing only for charity. As her brother said: “Rossi made my sister happy, in the best sense of the word. To the day of their death they loved each other as on their wedding-day.”

But political troubles ruined the count's fortunes, and it seemed necessary for the countess to return to the stage. Now again the court wished to separate diplomacy from the drama played on the open stage. Rossi was told that he might retain his ambassadorship if he would formally separate from his wife, at least until she could again leave the stage. But Rossi believed that it was his turn to make a sacrifice, and could not bear a separation; so he resigned, and travelled with his wife. They came to America, and in Mexico the cholera ended her beautiful life at the age of forty-nine.

It was into this ideal romance that De Beriot had wandered unwittingly in 1830. It was fortunate that he could not prevail against the noble Count Rossi, even though his failure caused him pain. It almost cost him his health, and he suffered so obviously that his friends were alarmed. Among those endeavouring to console him was Madame



Malibran, whom people, who like exclusive superlatives, have been pleased to select as the greatest singer in the history of music. Like Sontag, she was the child of stage people, and, indeed, had made her first appearance at the age of five.

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In 1826 she, and that wonderful assembly, the Garcia family, had found themselves in New York, where an old French merchant, supposed to be rich, married her. It is certain that Malibran married the old merchant for his money—a thing so common that one cannot stop to express indignation. The horrible thing is that, as it turned out, the old man had also an eye to the weather. He had hoped to stave off bankruptcy by marrying the prosperous singer. He succeeded in getting neither her money nor her heart, for she left him within a year and returned to Paris.

Here, then, we find her again, with her rival Sontag out of the way, and Sontag's lover to console. She furnished him with contrast enough, for she differed from Sontag in these respects, that she was only twenty-two, she was a contralto, dark and Spanish, and was known to be married. Her consolation of De Beriot was complete. They lived together the rest of her life, touring in concerts occasionally, with enormous financial success, she creating an immortal name as an operatic singer, and he as a violinist. In 1831 they built a palatial home in the suburbs of Brussels, where they spent the time when they were not travelling. She bore him a son and a daughter, the latter dying in infancy.

Meanwhile, she was trying to divorce her husband, who was now living in Paris. The freedom was a long while coming, and it was 1836 before the Gordian knot was cut. On March 26th of the same year, she and De Beriot were married. The very next month, in London, she was thrown from a horse and more severely injured than she realised. As soon as she could, she resumed her concerts; brain-fever attacked her. She died at the age of twenty-eight.

Two hours after her death, De Beriot hastened away to make sure of the possession of the wealth this young woman had already heaped up. He did not wait for the funeral, and all Europe was scandalised. But it is claimed in his defence that he had been devoted to her, and during her illness had never left her side, and that his mercenary haste was due to his fear that a moment's delay might give Monsieur Malibran a chance to claim her property, and thus rob the child she had borne De Beriot of his inheritance. Those who know the peculiar attitude the French law takes toward the property of a wife, can understand the difficulty of the situation.

In any case, the child was saved from poverty or from the necessity of professionalism in later life, though he was a distinguished pianist. As for De Beriot, after the success of his mission he returned to the country home and remained in seclusion, not playing again in public for one year. Two years later he married Fraeulein Huber, the daughter of a Vienna magistrate and the adopted ward of a prince. De Beriot travelled little after this, and lived to be sixty-eight years old. He died in blindness that had been creeping on him for the last eighteen years of his life.



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CHAPTER V.

AN OMNIBUS CHAPTER

“Passions are like dogs: the big ones need more food than the little ones.”—HENRY T. FINCK, *Romantic Love and Personal Beauty*.”

There is both temptation and material enough for as many musical love stories, as there are novels in the handwriting of Sir Walter Scott, but this being a limited work, the covers already begin to bulge and creak, and it will be necessary to crowd into one swift mail-coach such other composers as we can hardly afford to leave behind.

In some cases, this summary treatment is all the easier because little or nothing is known of their love affairs, while in others it will be purely a case of regretful omission. It is the chief difficulty and the chief regret, whom and what to omit. There are composers whom to neglect argues oneself ignorant, yet who composed no love affair of immortal charm. There are composers of whom few ever heard, whose *magnum opus* was some romance that still makes the heart-strings tingle by the acoustic law of sympathetic vibration. For example, there are two old crusading troubadours.

CERTAIN TROUBADOURS

You never heard, perhaps, of Geoffrey Rudel, who “died for the charms of an imaginary mistress.” He fell in love with the Countess of Tripoli, never having seen her. He loved the very fame of her beauty. He set sail for the East, and endured the agonies of travel of those days. Whether anticipation was better than realisation, we cannot know to-day, having no portrait of the countess; but at least anticipation was more fatal, for it wrought him into such a fever, that when at last Tripoli was reached, he was carried ashore dying. The countess had heard of his pilgrimage, and had hastened to greet him, only to be permitted to clasp his hand and to hear him gasp, with his last breath: “Having seen thee, I die satisfied.”

There is a distressing ambiguity about the troubadour’s last words.

And so there was the other troubadour, the Chatelain Regnault de Coucy. His mistress was a married woman, whom he left to go to the Third Crusade. In the inveterate siege of Acre, he was mortally wounded before those odious Paynim walls; but, with his dying breath, he begged that his heart be taken from his breast and sent home to her who had owned it. The stupid messenger, arriving at home, betrayed to the husband what it was he had been charged to deliver, and the husband chose a most mediaeval revenge: he had the heart of the troubadour cooked and placed before his wife. When she had eaten, he told her what sweetmeat it was she had so relished. Thereafter, she starved



herself to death. The same story is told of the troubadour Guillem de Cabestanh; but it is good enough to repeat.

There was another old troubadour, Pierre Vidal, of whom an ancient biographer wrote that he “sang better than any man in the world, and was one of the most foolish men who ever lived, for he believed everything to be just as it pleased him and as he would have it be.” But the biographer contradicted his own beautiful portrait by telling how poor Pierre sang once too well to a married woman, whose husband took him, jailed him, and pierced his linnnet tongue.



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MARTIN LUTHER

If we cannot omit these troubadours, how can we overlook Martin Luther, whose musical attainments the skeptics are wont to minimise, as others deny his claim to that magnificent ejaculation: "Who loves not wine, women, and song remains a fool his whole life long." No one claims that Luther wrote his own compositions, but that he dictated them to trained musicians who wrote down, and then wrote up such melodies as he played upon the flute. But whatsoever may be the truth of his position as a composer, no one can deny him either a passion for music or a domestic romance. The runaway monk told the truth, when he said: "I married a runaway nun."

When he was forty-one, with his connivance, a number of nuns fled, or were abducted, from a convent. One of them, Catherina von Bora, found an asylum in Luther's own home. After looking about for a good husband for her, at the end of a year he married her himself. She was then twenty-six years old. The married life of the jovial reformer was happy; but when he died, he left her so poor that she was obliged to take in boarders, until she met her death by the same means that had brought her marriage,—a runaway.

BRITISHERS

The earlier English composers have not been without their heart interests. We have already pried into Purcell's romance. Old John Bull, at the age of forty-four, could give up his professorship to marry "Elizabeth Walker, of the Strand, maiden, being about twenty-four, daughter of — Walker, citizen of London, deceased, she attending upon the Right Honourable Lady Marchioness of Winchester." Four years later, he became the chief of the prince's music, with the splendid salary of £40 a year.

Sir William Sterndale loved a Mary Wood, and wrote an overture called "Marie des Bois," and after this atrocious pun, married the poor girl in 1844, and they lived happily ever after, or at least for thirty years after.

Those other oldsters, Blow, Byrd, and Playford, were married men; and Arne, the composer of "Rule Britannia," married, at the age of twenty-six, Cecilia Young, an eminent singer in Haendel's company, and the daughter of an organist. She continued to sing, and he to write music for her. At the age of sixty-eight he died, singing a hallelujah. Whether she echoed his sentiments we are not told, but she lived seventeen years longer.

Balfe married a German singer, Rosen, who afterward sang in some of his operas.

One of the few other British composers who attained distinction was John Field, who, like Balfe, was Dublin-born. He was the inventor of Chopin's Nocturne. The story is told



that he had a pupil from whom he could not collect his bills. Finally in sheer despair he proposed, and, when she accepted him, found his only revenge in telling everybody he met that he had only married her to escape the necessity of



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giving her further lessons, which she would never pay for. The story seems to be, however, neither true nor well-founded, for in spite of his awkwardness and the hard life he led at the hands of his teacher Clementi, who made him serve as a combined salesman of pianos and a concert virtuoso, he was said to have married a Russian lady of rank and wealth. She was really a Frenchwoman named Charpentier whom he had met in Moscow. She was a professional pianist, and bore him a son; then she left him, and changed her name, as did even the son. He was one of the many composers who should have been kept in a cage.

CLEMENTI, HUMMEL, STEIBELT

As for Clementi, he was chiefly notable for his miserly qualities, by which he rendered miserable three successive wives.

The pianist Hummel, whom I always place with Clementi in a sort of musical Dunciad, is credited with having won a courtship duel against Beethoven, in which Clementi as the winner—or was it the loser?—married the woman.

Another rival of Beethoven's in public esteem was Daniel Steibelt, forgotten as a virtuoso, but not to be forgotten for his splendid vices which range from kleptomania up, or down as you wish. He married a young and beautiful woman, who doubtless deserved her fate, since we are told that she was a wonderful performer on the tambourine. He succeeded to the post of Boieldieu, the eminent opera composer, who began life under poor matrimonial auspices, seeing that his mother was a milliner, from whom his father managed to escape by means of an easy divorce law issued by the French Revolutionists.

BOIELDIEU AND GRETRY

The father married again, but with what success, I do not know. But at any rate, his son followed his example and married Clotilde Mafleuray, a dancer, who made him as unhappy as possible. It was said that he was so wretched that he took to flight secretly; but it is known that his departure was mentioned in a theatrical journal in good season. None the less, though the flight may not have been surreptitious, it may well be credited to domestic misery. He buried himself in Russia for eight years, which may be placed in music's column of loss. Returning to Paris then, he found a clear field for the great success that followed. Soon after, in 1811, he formed an attachment with a woman who bore him a son in 1816. Her tenderness to the composer is highly praised; she must have given him devotion indeed, for he married her in 1827, eleven years after the birth of their son, who became also a worthy composer. At the age of fifty-four, consumption



and the bankruptcy of the Opera Comique, and the expulsion of the king who had pensioned him, broke down his health. He lived five years longer.

All I know of the domestic affairs of the great French opera-writer Gretry is that he left three daughters, one of whom, Lucille, had a one-act opera successfully produced when she was only thirteen years old, and who was precocious enough to make an unhappy marriage and end it in death by the time she was twenty-three.



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HEROLD AND BIZET

The Frenchman Herold, son of a good musician, made ballet-music artistic while he paced the dance of death with consumption, and died in his forty-second year, a month after his masterpiece, "Le Pre aux Clercs," had been produced and had wrung from him the wail: "I am going too soon; I was just beginning to understand the stage." He had married Adele Elise Rollet four years before, and she had borne him three children, the eldest of whom became a Senator; the next, a daughter, married well, and the third, a promising musician, died of his father's disease at twenty.

Bizet, like Herold, died soon after his masterpiece was done. Three months after "Carmen's" first equivocal success, Bizet was dead, not of a broken heart, as legend tells, but of heart-disease. Six years before he had married Genevieve, the daughter of his teacher, the composer Halevy. In his letters to Lacombe he frequently mentions her, saying in May, 1872: "J'attends un *baby* dans deux ou trois semaines." His wife, he said, was "marvellously well," and a happy result was expected—and achieved, for in 1874 he sends Lacombe the greetings "des Bizet, pere, mere, et enfant." He began an oratorio with the suggestive name of "Sainte Genevieve," which his death interrupted. His widow told Gounod that Bizet had been so devoted that there was not a moment of their six years' life she would not gladly live over again.

Cesar Franck married and left a son. At his funeral Chabrier said, "His family, his pupils, his immortal art: *viola* all his life!" But Auber, though too timid to marry or even to conduct his own works, was brave enough to earn the name of a "devotee of Venus."

THE PASSIONS OF BERLIOZ

Some of the most eminent musicians were strictly literary men, to whom music was an avocation.

Thus Robert Schumann was an editor, who whiled away his leisure writing music that almost no one approved or played for many years. Richard Wagner was well on in life before his compositions brought him as much money as his writing. Hector Berlioz was a prominent critic, whose excursions into music brought him unmitigated abuse and ridicule. The list might be multiplied.

The tempestuous Berlioz was in love at twelve. The girl was eighteen; her name was Estelle, and he called her "the hamadryad of St. Eynard." Years later she had grown vague in his memory, and he could only say, "I have forgot the colour of her hair; it was black I think. But whenever I remember her I see a vision of great brilliant eyes and of pink shoes." When he was fifty-seven years old, he found her again and his old love revived. But before that time there was much life to live. And he lived it at a *tempo presto con fuoco*.

He went to Paris, which was a cyclone of conflict for him. At the age of twenty-seven he won the Prix de Rome and went for three years to Italy, not without the amorous adventures suitable to that sky.



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Returning to Paris, he found the city in a spasm of enthusiasm over Shakespeare, especially over the Irish actress Smithson, whom he had worshipped from afar, before he had gone to Rome, thinking that he only worshipped Shakespeare through the prophetess. The remembrance of her had inspired him to write his "Lelio" in Italy. When he was again in Paris, he gave a concert, played the kettle-drums for his own symphony, and through a friend managed to secure the attendance of Miss Smithson. She recognised in him the stranger who had dogged her steps in the years before. The poet Heine was at the concert, and his description of the scene is as follows:

"It was thus I saw him for the first time, and thus he will always remain in my memory. It was at the Conservatoire de Musique when a big symphony of his was given, a bizarre nocturne, only here and there relieved by the gleam of a woman's dress, sentimentally white, fluttering to and fro—or by a flash of irony, sulphur yellow. My neighbour in my box pointed out to me the composer, who was sitting at the extremity of the hall in the corner of the orchestra playing the kettle-drums.

"Do you see that stout English woman in the proscenium? That is Miss Smithson; for nearly three years Berlioz has been madly in love with her, and it is this passion that we have to thank for the wild symphony we are listening to to-day.'

"Every time that her look met his, he struck his kettle-drum like a maniac."

Then he married the plump enchantress and knew a brief happiness. But he gradually woke to the fact that the dowry she brought him was mainly ill-luck, bad temper, and a monument of debts which she acquired by a new series of Shakespeare performances under her own management. By this time Paris had forgotten the barbarian Shakespeare and ridiculed the former queen of the stage. Then Madame Berlioz fell from a carriage and broke her leg. This took her permanently from the stage, where she was no longer a success. A few managerial ventures brought her a handsome bankruptcy. Berlioz gave benefit concerts and wrote fiendishly for the papers to pay her debts, and always provided for her. But there was no more happiness for the two, though there was a child. I have said that Miss Smithson brought Berlioz a dowry of bad luck and bad temper. The worldly goods with which Berlioz had her endowed, were no better. He had begun the marriage with "300 francs borrowed from a friend and a new quarrel with my parents." He also contributed a temper which is one of the most brilliant in history.

A few years after the birth of their child, his wife grew jealous, and accused him of loving elsewhere. He reasoned that he might as well have the game, if he must have the blame, and thereafter a travelling companion attended him when he surreptitiously eloped with his music, and his clothes. In his "Memoires," he paints a dismal picture of his wife's ill health, her jealous outbreaks, the final separation, and her eventual death. Then he married again. "I was compelled to do so," is his suggestive explanation. His new experiment was hardly more successful; but in eight years his wife was dead.



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He found some consolation for his manifold troubles in Liszt's Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein, and wrote her many letters which La Mara published under the title of "The Apotheosis of Friendship."

Then at Lyons he met again Her of the pink slippers, now Madame Fournier, and a widow. He was fifty-seven and she still six years his elder. He grew ferociously sentimental over her, and almost fainted when he shook her hand. He tried to reconstruct from the victim of three-and-sixty years the pink-slippered hamadryad who had haunted him all his life. He wrote of the meeting:

"I recognised the divine stateliness of her step; but oh, heavens, how changed she was! her complexion faded, her hair gray. And yet at the sight of her my heart did not feel one moment's indecision; my whole soul went out to its idol as though she were still in her dazzling loveliness. Balzac, nay, Shakespeare himself, the great painter of the passions, never dreamt of such a thing." [For that reason the novelty-mad Berlioz tried it. He wrote to her:] "I have loved you. I still love you. I shall always love you. I have but one aim left in the world, that of obtaining your affection."

But it was not alone her physical self that had grown old; her heart-beat, too, was *andante*. She consented to exchange letters; her pen could correspond with him, but not her passion. She wrote him: "You have a very young heart. I am quite old. Then, sir, I am six years your elder, and at my age I must know how to deny myself new friendships." So Berlioz went his way. His disapproval of Liszt and Wagner alienated the friendship of even the princess, and his stormy career ended at the age of sixty-six.

GOUNOD

Charles Gounod wrote as amorous music as ever troubled a human heart. Like Liszt he was a religious mystic, and Vernon Blackburn has said that the women who used to attend Gounod's concerts of sacred music "used to look upon them as a sort of religious orgy."

