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WAGNER AND LISZT CORRESPONDENCE.

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THERE is a great charm about private letters. When one friend writes to another, he expresses his thoughts as freely as if he were talking with him. There is no fear as to what the world will say. Men write letters to newspapers, and many such are perfectly honest letters, yet the writers have to be cautious, and often the reader has to look between the lines. But in private letters—especially between two men who thoroughly understand and sympathise with each other—there is no need of restraint. They say what they have to say in plain, unvarnished language. Everything is *au naturel*. Private letters of great men are of inestimable advantage to writers of biography: from them portraits true to the life can be drawn. They are of value to historians who seek to know the hidden causes of things. They are of value to friends and relations, who treasure up every line written by one whom they respect or admire.

But viewed in another light, the giving of private letters to the world may be considered a disadvantage. They may be used for party purposes. In a correspondence of twenty years—such as the one before us—men are apt to show many sides of their character; and it is easy to pick and choose so as to present a man either all that is great and noble, or the reverse. Again, they may fall into the hands of careless readers, readers who will merely glance at a page here and there, and form most erroneous ideas. And in any case there is always the danger of forgetting the private nature of the communications.

In reading through the Wagner-Liszt letters I could not help feeling that they contain seeds both of good and evil. But the die is cast, the letters have been published. I am going to try this afternoon and picture the two men such as we find them. So far as I have understood the book, I make out that Wagner was a man thoroughly in earnest. He felt he had a mission in life, and that mission he sought to fulfil.

But the fates were against him : his mind was strong but his body weak ; he meant well but often acted ill. He must not however be judged by an ordinary standard, his faults were to a great extent the result of his genius. He had a sharp pen, a sharp tongue ; but it needed strong weapons to fight a way from Dresden to Bayreuth.

Wagner was introduced to Liszt in Paris in the autumn of 1840. The latter was at the zenith of his fame ; the former, his mind full of ambition, his head full of ideas, his pocket empty, was like Mr. Micawber—waiting for something to turn up. In the following year (1841) Wagner ventured to address a letter to Liszt to say how much he longed to see and talk with him : he—the unsuccessful man, writing songs for a few francs, attempting a vaudeville, offering himself as "*choriste*" to a small theatre—ventured to approach the successful man, who by his marvellous piano-forte playing had turned all heads. Great indeed was Liszt's success as a virtuoso, and his triumphant progress through Europe, the homage paid to him by all sorts and conditions of men and women, and the way in which the most competent musicians and critics sang his praises, read in our day like a fable. These, then, were the two men destined to become firm friends for a period of nearly forty years. Judging from outward appearances nothing seemed more unlikely. For not only were their positions in life very different, but also their characters. Liszt was fond of the world, Wagner loved solitude ; Liszt was patient and hopeful, Wagner impatient and despairing ; Liszt was most reasonable, Wagner often most unreasonable.

Before they had become acquainted each had dreamt of a new musical era. Though each had independently thought and worked, the same influences had acted upon both ; the romantic spirit of the day had cast its spell over the two men. To enlarge upon this matter would be an unwarrantable digression. I will therefore only name Berlioz who, in what he suggested rather than accomplished, may be regarded as one of the many minds who guided and influenced Wagner and Liszt. The letters do not show how the acquaintance between these two men ripened into friendship. After the first-mentioned letter in 1841 there is a break. The next bears the date 1845, and refers to the monument proposed to be erected at Dresden in memory of Weber. In 1846 Wagner learns that Liszt is trying to win friends for him. But not until 1848 do we detect anything like intimacy. In 1841 Liszt is addressed as "Most honoured Sir," in 1848 and 1849 as "Best friend," "Dear friend Liszt," "Dearest friend," and so on. Liszt, too, had heard "*Rienzi*" at Dresden in 1845 ; had met Wagner, and become drawn towards the Dresden Kapellmeister. Wagner certainly needed a

friend such as Liszt proved, for the whole course of his life showed that he was right when, in 1848, he wrote to Liszt: "I cannot help myself." In 1849 Liszt writes: "Once for all you may count me among your most zealous and devoted admirers. Near or far you may rely upon me; I am at your command." And Liszt was as good as his word. He produced "Tannhäuser" at Weimar in February, 1849. (The work was first given at Dresden under the composer's direction in 1845.) In a letter to Liszt (February, 1849) Wagner says: "No theatre in the world has thought fit to give my 'Tannhäuser' which appeared four years ago. But no sooner do you settle down in a small court theatre than you take up the work." And he goes on to thank Liszt for all his trouble to bring it out in a satisfactory manner. The news of the success of "Tannhäuser" came to Wagner at a most opportune moment. He was so disgusted with the ignorant despotism under which he suffered at Dresden that he says he was just on the point of giving up art, preferring to earn a living as a mechanic. "Now," he adds, "I have courage to endure." "Tannhäuser" was given again in 1852, minute attention being given to directions of the composer's contained in some long letters from Zurich. Then Liszt brought out "Lohengrin" at the Weimar theatre. Wagner wrote to him from Paris: "I am burning to know that 'Lohengrin' has been performed. I lay my wish before you. Produce my 'Lohengrin.'" This was the end of April, 1850; on the 28th of August of the same year Liszt brought out the opera, and did all that it was possible for a man to do to ensure success. He next undertook to produce a new opera, "Young Siegfried," on which Wagner was engaged, and even arranged with the authorities at Weimar that certain sums of money should be paid in the meantime to the composer, so that he might work free from care. "Siegfried," however, was never finished; it proved merely the germ from which sprang the "Ring des Nibelungen." "Rienzi" and the "Flying Dutchman" were also given at Weimar.