The details of Gounod's picturesque affairs have been denied us. And the translator of his "Memoires" regrets that he not only kept silence on these points, but seems to have destroyed all the documents. His "Memoires" are disappointing in every way. Even his references to his marriage are about as thrilling as a page from a blue book. His account of his love and his wedding are on this ground really worth quoting, as a curiosity of literature, it being observed how little he has to say of romance, how much of his relatives-in-law.

"*Ulysse* was produced the 18th of June, 1852. I had just married a few days before, a daughter of Zimmerman the celebrated professor of the piano at the Conservatory, and to whom is due the fine school from which have come Prudent, Marmontel, Gorla,



Lefebure-Wely, Ravina, Bizet, and many others. I became by this alliance the brother-in-law of the young painter Edouard Dubufe, who was already most ably carrying his father's name, the heritage and reputation which his own son Guillaume Dubufe, promises brilliantly to maintain."

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Even to his friend, Lefuel he wrote:

“I am going to be married the next month to *Mlle.* Anna Zimmerman. We are all perfectly satisfied with this union which seems to offer the most reliable assurances of lasting happiness. The family is excellent and I have the good luck to be loved by all its members.”

He mentions briefly in later pages that his father-in-law died a year after his marriage, and that two years later he lost his sister-in-law, to whom he gives several lines of a cordial praise, which he singularly denies his wife, though he states that a year after the marriage she bore him a girl child, who died at birth, and that four years later she bore him a son. On the afternoon of this day he was to conduct a very important concert; when he returned, he found himself a father. He is here generous enough to say: “On the morning of the day when my son was born, my brave wife had the force to conceal from me her sufferings.”

When the Franco-Prussian war broke out, Gounod took refuge in London, and there wrote his “Gallia.” The soprano role was taken by a certain Georgina Thomas, who had married Captain Weldon of the 18th Hussars. When she met Gounod, she was some thirty-three years old, having been born in 1837. She took up professional singing for the sake of charity, and Gounod and she became romantically attached. She helped him train his choir, established an orphanage at her residence for poor children with musical inclinations, and published songs by Gounod and others, including herself, the proceeds going to the aid of her orphanage. At this time she claimed to have acquired the ownership of certain works of his. Gounod thought, he said, that he had found in her “an apostle of his art and a fanatic for his works,” but he also found that her charity had an excellent business foundation, for, when their love affair came to an end, she claimed her property in his compositions.

He refused to acknowledge her right, and when she clung to his “Polyeucte,” he rewrote it from memory. She sued him for damages, and the English courts ordered him to pay to his former hostess \$50,000. But he evaded payment by staying in France. Mrs. Weldon was also a composer, and she had edited in 1875 Gounod’s autobiography and certain of his essays with a preface by herself. The lawsuit as usual exposed to public curiosity many things both would have preferred to keep secret, and was a pitiful finish generally to what promised to be a most congenial alliance. The love affair began like a novel and ended like a cash-book.

DIVERS ITALIANS



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As for the Italians, we know that Paesiello, who was a famous intriguer against his musical rivals, was a devoted husband whose wife was an invalid and who died soon after her death. Cherubini married Mademoiselle Cecile Turette, when he was thirty-five, and the marriage was not a success. He left a son and two daughters. Spontini, one of whose best operas was based on the life of that much mis-married enthusiast for divorce, John Milton, took to wife a member of the Erard family. In the outer world Spontini was famous for his despotism, his jealousy, his bad temper, and his excessive vanity. None of these qualities as a rule add much to home comfort, and yet, it is said that he lived happily with his wife. We may feel sure that some of the bad light thrown on his character is due purely to the jealousy of rivals, when we consider his domestic content, his ardent interest in the welfare of Mozart's widow and children, and the great efforts he made to secure subscriptions for the widow's biography of Mozart.

Furthermore, Spontini in his later years, when deafness saddened his lot, deserted the halls of fame and the palaces of royalty, where he had been prominent, and retired with his wife to the little Italian village where he had been born of the peasantry. And there he spent years founding schools and doing other works for the public good. He died there in the arms of his wife, at the age of seventy-five; having had no children, he willed his property to the poor of his native village.

It is strange how much wrong we do to the geniuses of the second rate, when they happen to be rivals of those whom we have voted geniuses of the first rate; for the Piccinnis and the Salieris and the Spontinis, who chance to fight earnestly against Glucks, Mozarts, and others, often show in their lives qualities of the utmost sweetness and sincerity, equalling that of their more successful rivals in the struggle for existence.

For instance, there is Salieri, who was accused of poisoning Mozart, a monstrous slander, which Salieri bitterly regretted and answered by befriending Mozart's son and securing him his first appointment. When Salieri was young and left an orphan, he was befriended by a man, who later died, leaving his children in some distress. Salieri took care of the family and educated the two daughters as opera singers. His generosity was shown in numberless ways, and if by mishap he did not especially approve of Mozart, he was on most cordial terms with Haydn and Beethoven. He gave lessons and money to poor musicians; he loved nature piously; was exuberant; was devoted to pastry and sugar-plums, but cared nothing for wine. All I know of his married life is that when he was fifty-five he lost his son, and two years later his wife, and he was never the same thereafter. It is a shame to slander him as men do.

THE GRAND ROSSINI



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One of the most remarkably successful men of his century was Rossini, son of a village inspector of slaughter-houses, and a baker's daughter. Once, while the husband was in jail on account of his political sympathies, the mother became a burlesque singer, and when the father was released, he joined the troupe as a horn-player. Rossini was left in the care of a pork-butcher, on whom he used to play practical jokes. He always took life easily, this Rossini. At the age of sixteen he was already a successful composer, and had begun that dazzling career which mingled superhuman laziness with inhuman zeal. Among his first acquaintances were the Mombelli family, of whom he said in a letter that the girls were "ferociously virtuous."

In 1815, he then being twenty-three, he first met the successful prima donna Isabella Colbran, who was then thirty years old and had been singing for fourteen years on the stage. She was still beautiful, though her voice had begun to show signs of wear. Rossini seems to have fallen in love with her art and herself, and he wrote ten roles for her. It was she who persuaded him away from comic to tragic opera. The political changes of the period soon changed her from public favourite to a public dislike, and Rossini, disgusted with his countrymen, married her and left Italy. It was said that he married her for her money, because she was his elder and was already on the wane in public favour, and yet owned a villa and \$25,000 a year income. However that may be, it was a brilliant match for the son of the slaughter-house inspector, and the wedding took place in the palace of a cardinal, the Archbishop of Bologna. As one poet wrote, in stilted Latin:

"A remarkable man weds a remarkable woman. Who can doubt that their progeny will be remarkable?"

It might have been, for all we know, had there been any progeny, but there was not. It is pleasant to note that Rossini's ancient parents were at the wedding. Then the couple went to Vienna, where Carpani wrote of Colbran's voice: "The Graces seemed to have watered with nectar each of her syllables. Her acting is notable and dignified, as becomes her important and majestic beauty."

In 1824 they were called to London. Here they were on terms of great intimacy with the king. In this one season the two made \$35,000. Rossini complained that the singer was paid at a far higher rate than the composer; besides, she sang excruciatingly off the key and had nothing left but her intellectual charms. From England Rossini went to equal glory to France. At the early age of forty-three, he took a solemn vow to write no more music, a vow he kept almost literally. In 1845, his wife, then being sixty years of age, died. Two years later he married Olympe Pelissier, who had been his mistress in Paris and had posed for Vernet's "Judith." Rossini was a great voluptuary, and was prouder of his art in cooking macaroni than of anything else he could do. But much should be forgiven him in return for his brilliant wit and the heroism with which he kept his vow, however regrettable the vow.



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BELLINI

Of Bellini, that great treasurer for the hand-organists, a story has been told as his first romance. According to this, when he was a conservatory student at Naples, he called upon a fellow student and took up a pair of opera glasses, proceeding to take that interest in the neighbours that one is prone to take with a telescope. On the balcony of the opposite house he saw a beautiful girl; the opera-glasses seemed to bring her very near, but not near enough to reach. So, after much elaborate management he became her teacher of singing, and managed to teach her at least to love him. But the family growing suspicious that Bellini was instructing her in certain elective studies outside the regular musical curriculum, his school was closed.

Then a little opera of his had some success, and he asked for her hand. His proposal was received with Neapolitan ice, and the lovers were separated, to their deep gloom. When he was twenty-four, another opera of his made a great local triumph, and he applied again, only to be told that "the daughter of Judge Fumaroli will never be allowed to marry a poor cymbal player." Later his success grew beyond the bounds of Italy, and now the composer of "La Sonnambula" and "Norma" was worthy of the daughter of even a judge; so the parents, it is said, reminded him that he could now have the honour of marrying into their family. But he was by this time calm enough to reply that he was wedded to his art.

This conclusion of the romance reminds one of Handel—a thing which Bellini very rarely does. He died when he was only thirty-three years of age, and at that age Handel had not written a single one of the oratorios by which he is remembered. In fact, he did not begin until he was fifty-five with the success which made him immortal. It was the irony of fate that Bellini should have died so young, while a brother of his who was a fourth-rate church composer lived for eighty-two years.

VERDI'S MISERERE

The virtues of senescence are seen in the case of Verdi, who did some of his greatest work at the age when most musicians are ready for the old ladies' home. His first love affair has been the subject of an opera, like Stradella's. In fact it has much of the garish misery of the Punchinello story. Verdi was very poor as a child, and was educated by a charitable institution. He was greatly befriended by his teacher, Barezzi, in whose house he lived, and like Robert Schumann, he showed his gratitude by falling in love with the daughter; Margarita was her name. But Barezzi interpreted the role of father-in-law in a manner unlike that of Wieck, and to the youth to whom he had given not only instruction, but funds for his study and board and lodging while in Milan, he gave also his daughter, when the time came in 1836, Verdi being then twenty-three years old. Two years later, the composer left his home town of Busseto with one wife, two children,



and three or four MSS. He settled in Milan. He was a long time getting his first opera produced, and it was not until 1839 that it made its little success, and he was engaged to write three more. He chose a comic libretto for the first, and then troubles began not to rain but to pour upon him. But let Verdi tell his own story:



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“I lived at that time in a small and modest apartment in the neighbourhood of the Porta Ticinese, and I had my little family with me, that is to say my young wife and our two little children. I had hardly begun my work when I fell seriously ill of a throat complaint, which compelled me to keep my bed for a long time. I was beginning to be convalescent, when I remembered that the rent, for which I wanted fifty ecus, would become due in a few days. At that time if such a sum was of importance to me, it was no very serious matter; but my painful illness had not allowed me to provide it in time, and the state of communications with Busseto (in those days the post only went twice a week) did not leave me the opportunity of writing to my excellent father-in-law Barezzi to enable him to send the necessary funds. I wished, whatever trouble it might give to me, to pay my lodging on the day fixed, and although much annoyed at being obliged to have recourse to a third person, I nevertheless decided to beg the engineer Pasetti to ask Merelli on my behalf for the fifty ecus which I wanted, either in the form of an advance under the conditions of my contract, or by way of loan for eight or ten days, that is to say the time necessary for writing to Busseto and receiving the said sum.

“It is useless to relate here how it came about that Merelli, without any fault on his part, did not advance me the fifty ecus in question. Nevertheless, I was much distressed at letting the rent day of the lodgings go by. My wife then, seeing my annoyance, took a few articles of jewelry which she possessed, and succeeded, I know not how, in getting together the sum necessary, and brought it to me. I was deeply touched at this proof of affection, and promised myself to return them all to her, which, happily, I was able to do with little difficulty, thanks to my agreement.

“But now began for me the greatest misfortunes. My ‘bambino’ fell ill at the beginning of April, the doctors were unable to discover the cause of his ailment, and the poor little thing, fading away, expired in the arms of his mother, who was beside herself with despair. That was not all. A few days after my little daughter fell ill in turn, and her complaint also terminated fatally. But this even was not all. Early in June my young companion herself was attacked by acute brain fever, and on the 19th of June, 1840, a third coffin was carried from my house.

“I was alone!—alone! In the space of about two months, three loved ones had disappeared for ever. I had no longer a family. And, in the midst of this terrible anguish, to avoid breaking the engagement I had contracted, I was compelled to write and finish a comic opera!

“‘Un Giorno di Regno’ did not succeed. A share of the want of success certainly belongs to the music, but part must also be attributed to the performance. My soul, rent by the misfortunes which had overwhelmed me, my spirit, soured by the failure of the opera, I persuaded myself that I should no longer find consolation in art, and formed the resolution to compose no more! I even wrote to the engineer Pasetti (who since the fiasco of ‘Un Giorno di Regno’ had shown no signs of life) to beg him to obtain from Merelli the cancelling of my contract.”

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This story is sad enough, Heaven knows, without the melodramatic frills that have been put upon it. You will read in certain sketches, and even Mr. Elbert Hubbard has enambered the fable in one of his "Little Journeys," that Verdi's wife was ill during the performance of the opera, that the first act was a great success, and he ran home to tell her. The second act was also successful, and he ran home again, not noting that his wife was dying of starvation. The third act, and he was hissed off the stage, and flew home, only to find his wife dead. The chief objection to the story is the fact that his wife died on the 19th of June, 1840, and the opera was not produced until the 5th of September that same year. But it is tragic enough that he should have been compelled to write a comic opera under the anguish that he felt at the loss of his two children and his wife, and that his reward should have been even then a dismal fiasco.

He was dissuaded from his vow to write no more, and it was in a driving snow-storm that his friend Merelli decoyed him to a field, in which so much fame was awaiting him.

This Merelli had first become interested in Verdi from overhearing the singer Signora Strepponi praising Verdi's first opera. This was before the failure of the comic opera and the annihilation of Verdi's family.

When Merelli had at length decoyed Verdi back to composition, his next work, "Nabucco," was a decided success, the principal part being taken by this same Strepponi. She had made her debut seven years before, and was a singer of dramatic fire and vocal splendour, we are told. Her enthusiasm for Verdi's work not only fastened the claim of operatic art upon him, but won his interest in her charms also, and Verdi and she were soon joined in an alliance, which after some years was legalised and churchd. She shortly after left the stage without waiting to "lag superfluous" there. Thenceforward she shared with Verdi that life of quiet retirement from the world in which he played the patriarch and the farmer, breeding horses and watching the harmonies of nature with almost more enthusiasm than the progress of his art.

So much for the Italian opera composers. How do the Germans compare?

VARIOUS GERMANS

The old composer Hasse, like Rossini, being himself the most popular composer of the day, married one of the most popular singers of her time, and scored a double triumph with her. This was the famous Faustina.

Mendelssohn's friend, Carl Zelter, was a busy lover, as his autobiography makes plain. One of his flirtations was with an artistic Jewess, with whom he quarrelled and from whom he parted, because they could not agree upon the art of suicide as outlined in Goethe's then new work, "The Sorrows of Werther."

Albert Lortzing was married before he was twenty, and lived busily as singer, composer, and instrumentalist, travelling here and there with a family that increased along with his debts. It was not till after his death, and then by a public subscription, that his family knew the end of worry.



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Similarly the public came to the aid of Robert Franz, before his death, thanks to Liszt and others. For Franz, who had married the song composer, Marie Hinrichs, lost his hearing and drifted to the brink of despair before a series of concerts rescued him from starvation.

Heinrich Marschner was married three times, his latter two wives being vocalists. Thalberg married a daughter of the great singer Lablache; she was the widow of the painter Boucher, whose exquisite confections every one knows. They had a daughter, who was a singer of great gifts.

Meyerbeer in 1825 lost his father, whom he loved to the depth of his large heart. At the father's death-bed he renewed an old love with his cousin, Minna Mosson, and they were betrothed. Niggli says she was "as sweet as she was fair." Two years later he married her. She bore him five children, of whom three, with the wife, survived him and inherited his great fortune.

Josef Strauss, son of a saloon-keeper, married Anna Streim, daughter of an innkeeper. After she had borne him five children, they were divorced on the ground of incompatibility. How many children did they want for compatibility's sake? Their son Johann married Jetty Treffy in 1863; she was a favourite public singer, and her ambition raised him out of a mere dance-hall existence to the waltz-making for the world. When she died he paid her the exquisite compliment of choosing another singer, before the year was over, for the next waltz. Her name was Angelica Dittrich.

Joachim Raff fell in love with an actress named Doris Genast, and followed her to Wiesbaden in 1856; he married her three years later, and she bore him a daughter.

The Russian Glinka was sent travelling in search of health. He liked Italian women much and many, but it was in Berlin that he made his declarations to a Jewish contralto, for whose voice he wrote six studies. But he married Maria Petrovna Ivanof, who was young, pretty, quarrelsome, and extravagant. She brought along also a dramatic mother-in-law, and he set out again for his health. His wife married again, and the scandal of the whole affair preyed on him so that he went to Paris and sought diversion recklessly along the boulevards.

His countryman, Anton Rubinstein, married Vera Tschekononof in 1865. She accompanied him on his first tour, but after that, not.

The Bohemian composer Smetana married his pupil, Katharine Kolar; he was another of those whose happiness deafness ruined. He was immortalised in a composition as harrowing as any of Poe's stories, or as Huneker's "The Lord's Prayer in B," the torment of one high note that rang in his head unceasingly, until it drove him mad.