But Liszt did more than this. He undertook to be Wagner's agent in connection with the production of his operas at other theatres, while Wagner was an exile. Not an agent in the ordinary sense of the word. He received no commission. All he did was out of pure love for his friend and enthusiasm for his music. And it was often troublesome work too. Here is a specimen. In 1850 there was some talk of giving "Lohengrin" at Brussels. Wagner asks Liszt to correspond with the manager of the Brussels theatre to see about a score, and to do all he can in the matter. Why should Liszt be troubled? Because, says Wagner in a naïve way, "You are more capable than I am."

Liszt was generous, practical, and enthusiastic. Generous indeed! When Wagner was in Paris, in 1849, he sends him 300 francs to enable him to get back to Switzerland, and sends a 100 thalers (which he says he got from some mysterious friend) to Dresden to Wagner's wife to enable her to join him there. Soon after that he sends him again 300 francs to pay a tailor's bill. Liszt could not always help his friend, but even at these times his generous nature shows itself. In 1849 Wagner writes a piteous letter: his purse is well-nigh empty. "For the moment," replies Liszt, "my purse is quite empty. Try and manage until Christmas. I then expect to receive some money, and will give you as much of it as I possibly can." Liszt was about right when in another letter he says to Wagner: "It is not always easy to serve a friend like you." Then Liszt sends a 100 thalers to Wagner to enable him to have a holiday after his hard work at the "Walküre." A year afterwards Wagner, in writing about a present which he had received from Zigesar, Intendant of Weimar theatre, says: "It powerfully reminds me that last year I visited the islands of Lake Maggiore at the cost of friend Liszt."

In 1856 Liszt sends Wagner a 1,000 francs, apparently from himself. Wagner wanted Liszt to promise the same sum for the two following years. Liszt much regrets that he cannot do so; with a Kapellmeister's pension of 1,000 thalers and 300 extra for court concerts (in all, roughly speaking, a wee bit over £200), he finds it as much as he can do to keep himself, his mother, and his three children. His symphonic poems, he says, do not bring him in a farthing, nay, they cost him something, for he has to pay for the copies which he gives to his friends. In 1858 Wagner again wants money—a 1,000 francs. Liszt gets the money from M. Emile Ollivier, his son-in-law.

In the course of this paper I notice here and there the practical nature of Liszt. Let me, however, give here two specimens of it. "Keep," says he on one occasion, "from political commonplaces, socialistic nonsense, and personal disputes." Again, "Do not worry about the spiteful and silly things which are freely said about you." And one or two specimens of his enthusiasm. "Your 'Lohengrin' is from beginning to end a noble work." "'Lohengrin' is the noblest work of art which, up to now, we possess." And once more, "'Lohengrin' will be the highest, completest work of art until the 'Nibelungen' is finished."

Now a few words about Wagner's character. I shall have to speak of his failings presently. But let us look at the real man, and for that purpose let us take him at his best moments. That is only fair. You would not judge Shakespeare as a playwright by the "Merry Wives of

Windsor," Raphael as a painter by one of his ordinary Madonnas, Beethoven by his "Battle of Vittoria." Wagner was honest. "Only one thing can I do, and that I will do willingly—*i.e.*, write operas. For all else I am useless. To play a rôle, to accept any public post, is impossible, and I should deceive my friends if I were to say I could." So he said in 1849, and he declared the same thing over and over again. His aims were lofty. "The best that I can, I will," he writes. And when not racked by pain, or worried in mind, he was full of confidence.

Wagner went to Switzerland in 1849, and here were his headquarters during the period of the correspondence. But his life assumed a rondo-form, Switzerland being the principal theme; the flying visits to Paris, the Philharmonic campaign in London, the short stay at Venice, so many episodes. He picked out Zurich as a place where he could work quietly; he calls it "friendly" Zurich. No sooner is he settled there than he sets to work at a new opera, "Siegfried's Tod," expressly for Weimar. Liszt in his letters is always asking how the work is progressing. But Wagner for a time was engaged on his literary work, "Oper und Drama." However, in November, 1851, Wagner announces to his friend that the opera "Siegfried" must be abandoned. He finds that "Siegfried's Tod" is only a fragment, a part of a whole. He has now worked out the full plan. This was none other than the "Ring des Nibelungen," with its four parts. Liszt may think it a bold, fantastic plan, but, says Wagner, the nature of the material (*i.e.*, the "Nibelungen Myth") demands it. Liszt was delighted with the idea, and "entertains not the slightest doubt as to the monumental success of the work." But for the moment he must have been disappointed, for he was counting on the "Siegfried" opera for Weimar. In 1852 Wagner conducted some performances of the "Flying Dutchman" at Zurich, and, according to Wagner's account, they were very successful. In June of that year he is hard at work at his "Walküre." It is turning out "fearfully beautiful." The year 1852 is occupied too in correspondence respecting the production of "Tannhäuser," and the difficulties in connection with Hülsen, the manager of the Court Opera at Berlin. At the beginning of 1853 his "Nibelungen" dramas are ready, and he is longing to commence the music—the form of the poems has determined the form of the music, and he is quite at one with himself respecting the accomplishment of his plan. He only wants some charm of life to stimulate him, to make his thoughts flow freely, joyfully from his pen. This, however, he did not get. (I look upon the "Ring des Nibelungen" as a great and wonderful but not a perfect work. Inspiration comes and goes; the work seems

to me a reflection of the composer's life at the time—moments of pure calm or intense excitement, followed by moments of dulness or even despair. I know that to say a word against any note of Wagner's is, according to some of his followers, an unpardonable sin. But I shall certainly say what I think and what I feel; *my* opinion can do no harm to Wagner, and for myself, as for others, honesty is the best policy.) In 1853 there was a musical festival at Zurich, which Wagner conducted, and which gave him great satisfaction. In August he started on a journey to Italy. Here is his brief but characteristic account of it: "In Genoa I was taken ill; went to Spezia and got worse; no chance of enjoyment, so I came home to die—or to compose."