FRANZ SCHUBERT

Among the beautiful figures, whom the critical historian tries to drive back into that limbo, where an imaginary Homer flirts with a fabulous Pocahontas, we are asked to place the alleged one love of Schubert's life. Few composers have been so overweighted with poverty or so gifted with loneliness as Franz Schubert. His joy was spasmodic and short, but his sorrow was persistent and deep.



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He, who sang so many love songs, could hardly be said to have been in any sense a lover. Once he wrote of himself as a man so wrecked in health, that he was one “to whom the happiness of proffered love and friendship is but anguish; whose enthusiasm for the beautiful threatens to vanish altogether.” Of his music he wrote, that the world seemed to like only that which was the product of his sufferings, and of his songs he exclaimed: “For many years I sang my *Lieder*. If I would fain sing of love, it turned to pain; or if I would sing of pain, it turned to love. Thus I was torn between love and sorrow.”

He had a few flirtations, and one or two strong friendships, but the thought of marriage seems to have entered his mind only to be rejected. In his diary he wrote:

“Happy is he who finds a true friend; happier still is he who finds in his wife a true friend. To the free man at this time, marriage is a frightful thought: he confounds it either with melancholy or low sensuality.” One of his first affairs of the heart was with Theresa Grob, who sang in his works, and for whom he wrote various songs and other compositions. But he also wrote for her brother, and besides, she married a baker. Anna Milder, who had been a lady’s maid, but became a famous singer and married a rich jeweller and quarrelled with Beethoven and with Spontini, was a sort of muse to Schubert, sang his songs in public, and gave him much advice.

Mary Pachler was a friend of Beethoven’s, and after his death seems to have turned her friendship to Schubert, with great happiness to him.

But the legendary romance of Schubert’s life occurred when he was twenty-one, and a music teacher to Carolina Esterhazy. He first fell in love with her maid, it is said, and based his “*Divertissement a l’Hongroise*” on Hungarian melodies he heard her singing at her work. There is no disguising the fact that Schubert, prince of musicians, was personally a hopeless little pleb. He wrote his friend Schober in 1818 of the Esterhazy visit: “The cook is a pleasant fellow; the housemaid is very pretty and often pays me a visit; the butler is my rival.” Mozart also ate with the servants in the Archbishop’s household, though it ground him deep.

But Schubert was too homely even for a housemaid, so in despair he turned to the young countess and loved her—they say, till death. Once, she jokingly demanded why he had never dedicated anything to her, and the legend says he cried: “Why should I, when everything I write is yours?”

The purveyors of this legend disagree as to the age of the young countess; some say she was seventeen, and some that she was eleven, while those who disbelieve the story altogether say that she was only seven years old. But now you have heard the story, and you may take it or leave it. There is some explanation for the belief that Schubert did not dare to love or declare his love, and some reason to believe that his reticence was wise and may have saved him worse pangs, in the fact that he was only



one inch more than five feet high, and yet fat and awkward; stoop-shouldered, wild-haired, small-nosed, big-spectacled, thick-lipped, and of a complexion which has been called pasty to the point of tallowness. Haydn, however, almost as unpromising, was a great slayer of women. But Schubert either did not care, or did not dare.



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He reminds one of Brahms, a genial giant, who was deeply devoted in a filial way to Clara Schumann after the death of Schumann, but who never married, and of whom I find no recorded romance.

CHAPTER VI.

ROBERT SCHUMANN AND CLARA WIECK

“I am not satisfied with any man who despises music. For music is a gift of God. It will drive away the devil and makes people cheerful. Occupied with it, man forgets all anger, unchastity, pride, and other vices. Next to theology, I give music the next place and highest praise.”—MARTIN LUTHER.

By a little violence to chronology, I am putting last of all the story of Schumann’s love-life, because it marks the highest point of musical amour.

If music have any effect at all upon character, especially upon the amorous development and activity of character, that effect ought to be discoverable—if discoverable it is—with double distinctness where two musicians have fallen in love with each other, and with each other’s music. There are many instances where both the lovers were musically inclined, but in practically every case, save in one, there has been a great disparity between their abilities.

The whimsical Fates, however, decided to make one trial of the experiment of bringing two musicians of the first class into a sphere of mutual influence and affection. The result was so beautiful, so nearly ideal, that—needless to say—it has not been repeated. But while the experiment has not been duplicated, the story well merits a repetition, especially in view of the fact that the woman’s side of the romance has only recently been given to the public in Litzmann’s biography, only half of which has been published in German and none in English.

There can surely be no dispute that Robert Schumann was one of the most original and individual of composers, and one of the broadest and deepest-minded musicians in the history of the art. Nor can there be any doubt that Clara Wieck was one of the richest dowered musicians who ever shed glory upon her sex. Henry T. Finck was, perhaps, right, when he called her “the most gifted woman that has ever chosen music as a profession.”

Robert Schumann showed his determined eccentricity before he was born, for surely no child ever selected more unconventional parents. Would you believe it? It was the mother who opposed the boy’s taking up music as a career! the father who wished him to follow his natural bent! and it was the father who died while Schumann was young, leaving him to struggle for years against his mother’s will!



Not that Frau Schumann was anything but a lovable and a most beloved mother. Robert's letters to her show a remarkable affection even for a son. Indeed, as Reissmann says in his biography:

“As in most cases, Robert's youthful years belonged almost wholly to his mother, and indeed her influence chiefly developed that pure fervour of feeling to which his whole life bore witness; this, however, soon estranged him from the busy world and was the prime factor in that profound melancholy which often overcame him almost to suicide.”



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Frau Schumann wished Robert to study law, and sent him to the University at Leipzig for that purpose and later to Heidelberg. He was not the least interested in his legal studies, but loved to play the piano, and write letters, and dream of literature, to idolise Jean Paul Richter and to indulge a most commendable passion for good cigars. He was not dilatory at love, and went through a varied apprenticeship before his heart seemed ready for the fierce test it was put to in his grand passion.

In 1827, he being then seventeen years old, we find him writing to a schoolfellow a letter of magnificent melancholy; the tone of its allusions to a certain young woman reminds one of Chopin's early love letters. How sophomoric and seventeen-year-oldish they sound!

"Oh, friend! were I but a smile, how would I flit about her eyes! ... were I but joy, how gently would I throb in all her pulses! yea, might I be but a tear, I would weep with her, and then, if she smiled again, how gladly would I die on her eyelash, and gladly, gladly, be no more."

"My past life lies before me like a vast, vast evening landscape, over which faintly quivers a rosy kiss from the setting sun."

He bewails two dissipated ideals. One, named "Liddy," "a narrow-minded soul, a simple maiden from innocent Eutopia; she cannot grasp an idea." And yet she was very beautiful, and if she were "petrified," every critic would pronounce her perfection. The boy sighs with that well-known senility of seventeen:

"I think I loved her, but I knew only the outward form in which the roseate tinted fancy of youth often embodies its inmost longings. So I have no longer a sweetheart, but am creating for myself other ideals, and have in this respect also broken with the world."

Again he looks back upon his absorbing passion for a glorious girl called "Nanni," but that blaze is now "only a quietly burning sacred flame of pure divine friendship and reverence."

A month after this serene resignation he goes to Dresden, and finds his heart full of longing for this very "Nanni." He roves the streets looking under every veil that flutters by him in the street, in the hope that he might see her features; he remembers again "all the hours which I dreamed away so joyfully, so blissfully in her arms and her love." He did not see her, but later, to his amazement, he stumbles upon the supposedly finished sweetheart "Liddy." She is bristling with "explanations upon explanations." She begs him to go up a steep mountain alone with her. He goes "from politeness, perhaps also for the sake of adventure." But they are both dumb and tremulous and they reach the peak just at sunset. Schumann describes that sunset more gaudily than ever chromo was painted. But at any rate it moved him to seize Liddy's hand and exclaim, somewhat mal-a-propos: "Liddy, such is our life."

He plucked a rose and was about to give it to her when a flash of lightning and a cloud of thunder woke him from his dreams; he tore the rose to pieces, and they returned home in silence.



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In 1828, at Augsburg, he cast his affectionate eyes upon Clara von Kurer, the daughter of a chemist; but found her already engaged. It was now that he entered the University at Leipzig to study law. The wife of Professor Carus charmed him by her singing and inspired various songs. At her house he met the noted piano teacher, Friedrich Wieck, and thus began an acquaintance of strange vicissitude and strange power for torment and delight.

Wieck, who was then forty-three, chiefly lived in the career of his wonder-child, a pianist, Clara Josephine Wieck. She had been born at Leipzig on September 13, 1819, and was only nine years old, and nine years younger than Schumann, when they met. She made a sensational debut in concert the same year. And, child as she was, she excited at once the keenest and most affectionate admiration in Schumann. He did not guess then how deeply she was doomed to affect him, but while she was growing up his heart seemed merely to loaf about till she was ready for it.

For a time he became Wieck's pupil, hoping secretly to be a pianist, not a lawyer. He dreamed already of storming America with his virtuosity.

In 1829, while travelling, he wrote his mother, "I found it frightfully hard to leave Leipzig at the last. A girl's soul, beautiful, happy, and pure, had enslaved mine." But this soul was not Clara's. A few months later, he made a tour through Italy, and wrote of meeting "a beautiful English girl, who seemed to have fallen in love, not so much with myself as my piano playing, for all English women love with the head—I mean they love Brutuses, or Lord Byrons, or Mozart and Raphaels." Surely one of the most remarkable statements ever made, and appropriately demolished by the very instances brought to substantiate it, for, to the best of my knowledge, Mozart, Brutus, and Raphael had affairs with other than English women; and so did, for the matter of that, Lord Byron.

A week later Schumann wrote from Venice, whither he had apparently followed the English beauty:

"Alas, my heart is heavy ... she gave me a spray of cypress when we parted.... She was an English girl, very proud, and kind, and loving, and hating ... hard but so soft when I was playing—accursed reminiscences!"

The wound was not mortal. A little later, and he was showing almost as much enthusiasm in his reference to his cigars. "Oh, those cigars!" We find him smoking one at five A.M., on July 30th, at Heidelberg. He had risen early to write, "the most important letter I have ever written," pleading ardently with his mother to let him be a musician. She decided to leave the decision concerning her son's future to Wieck, who, knowing Schumann's attainments and promise, voted for music. Schumann, wild with delight and ambition, fled from Heidelberg and the law. He went to Mainz on a steamer with many English men and women, and he writes his mother, "If ever I marry, it will be

an English girl.” He did not know what was awaiting him in the home of Wieck, whose house he entered as pupil and lodger, almost as a son.



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Here he worked like a fiend at his theory and practice. He suffered from occasional attacks of the most violent melancholy, obsessions of inky gloom, which kept returning upon him at long intervals. But when he threw off the spell, he was himself again, and could write to his mother of still new amours:

“I have filled my cup to the brim by falling in love the day before yesterday. The gods grant that my ideal may have a fortune of 50,000.”

In 1830 he flirted with the beautiful Anita Abegg; her name suggested to him a theme for his Opus I, published in 1831, and based upon the notes A-B-E-G-G. He apologised to his family for not dedicating his first work to them, but explained that it was not good enough. It is published with an inscription to “Pauline, Comtesse d’Abegg,” a disguise which puzzled his family, until he explained that he himself was the “father” of the “Countess” d’Abegg.

It was two years before he confessed another flirtation. In 1833, he went to Frankfort to hear Paganini, and there it was a case of “pretty girl at the willow-bush—staring match through opera-glasses—champagne.” The next year he was torn between two admirations. One, the daughter of the German-born American consul at Liepzig,—her name was Emily List; she was sixteen, and he described her “as a thoroughly English girl, with black sparkling eyes, black hair, and firm step; and full of intellect, and dignity, and life.”

The other was Ernestine von Fricken, daughter—by adoption, though this he did not know—of a rich Bohemian baron. Of her he wrote:

“She has a delightfully pure, child-like mind, is delicate and thoughtful, deeply attached to me and everything artistic, and uncommonly musical—in short just such a one as I might wish to have for a wife; and I will whisper it in your ear, my good mother, if the Future were to ask me whom I should choose, I would answer unhesitatingly, ‘This one,’ But that is all in the dim distance; and even now I renounce the prospect of a more intimate relationship, although, I dare say, I should find it easy enough.”

Ernestine, like Robert, was a pupil and boarder at the home of the Wiecks. She and Robert had acted as godparents to one of Wieck’s children, possibly Clara’s half-sister, Marie, also in later years a prominent pianist and teacher.

The affair with Ernestine grew more serious. In 1834 he wrote a letter of somewhat formal and timid devotion to her. A little later, with fine diplomacy, he also wrote a fatherly letter to her supposed father, praising some of the baron’s compositions with certain reservations, and adding, as a *coup de grace*, the statement that he himself was writing some variations on a theme of the baron’s own.



The same month Ernestine and Robert became engaged. He was deeply, joyously fond of her, and he poured out his soul to her friend, who was also a distinguished musician, Henrietta Voigt. To her he wrote of Ernestine:



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“Ernestine has written to me in great delight. She has sounded her father by means of her mother; and he gives her to me! Henrietta, he gives her to me! do you understand that? And yet I am so wretched; it seems as though I feared to accept this jewel, lest it should be in unworthy hands. If you ask me to put a name to my grief I cannot do it. I think it is grief itself; but alas, it may be love itself, and mere longing for Ernestine. I really cannot stand it any longer, so I have written to her to arrange a meeting one of these days. If you should ever feel thoroughly happy, then think of two souls who have placed all that is most sacred to them in your keeping, and whose future happiness is inseparably bound up with your own.”

This Madame Voigt, who died at the age of thirty-one, once said that on a beautiful summer evening, she and Schumann, after playing various music, had rowed out in a boat, and, shipping the oars, had sat side by side in complete silence—that deathlike silence which so often enveloped Schumann even in the circles of his friends at the taverns. When they returned after a mute hour, Schumann pressed her hand and exclaimed, “Today we have understood each other perfectly.”

It was under Ernestine’s inspiration, which Schumann called “a perfect godsend,” that he fashioned the various jewels that make up the music of his “Carneval,” using for his theme the name of Ernestine’s birthplace, “Asch,” which he could spell in music in two ways: A-ES-C-H, or AS-C-H, for ES is the German name for E flat, while AS is our A flat and H our B natural. He was also pleased to note that the letters S-C-H-A were in his own name.

While all this flirtation and loving and getting betrothed was going on in the home of Wieck, there was another member of the same household, another pupil of the same teacher, who was not deriving so much delight from the arrangement. Through it all, a great-eyed, great-hearted, greatly suffering little girl of fifteen was learning, for the first time, sorrow. This was Clara Wieck, who was already electrifying the most serious critics and captivating the most cultured audiences by the maturity of her art, already winning an encore with a Bach fugue,—an unheard-of miracle. As Wieck wrote in the diary, which he and his daughter kept together, “This marked a new era in piano music.” At the age of twelve, she played with absolute mastery the most difficult music ever written.

But her public triumph made her only half-glad, for she was watching at home the triumph of another girl over the youth she loved. Can’t you see her now in her lonely room, reeling off from under her fleet fingers the dazzling arpeggios, while the tears gather in her eyes and fall upon her hands?

Four years later she could write to Schumann:



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“I must tell you what a silly child I was then. When Ernestine came to us I said, ‘Just wait till you learn to know Schumann, he is my favorite of all my acquaintances,’ But she did not care to know you, since she said she knew a gentleman in Asch, whom she liked much better. That made me mad; but it was not long before she began to like you better and it soon went so far that every time you came I had to call her. I was glad to do this since I was pleased that she liked you. But you talked more and more with her and cut me short; that hurt me a good deal; but I consoled myself by saying it was only natural since you were with me all the time; and, besides, Ernestine was more grown-up than I. Still queer feelings filled my heart, so young it was, and so warmly it beat even then. When we went walking you talked to Ernestine and poked fun at me. Father shipped me off to Dresden on that account, where I again grew hopeful, and I said to myself, ‘How pretty it would be if he were only your husband,’”

From Dresden, Clara wrote to “Lieber Herr Schumann,” a quizzical letter advising him to drink “less Bavarian beer; not to turn night into day; to let your girl friends know that you think of them; to compose industriously, and to write more in your paper, since the readers wish it.”

Schumann, unconsciously to himself, had given Clara reason enough to persuade a child of her years that he loved her more than he did, or more than he thought he did. He thought he was interested only in the marvellous child-artist. He found in the musical newspaper which he edited an opportunity to promulgate his high opinion of her. It is needless to say that the praises he lavished in print, would be no more cordial than those he bestowed on her in the privacy of the home. For he and she seemed to be as son and daughter to old Wieck, who was also greatly interested in the critical ideals of Schumann, and joined him zealously in the organisation and conducting of the *Neue Zeitschrift fuer Musik*. This, Schumann made the most wonderfully catholic and prophetic critical organ that ever existed for art; and in the editing of it he approved himself to posterity as a musical critic never approached for discriminating the good from the bad; for daring to discover and to acclaim new genius without fear, or without waiting for death to close the lifelong catalogue or to serve as a guide for an estimate. For some time Wieck joined hands and pen with Schumann in this great cause, till gradually his fears for the career of the jealously guarded Clara caused a widening rift between the old man and the young.

Clara was to Schumann first a brilliant young sister, for whom he prophesied such a career as that of Schubert, Paganini, and Chopin, and for whom he cherished an affectionate concern. Yet as early as 1832, when she was only thirteen, and he twenty-two, he could write to his “Dear honoured Clara,” “I often think of you, not as a brother of his sister, or merely in friendship, but rather as a pilgrim thinking of a distant shrine.” He began to dedicate compositions to her, and he took her opinion seriously. His Opus 5, written in 1833, was based on a theme by Clara, and, according to Reissman, showed a feeling of “reverence for her genius rather than of love.”



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He began also to publish most enthusiastic criticisms of her concerts, calling her “the wonder-child,” and “the first German artist,” one who “already stands on the topmost peak of our time.” He even printed verses upon her genius. In a letter to Wieck, in 1833, he says, “It is easy to write to you, but I do not feel equal to write to Clara.” She was still, however, the child to him; the child whom he used to frighten with his gruesome ghost-stories, especially of his “Doppelgaenger,” a name, Clara afterwards took to herself. Child as she was, he watched her with something of fascination, and wrote his mother:

“Clara is as fond of me as ever, and is just as she used to be of old, wild and enthusiastic, skipping and running about like a child, and saying the most intensely thoughtful things. It is a pleasure to see how her gifts of mind and heart keep developing faster and faster, and, as it were, leaf by leaf. The other day, as we were walking back from Cannovitz (we go for a two or three hours’ tramp almost every day), I heard her say to herself: ‘Oh, how happy I am! how happy!’ Who would not love to hear that? On this same road there are a great many useless stones lying about in the middle of the footpath. Now, when I am talking, I often look more up than down, so she always walks behind me and gently pulls my coat at every stone to prevent my falling; meantime she stumbles over them herself.”

What an allegory of womanly devotion is here!

Gradually Schumann let himself write to Clara a whit more like a lover than a brother, with an occasional “Longingly yours.” He begged her to keep mental trysts with him, and, acknowledging a composition she had dedicated to him, he hinted:

“If you were present, I would press your hand even without your father’s leave. Then I might express a hope that the union of our names on the title-page might foreshadow the union of our ideas in the future. A poor fellow like myself cannot offer you more than that.... Today a year ago we drove to Schleusig, how sorry I am that I spoiled your pleasure on that occasion.”

Of this last, we can only imagine some too ardent compliment, or perhaps some subjection to one of his dense melancholies. In the very midst of his short infatuation with Ernestine von Fricken, he is still corresponding with Clara. Their tone is very cordial, and, knowing the sequel, it is hard not to read into them perhaps more than Schumann meant. The letters could hardly have seemed to him to be love letters, since he writes to Clara that he has been considering the publication of their correspondence in his “Zeitschrift,” though he was probably not serious at this, seeing that he also plans to fill a balloon with his unwritten thoughts and send it to her, “properly addressed with a favourable wind.”

“I long to catch butterflies to be my messengers to you. I thought of getting my letters posted in Paris, so as to arouse your curiosity and make you believe that I was there. In



short a great many quaint notions came to my head and have only just been dispersed by a postilion's horn; the fact is, dear Clara, that the postilion has much the same effect upon me as the most excellent champagne."



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Here is perhaps the secret of much of his correspondence; the pure delight of letting his “fingers chase the pen, and the pen chase the ink.” The aroma of the ink-bottle has run away with how many brains.

He wants to send her “perfect bales of letters,” he prefers to write her at the piano, especially in the chords of the ninth and the thirteenth. He paints her a pleasant portrait of herself in a letter which, he says, is written like a little sonata, “namely, a chattering part, a laughing part, and a talking part.”

Clara seemed from his first sight of her to exercise over him a curious mingling of profound admiration and of teasing amusement. He portrays her vividly to herself in such words as these:

“Your letter was yourself all over. You stood before me laughing and talking; rushing from fun to earnest as usual, diplomatically playing with your veil. In short, the letter was Clara herself, her double.”

All these expressions of tenderness and fascinations were ground enough for the child Clara to build Spanish hopes upon, but in the very same letter Schumann could refer to that torment of Clara’s soul, Ernestine, and speak of her as “your old companion in joy and sorrow, that bright star which we can never appreciate enough.”

A change, however, seems to have come over Ernestine. Clara found her taciturn and mistrustful, and when the Baron von Fricken came for her, Wieck himself wrote in the diary, “We have not missed her; for the last six weeks she has been a stranger in our house; she had lost completely her lovable and frank disposition.” He compares her to a plant, which only prospers under attention, but withers and dies when left to itself. He concludes, “The sun shone too sharply upon her, *i.e.*, Herr Schumann.”

But the sun seemed to withdraw from the flower it had scorched. During her absence, Ernestine wrote to Schumann many letters, chiefly remarkable for their poor style and their worse grammar. To a man of the exquisite sensibility of Schumann, and one who took literature so earnestly, this must have been a constant torture. It humiliated his own love, and greatly undermined the romance, which crumpled absolutely when he learned that she was not the baron’s own daughter, but only an adopted child, and of an illegitimate birth at that. He had not learned these facts from her; indeed she had practised elaborate deceptions upon him. But the breaking of the engagement—a step almost as serious as divorce in the Germany of that day—he seems to have conducted with his characteristic gentleness and tact; for Ernestine did not cease to be his friend and Clara’s. Later, when he was accused of having severed the ties with Ernestine, he wrote:

“You say something harsh, when you say that I broke the engagement with Ernestine. That is not true; it was ended in proper form with both sides agreeing. But concerning



this whole black page of my life, I might tell you a deep secret of a heavy psychic disturbance that had befallen me earlier. It would take a long time, however, and it includes the years from the summer of 1833 on. But you shall learn of it sometime, and you will have the key to all my actions and my peculiar manner.”

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That explanation, however, does not seem to be extant; all we can know is that Ernestine and he parted as friends, and that six years later he dedicated to her a volume of songs (Opus 13). Three years after the separation she married, to become Frau von Zedtwitz; but her husband did not live long, nor did she survive him many years.

Aside from the disillusionment that had taken the glamour from Ernestine, Schumann had been slowly coming more and more under the spell of Clara Wieck. The affair with Ernestine seemed to have been only a transient modulation, and his heart like a sonata returned to its home in the original key of “carissima Clara, Clara carissima.” Clara, who had found small satisfaction in her fame out-of-doors, since she was defeated in her love in her home, had the joy of seeing the gradual growth in Schumann’s heart of a tenderness that kept increasing almost to idolatry. Her increasing beauty was partly to blame for it, but chiefly it was the nobility yet exuberant joy of her soul, and her absolute sympathy with his ideals in music, criticism, literature, and life.

To both of them, art was always a religion; there was no philistinism or charlatanism in the soul or the career of either. At this time, when Schumann found it difficult to get any attention paid to his compositions, Clara, from childhood, was able both to conquer their difficulties and to express their deep meanings. While Schumann was earning his living and a wide reputation by publishing the praises of other composers, by burrowing in all the obscure meaning of new geniuses, and revealing their messages to the world, his own great works were lying ignored and uncomprehended and seemingly forgotten. At this time he found a young girl of brilliant fame, honoured by Chopin, Liszt, by Goethe, by the king, by the public; and yet devoted to the soul and the art of the fellow pupil of her father. Even before he broke his engagement with Ernestine, he found Clara’s charms irresistible.

Chopin came to Leipzig in 1834, and in Schumann’s diary after his name stands the entry: “Clara’s eyes and her love.” And later, “The first kiss in November.”

It was on the 25th. He had been calling on Clara, and when it came time to go home, she carried a lamp to light him down the steps. He could keep his secret no longer from himself or from her; he declared his love then and there. But she reminded him of Ernestine, and, with that trivial perjury to which lovers are always apt, he informed her that Ernestine was already engaged to some one else. There was no further resistance, but nearly a serious accident. The kiss that set their hearts afire came near working the same effect upon the house. As Clara wrote afterward:

“When you gave me that first kiss, then I felt myself near swooning. Before my eyes it grew black!... The lamp I brought to light you, I could hardly hold.”



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Schumann writes a few days later in his diary: "Mit Ernestine gebrochen." Schumann consoled himself later by saying that he did Ernestine no wrong, for it would have been a greater and more terrible misery had they married. "Earlier or later my old love and attachment for you would have awakened again, and then what misery!... Ernestine knew right well that she had first driven you out of my heart, that I loved you before I knew Ernestine."

Ernestine herself wrote him often.

"I always believed that you could love Clara alone, and still believe it."

In January, 1836, the engagement with Ernestine was formally broken. Shortly after this, Robert's mother died. He was compelled to leave Leipzig in dismal gloom. He said to Clara simply, "Bleib mir treu," and she nodded her head a little, very sadly. How she kept her word! Two nights later he wrote:

"While waiting for the coach at Zwickau,

"10 P.M., Feb. 13, 1836.

"Sleep has been weighing on my eyes. I have been waiting two hours for the express coach. The roads are so bad that perhaps we shall not get away till two o'clock. How you stand before me, my beloved Clara; ah, so near you seem to me that I could almost seize you. Once I could put everything daintily in words, telling how strongly I liked any one, but now I cannot any more. And if you do not know, I cannot tell you. But love me well; do you hear? ... I demand much since I give much. To-day I have been excited by various feelings; the opening of mother's will; hearing all about her death, etc. But your radiant image gleams through all the darkness and helps me to bear everything better... All I can tell you now is, that the future is much more assured. Still I cannot fold my hands in my lap. I must accomplish much to obtain that which you see when by chance you walk past the mirror. In the meantime you also remain an artist and not a Countess Rossi. You will help me; work with me; and endure joy and sorrow with me.

"At Leipzig my first care shall be to put my worldly affairs in order. I am quite clear about my heart. Perhaps your father will not refuse if I ask him for his blessing. Of course there is much to be thought of and arranged. But I put great trust in our guardian angel. Fate always intended us for one another. I have known that a long time, but my hopes were never strong enough to tell you and get your answer before.

"What I write to-day briefly and incompletely, I will later explain to you, for probably you cannot read me at all. But simply realise, that I love you quite unspeakably. The room is getting dark. Passengers near me are going to sleep. It is sleeting and snowing outside. But I will squeeze myself right into a corner, bury my face in the cushions, and think only of you. Farewell, my Clara.



“Your ROBERT.”



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Close upon this letter, which must have been answered with no hesitation and no inferiority of passion, came the summons to battle for the prize. Wieck, who had been a cordial father, declined with undue enthusiasm the role of father-in-law. He had viewed with hope Robert's entrance into the career of music, had advised the mother to let him make it his life; then the youth ruined his chances of earning large moneys as a concert performer by practising until his right hand was permanently injured and the third finger useless. As early as 1831 Wieck is quoted as objecting to Schumann's habits, and saying that, if he had no money at all, he might turn out well; for Schumann, while never rich, never knew poverty. But their friendship continued cordial and intimate, and Wieck went into partnership with him in the *Neue Zeitschrift fuer Musik*; he was a member of the famous Davids-buendler, that mystical brotherhood of art, wherein Clara is alluded to as "Chiara," perhaps also as "Zilia." None the less, or perhaps all the more, Wieck objected to seeing his famous and all-conquering child marry herself away to the dreamer and eccentric.

Wieck's own domestic affairs had not flowed too smoothly; he had married the daughter of Cantor Tromlitz, who was the mother of Clara and four other children, but the marriage, though begun in love, was unhappy, and after six years was ended in divorce. Clara remained with her father, while her mother married a music-teacher named Bargiel, and bore him a son, Waldemar, well known as a composer and a good friend and disciple of Robert Schumann. Wieck had married again, in 1828, Clementine Fechner, by whom he had a daughter, Marie, who also attained some prominence as pianist and teacher.

On February 13, 1836, we have seen Schumann write his love to Clara. The number of the day, the stormy night, and the remembrance of his mother's death were all appropriate omens. Wieck stormed about Clara's head with rebuke and accusations, and threatened like another Capulet, till he scared the seventeen-year-old girl into giving him Schumann's letters. Then he threatened to shoot Schumann if she did not promise never to speak to him again. She made the promise, and the manner in which she did not keep it adds the necessary human touch to this most beautiful of true love stories. Schumann was never underhanded by choice, or at all, except a little on occasion in this love affair; so now he called at once upon his old teacher, friend and colleague.

The interview must have been brief and stormy, for, on the 1st of March, 1836, Schumann writes to August Kahlert, a stranger but a fellow musical journalist, at Breslau, where Clara had gone:

"I am not going to give you anything musical to spell out today, and, without beating about the bush, will come to the point at once. I have a particular favour to ask you. It is this: Will you not devote a few moments of your life to acting as messenger between two parted souls? At any rate, do not betray them. Give me your word that you will not!



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“Clara Wieck loves, and is loved in return. You will soon find that out from her gentle, almost supernatural ways and doings. For the present don’t ask me the name of the other one. The happy ones, however, acted, met, talked, and exchanged their vows, without the father’s knowledge. He has found them out, wants to take violent measures, and forbids any sort of intercourse on pain of death. Well, it has all happened before, thousands of times. But the worst of it is that she has gone away. The latest news came from Dresden. But we know nothing for certain, though I suspect, indeed I am nearly convinced, that they are at Breslau. Wieck is sure to call upon you at once, and will invite you to come and hear Clara play. Now, this is my ardent request, that you should let me know all about Clara as quickly as possible,—I mean as to the state of mind, the life she leads, in fact any news you can obtain. All that I have told you is a sacred trust, and don’t mention this letter to either the old man or anybody else.

“If Wieck speaks of me, it will probably not be in very flattering terms. Don’t let that put you out. You will learn to know him. He is a man of honour, but a rattle-brain (*Er ist ein Ehrenmann, aber ein Rappelkopf*). I may further remark that it will be an easy thing for you to obtain Clara’s confidence and favour, as I (who am more than partial to the lovers), have often told her that I correspond with you. She will be happy to see you, and to give you a look. Give me your hand, unknown one; I believe your disposition to be so noble that it will not disappoint me. Write soon. A heart, a life depends upon it—my own—. For it is I, myself, for whom I have been pleading.”

Kahlert met Clara, but she was embarrassed and mistrustful of the stranger’s discretion. The next day Schumann wrote to his sister-in-law Theresa still with a little hope: “Clara is at Breslau. My stars are curiously placed. God grant it may all end happily.”

In April, Clara and her father returned to Leipzig, but the lovers, now reunited in the same town, were further removed than ever. Clara’s promise compelled her to treat Schumann as a stranger on the casual meetings that happened to the torment rather than the liking of both. The nagging uncertainty, the simulating of indifference, a stolen glance, or a hasty clasp of the hand, in which one or the other seemed not to express warmth enough, caused a certain impatience which Wieck and his wife were eager enough to turn into mistrust.

Schumann’s compositions no longer frequented Clara’s programmes. He was driven elsewhere for society, and when the taverns and the boisterous humour of his friends wearied him, he turned again to Frau Voigt. In March he had written to his sister:

“I am in a critical position; to extricate myself I must be calm and clear-sighted; it has come to this, either I can never speak to her again, or she must be mine.”



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By November such an estrangement had come between the lovers that he could write his sister-in-law:

“Clara loves me as dearly as ever, but I am resigned. I am often at the Voigts.”

Since February of the year 1836, they had not spoken or exchanged any letters. He never heard her beloved music, except at two concerts, or when at night he would stand outside of her house and listen in secret loneliness. In May he dedicated to her his Sonata in F Sharp Minor. It was, as he expressed it: “One long cry of my heart for you, in which a theme of yours appears in all possible forms.” His Opus 6, dated the same year, was his wonderfully emotional group, “The Davidsbuendlertaenze.” The opening number is based upon a theme by Clara Wieck, and in certain of the chords written in syncopation, I always feel that I hear him calling aloud, “Clara! Clara!”

His hope that this musical appeal might bring her to him was in vain, and he began to doubt her faith. He passed through one of those terrific crises of melancholia which at long intervals threatened his reason. On the eve of the New Year, he wrote to his sister-in-law:

“Oh, continue to love me—sometimes I am seized with mortal anguish, and then I have no one but you who really seem to hold me in your arms and to protect me. Farewell.”

To Clara, at a later time, he described this trial of his hope:

“I had given up and then the old anguish broke out anew—then I wrung my hands—then I often prayed at night to God: ‘Only let me live through this one torment without going mad.’ I thought once to find your engagement announced in the paper—that bowed my neck to the dust till I cried aloud. Then I wished to heal myself by forcing myself to love a woman who already had me half in her net.”

Love by act of Parliament, or by individual resolve, has never been accomplished; and Schumann’s efforts were foredoomed. In the meanwhile, the Wiecks tried the same treatment upon Clara, whose singing-teacher, Carl Banck, had been deceived by her friendship into thinking that he could persuade her to love him. His ambition suited eminently the family politics of Father Wieck. He made his first mistake by slandering Schumann, not knowing the A B C of a woman’s heart. For a lover slandered is twice recommended. As Clara wrote later: “I was astounded at his black heart. He wanted to betray you, and he only insulted me.”