In 1854 he is at work at the "Rheingold." "I am getting on," he says, "with the scoring. I have just gone down with my orchestra into Nibelheim." In July he is writing the "Walküre"—the only thing which makes him endure life. This reminds us of Beethoven: "I live only in my music," once wrote the greatest of musicians, whose life also was one of trouble.

About this time a new idea seizes hold of him. "I have mentally sketched a 'Tristan und Isolde,'" he writes, "a very simple and thoroughly musical conception." "Your 'Tristan,'" replies Liszt, "is a noble idea. It may become a wonder-work. Don't give it up."

Wagner was invited to London, as you probably all know, to conduct the concerts of the Philharmonic Society in 1855. Liszt writes to congratulate him, but reminds him that in his excitement, probably, he had forgotten to say whether it was the old or the new. It is somewhat amusing to learn what tempted Wagner to accept the invitation. Not the honour, not the salary. No. "I thought," he says to Liszt, "I might so far win over the English to my cause as to render possible next year a first-rate German Opera company for my works and under my direction—this under the patronage of the Court." Liszt replies: "Your proposition is most profitable, only," he adds, "beware of theatre speculations." Liszt, as we have said, was a man of the world. Wagner must, indeed, have been in an excited state when he first arrived, for Liszt reminds him that he had given no street or number of his house. "Your reputation," he adds, "has reached to the stars, yet it is just possible that the London postman may know nothing of 'Tannhäuser' and 'Lohengrin.'" Wagner, while in London, was at work at his "Nibelungen." Writing about his troubles with regard to performances of "Tannhäuser" and "Lohengrin" at German theatres, he says: "What I am now doing shall never be produced excepting under fitting conditions. If I die without bringing

it out, I leave it to you. When you die burn it. Let that be a bargain." Here is a remark from the same letter. Speaking of a Philharmonic concert, he says: "Strange that Mendelssohnians confessed that they had never heard or understood the 'Overture of the Hebrides' so well as under my direction." He was, judging by his letters, very unhappy. "I heartily regret being here, and shall never think of returning. I am in a wildly foreign element, and in a false position." Speaking of some fragments of "Lohengrin," which were well received, he is annoyed to think that men will form an opinion of his whole being from those fragments. "Let me finish my 'Nibelungen,'" he exclaims, "that is all I care about." The critics abuse him, the public is for the most part cold, his orchestra is only a clever machine. The ridiculous (the adjective is Wagner's) Mendelssohn *cultus* everywhere confronts him. He longs to be back in Switzerland. He, however, meets Ellerton, and he likes him; he is the first Englishman whom he has met who does not rave about Mendelssohn. The Queen and Prince Albert were present at the last Philharmonic Concert, and spoke to him in a very friendly manner. "Only think," says Wagner, "that they had to do with a politically infamous traitor, publicly pursued by writ of arrest, and one must acknowledge that I am right in thanking both most heartily." On returning from London, he receives an offer to go to America. High terms are offered—a strong temptation to one who needed money; but Wagner feels that he would only sacrifice his best strength without any good result, and therefore declines.

In the summer of 1856 we find him not far from Geneva in a pension about to begin his "Siegfried." From the balcony he has a splendid view of the Mount Blanc chain: there is a pretty garden to the pension. There is one drawback: he has to give up his room every Sunday morning for the Protestant service to be held; but this he does willingly—out of respect to religion. And he has a piano—though not of the best sort. In this letter he writes: "I have two wonderful subjects which some day I must work out. 'Tristan and Isolde' (that you know)—but then, the Victory—the Holiest—complete Redemption." I suppose this was the germ whence sprang the "Parsifal" of 1882. This year (1856) Liszt pays him a visit. In 1857 we find him trying to sell his "Nibelungen" to Härtel's. He is leading, too, "Siegfried" into the lonely wood. But he is getting anxious about money. He has an idea. "Tristan" will be, as he conceives it, a thoroughly practicable work; it will take; he will get money by it; he will have it translated into Italian and dedicate it to the Emperor of Brazil. Castles in the air. Such was not the lot in store for "Tristan." "What in the name of all the gods,"

asks Liszt, "do you mean by an opera for Italian singers? The incredible and the impossible have become elements belonging to you, so perhaps you may accomplish this."

In 1858 he decides to go for a time to Venice. In September he writes from that city: "You will be pleased to learn that Venice has not disappointed my expectations—the melancholy quiet of the great canal near which I live in a stately palace with spacious rooms is sympathetic to me"—and then he mentions the walks in the market place, rides in gondolas, visits to the art-treasures. He means to work at "Tristan." But later on—*i.e.*, the next year—we find him in Lucerne with "Tristan" still unfinished. "Finish 'Tristan,' say you," writes Wagner to Liszt; "but how if I cannot. I go with right good will every day to my work, but my head is confused, my heart desolate. Work, say you; but I, poor wretch, can do nothing by routine, and if things do not go of themselves, I can do nothing." By the commencement of August, however, "Tristan" was completed.

We next find him in Paris, the city of "mud and smoke," as Liszt calls it in one of his letters. As Wagner paid several visits to Paris during the ten years of exile (1849-59), I have taken them altogether so as not to interrupt too much the thread of my Swiss tale. Before speaking of this last visit to Paris in 1859, I must, therefore, refer—but very briefly—to the earlier ones.

Wagner went there for the first time in 1839, and stopped over two years. It was during that period that the first letter to Liszt of our correspondence was addressed. When forced to quit Dresden in May, 1849, he went straight to Zurich, but in the following month he writes to Liszt from Paris. He refers to the first period and to its trials. Now he finds Paris is not the market for his wares; he feels sad and lonely. No one understands him, no one sympathises with him. He wants to write an opera for Paris, but cannot work there. His friend sends him a letter, and we see how well Liszt understood the art of getting on. "Modify 'Rienzi,'" he says, "and introduce a ballet to please the Parisians, and work out a new opera in partnership with two men (whom he names), men who thoroughly know the paths which lead to fame." "Make yourself possible" was another piece of wise, but, so far as Wagner was concerned, useless advice. Wagner soon returns to Switzerland, but has made arrangements about a book. "God grant," he writes, "that my librettist and I may understand one another and agree." Nothing however came of this matter. He paid a short visit to Paris again in 1850, and there is only one letter written from there to Liszt, but it is about "Lohengrin" and money. He is in Paris again in 1853. On Liszt's birthday he "Tannhäusered" and "Lohengrinned" on a beautiful Erard piano

in an astonishing manner, and he saw the Emperor Napoleon, and what more—he adds—can one wish! Early in 1858 we find him again in Paris in a modest room on the third floor of the Grand Hôtel du Louvre. His object in visiting Paris was to try and arrange with the manager of the Théâtre Lyrique for the production of “Rienzi”—as a first *entrée*—but only if he could do so on advantageous terms. For the work itself he cared no longer: it might be murdered, if only it brought him money. Let us be fair to Wagner; he only meant money to enable him to work. Wagner had brought with him the first act of “Tristan,” which he describes as “a wonderful piece of music.” He is longing to show it to someone, and feels tempted to play over some of it to Berlioz, regardless of the torture he might inflict by his playing. The mere idea of these two masters of the orchestra seated before a piano, the technique of which neither ever had the patience to learn, is certainly comical. In 1859 we find Wagner once more meditating a move. For a time he was wavering between New York and Paris. “I don’t think much of your American plan,” writes Liszt; “you will be more uncomfortable there than you were in London” (He refers to the Philharmonic engagement in 1855 of which we have spoken). “Paris,” he adds, “may not be to your liking, but there you will find much to distract and enliven you; and it will be better for you than your solitary Swiss walks, however beautiful the region of the Alps may be.”

We have a letter dated from Paris, October 20, 1859—indeed, all the remaining letters of the second volume, with one exception, when he paid a flying visit to Brussels, are dated from that city. He speaks of himself as “without faith, love, or hope”—the three cardinal points of the Christian compass. But in the following year the clouds of adversity appear to be rolling by. “Tannhäuser” is going to be performed at the Grand Opera. Wagner is counting on a triumph: every one seems well disposed towards him. “You will be astonished to learn,” he writes to Liszt, “that I feel happy; but I enjoy the calm of the fatalist who gives himself up to his lot, wondering perhaps at the strange manner in which I am dealt with and led into unexpected paths; and saying to myself silently, it must come all right at last.” This was only the calm before the storm. “Tannhäuser,” as you know, was given in Paris in 1861, and failed. The fates were still unpropitious. I have not to enter into any details respecting the performances. The last letter from Wagner in the correspondence is dated June 15, 1861; but although “Tannhäuser” was produced in March, there are no letters referring to the event. Possibly Liszt was in Paris at the time.

It is true greatness to have in one the frailty of a man and the security of a god “Vere magnum habere fragilitatem

hominis, securitatem Dei." So wrote Seneca. Wagner had a great mind, but if Seneca be right, to perceive the full measure of his greatness we must take note also of his frailties. Feeble health caused him to be now peevish, now angry, now sarcastic; and his slender purse made him unhappy, and at times despairing. But the fact that he could not enjoy life caused him to turn with all the greater zest to his art, and the greater his outward weakness the greater his inward strength. The lives of many great men seem to show that the one is the necessary complement of the other—that without the weakness we should not have the strength; and further, that the two are in inverse ratio to one another—the poorer the body, the richer the soul. Wagner felt that modern art was doomed to die and that he was destined to deal the death-blow. In the eyes of the world this would appear foolhardiness, arrogance. What right then have we to set it down as a mark of greatness? Why, because, like David, he marched with sling and stones against the Philistines, and waged a life-long war against them. The Philistines against whom he strove were stronger than the bragging giant of the old fable, and Wagner did not kill them; but he struck deeply at the root of all that was unmeaning and false in art. He preached that art was a sacred thing, not given to man for amusement or gain, but to raise and ennoble him. He had the courage of his opinions, he would not give way, although by a little trimming he might have made friends, might soon have acquired fame and fortune. None but a great man could have done this. And then we have his works. There are many able and earnest musicians who think Wagner was mistaken in his aims, who refuse to accept his operas and music dramas as gospel, who find much in them repulsive to their tastes and modes of thinking; but it is no exaggeration to say that all of Wagner's antagonists whose names count for anything have fully acknowledged the greatness of the genius manifested in these works—genius misdirected, as they say. I have already alluded to one of Wagner's weaknesses—his inability to help himself. It was the key-note struck at the opening of the correspondence, and it is repeated so often that we are in no danger of forgetting it. The very fact that Liszt was always coming to the assistance of Wagner with coin, counsel, or consolation must, if I may be allowed the expression, have strengthened that weakness. "With Liszt's help" was Wagner's motto, to which he ought to have added the "O man, help thyself," of Beethoven.