One of the attempts to undermine Schumann was the effort to poison Clara’s mind against him; because when a piano Concerto of hers was played (Opus 7), Schumann did not review it in his paper, but left it to a friend of his named Becker. In the next number Schumann wrote an enthusiastic criticism upon a Concerto by Sterndale Bennett. The attempt failed, however, and Schumann’s letter is in existence in which he

had asked Becker to review the Concerto, because, in view of the publicity given to the estrangement with the Wiecks, praise from him would be in poor taste.



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Soon Clara at a public concert in Leipzig dared to put upon the programme the F Sharp Minor Sonata, in which Schumann had given voice to his heart's cry ("*Herzensschrei nach der Geliebten*"). Schumann's name did not appear on the programme, but it was credited to two of his pen-names, Eusebius and Florestan. Now, as Litzman notes, the answer to that outcry came back to him over the head of the audience. Clara knew he would be there, and that he would understand. Her fingers seemed to be giving expression not only to his own yearning, but to her answer and her like desire. It was a bold effort to declare her love before the world, and, as she wrote him later: "Do you not realise that I played it since I knew no other way to express my innermost feelings at all. Secretly, I did not dare express them, though I did it openly. Do you imagine that my heart did not tremble?"

The musical message renewed in Schumann's heart a hope and determination that had been dying slowly for two years. His friend Becker came to Leipzig, and took up the cause of the lovers with great enthusiasm. He carried letters to and fro with equal diplomacy and delight. He appeared in time to play a leading role in a drama Schumann was preparing. Wieck's enmity to Schumann had been somewhat mitigated after two years of meeting no opposition. Schumann was encouraged to hope that, if he wrote a letter to Clara on Clara's birthday, September 13, 1837, it might find the old bear in a congenial mood. He had written to Clara the very morning after the concert at daybreak, saying: "I write this in the very light of Aurora. Would it be that only one more daybreak should separate us." He tells her of his plan, asking only one word of approval. Clara, overcome with emotion when Becker brought her the first letter she had received in so long a time from Schumann, was so delighted at the inspiration that she wrote:

"Only a simple 'Ja' do you ask. Such a tiny little word ... so weighty though ... could a heart, as full of unspeakable love as mine not speak this tiny little word with the whole soul? I do it and my soul whispers it for ever. The grief of my heart, the many tears, could I but describe them ... oh, no! Your plan seems to me risky, but a loving heart fears no obstacles. Therefore once more I say yes! Could God turn my eighteenth birthday into a day of mourning? Oh, no! that were far too gruesome. Ah, I have long felt 'it must be,' and nothing in the world shall make me waver, and I will convince my father that a youthful heart can also be steadfast. Very hastily,

"Your CLARA."

And now, letters began to fly as thickly as swallows at evening. She found a better messenger than Becker, in her faithful maid, "Nanny," whom she recommended to complete confidence: "So Nanny can serve as a pen to me." At last the lovers met clandestinely by appointment, as Clara returned from a visit to Emily List. Both were so agitated that Clara almost fainted, and Schumann was formal and cold. She wrote later:



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“The moon shone so beautifully on your face when you lifted your hat and passed your hand across your forehead; I had the sweetest feeling that I ever had; I had found my love again.”

It was in this time of frenzied enthusiasm, of alternate hope and despondency, that Schumann wrote the seventh of his “*Davidsbuendlertaenze*.” The birthday came, and with it the letter went to Wieck:

“It is so simple what I have to say to you—and yet the right words fail me constantly. A trembling hand will not let the pen run quietly.... To-day is Clara’s birthday,—the day when the dearest being in the world, for you as for me, first saw the light of the world.”

He tells how through all the obstacles that had met their way he had deeply loved her and she him.

“Ask her eyes whether I have told the truth. Eighteen months long have you tested me. If you have found me worthy, true and manly, then seal this union of souls; it lacks nothing of the highest bliss, except the parental blessing. An awful moment it is until I learn your decision, awful as the pause between lightning and thunder in the tempest, where man does not know whether it will give destruction or benediction. Be again a friend to one of your oldest friends, and to the best of children be the best of fathers.”

With this letter he enclosed one to Wieck’s wife: “In your hands, dear lady, I lay our future happiness, and in your heart—no stepmotherly heart, I am sure.”

The letter made a sensation in the Wieck home. Clara’s father spoke no word to her about it. He and his wife locked themselves up in a room to answer it. Clara wept alone all the long birthday. Her father asked her why she was so unhappy, and when she told him the truth, he showed her Schumann’s letter, and said: “I did not want you to read it, but, since you are so unreasonable, read.” Clara was too proud, and would not. Schumann wrote to Becker concerning Wieck’s answer, saying:

“Wieck’s answer was so confused, and he declined and accepted so vaguely, that now I really don’t know what to do. Not at all. He was not able to make any valid objections; but as I said before, one could make nothing of his letter. I have not spoken to C. yet; her strength is my only hope.”

To Clara he wrote that an interview he had with her father was frightful. “This iciness, ill-will, such confusion, such contradictions. He has a new way to wound; he drives his knife to the hilt into my heart. What next then, my dear Clara, what next? Your father himself said to me the fearful words: ‘Nothing shall shake me.’ Fear everything from him, he will compel you by force if he cannot by trickery. *Fuerchten Sie Alles!*” Wieck consented to permit them to meet publicly and with a third person, but not alone, and to

correspond only when Clara was travelling. His reasons were his ambition for her, her youth. But Schumann knew better:



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“There is nothing in this, believe me; he will throw you to the first comer who has gold and title enough. His highest ambition then is concert giving and travelling. Further than that he lets your heart bleed, destroys my strength in the midst of my ambition to do beautiful things in the world. Besides he laughs at all your tears.... Ah! how my head swims. I could laugh at death’s own agony!”

His only hope was now her steadfastness. Her message promised him that, and warned him also to be true, or else “you will have broken a heart that loves but once.”

It is only now, strange to say, that they began to use the “Du,” that second person singular of intimacy which all languages keep except the English, which has banished its “thee and thou” to cold and formal usages.

It was typical of Clara’s attitude throughout this whole long struggle that she was always as true to her father’s wishes as could humanly be expected. She obeyed him always, until he became unreasonable and a tyrant beyond even the endurance of a German daughter. So now, though Robert begged her to write him secretly, she refused with tears. But, fortunately for them both, she did not long remain in the town where they were separated like prisoners in neighbouring cells. She could soon write him from other cities. As for Schumann, he determined to make the most of the new hope, and to establish himself socially and financially in a position which Wieck could not assail.

Gradually, with that same justice which made him able to criticise appreciatively the music of men who wrote in another style than his, he was able to feel an understanding for the position of even his tormentor Wieck.

“Now we have only to obtain the affection and confidence of your father, to whom I should so love to give that name, to whom I owe so many of the joys of my life, so much good advice, and some sorrow as well—and whom I should like to make so happy in his old days, that he might say: ‘What good children!’ If he understood me better he would have saved me many worries and would never have written me a letter which made me two years older. Well, it is all over and forgiven now; he is your father, and has brought you up to be everything that is noble; he would like to weigh your future happiness as in a pair of scales, and wishes to see you just as happy and well-protected as you have always been under his fatherly care. I cannot argue with him.”

Schumann works with new fury at his compositions, and plans ever larger and larger works; but through all his music there reigns the influence of Clara in a way unequalled, or at least never equally confessed by any other musician. He writes her that the *Dauidsbuendlertaenze* were written in happiness and are full of “bridal thoughts, suggested by the most delicious excitement that I have ever remembered.” Of his “*Ende vom Lied*” he says:

“When I was composing it, I must confess that I thought: ‘Well, the end of it all will be a jolly wedding,’ but towards the end, my sorrow about you came over me again, so that wedding and funeral bells are ringing together.”



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He plans how they shall write music together when they are married, and says:

“When you are standing by me as I sit at the piano, then we shall both cry like children—I know I shall be quite overcome. Then you must not watch me too closely when I am composing; that would drive me to desperation; and for my part, I promise you, too, only very seldom to listen at your door. Well, we shall lead a life of poetry and blossoms, and we shall play and compose together like angels, and bring gladness to mankind.”

He would have “a pretty cottage not far from town—you at my side—to work—to live with me blissful and calm” (*selig und still*). And when she wishes to tour: “We’ll pack our diamonds together and go live in Paris.”

He writes her, complaining that her father called him phlegmatic, and said that he had written nothing in the *Zeitschrift* for six weeks. He insists that he is leading a very serious life:

“I am a young man of twenty-eight with a very active mind, and an artist, to boot; yet for eight years I have not been out of Saxony, and have been sitting still, saving my money without a thought of spending it on amusement or horses, and quietly going my own way as usual. And do you mean to say that all my industry and simplicity, and all that I have done are quite lost upon your father?”

Sometimes the strain under which the two lovers lived caused a little rift within the lute. Poor Clara, forced to defend Robert against her father’s contempt, and her father against Robert’s indignation, preserved her double and contradictory dignity with remarkable skill, with a fidelity to both that makes her in the last degree both admirable and lovable. When she advised patience or postponement, the impatient Robert saw her father’s hand moving the pen, and complained; but in his next letter he was sure to return to his attitude of tenderness for her in her difficulties, and determination to yield everything to circumstances except the final possession of the woman of his heart.

Musicians seem to be naturally good writers of letters. In the first place, those whose fingers grow tired of playing notes or writing them, seem to find recreation in the reeling off of letters. They have acquired an instinctive sense of form, and an instinct for smoothing over its rough edges, and modulating from one mood into another. Besides, music is so thoroughly an expression of mood, and a good letter has so necessarily a unity of mood, that musicians, *ex officio*, tend to write correspondence that is literary without trying to be so, sincere without stupidity. But in the volumes and volumes of musicians’ letters, which it has been my fortune to read, I have never found any others which were so ardent and yet so earnest, so throbbing with longing and yet so full of honesty, so eloquent and so dramatic with the very highest forms of eloquence and romance as those of Robert Schumann and Clara Wieck.

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The woes of the two lovers were as different as possible, though equally balanced; and the honourableness of their undertaking was equally high.

Clara was torn betwixt filial piety toward a father who could be ursine to a miserable degree, and a lover who was not only eating his heart out in loneliness, but who needed her personality to complete his creative powers in music. While Schumann had no such problem to meet, he lacked Clara's elastic and buoyant nature, and it must never be forgotten that when he was sad, he was dismal to the point of absolute madness. He would sit for hours in the company of hilarious tavern-friends, and speak never a word.

Clara at length gave up her attempt to keep from writing to Schumann, in the face of her father's actions; for in spite of the promises he had given them, he could break out in such speeches as this: "If Clara marries Schumann, I will say it even on my death-bed, she is not worthy of being my daughter."

Now began that clandestine correspondence which seems to have implicated and inculcated half the musicians of Europe. There were almost numberless go-betweens who carried letters for the lovers, or received them in different towns. There were zealous messengers ranging from the Russian Prince Reuss-Koestritz, through all grades of society, down to the devoted housemaid "Nanny." Chopin, and Mendelssohn, and many another musician, were touched by the fidelity of the lovers, and Liszt in one of his letters describes how he had broken off acquaintance with his old friend Wieck, because of indignation at his treatment of Schumann and Clara.

Schumann's works were now beginning to attract a little attention, though not much, and even Clara was impelled to beg him to write her something more in the concert style that the public would understand. But while the musician Schumann was not arriving at understanding, the critic Schumann was already famous for the swiftness of his discoveries and the bravery of his proclamations of genius. As for Clara, though already in her eighteenth year, she was one of the most famous pianists in the world, and favourably compared, in many respects, especially in point of poetical interpretation, with Liszt, Thalberg, Chopin, and Europe's brilliantest virtuosos. But Schumann had delighted her heart by writing: "I love you not because you are a great artist; no, I love you because you are so good." That praise, she wrote him, had rejoiced her infinitely, and that praise any one who knows her life can echo with Schumann.

Such fame the love-affair of the Schumanns had gained that to the musical world it was like following a serial romance in instalments. Doctor Weber in Trieste offered to give Schumann ten thousand thalers—an offer which could not of course be accepted. At Easter, 1838, Schumann received one thousand thalers (about \$760) from his brothers Eduard and Carl.

But the lovers had agreed to wait two years—until Easter, 1840, before they should marry—and the two years were long and wearisome in the prospect and in the endurance. As Clara wrote:

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“My sole wish is—I wish it every morning—that I could sleep two years; could oversleep all the thousand tears that shall yet flow. Foolish wish! I am sometimes such a silly child. Do you remember that two years ago on Christmas Eve you gave me white pearls and mother said then: ‘Pearls mean tears’? She was right, they followed only too soon.”

Schumann busied himself in so many ways that again for a little while he somewhat melted Wieck’s wrath, and Clara hoped that some day he could again be received at home as a friend. She was made the court pianist at this time, and it was a quaint whim of fate that, in connection with the award, Schumann was asked to give her father a “character.” It need hardly be said that he gave him extra measure of praise.

Clara’s new dignity stirred Schumann to hunt some honour for himself. Robert decided, that while he was content “to die an artist, it would please a certain girl to see ‘Dr.’ before his name.” He was willing to become either a doctor of philosophy or of music. He began at once to set both of these schemes to work.

Now old Wieck returned to his congenial state of wrath. He declared that Clara was far too extravagant ever to live on Schumann’s earnings, though she insisted that Schumann was assured of one thousand thalers a year, and she could earn an equal sum with one concert a winter in Dresden, where prices were so high. But just then the prosperity of Schumann’s paper began to slough off. It occurred to the lovers that they would prefer to live in Vienna, and that the *Zeitschrift* could prosper there. There were endless difficulties, a censorship to pacify, and many commercial schemes to arrange, but nothing must be left untried. The scheme was put under way. Meanwhile, as usual, the Wiecks were trying on their part; to separate the lovers. Schumann was accused of infidelity to her, and he admitted that a Mrs. Laidlaw seemed to be in love with him, but not he with her. They attacked his character, and accused him of being too fond of Bavarian beer. On this charge, he answered with dignity:

“Pooh!—I should not be worth being spoken to, if a man trusted by so good and noble a girl as you, should not be a respectable man and not control himself in everything. Let this simple word put you at ease for ever.”

Failing here, Wieck presented another candidate for Clara’s heart, a Doctor D——, who met the same fate as Banck. There were further hopes that she would find some one in Paris or London, whither she was bound; but she wrote Schumann that if the whole aristocracy of both places fell at her feet, she would let them lie there and turn to the simple artist, the dear, noble man, and lay her heart at his feet. (“Alle Lords von London und alle Cavaliere von Paris, koennten mir zu Fuessen liegen,” etc.) Clara was also tormented by the persistent suit of Louis Rackerman, of Bremen, who could not see how vain was his quest.



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One rainy night, Schumann stood a half-hour before her house and heard her play. And he wrote her: "Did you not feel that I was there?" He could even see his ring glitter on her finger. Another day Clara saw him taking his coffee with his sister-in-law, and she repeated his query: "Did you not feel that I was there?"

Old Wieck stooped to everything, and even told Clara that he had written to Ernestine to demand a statement that she fully released Schumann from his former engagement to her—it being remembered that among Germans a betrothal always used to be almost as difficult a bond to sever as a marriage tie. This drove Clara to resolve a great resolve, and she wrote Schumann:

"Twice has my father in his letters underlined the words: 'Never will I give my consent.' What I had feared has come true. I must act without my father's consent and without my father's blessing."

An elopement was seriously considered. It was planned that Clara was to go to Schumann's sister-in-law. At this time also another friend offered Schumann one thousand thalers (about \$760) and he said: "Ask of me what you will, I will do everything for you and Clara." But this crisis did not arrive, though the two were kept under espionage. Even now in November, 1838, a new and merely nagging attempt was made to postpone the marriage till the latter part of 1840, but Clara wrote that she would be with Robert on Easter, 1840, without fail. Then he went to Vienna to establish his journal there, and from there he sent a bundle of thirty short poems written in her praise. While he was in Vienna, her father shipped her off to Paris, so sure now of cleaving their hearts asunder that he sent her alone without even an elderly woman for a companion. He little knew that he was putting her to the test she had never yet undergone: that of living far from him and depending solely upon herself. It is a curious coincidence that one of her best friends in Paris was the same American girl, Emily List, who had once been Ernestine's rival for Robert's heart.

The French people did not please Clara and she feared to go on to London alone. She dreamed only of hurrying back to Leipzig and Schumann and a home with him; in her letters the famous pianist seriously discusses learning to cook.

Unhappy as she was in Paris, Robert was unhappier in Vienna, for the *Zeitschrift* made no success, and he was driven to the bitter humiliation of taking it back to Leipzig in 1839. His brother died at this time also, and their sympathies had been so close that the shock was very heavy. Everything seemed to be going wrong. He could not even find consolation in his music. At this gloomy moment Clara hoped to win over her father by a last concession. She wrote from Paris that it would be well to postpone the marriage a few months longer than they had first intended, and Emily List wrote a long letter advocating the same and explaining how much it grieved Clara



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to ask this. She advised Robert to take up the book business of his brother, who had succeeded his father's prosperous trade. Even while Clara's tear-stained appeal was going to him, another letter of his crossed hers. It was full of joy and told her how well they would get along on their united resources. He gave them in detail and it is interesting to pry into the personal affairs of so great a musician. He wrote: "Am I not an expert accountant? and can't we once in a while drink champagne?"