He was poor, and this, as we have said, made him unhappy and often despairing. Like Macbeth, he was "cabin'd cribb'd, confin'd, bound in to saucy doubts and fears." He did not desire wealth, he only wanted sufficient to enable him

to work with mind free from anxiety. "If you would give me," he says to Liszt in a letter of 1849, "enough to live like an ordinary workman, you would rejoice in what I could produce, my mind being at ease." He was in a miserable condition when he first went to Zurich. In October, 1849, we find him short of firewood and without a greatcoat. He says, despairingly, "Shall I write in the papers, 'I have nothing to live on; will any one who cares for me help me?'" His needy circumstances, especially on his wife's account, he tells Liszt, often plunged him into deep melancholy. "This melancholy serves no good purpose," he adds, "but I owe it to my sound nature, that I can always manage in the end to shake it off."

Here is a picture of the man in 1854: "I am sitting with folded arms, giving myself up to my sorrows. I can do nothing—nothing, except my 'Nibelungen,' and even that will be impossible without great and energetic help. Best and only friend! Listen! I can do nothing unless others do it for me."

Wagner enjoyed, as the French say, bad health, and this affected his temper. He had a nervous complaint and a bad digestion. He went in 1851 to a hydropathic establishment and derived temporary benefit from it. "Ye unhappy men," he cries out in Carlyle fashion, "get a good digestion, and suddenly life will appear to you something very different." Liszt once speaking about the Greville Memoirs, said: "Greville was bilious, fond of eating, and vindictive; and every time he got an attack of indigestion the world appeared to him under an aspect as false as it was unsightly." Winter was Wagner's great enemy. In one letter he writes: "The beautiful spring weather, after the dreary winter, makes me feel better, and now I am going to work again at my poem. In 1853 he is in a bad state, he fancies he is going to die. He has a doctor to see him—a careful, conscientious man. "Rest assured," he writes sarcastically to Liszt, "it won't be his fault if I do not recover." Later on he speaks of sleepless nights, days without comfort: "It cannot go on so! I can no longer endure life." At times he meditates suicide, but fears the act would be an immoral one. In one part of this correspondence Wagner tells us that not a year closed without his forming the resolution to make away with himself. But, like many others, he paused before shuffling off this mortal coil. It is, I think, the weak, not the strong-minded who commit suicide.

In the summer of 1853 he is at Zurich unwell, unstrung—ready for death. And so we might go on with this dark picture. Already even in 1848 he talks about Kapellmeister sorrows as the daily bread which he ate; in 1849 he has given up all thoughts of enjoyment in life.

In 1854 he entreats Liszt "to look at the world with contempt; that is what it deserves. It is bad, bad, thoroughly bad."

In the year 1858, while Wagner was in Venice, he seems to have shown a bit of his temper, and for a time the friendship between him and Liszt seemed to be in a parlous state. Liszt had been prevented from going to Zurich by official duties, which Wagner describes as trivial. Liszt tells him that in a calmer moment he will recognise how unjust he has been to speak thus. And then, again, there was a misunderstanding about a performance of "Rienzi." Wagner tried to get his *droits d'auteur* before they were actually due. He attempted a bit of finessing, but it was clumsily done; he did not get the money, and nearly lost his friend. There were grievous words on both sides, which stirred up anger. Liszt, for once, was out of temper. "Your scolding has done me good," says Wagner; "I know that I let myself go too far, and count too much on the patience of others."

At first sight one would feel inclined to look upon Wagner as a selfish man, because he was always thinking and writing about himself. Judged by an ordinary moral standard he would be set down as an egotist, but no ordinary standard will do to measure genius, which has its own laws. All great men are more or less wrapt up in themselves. Lord Bacon, while saying "It is a poor centre of a man's actions, himself," acknowledges that the referring of all to a man's self is more tolerable in a sovereign prince, because, he says, "themselves are not only themselves, but their good and evil is at the peril of the public fortune. But it is a desperate evil in a servant to a prince, or a citizen in a republic." And great men in every department of art *are* princes, not servants. In looking after themselves they are looking after others; in seeing to their own comfort and welfare they are really caring for others. They work for the world; they add to the spiritual wealth of the human race. They feel a talent has been committed to their care, and that talent, emanating from themselves, makes themselves the centre of their thoughts and actions. Take, for example, Beethoven. "His letters," says Sir G. Grove, "are all concerned with himself, his wants and wishes, his joys and sorrows."

You can pick out many a passage in Wagner's letters and say—These are the marks of a selfish man. But read them with the context, think what the man felt and thought when writing them, and I think you will admit that they are not the marks of a man who thought of comfort or pleasure for its own sake. For example, he wanted once, after working hard at his "Walküre," to have a ramble in the Alps, and he asks Liszt to lend him money for the purpose. Fancy an ordinary man worrying a friend for money to enable him to

have a pleasant holiday. Liszt knew that Wagner's holiday was to fit him for important labour, and sent him money at once. In reference to some business arrangements about the production of one of his works at Berlin, Wagner writes to Liszt, "I should be a fool if I took the matter out of your hands so long as you are not weary of it." He did not mean that he would be a fool to do anything so long as he could get someone else to do it, but that Liszt might bring about a good result, whereas he would most probably do exactly the reverse.

Wagner disliked Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer, They were of Jewish descent, and in 1851 he wrote to Liszt respecting his celebrated article on Judaism in music: "I long have entertained a grudge against the Jewish community, and this grudge is as necessary to my nature as gall to blood." Why this bitter feeling? What had they done to him? Mendelssohn, when in the zenith of his fame, had taken no notice of a Symphony which the ambitious youthful composer had given into his hands; Meyerbeer, according to a statement of Wagner's in one of our letters, had intentionally failed to befriend him. For years he saw these two Jewish composers making their mark in the world whilst he was unsuccessful. There were then personal reasons why he should not feel specially drawn towards the chiefs; and taking the part for the whole synecdochically condemned all. *Ex duobus didicit omnes*. While Mendelssohn was alive, Wagner was on friendly, if not intimate, terms with him. We know from Wagner himself that he frequently met him, dined with him, and even once made music with him. Of Meyerbeer he says in a letter: "He is an amiable man and I do not hate him." Mendelssohn's music Wagner knew how to appreciate: the finished form of the "Midsummer Night's Dream," the imagination of the "Hebrides" Overture, the charm of the "Scotch" Symphony did not escape his notice. But in their artistic aims the two men had little in common: Mendelssohn clung to the past, Wagner looked to the future; the one was conservative, the other radical. Wagner's artistic feeling against Meyerbeer was a strong one. The latter was chief representative of a style of dramatic art which Wagner thought radically false and degrading. The references to Mendelssohn in the correspondence are very few and far between; and this is but natural, for Mendelssohn had gone to his rest before the flight from Dresden, when the letters only begin to be of importance. The few allusions, however, are more or less of a disagreeable kind; but they may be all excused, inasmuch as they were addressed to his friend Liszt, and not to the world. Referring to the above-mentioned pamphlet, Wagner says that in justice to himself and his friends he must fully express his opposition to

Meyerbeer, and loudly declare that he had nothing in common with him. It would perhaps have been better for Wagner, and, at any rate, more dignified, had he left his friends and the world to make this easy discovery for themselves.

Berlioz is mentioned a good many times. His opera, "Benvenuto Cellini," was given at Weimar in 1852, and Liszt thought very highly of it, and wrote to that effect to Wagner. The latter answered as follows, and it is interesting to learn the judgment of one great man on another: "Believe me, I love Berlioz; he understands me not, but I understand him. If I expect anything from anyone it is from Berlioz, but not by the way in which he attained to the tastelessness of his 'Faust' Symphony; for if he goes further in that direction he can only become perfectly ridiculous. If ever a musician needed a poet it is Berlioz. I see with grief that this artist, gifted beyond all measure, is going to ruin through this egotistical loneliness." This was a sharp-sighted yet generous criticism.

But what did Wagner think of his friend Liszt's compositions? It is difficult to say exactly. In writing about them he often uses plenty of words, but they often seem intended to conceal rather than reveal his thoughts. Liszt sends him some music written on the occasion of the celebration of Goethe's 100th birthday. Wagner perceives in it the claw of the lion; "but," says he, "let us see the whole lion."

In 1854 Liszt sends Wagner his "Künstler" chorus to words of Schiller. Wagner reads the score and shakes his head. Here and there are details which he approves of, but the poem, the form of the music determined by the words, do not suit him. But he reads through the score again, fancies he sees Liszt at the conductor's desk, and then he understood. He took Liszt in his own way, and thus could speak well of the work. This I call damning with faint praise.

While Wagner is in London in 1855, Liszt announces to him that he is writing a Symphony—a sort of musical commentary to Dante's Divine Comedy. Wagner writes back that he has no doubt he will succeed with hell and purgatory, but he is more doubtful about the heaven section, inasmuch as Liszt announces the introduction of a choral element into the third part. The last part of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, he says, is the weakest—and he evidently leaves Liszt to conclude that where Beethoven failed he would not be likely to succeed. Even Dante's "Heaven," says Wagner, is not equal to what goes before. In 1856, Liszt sends him six of his Symphonic Poems. Wagner must hear them played by the composer before he can understand them. He praises them, it is true; he tells Liszt

he is an astonishing man ; but as I said at first, there is a beating about the bush, a want of directness about his remarks.

Liszt, in answer to some complaints of Wagner, advised him in calm philosophical language to be patient. This is how Wagner received the advice. "You exhort me to be patient," he says; "but my dear noble friend, reflect that with patience one can at best prolong bare life, but no man has ever obtained from patience alone strength and fulness to enrich life and make it productive. Such a method will not succeed with me." A little later on Liszt, in answer to a wild letter from Wagner, in which he proposes that Liszt and he should leave Philistines, Jews, and Jesuits, and go into the wide world, reminds him that the pricks and wounds which he bears in his heart will follow him wherever he goes. "Your greatness," he says, "is the cause of your misery; both are irretrievably interwoven with one another, and must trouble and torture you until you allow them, sinking into faith, to disappear." Liszt cannot preach or explain it, but he will pray to God that He will enlighten Wagner's heart through His faith and His love; and then in a few simple words he points him to Christ, the only Saviour. Here then we have in a few words Liszt's religious belief. Men of all creeds can but admire the simple earnest way in which he sought to give what he considered the best comfort to his distressed friend. Wagner acknowledges the good intention shown, but reminds Liszt that the forms in which men seek to win consolation when in unfortunate circumstances differ according to one's being, one's needs, one's education. He, too, has a strong faith, but it is a faith in the future of the human race. He believes in nothing else. Yet Liszt's noble life shows him what a noble belief he must have. This quiet and friendly interchange of thought between two men holding such opposite views is deeply interesting. But let us turn to another passage. About a year after the above religious discussion, if we may so call it, Wagner writes to Liszt to tell him of a heavenly gift which has reached him in his solitude. This was Schopenhauer, the apostle of pessimism. Freedom from suffering is to be found by the renunciation of will. To Liszt Wagner says—"Because you are religious you express your ideas differently, but I am convinced we are one in thought. What Liszt thought of Wagner's guide, philosopher, and friend may be indirectly gathered from a letter in which Liszt speaks of him as "that old snarling poodle, Schopenhauer."