Clara's letter provoked in Schumann a wild outcry of disappointment, that after all these years he should accept as his dole only further procrastination. He wrote her that his family were beginning to say that if she loved him she would ask no further delay. Clara's letter seems to have been only her last tribute to her father, for, at Schumann's first protest, she hastened to write that she could endure anything, except his doubt; that she would be with him on Easter, 1840, come what would. This cheered him mightily, and he wrote that, while he was still unable to compose, owing to his loneliness, a beautiful future was awaiting him. He described his dreams of the life of art and love they should lead, composing and making all manner of beautiful music.

"Once I call you mine, you shall hear plenty of new things, for I think you will encourage me; and hearing more of my compositions will be enough to cheer me up. And we will publish some things under our two names, so that posterity may regard us as one heart and one soul, and may not know which is yours and which is mine. How happy I am! From your Romanze I again see plainly that we are to be man and wife. Every one of your thoughts comes out of my soul, just as I owe all my music to you."

Now he sent for her decision a formidable document, an appeal to the court, to compel the father's consent. Clara wrote her father an ultimatum on the subject, and received a long letter in reply, in which he consented to the marriage under such terms that they were better off before. For his consent was to be made on the following six stipulations: 1. That Robert and Clara, so long as Wieck lived, should not make their residence in Saxony; but that Schumann must none the less make as much money in the new home as his *Zeitschrift* brought him in Leipzig. 2. That Wieck should control Clara's property for five years, paying her, during that time, five per cent. 3. That Schumann should make out a sworn statement of his income which he had given Wieck in Leipzig in September, 1837, and turn it over to Wieck's lawyer. 4. That Schumann should not communicate with him verbally or by letter, until he himself expressed the wish. 5. That Clara should renounce all claims as to her inheritance. 6. That the marriage should take place September 29, 1839.

This insolent and mercenary protocol drove Clara to bay. She wrote her father from the depths of grief, and declared to him finally that she would wed Schumann on the 24th of June. Schumann wrote a short note to the old man, telling him that if he did not hear in eight days, silence would be taken as the last refusal. The answer was simply a letter

from Frau Wieck, acknowledging Schumann's "impertinent letter," and saying that Wieck would not hold any communication with him.



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Then the lawsuit began. On the 16th of July he made his appeal and wrote to Clara that she must be personally present in six or seven weeks. She had written him a letter of great cheer and sent him from Paris a portrait she had had painted and a cigar case she had made with her own hands.

On her way home Clara stopped at Berlin, where her own mother lived as the wife of Bargiel.

Clara's life under her father's guardianship had gradually drifted almost out of the ken of her own mother. Her stepmother had done everything possible to make her life miserable, spying upon her and making it impossible to be alone long enough to write Schumann a letter. Now, in her loneliness, Clara turned to the woman whose flesh she was; and she found there an immediate and passionate support.

From Wieck and the Wieck family, Clara had received while in Paris not one penny of money and not a single trinket. They always wrote her: "You have your own money." This grieved her deeply, and her father's sending her to Paris without a chaperon of any kind and writing her never a word of tenderness but only and always reproaches, had orphaned her indeed. Her heart was doubly ripe for a little mothering, and Frau Bargiel seized the moment. She wrote letters of greatest warmth and sweetness to her child in Paris, and to Schumann she wrote an invitation to come to Berlin. He accepted and spent several pleasant days. Frau Bargiel wrote Clara how she had delighted in the talent and person of Schumann, and Robert wrote her how fine a mother she had. On the 14th of August, Clara and her friend Henrietta Reissman left Paris.

Meanwhile Schumann had sunk into another awesome abyss of melancholia. The humiliation of having to go to law for his wife, and airing the family scandal in public, crushed him to the dust. He wrote his friend Becker: "I hardly think I shall live to hear the decision of the court." As soon as Clara left Paris he hastened toward her and met her at Altenburg. It was a blissful reunion after a year of separation, and they went together to Berlin, where they knew the bliss of sitting once more at the piano together, playing Bach fugues. She found his genius still what it was,—"*er fantasiert himmlisch*"—but his health was in such serious condition that she was greatly frightened.

Now her father proceeded to destroy every claim he may ever have had on her sympathy by his ferocity toward a daughter who had been so patient and so gentle toward him. He not only neglected her in Paris, except to write her merciless letters, but when she returned and he saw himself confronted with the lawsuit for her liberty, he offered a revision of his terms, which was in itself worse than the original. Clara describes the new offer:

"I must surrender the 2,000 thalers (about \$1,500) which I have saved from seven years' concerts, and give it to my brothers.

“He would give back my effects and instruments, but I must later pay 1,000 thalers and give this also to my brothers.



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“Robert must transfer to me 8,000 thalers of his capital, the interest of which shall come to me, also the capital, in case of a separation—What a hideous thought! Robert has 12,000 thalers, and shall he give his wife two-thirds?”

Robert had already given her four hundred thalers in bonds. The new terms being rejected, Wieck put everything possible in the way of a speedy termination of the lawsuit. He made it impossible for Clara to get back to Paris, as she wished, to earn more money before the marriage. He demanded that she should postpone her wedding and take a concert tour for three months with him for a consideration of six thousand thalers. Clara declined the arrangement.

One day she sent her maid to the house of her father, and asked him for her winter cloak. He gave this answer to the maid: “Who then is this Mam’selle Wieck? I know two Fraeulein Wieck only; they are my two little daughters here. I know no other!” As Litzmann says: “With so shrill a dissonance ended Clara’s stay at Leipzig.” He compares this exile of the daughter by the father to the story of King Lear and Cordelia. But it was the blind and tyrannical old Lear of the first act, driving from his home his most loving child. On October 3d, Clara went back to Berlin to her mother. Her father moved heaven and earth to make Clara suspect Schumann’s fidelity, and he gave the love affair as unpleasant a notoriety as possible. For an instance of senile spite: Clara had always been given a Behrens piano for her concerts in Berlin. Wieck wrote to a friend to go to Behrens, and warn him that he must not lend Clara his pianos, because she was used to the hard English action, and would ruin any others! He wrote that he hoped the honour of the King of Prussia would prevent his disobedient daughter from appearing in public concerts in Berlin. It need hardly be said that Clara was neither forbidden her piano nor her concerts; indeed, the king appeared in person at her concert and applauded the runaway vigorously. By a curious chance at the end of her *piece de resistance*, a string broke on the piano; but as a correspondent of Schumann’s paper wrote, it came “just at the end, like a cry of victory.” After this, Wieck wrote to Behrens protesting against his lending a hand to “a demoralised girl without shame.” Clara learned that such of her letters as had gone through the Wieck home were opened, and she received an anonymous letter which she knew must have been dictated by her father. Her suspicions were later proved. The worst of the affair was the diabolical malice that led Wieck to have the letter put into her hand just before her chief Berlin concert.



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Next, he announced that his reason for not granting his consent was that Schumann was a drunkard. Robert found witnesses enough to be sponsors for his high respectability, but the accusation was a staggering blow in the midst of the deep melancholia into which the endless struggle and the recent death of Henrietta Voigt had plunged him. Clara had the rare agony of seeing him weep. It was now the turn of the strong Clara to break down, and only with the doctor's aid she continued her concerts. Her father's effort to undermine her good name extended to the publication of a lithographed account of his side of the story. But while certain old friends snubbed her, the lies that were told against her met their truest answer in the integrity of her whole career, and in the purity and honour of her life. This her own father was the first and the last ever to slander.

It is noteworthy, in view of the lightness of so many of the love affairs of the musicians, such as the case of Liszt, who twice eloped with married women and discussed the formality of divorce afterward, that through the long and ardent and greatly tormented love story of the Schumanns there never appears a line in any of their multitudinous letters which shows or hints the faintest dream of any procedure but the most upright. Always they encouraged each other with ringing beautiful changes on the one theme of their lives: Be true to me as I am true to you. Despair not.

The lawsuit dragged on and on. Wieck exhausted all the devices of postponement in which the law is so fertile. Schumann found himself the victim of a pamphlet of direct assault and downright libel, but all these things were only obstacles to exercise fidelity. The lovers felt that no power on earth could cut them apart. They began to dream of their marriage as more certain than the dawn. Schumann writes to Clara—“*Mein Herzensbrautmaedchen*”—that he wishes her to study and prepare for his exclusive hearing a whole concert of music, the bride's concert. She responds that he too must prepare for her music of his own, for a bridegroom's concert. He writes and begs her to compose some music and dedicate it to him; he implores her not to ignore her genius. She writes that she cannot find inspiration; that he is the family's genius for original work. Always they mingled music with love.

The composer Hiller gave a notable dinner to Liszt, who, after toasting Mendelssohn, toasted Schumann, “and spoke of me in such beautiful French and such tender words, that I turned blood-red.” January 31, 1840, Schumann had taken up his plan to gain himself a doctor's degree to match Clara's titles. He had asked a friend to appeal to the University of Jena to give him an honorary degree, or set him an examination to pass; for his qualifications he mentioned modestly:

“My sphere of action as editor on a high-class paper, which has now existed for seven years; my position as composer and the fact of my having really worked hard, both as editor and musician.”



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He began an essay on Shakespeare's relation to music, but without waiting for this the University of Jena granted him his doctorate on February 24, 1840, a bit of speed which must have been marvellously refreshing to this poor victim of so much delay.

The very day the degree was granted, he had decided to take legal steps for libel against the attack of Wieck's, which had been printed in pamphlet form and distributed. Toward Wieck he is still pitiful, "The wretched man is torturing himself; let it be his punishment." The libel suit was not prosecuted and his anger vanished in the rapture of being made a doctor of philosophy in flattering terms. As he confesses:

"Of course the first I did was to send a copy to the north for my betrothed; who is exactly like a child and will dance at being engaged to a doctor."

In May he went to Berlin and visited Clara's mother for a fortnight; here he had two weeks' bliss listening to Mendelssohn's singing to Clara's accompaniment some of the manifold songs that were suddenly beginning to bubble up from Schumann's heart. It was to his happiness that he credited this lyric outburst, for he had hitherto written only instrumental music.

"While I was composing them I was quite lost in thoughts of you. If I were not engaged to such a girl, I could not write such music."

Songs came with a rush from his soul, and he exclaims:

"I have been composing so much that it really seems quite uncanny at times. I cannot help it, and should like to sing myself to death like a nightingale."

He begged Clara to come to him and drag him away from his music. Yet all he wished was to be "where I can have a piano and be near you."

On July 4, 1840, he made her a present of a grand piano as a surprise, taking her out for a long walk until the piano could be placed in her rooms and hers taken to his.

It will not be possible to tell here in detail the story of the process of law, or its many postponements or disappointments. Long ago they had set their hearts upon marrying on Easter Day, 1840; they had determined not to permit their father to drive them past this date. But they went meekly enough under the yoke of the law and passed many a month until it seemed to the litigants that the condition of waiting for a decision was to be their permanent manner of life. But suddenly, as Litzmann says, "there stood Happiness, long besought, on the stoop, and knocked with tender fingers on the door."

On the 7th of July, 1840, Clara was told the good news that the father had withdrawn the evidence upon which he based his opposition. The case was not ended, but the lovers immediately began to hunt for a place to live. On the sixteenth of July they found



a little, but cosy, lodging on the Insel Strasse. Grief had not yet finally done with them, however, for Clara must write in her journal:

“I have not for my wedding what the simplest girl in town has, a trousseau.”



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On the 1st of August the case reached a stage where the father had but ten days more to make his final appeal. Worn out and lacking in further weapons of any kind, he let the occasion pass, and rested on the decision of the court. Clara went for one last concert tour as Clara Wieck.

On the 12th of August, the super-deliberate court handed down its awesome verdict. It was a verdict of reward for the lovers. Since Wieck had withdrawn his evidence, the verdict was strongly worded in favour of the lovers. Schumann wrote Clara, "On this day, Clara, three years ago, I proposed for your hand."

There was no delay in crying the banns, and the lovers went about as in a dream of rapture.

On September the 12th, between ten and eleven o'clock of a Saturday, at Schoenefeld, a village near Leipzig, they were married by an old school friend of Schumann's. On the 13th, a Sunday, and Clara's birthday—her twenty-first—she was the wife of the man who had for four years made her possession his chief ambition, and who had loved her better than he knew, long years before that.

Thus the lovers gained only one day by their lawsuit, for Clara was now of age. But who could estimate the value of the struggle in strengthening and deepening their love for each other and their worthiness for each other? It is the struggle for existence and the battle with resistance that bring about the evolution of strength in the physical world, and in the mental. Can we not say the same of the sentimental?

Would it not be a great pity if there were never such a gymnasium as parental resistance for lovers to exercise their hearts in? Shall we not, then, thank old Wieck for his fine lessons in psychical culture? His daughter Marie, by the way, Clara's half-sister, has only this year (1903) published a defence of the old man in answer to the first volume of Litzmann's new biography.

On Clara's marriage-day she wrote in her diary a little triumph song of joy. The wedding had been very simple and—

"There was a little dancing. Though no hilarity reigned, still in every face there was an inner content; it was a beautiful day, and the sun himself, who had been hidden for many days, poured his mild beams upon us in the morning as we went to the wedding, as if he would bless our union. There was nothing disturbing on this day, and so let it be inscribed in this book as the most beautiful and the most important day of my life. A period in my existence has now closed. I have endured very many sorrows in my young years, but also many joys which I shall never forget. Now begins a new life, a beautiful life, that life which one loves more than anything, even than self; but heavy responsibilities also rest upon me, and Heaven grant me strength to fulfil them truly and

as a good wife. Heaven has always stood by me and will not cease now. I have always had a great belief in God, and shall always keep it.”



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As for the old Wieck, his bitterness must have been almost suicidal. He did not forgive his daughter even after the birth of her first child, on September 1, 1841, the year also of Schumann's first symphony. It was only after a second child was born, in April, 1843, that Schumann could write to a friend:

"There has been a reconciliation between Clara and old Wieck, which I am glad of for Clara's sake. He has been trying to make it up with me too, but the man can have no feelings or he could not attempt such a thing. So you can see the sky is clearing. I am glad for Clara's sake."

But the cherishing of such a grudge even with such foundation was not like Schumann, and a year later, from Petersburg, where he had accompanied Clara on a triumphal tour and where they had the most cordial recognition from the Czar and Czarina, he addressed old Wieck as "Dear Father," and described to him with contagious pride the immense success of his wife. A little later he reminded him that "It is the tenth birthday Of our *Zeitschrift*, I dare say you remember." And yet again he writes to him as "Dear Papa," adding "best love to your wife and children, till we all meet again happily." And so ended the feud between the two men.

The romance of Robert and Clara did not end at the little village church, but rather they seemed to issue thence into a very Eden of love and art commingled. The gush of song from his heart continued, he dedicated to her his "Myrthen" and collaborated with her in the twelve songs called "Love's Springtime." As Spitta, his biographer, writes:

"As far as anything human can be imagined, the marriage was perfectly happy. Besides their genius both husband and wife had simple domestic tastes and were strong enough to bear the admiration of the world, without becoming egotistical. They lived for one another and for their children. He created and wrote for his wife, and in accordance with their temperament; while she looked upon it as her highest privilege to give to the world the most perfect interpretation of his works, or at least to stand as mediatrix between him and his audience, and to ward off all disturbing or injurious impressions from his sensitive soul, which day by day became more irritable. Now that he found perfect contentment in his domestic relations, he withdrew from his intercourse with others and devoted himself exclusively to his family and work. The deep joy of his married life, produced the direct result of a mighty advance in his artistic progress. Schumann's most beautiful works in the larger forms date almost entirely from the years 1841-5."

He went with her on many of her tours. They even planned an American trip. Once they were received with a public banquet; these two whom Reissman calls "the marvellous couple." In his letters there are always loving allusions to "my Clara," and though he could not himself play because of his lame finger, she was to him his "right hand." Once in referring to a prospective concert he even wrote, "We shall play" such and such numbers.



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In 1853 he and Clara went to the Netherlands, where he found his music well known and himself highly honoured, though they say that the King of Holland, after praising Clara's playing, turned to Robert and said: "Are you also musical?" But then one does not expect much from a king. The musicians knew Schumann's work, and he rejoiced at finding friends of his art in a far-away country. "But," says Reissman, "this was destined to be his last happiness."

For the dread affliction which throws a spell of horror across his life and his wife's devotion, did not long delay in seizing upon him after his marriage. As early as 1833, the ferocious onslaughts of melancholia had affected him at long intervals. In 1845, on the doctor's advice, he moved to Dresden. His trouble seems to have been "an abnormal formation of irregular masses of bone in the brain." He was afraid to live above the ground floor, or to go high in any building, lest he throw himself from the window in a sudden attack. He was subject to moods of long, and one might almost say violent, silence. In 1845 he described it as "a mysterious complaint which, when the doctor tries to take hold of it, disappears. I dare say better times are coming, and when I look upon my wife and children, I have joy enough."

Later he wrote to Mendelssohn, that he preferred staying at home, even when his wife went out.

"Wherever there is fun and enjoyment, I must still keep out of the way; the only thing to be done is hope ... hope ... and I will!"