In conclusion, I have to remind you that we have been looking at only one period of the lives of Liszt and Wagner. They were almost of the same age; the one having been

born in 1811, the other in 1813. Liszt's life may, roughly speaking, be divided into three periods: the first was devoted to virtuosity, the second to art, the third to the church. It is in the second, the Weimar period, that we have found him. The first brought him fame, and the third, let us hope, spiritual comfort; but in the second, as the champion of Berlioz, Wagner, and others, he appeared, as an artist, to the best advantage. Wagner had also his periods—but in all art is the chief thing. Before he went to Zurich, he had produced "Rienzi," "Flying Dutchman," "Tannhäuser," and "Lohengrin." In his transition period, as Liszt calls it, we see in this correspondence more of the man than of the artist, so that he is scarcely seen at his best. Wagner's troubles did not come to an end after his return to Germany in 1861, but Bayreuth formed a noble termination to an eventful life.

The friendship of Liszt for Wagner is the golden thread running through the correspondence. It will serve to perpetuate the name of Liszt when perhaps his Symphonic Poems may be forgotten. True friendships are not common. As a poet has written—

Nothing is commoner than the name :
Nothing rarer than the thing itself.

DISCUSSION.

THE CHAIRMAN.—Ladies and gentlemen, I think we shall be all of one mind in thanking Mr. Shedlock for a very interesting, concise, and explicit review of these letters. As I have the honour of being in the chair I may say I believe that I have this time some qualification for it, as I have known intimately not only Wagner, but Liszt, for many years, and have heard from Wagner's own mouth his whole history from his childhood upwards, all of which will appear in a work which I have just finished. So I may say that I understand these letters better than anyone—better, I should say, than Cosima, the wife of Wagner, because she was not aware of what occurred in the early period, and it is not probable that he would have told her all that I know; indeed, I am convinced he did not, for I was in possession of secrets, even after he was married. As to the noble-minded Liszt, there is no word to praise him too highly. He was the most noble-minded man you can imagine: he had a heart not only for Wagner, but for all men. I have seen him give advice to poor musicians who had not a great horizon before them to help them on, even to that extent, and he would have gone through fire and water to help them.

I met him continually at all Musical Festivals, and have known him intimately, and I have some letters which will prove that he had an opinion of me too which is worthy of being preserved in writing, and of which I am proud, more so than of any Royal patent or any degree. But his devotion to Wagner was so wonderfully gentle, it was so entire, that there is no feeling to which it can be compared but that of a mother, the holiest thing on earth. Wagner was so much a child in some respects that when one reads these letters without knowing him intimately, without knowing the grandeur of Wagner's perception, his great mind, his earnestness, his sublime morale, he appears like a child compared with Liszt, who was always ready with his self-command to cajole him, to pet him gently, and say: "You must not do this—it is right, but you are running against prejudice; keep away from it." And the wonderful generosity he had at all times to help him! Then, on the other hand, it must not be forgotten that Wagner wrote these letters without the slightest notion (that I can vouch for) that they should ever be seen by the world, and Wagner was by no means the man you would take him to be from some of these letters in which he is complaining about not having money. He was by no means a man for money, as you will see if I tell you a few isolated facts. It was not at Zürich only that he received an offer from America. The offer was addressed to me in London with a cheque that he was to fill up. It claimed from him only the promise to go, and he was to fill the cheque up to any amount. I had the cheque, and therefore can vouch for the truth of it. Wagner said—"How can I go to America with these people that know nothing of music?" He had no idea then how America would develop itself, and show such a wonderful enthusiasm in a new direction as they have done in many things, outdoing the old country. But Wagner had another offer while I was staying with him. He said: "Look at that, is it not odd? all the money that is offered to me I am obliged to reject." That was a letter from the Duke of Coburg in which he asked him if he would score one of his operas. The secret of those operas is not so thoroughly understood as might be, but I do not think I shall do any harm in mentioning it. It is what the French call a *sécret de polichinelle*—everybody knows it, but they do not say it. These operas of the Duke of Coburg consisted in his whistling some tunes while his wife put them on the piano with a vulgar accompaniment, such as ladies who do not know anything of harmony would give. Thus the opera was produced, but before it was produced—that is a current story in Germany—he heard some music performed, and he said to the Capellmeister: "That is very nice, what is it?" And the reply was—"That is the Overture to your Royal Highness's

next opera." That is a true story. We will not speak more of the Duke; but, however, he offered him £150 when Wagner would have been very glad of much less than that for his absolute necessities, but he said: "How can I accept anything like that?" He was to stay at the Ducal Palace for three months free of all expenses, but he refused it. And so with many other things that I could tell you—offers of money—that Wagner resisted. Speaking of offers of money, we must not forget that when he had no money whatever at Zürich there was a family that lived at Dresden of the name of Ritter, intimate friends of his, and they came into a fortune. They at once most nobly gave him an annual income, which he enjoyed for many years, and had he been a little more economical he would have done extremely well. Anybody else might have eked it out, but he could not sit quiet; he must now and then go to France or Italy, or where he could. He was an exile under one of the most infamous persecutions that could be found in history owing to the very dense head of the King of Saxony, who was a most amiable man and a loving father, but extremely stubborn in politics. He would not allow any of the other Courts to receive him, and although there are letters published of this Duchess and that Grand Duchess showing how they admired his works, none of them had the nobility to beg the King of Saxony to allow him to come back. If you read the whole of the two volumes, you will find that Liszt never once lost patience in answering him like a mother to a child. If he even now and then tells him "You must not do that, it is naughty," he does it so gently, so genially, so kindly, that one cannot help admiring him. If Liszt had his faults, which he had, they were very much over-shadowed by his greatness, his goodness, his genius, so that literally there is no man in history to whom you can look up with such undiminished delight as to Liszt. The correspondence has often been likened to that between Goethe and Schiller; but there we have a sorrowful comparison, because Schiller, with all his love and enthusiasm, found in Goethe one who was exceedingly egotistical, and one who was too much of a courtier, so that really there is no comparison between the two. We may leave those two great poets, for to compare their correspondence with that of Liszt and Wagner would certainly be quite wrong, because in this case there is such an intense devotion. If Wagner does not praise Liszt's works with very enthusiastic feeling, it is another proof of his extreme veracity. Wagner could not tell lies if he tried. It was against the grain, and it is easy to understand that his genius would not allow anything but the very highest to come into such a position to him that he could look up to it. He has told me that Liszt had undoubtedly moments of genius, but