His wife was still "a gift from above," and his allusions to her were affectionate to the utmost. In 1846, and again in the summer of 1847, he suffered a violent melancholia. In these periods he experienced an inability to remember his own music long enough to write it down. He saw but few friends, among them the charming widow of Von Weber, Ferdinand Hiller, Mendelssohn, Joachim, and a few others. Wagner wrote some articles for Schumann's journal and was highly thought of at first, but Schumann soon lost sympathy with him; the final sign of the break-up of his wonderful appreciation of other men's music.

His life was more and more his home, and that more and more a voluntary prison. In 1853 he presented his wife on her birthday with a grand piano, and several new compositions. He took great delight in his family, and could even compose amid the hilarity and noise of his children. Concerning children he had written in 1845 to Mendelssohn, whose wife had presented him with a second child, "We are looking forward to a similar event, and I always tell my wife, 'one cannot have enough.' It is the greatest blessing we have on earth."

Clara bore him eight children, and at her concerts there was usually a nurse with a babe in arms waiting for her in the wings. Schumann wrote three sonatas for his three

daughters, and other compositions for them. His famous “Kinderscenen” were, however, composed before his marriage.

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It was in 1853 that his old enthusiasm for new composers broke forth in his ardent welcome to Brahms (who was then twenty years old), who became a devoted friend and was of much comfort to Frau Schumann after Schumann's death. This was not far off, but before life went, he must suffer a death in life.

Worst of all in that final disintegration of his great soul was the interest he took in the atrocious frauds of spiritualism. He was even duped into believing in the cheap swindle of table-tipping. The bliss of Robert Browning's home was broken up in this same form, of all-encompassing credulity, only it was Mrs. Browning who was the spiritualist in this case and resisted Browning's sanity in the matter.

Schumann fancied that he heard spirit voices rebuking and praising him, and he rose once in the night to write down a theme given him by the ghosts of Schubert and Mendelssohn, on which he afterward wrote variations which were never finished and were the last pathetic exercise of his magnificent mind.

He was also distracted by hearing one eternal note ringing in his ears—the same horror that drove the composer Smetana mad, after he had embodied the nightmare in one of his compositions. Clara herself in later life was long distressed by hearing a continual pattern of “sequences” in her head, and Bizet's early death was a release from two notes that dinned his ears interminably.

Schumann's eccentricities became a proverb. Alice Mangold Diehl tells of meeting Robert and Clara, and finding him peevish and her a model of meekness and patience. Poor Schumann realised his failings and his own danger, and often suggested retirement to an asylum. But the idea was too ghastly to endure.

On February 27, 1854, after an especial attack of the bewilderment and helpless terror that thrilled him, he stole away unobserved, and leaped from a bridge into the Rhine. He was saved by boatmen and taken home. He recovered, but it was now thought best that he should be placed under restraint, and he passed his last two years in a private asylum, near Bonn. Periods of complete sanity, when he received his friends and wrote to them, alternated with periods of absolute despair. Under the weight of his affliction, his soul, like Giles Corey's body in the Salem witchcraft times, was gradually crushed to death, and at the age of forty-six he died. Clara, who had been away on a concert tour to earn much-needed funds, hastened back from London just in time to give him her own arms as his resting-place in his last agony.

After his funeral she and her children went to Berlin to live with her mother. She found it necessary to travel as a performer and to teach until 1882, when her health forbade her touring longer. She had shown herself a woman worth fighting for, even as Schumann fought for her, and she had given him not only the greatest ambition and the greatest solace his life had known, but she had been also the perfect helpmeet to his art.



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Schumann's music was not an easy music for the world to learn, and it is to Clara Wieck's eternal honour, that she not only inspired Schumann to write this music, and gave him her support under the long discouragement of its neglect and the temptations to be untrue to his best ideals; but that she travelled through Europe and promulgated his art, until with her own power of intellect and persuasion she had coaxed and compelled the world to understand its right value, and his great messages.

She never married again, but devoted her long widowhood to his memory personally as well as artistically. She edited his works and published his letters in 1885, with a preface, saying that her desire was to make him known for himself as well as he was loved and honoured in his artistic importance. As she had written in 1871, "the purity of his life, his noble aspirations, the excellence of his heart, can never be fully known except through the communication of his family and friends."

In return for her devotion he never made genius an excuse for infidelity or selfishness. It seems actually and beautifully true, as Reissman says, that "Schumann's devotions were as chaste and devout as those of the soul of a pure woman."

Such a love, such a courtship, and such a wedlock as that of Robert and Clara Schumann ennoble not only the art and history of music, but those as well of humanity.

CHAPTER VII.

MUSICIANS AS LOVERS

"Et le cortege chantait quelque chose de triste des oh! et des ah!"—ZOLA,
L'Assommoir.

And now at the end of all this gossip, to see if it has served any purpose, and if the multitude of experiences totals up into any definite result:

Of course, as you were just going to say, he said, "If music be the food of love." But then you must not fail to remember that in another play he hedged by saying, "Much virtue in an 'if.'" For music is not the food of love, any more than oatmeal or watermelons. And yet in a sense, music is a love-food—in the sense I mean, that there is love-nourishment in tubes of paint, which can perpetuate your beauty, my fair readeress; or in ink-bottles all ebon with Portuguese sonnets and erotic rondeaux; or in tubs of plaster of Paris, or in bargain-counterfuls of dress goods to add the last word to a woman's beauty. In such a sense, indeed, there is *materia amorofica* in music, for with music one can—or at least one did—show forth the very rhythm of Tristanic desire, and another portrayed in unexpurgated harmonies the garden-mood of Faust and Marguerite.



But as there are in those same tubes of oozy paint horrific visions like Franz Stuck's "War," or portraits of plutocrats by Bonnat, and as there are in ink-bottles sad potencies of tailors' bills and scathing reviews of this very book, so it is possible under the name of music to write fugues and five-finger exercises, and yet more settings of "Hiawatha," or "*Du bist wie eine Blume*"



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Now, there is only one thing easier than a generalisation, and that is a generalisation in the opposite direction. You can prove anything by statistics, if you can only choose your statistics and stop when you want to. But statistics are like automobiles. Sometimes if you hitch yourself up with a statistic, you meet the fate of the farmer who put his fool head in the yoke with a skittish steer.

There was a time when I could have written you an essay on the moral effect of music, and been convinced, if not convincing. A little later, I could have done no worse with a thesis to the effect that music is an immoral influence. But that time is gone now, after a time spent in gathering material from everywhicway for this book on musicians' love affairs. For, to repeat, with a few statistics you can prove anything; with a complete array you can usually prove nothing, or its next-door neighbour.

The way to test any food is to observe its effects on those addicted to it. To study the true workings of music, then, you would not count the pulse of one of those "Oh-I'm-passionately-fond-of-music" maidens who talk all through even dance-music. Nor would you take for your test one of those laymen who are fond of this tune or that, because it reminds them of the first time they heard it—"that night when Sally Perkins sang it while I was out in the moonlit piazza hugging Kitty Gray, now Mrs. van Van,—or was it Bessie Brown? who buried her husband two years ago next Sunday."

These are people to whom music is as much a rarity as Nesselrode to a newsboy.

The true place, surely, to test the effect of music is in the souls of the people who live in it, breathe it, steep themselves in it, play it,—and what is worse,—work it.

To the great musicians themselves, then, we have turned. What could have been better for the purpose than to have made them parade before us in historic mardi-gras? wearing their hearts on their sleeves, or in their letters, their music, their lives, as they trooped forth endlessly from the tomes of Burney, Hawkins, Fetis, Grove, Riemann, and from their biographies and memoirs innumerable?

A motley crew they have formed, and you perhaps have been able to find a unity, if not of purpose, at least of result, in the music they have made, and the music that has made them. Let them pass again, only this time as soldiers go by at a review—the second time at the double-quick. Here they come—watch them well.

Leading the rout are those stately or capering figures, who, from being the great virtuosi of their time, were finally idolised into gods in the Golden Age, when musical critics had no columns to perpetuate their iconoclasms in.

Mark him with the stately stride—Apollo, smiting his lyre with a majesty hardly supported by the seven small notes he could get out of it. The gossips said he loved

Daphne, and madly withal, but she took to a tree.—No, let the gods pass as they will. It is with men we deal, not gods.



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Note especially the cluster of those wonderful musickers, who, at the end of the Middle Age, went from Flanders and thereabouts, into Italy and all around Europe, weaving their Flemish counterpoint like a net all over the world of music. They seem all to have been marrying men, some of them super-romantic, others as stodgily domestic and workaday as any village blacksmith. There is Marc Houtermann, called the Prince of Musicians. He lived at Brussels, and died there aged forty, and the same year he was followed to his grave by his musically named Joanna Gavadia, who knew music well, and who, let us still hope, died of a broken heart. Cipriano de Rore, De Croes, and Jacques Buus were all married men, and begot hostages to fortune. Philippe de Monte may or may not have married; we only know that a pupil of his wrote him a Latin poem forty-six lines long, and we can only trust that he did not marry her.

Orlando di Lasso, "one of the morning stars of modern times," whose music was so beautiful that once at Munich a thunder-storm was miraculously hushed at the first note of one of his motets, lived a love-life much like Schumann's, save that he seems to have had no hard-hearted parents to strengthen and purify his resolve. The only court he went to, to win her, was the court at Munich, where his Regina was a maid of honour. She bore him six children, and they lived ideally, it seems. But his health gave way now and then before his hard work, and finally, when he had reached his threescore and ten, his wife came home to find him gone mad, and unable even to recognise her, who had been at his side for thirty years. She guarded him tenderly, and strove hard to cheer his last days, but melancholy surrendered him only to death.

Adrien Willaert had a wife, and loved her long and well, and wrote many wills, in which he grew more and more affectionate toward his helpmeet, yet strangely he never mentioned his daughter, who was herself a composer, and had perhaps a romance of her own, down there in Juliet's country where her Flemish father took her.

How otherwise is the domestic life of Jacques de Wert, whose wife conspired against him heinously, and put his very life in danger! When he was well rid of this baggage, he fell into an intrigue with a lady of the court of Ferrara. Her name was Tarquinia Molza, and she was a poetess, but her relatives frowned upon the alliance of her poetry and his music, and forced her to go back to her mother at Mantua, where she outlived De Wert some twenty-seven years.

His is such a life as one would take to prove the unsettling effects of music; yet what shall we say then of Josse Boutmy, who lived ninety-nine years and raised twelve children, spending the greater part of his life with his faithful spouse in one long struggle against poverty, one eternal drudgery for the pence necessary to educate his family? Shall we not say that he was as truly influenced by music as Jacques de Wert?



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De Wert had gone to Italy as a boy, and you might be after blaming those soft Italian skies for his amorous troubles. But then you'll encounter such a life as that of Palestrina spent altogether in Italy. He married young. Her name was Lucrezia, and their life seems to have been one of ideal devotion. She bore him four sons, and stood by him in all his troubles, brightening the twilight of poverty, adorning that high noon of his glory, when the Pope himself turned to Palestrina, and implored him to reform and rescue the whole music of the Church from its corruptions. It was well that Lucrezia could offer him solace, for unwittingly she had once brought him his direst distress. When he was recovered and well, a better post was offered him, and things ran smoothly till, twenty-five years later, Lucrezia died, leaving him broken-hearted with only one worthless son to embitter the last fourteen years of his widowed life. His most poignantly impressive motets seem to have been written under the anguish of Lucrezia's death. The finest of them is his setting of the words:

“By the River of Babylon we have set us down and wept,
Remembering Thee, oh, Zion;
Upon the willows we have hung our harps,”

which, as E.H. Pember says, “may well have represented to himself, the heart-broken composer, mourning by the banks of the Tiber, for the lost wife whom he had loved so long.”

Close upon so noble a life, artistic and personal, comes the career of Georges de la Hele, who, being a priest, gave up his lucrative benefice to wed the woman he wished.

And yet again with disconcerting effect comes the story of Ambrosio de Cotes, who was a gambler and a drunkard, who kept a mistress, and was rebuked publicly for howling indecent refrains to the tunes in church. Which of these is fairly typical as a musician?

Then comes the most notable man in all English music, Harry Purcell, who wrote the best love-songs that ever melted the reserve of his race. He must have been a good husband, and his married life a happy one, seeing how ardent his wife was for his memory, and how she celebrated him in a memorial volume, as the Orpheus of Great Britain, and how eager she was that the two sons that survived out of their six children, should be trained to music.

And speaking of types, what shall we say of this cloud of witnesses, bearing the most honoured name in music, the name of Bach?

There were more than twenty-five Bachs, who made themselves names as makers of harmony, and they earned themselves almost as great names as family makers; all except Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, who was as lacking in virtue as he was abundant in virtuosity. He was notoriously immoral, and yet the greatest organist of his time, as his father had been before him; and it was this father, Johann Sebastian Bach, who by his



life and preeminence in music, offers the biggest obstacle to any theory about the immoral influences of the art. For surely, if he, who is generally called the greatest of musicians, led a life of hardly equalled domesticity, it will not be easy to claim that music has an unsettling effect upon society. And yet there are his great rivals, Handel and Beethoven, whose careers are in the remotest possible contrast.



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It is neither here nor there, that "Father" Bach left little money and many children when he died, and that the sons seized upon his MSS. and drifted away to other cities, leaving the mother and three daughters to live upon the charity of the town. It is unfortunate to have to include among the ungrateful children the stepson, Carl Philip Emmanuel Bach, who seems otherwise to have been a pleasant enough fellow, a fair family man, and a great composer. He first too much eclipsed his father's fame, and has since been too much eclipsed thereby. He had family troubles, too, and left a wife and children to mourn him. So much for the Bachs.

A family of almost equal fame was the group of violin makers of Cremona, the Stradivari. The founder of the house, Antonio, began his life romantically enough. When he was a youngster of seventeen or eighteen, he fell in love with Francesca Capra, a widow of a man who had been assassinated. She was nine or ten years older than Stradivari, and they were married on July 4, 1667. In the following December the first of their six children was born. Two of his sons took up their father's trade. Both of them died bachelors, and the third son became a priest.

At the age of fifty-eight Francesca died. After a year of widowerhood, he wedded again; this time, a woman fourteen or fifteen years younger than he. She bore him five children, and he outlived her less than a year. His descendants dwelt for generations, flourishing on his fame, at Cremona.

The Amati were also a numerous family of luthiers, as were the Guarneri, but I have not been able to poke into their private affairs, though he who called himself "Jesus," was addicted to imprisonment, and is said to have made violins out of bits of wood brought him by the jailer's daughter. She sold the fiddles to buy him luxuries.

But now, lest we should too firmly believe that music exerts an amorous and domestic effect, we are confronted with the ponderous majesty of one of the proudest spirits that ever strode the creaking earth, Georg Friedrich Haendel, who was born the very same year as the much-married Bach, but led a life as opposite as North Pole from South. The first snub he dealt to Cupid, was when he was eighteen, and sought the post of organist held by the famous old Buxtehude, who had married years before the daughter of an organist to whose post he aspired, and had left behind him a daughter thirty-four years old as an incumbrance upon his successor. Haendel could have got the job, if he would have had the girl. But she was almost twice his age, and he left her for another musician to marry in. Then he went to Italy, and was pursued in vain under those bewitching skies by no belated German spinster, but by a beautiful and attractive Italiane. Her, he also spurned. When he was in England, he seems to have come very near falling in love with two different women. The mother of the first objected to him as a mere



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fiddler. After she died, the father invited him into the family, only to be told that the invitation was too late. The other woman, a lady of high degree, offered herself as a substitute for his career, only to be declined with thanks and possibly with a formal statement that “rejection implied no lack of merit.” Seeing that these things happened in the eighteenth century, I need not add that both women were romantic enough to go into a decline, and die beautifully.

Whatever food music may have been to Haendel’s greatness, there was another food that rivalled it in his esteem; and that food was the symphonic poetry of the cook. For Haendel was almost equally famous both as a composer and a digester. In this he was rivalled by the father of French opera, Lully, who was a gourmand, in spite of the fact that he spent his early life as a kitchen boy. He led his wife a miserable existence on account of his hot temper, his brutality, and his excesses in solid and liquid food. After him came Rameau, who, like Stradivari, fell in love with a widow while he was still in his teens and she well out of hers. He did not wed, however, until he was forty-three, and then he wed an eighteen-year-old girl, who was, they say, a very good woman, and who did her best to make her husband very happy. But he was taciturn, and rarely spoke even to his own family, and spent on them almost less money than words. Another opera composer of the time was Reinhard Keiser. He married a woman who, with her wealth and her voice, rescued his operatic ventures from bankruptcy. These make a rather sordid and unromantic group.

But again there stalks forth, to confound all our theories, the superb figure of Gluck, who fell in love but once, and then for all time, with Maria Anna Pergin, who loved him, and whose mother approved of him, but whose purse-proud father despised him for a musician. The lovers accepted the rebuff as a temporary sorrow only, and Providence, like a playwright, removed the stern parent in the next act. Gluck flew back from Italy to Vienna to his betrothed, “with whom to his death he dwelt in happiest wedlock.” She went with him on his triumphal tours, and spent her wealth in charities. They had no children of their own, but adopted a niece. The devoted wife used to play his accompaniment as he sang his own music, and when he died he took especial pains that she should be his sole and exclusive heir, even leaving it to her pleasure whether or not his brothers and sisters should have anything at all.

Plainly we should be thinking that music has a purifying, ennobling, and substantial effect upon society, if only Gluck’s friend and partisan, the successful composer and immortal writer, Jean Jacques Rousseau, would not intrude upon the picture with his faun-like paganisms and magnificently shameless “Confessions.”

Jostling elbows with him comes Gluck’s chiefest rival, Piccinni, one of the most beautiful characters in history, a man who could wage a mortal combat in art, without bitterness toward his bitter rivals. He could, when Gluck died, strive to organise a memorial

festival in his honour, and when his other rival, Sacchini, was taken from the arena by death, he could deliver the funeral eulogy. This Sacchini, by the bye, was a reckless voluptuary, who seems never to have married.



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Piccinni was the very beau ideal of a father and a husband. He and his wife, who was a singer of exquisite skill and a teacher of ability, gave little home concerts, which were events. They and their many children went through more vicissitudes than have fallen to the lot of many musicians; but always they loved one another and their art, and there always remains that picture which the Prince of Brunswick stumbled upon, when he knocked at Piccinni's door, and found him rocking the cradle of one of his children, while another tugged at his coat in boisterous fun, and the mother beamed her enjoyment.

Hardly less ideal, though far more picturesque and dramatic, was the romance of Mozart.

This goldenhearted genius was a composer at an age when many children have not commenced to learn their ABC's; he was a virtuoso before the time when most boys can be trusted with a blunt knife. Kissed and fondled by great beauties, from the age of five, it is small wonder that Mozart began to improvise upon the oldest theme in the world precociously. His first recorded love affair is found in his letters at the age of thirteen. He loved with the same radiant enthusiasm that he gave to his music, and while some of his flirtations were of the utmost frivolity, such as his hilarious courtship of his pretty cousin, the "Baesle," he was capable of the completest altruism, and could turn aside from the aristocracy to lavish his idolatry upon the fifteen-year-old daughter of a poor music copyist, whose wife took in boarders. For this girl, Aloysia Weber, he wanted to give up his own career as a concert pianist; he wanted to give up the conquest he had planned of Paris, and devote himself to the training of her voice, to writing operas for her exploitation, and to journeying in Italy for the production of these operas and the promulgation of her talents. Yet after breaking his heart, as he supposed, for the gifted and fickle woman who became a successful prima donna,—after losing her, he did that most impossible thing which could never happen in real fiction, and sought his consolation in the arms and in the heart of Aloysia's younger sister, who was not especially pretty, and was only modestly musical. But her name was Constanze, and she lived up to it.

Constanze could always read to him, and tell him stories as he liked to have her do while he composed, and she could cut up his meat for him lest in his absent-mindedness he carve off one of his valuable fingers. And when she was ill, as she frequently was, there could be no gentler nurse than he. Besides, when winter was upon them, it was no winter of discontent, for if the fire gave out and the fuel could not be afforded, could they not always waltz together?



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Twice Mozart must make concert tours for money, and twice he came home poorer than he went, but at least he left the world some of the gentlest and most hearty love-letters in its literature. When he was at home, Vienna was busy with anecdotes of his devotion. He was indeed so good a husband that Constanze could not even withhold forgiveness for certain occasions when he strayed from the narrow path of absolute fidelity; for she knew that his heart had its home with her. When he died, supposedly of malignant typhus, she tried to catch his disease and die with him, and her health broke so completely that she could not attend his funeral; and when she was recovered enough to visit the cemetery, she could not discover, what no man has since found out, in just what three-deep pauper's grave Mozart was buried.

All in all, in spite of certain ficklenesses in which this immortal musician has been surpassed by lovers of all walks of life, from blacksmiths to bishops, music has created one of tenderest, most honest of all romances.

But then there was a man whose life encompassed Mozart's, as a long brace encompasses a stave of music. For Joseph Haydn was born twenty-four years before Mozart, and died eighteen years after him. And this man's love affairs were of altogether different fabric.

While Mozart died in his poverty at thirty-five, Haydn, dying at seventy-seven, was worried over the endowment he should leave to a discarded mistress, whose name, strangely enough, was also Aloysia. And Haydn, more than strangely enough, had begun his life the same way by proposing to an older sister, and marrying a younger; but with results how unlike!

Haydn also found his inamorata in the home of a poor man who had been kind to him. His wife, however, led him a dog's life. The only interest she seemed to have in his music was to keep him writing numbers for the priests, who clustered around her, eating Haydn out of house and home. Frau Haydn was a shrew, and he finally gave up trying to live at home, seeking his consolation at court with a young and beautiful Neapolitan singer, who was unhappily married to a poor fiddler, named Polzelli. The two lovers made little secret of their hope that one or both of their ill-favoured spouses would pass away. But they both declined to "die by request," as Artemus Ward has it.

After a time the lovers drifted apart, until finally Aloysia married again, though to the last she held Haydn to an agreement he had made years before, to marry no other woman, and to leave her a pension. Meanwhile, in London, Haydn was having a quaint alliance, *sub rosa*, with a widow. Her letters to him, as doubtless his to her, were full of gentle idolatry. She had been writing these to him while he had been writing ardent letters of yearning to Polzelli. Altogether Haydn does not shine as the beau ideal of single-hearted fidelity.

Was it from him that Beethoven caught his own fickleness along with so much of his musical manner? Beethoven had one of the busiest hearts in history.



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We cannot say that he might not have been a marrying man if disease and deafness had not harrowed his volcanic soul, and made his life so largely one of tempestuous tragedy, in which he wandered through the world, and found it as homeless and as bleak as did the Wandering Jew, whose quarrels with Fate were no more fierce, more majestic, nor more vain than Beethoven's. Among the multitudinous agonies that throng his letters and rave through his music, are many cries of wild longing for a homelife in a woman's heart.

But these "diminished sevenths" of unrest and yearning are often resolved in a cold minor of resignation or of cynicism in which he claims to be willing, and at times even glad, to pass his life alone. We are not justified, then, in taking Beethoven as a man of domestic inclinations. The most confirmed bachelors have their moments of doubt, and Beethoven had every qualification for driving a wife even madder than he himself could be on occasions. His most intimate and unswerving friends were the victims of spasms of suspicious hatred and maltreatment that surely no wife worth having could ever have endured through the honeymoon.

And yet in his love-letters there is a notable absence of jealousy or whim, and we can only accept his life as we find it, and regard him as a great genius who rushed from love to love, and never tarried for wedlock. As to the quality of those love affairs,—we meet a conflict of authority; some of his friends recording him as a wonder of chastity, and others treating him as a never-tiring flirt.

Among the thirty or more women who accepted his attentions, he could easily have found a wife, had he been at heart a marrying man. He has perpetuated in his dedications all these flames, and it was in the furnace of these flames that much of his music was forged. But how shall we blame or praise music for its effect upon Beethoven's heart, in the face of the antipodal life of such a fellow bachelor as Haendel? And to these two bachelors there belongs a third great bachelor of music, Schubert, who is said never to have loved a woman. Even the paltry anecdote or two of his hopeless love for a very young countess is dismissed by the cautious as a fable. Schubert was a pauper to the *n*th degree. But he found his joy in the hilarity of the Vienna cafes with boisterous friends, working up a maximum enthusiasm on a minimum of food, living a life of much art and equal beer. He seems never to have truly cared for women, nor to have been cared for by them.

There are all sorts of bachelorhoods, and there is a wide distinction between the womanless splendour of Haendel's life at court, and the unilluminated garret of Schubert's obscurity. There is a difference also in the busy, promiscuous courtship of Beethoven, who dedicated thirty-nine compositions to thirty-six women, and that of Chopin, who, though he could conduct three flirtations of an evening, seems to have loved but thrice, and to have planned marriage but once.



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Chopin, only half-Polish, and finding his true home in Paris, had been loved by the tiny musicienne, hardly so big as her name, Leopoldine Blahetka, but his first true love was for the raving beauty, Constantia Gladkovska, whom he mourned for in prose as highly coloured as his nocturnes, wishing that after his death his ashes might be strewn under her feet. She married elsewhere. The Polish Maria Wodzinska was his next flame, and he wished to marry her, but he, who had the salons of Paris at his princely behest, could not hold this nineteen-year-old girl. Then he fell into the embrace of George Sand, that mysterious sphinx who clasped him to her commodious heart, and held him as with claws, though little he cared to escape; and yet, her claws drew blood, and at length it was the sphinx herself who struggled for release from the embrace of the fretful genius, whom consumption was claiming with her own clammy arms. Every one knows all there is to know about the Chopin-Sand affair, all and a great deal more, but who could draw from it any inference as to the effect of music?

Sand was attracted to Chopin by his art. With her as nurse, his genius accomplished much of its greatest, and it held her enthralled for a time. To Chopin, music was both a medicine and a disease, torment and solace. But that he would have lived his life differently in any way had he been a painter, a poet, an architect, a man of affairs, or an idler, with the same effeminate nature, the same elegance of manner, the same disease, the same women about him, I can find no reason to believe. Is it not the man and the environment rather than the music that makes such a life what it is?

There is another brilliant consumptive, Carl Maria von Weber, a member of a long line of musicians. At seventeen he had formed "a tender connection with a lady of position," whom he lost sight of later and forgot in the race with fast young noblemen, whose dissipation he rivalled. A mad entanglement with a singer ruined him in purse, and almost in career. His frivolities ended in an arrest and punishment which sobered him with the abruptness of a plunge into a stream of ice. But his gaiety was as irrepressible as Chopin's melancholy, and he gave Germany some of its most cheerful music. His heart was restless, and still at the age of twenty-seven he was writhing in an infatuation for a worthless ballet-girl. Then his affection for a singer and soubrette, Caroline Brandt, steadied him. After a long period of effort to establish a firm position they married, and the soubrette became a "Haus-frau." He was thirty-one, however, before this point was reached, and the honeymoon consisted of a concert tour.

The glory of his later life fought against the gloom of his disease, but the ferocious rake had made, as the proverb has it, an ideal husband and father. His letters to his wife are full of ardour. It was a tour through England that exhausted Chopin's last strength, and it was Weber's fate to die alone in London in the midst of eager preparations and vast hunger to reach his home. He was not quite forty when he died, and his life had been two lives, one of unchecked libertinism, and the other all integrity of purpose. But it was in the latter half that he wrote his best music.



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The domestic and home-establishing influences of music might be pleaded even more strongly from the life of Mendelssohn. A more musical home than that in which Mendelssohn grew up, could hardly exist, nor one in which family life reached a higher level of comfort and delight. Like Mozart, Mendelssohn was especially devoted to his sister. Her death indeed grieved him so deeply, that he died shortly after. A man of the utmost cheer and wholesomeness, revelling in dancing, swimming, riding, sketching, and billiards; he was idolised in the circle around him, though his life was not without its enmities. He had many slight flirtations, but seems to have been even engaged but once, to Cecile Jeanrenaud, whom he married. His home life was a repetition of that ideal circle in his father's house. A busier life or a more pleasantly respectable can hardly be found in the history of men, nor yet a more truly musical.

A life of similar brilliance and similar musical immersion was that of Liszt, whose domestic career was nevertheless as different as possible. A soul of greater generosity, and more zealous altruism in many respects, it would be hard to find, and yet his relations to women were, in the conventional view, a colossal and multifarious scandal. Have we any more right to blame his domestic outrages to the music that was in him, than to the almost equally intense religious ardour that fought for him, leading him again and again to seek to enter a monastery, and finally actually to take orders? Abelard was a sufficiently tempestuous and irregular lover, yet he was a priest, and not a musician. Can we then blame harmony and melody for the humming-bird "amours" of the Abbe Liszt,—for the many women he made material love to from his early youth,—for the very dubious honesty of his bearing toward the Comtesse d'Agoult and the Princess Wittgenstein, with whom he debated the formalities of marriage without hesitating over the actualities?

There is a strange cluster of domestic infelicities centring about Liszt. The Comtesse d'Agoult loved him so ardently that she braved the world for him, driving even her complacent husband to divorce her; but even then, though they lived together, Liszt did not marry her. He even brought George Sand, the ex-mistress of so many men, including Liszt himself, to live at the house with the comtesse, who had borne him three children out of wedlock. One of these children became the wife of Hans von Buelow, who was driven to divorce her that she might marry his teacher, Richard Wagner, whose first wife had endured twenty-five years of his irregularities in everything, except poverty, and who separated from him during the last five years of her life.



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Shall we blame all this to music, and if so, shall we say that music has atoned sufficiently in the devotion of Wagner and his second wife to each other, and their lofty theories of art? And in any case, how shall we explain the influence of music in the life of Wagner's rival for supremacy, Johannes Brahms, a confirmed bachelor; or his other contemporary, Tschaikovski, who, after a normal love affair with a singer, Desiree Artot, who jilted him, eventually married a girl by whom he seemed to have been deeply loved, without feeling any return? He claimed to have explained to the enamoured girl that he would marry her if she wished, but that he could not love her. On these terms she accepted him, and the bridegroom endured all the agonies of heart ordinarily ascribed to bartered brides. A burlesque honeymoon of a week was soon followed by a separation. Tschaikovski regarded his wife with a horror bordering on insanity, finding what little consolation life had for him in the devotion of a widow, who furnished him liberally with funds and admiration, with an affection which, for lack of better information, we can only call, for lack of a better word, Platonic.

There are other musicians whose private affairs I need not repeat here, and yet others' that I have not poked into. There is no lack of curious entanglements, especially in the matter of the men and women who have played upon the human voice, but we have surely collected enough material for forming a judgment, especially when we have turned an additional glance upon the life of one other composer.

Now, the influence of music might be modified beyond recognition by the fact that one of the lovers might not be musical; but surely, when both man and woman are professional musicians, there can be no doubt of the governing power of music. In recent musical history there is one eminent composer who married a woman also prominent in music. In fact, Clara Wieck has been called the most eminent woman who ever took up music as a profession. It would be hard to deny Robert Schumann a place among the major gods of creative art. Every one knows how he began to love Clara, and she him, when he was first leaving his teens and she entering her fame as an eleven-year-old prodigy. Their fidelity through the storm and stress of their courtship, their lifelong sympathy and collaboration in conserving a humanly perfect home, and in achieving a dual immortality, both as lovers and as musicians—these certainly indicate music as a solidifying and enriching force in society.

And now, finally, in the procession that has filed past you, you have seen almost every imaginable form of love and lover, of husband and Lothario, or woman-hater. There have been cool-blooded bachelors like Haendel, Schubert, and Brahms; there have been passionate pilgrims like Chopin, Beethoven, and Liszt, who loved many women, and married none. There have been the home-keeping breeders of children, and contentment,



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such as Willaert, Orlando di Lasso, Palestrina, the Bachs, Gluck, Piccinni, Weber, Mendelssohn, and Schumann; and Bizet, whose wife said after his death, that there was not a moment of their six years' honeymoon she could regret or would not re-live. There have been the unhappily wed, who, through the fault of themselves, or their wives, found and made misery at home, and sought nepeenthe elsewhere, such as Haydn, Berlioz, and Tschaikovski. There have been married lives of mixed nature, neither failure nor success, such as the careers of Lully, Rameau, Stradivari, and Wagner.

If any one lives who could extract from this medley a theory as to the effect of music upon the human heart,—a theory that will satisfy himself alone, to say nothing of the world in general,—he is welcome to his conclusion. To me it is a chaos wherethrough I cannot pretend to trace any thread of unity. I can only fall back upon this agnosticism: if any man argue to the effect, that music has a moral influence on life, I will hurl at his head some of the most brilliant rascals in domestic chronicle; and equally, if any man will deny that music has a moral effect, I will barricade his path with some of the most beautiful lives that have ever bloomed upon earth. It is, after all, a matter of time, tide, and temperament. If a man of amorous nature happens to lead a life of much leisure, his idle mind will turn one way; and if the tide of opportunity concur, he will be dissipated, whether he be composer, clergyman, business man, bravo, soldier, sailor, carpenter, king, plumber, poet, pope, or peasant.

The long and the short of it is, perhaps, that music, being a universal art, like a universal watch-key, will set going the complicated cogs and springs of every soul and yet not regulate or assure its rhythm. Music stimulates and satisfies the mind in any of its whims, and you can tune it to a softly chanted prayer, or to a dance orgy; to a hymn of exultation, or a tinkling serenade; a kindergarten song, to the bloodthirst of armies; to voluptuous desires that cannot or dare not be worded, or to raptures distilled of every human dross; to cynical raillery, or the very throb of a young lover's heart; to the hilarity of a drinking song, or the midnight elegies of ineffable despair. How is such an art as this to compel, or to deny anything or anybody?

Musicians, then, are only ordinary clay, who happened to make music, instead of other things of more or less beauty or value. They are every-day puppets of circumstance and of inner and outer environment, who might have been happier, and might have been unhappier, with the women they wed or did not wed, had those women died younger, or lived longer—or with other women, or with none at all.

THE END.

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Wuerttemberg, Duchess

Xantippe

Young, Cecilia



BOOKRAGS

Zambelli, Antonia
Zarlino, Gioseffo
Zelter, Carl
Zimmerman, *Mlle.* Anna
Zingarelli
Zola