that he had not studied enough, and had begun too late in life. There is not the least question that that is the most honest criticism one can give to Liszt's works. The ambition was there, the great gift was also there, but there is not that continuity of reasoning power in it which requires study, and beginning at a time of life when the brain is still able to receive impressions, which afterwards is impossible. No man of an advanced age could study the primer and learn grammar. If he were a genius of the first order it was born in him—one of the geniuses who make the grammar. They know what has been done before by intuition, and not only have that in them, but by going much beyond that they improve that grammar; however, that is always a matter where doctors disagree. We have only to go back to history as early as the sixteenth century, when Monteverde was accused of being a bold musician because he used the chord of the dominant much oftener than other masters did. That is sufficient to prove that genius, such as Monteverde's was, should never care about his contemporaries, but do what his spirit tells him, and that will guide him in the right way. Now that Wagner is dead and his personal influence gone, we see everywhere that the Wagner enthusiasm is rising, and there is not the slightest help from outside. Therefore, let people abuse him, let them find fault with this, that, and the other; let mawkish people, who have not studied history—or else they would know the myth of the Northern nations—abuse him for the love of sisters in the "Nibelungen"; let them shake their heads until they have shaken them off, they will not in any way change history, because that is not his invention; he took that story from the northern myth, and if we go farther we may find similar things in our own great Book. But leaving that, and coming back to the correspondence, it is absolutely necessary that we should have really complete knowledge of a man like Wagner to judge him fairly. First he wanted certain things—he was extremely sickly of body, and had been troubled with sickness from his earliest childhood, and it had never left him. At times he was so despondent that his talk about suicide must be taken *cum grano salis*. That is one of those things so easily said: "I really will make away with myself"; but when one thinks of it one does not do it. It must only be taken as an outburst of suffering. But his earnestness, his habit of looking always up to the ideal, and of always having the good of the great mass at heart—because it is for the great mass that he wrote—these are all in his work. He said all art should address itself to the great mass just as much as to the high born, perhaps even more, because art is the only thing on earth that can draw us out of the miseries of daily life. No one exists without some poetic or religious notion—which is very

much one and the same thing—and Wagner's religion was one of the noblest you will find anywhere. His letters dealing with it are most interesting, and I have conversed with him many times on this subject. It is hard to give a condensed description of his religion, but it was the noblest religion one can imagine. His love for his fellow creatures and for animals was remarkable; his genial kindness to everybody around him was so great that one could not help loving him. I am afraid in my enthusiasm I may say too much. You may think I am too great a champion; but I have known both these men, and it is a great thing to say I have known them, because they are two of the greatest specimens of the human kind I can imagine. I think we owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Shedlock that he has given us such a clear review of all these letters, because it will be some time before those who cannot read them in German will be able to do so at all. It will be some time before they are published in English, and then I have strong doubts whether the translation will really give the spirit of the German, because there is this peculiar difficulty in Wagner's case, that his language is extremely difficult to translate. That has been found by most of those who have tried it. I fear some charm will be lost; there will be a little something that cannot be translated by any mere words. But let us hope that they will generally become known, and that the names of these two men will go down to posterity as they deserve, both of them being of the noblest of human kind.

Mr. COLERIDGE.—I should like to ask a question or two if I may be permitted. We are very fortunate in having as our Chairman this evening a gentleman who has known both these men intimately. I never could, in reading the fair amount of Wagner literature that I have read, quite account for the impecuniosity of Wagner during certain periods of his life, until I heard some of the remarks made by our Chairman just now. I was in Dresden for two summers, in 1852 and 1853, and took very accurate note then of what I heard at the theatre, and it certainly was remarkable that in those two long vacations—I was then a Cambridge man—I did not hear a single note of Wagner. I did not know of his existence I think at that time, yet now we come to read after his death of great performances both of "Rienzi" and "Tannhäuser." I am ready to be corrected by our Chairman, who knows these things much more accurately than I do, but I understood that those performances were highly successful not only to the treasury of the theatre of Dresden, but also successful, I think, in making personal friends in Dresden for Wagner himself. One of his friends to whom he alludes in his twelve enormous volumes, which I have vainly tried to attack, but have read here and there in, will be a name very familiar—

Tichatschek, a great tenor. He was certainly a splendid artist, and sang magnificently, and was the leading tenor of Dresden. He came over here, I think, for one or two seasons, and was so very fond of his fees that people used to call him "Take-a-cheque." However, Tichatschek was pointed out to me in Dresden as the *Primo tenore assoluto*, the *facile princeps*, as indeed he was, for he was a most cultivated musician, and a splendid performer in great operas such as "Fidelio" and the difficult works of Meyerbeer. I never heard anyone to approach him. He became a great and firm friend of Wagner; so much so that I think I have heard he had *carte blanche* always to come to Bayreuth, and that Wagner was delighted to see his old friend until he died a few years ago. Tichatschek, I believe, was in receipt at that time of about £700 a year of our money, and was a very prosperous man, and a great friend of Wagner—that Wagner himself admits in parts of his writings. I do not quite understand, therefore, his impecuniosity at that time; but certain it was, because we have his own confession that he was exceedingly poor. In Paris he came under the notice of no less a man than the great Heine, who spoke words of great encouragement to him. I should like to hear how this is to be accounted for—this great want of funds, and even of the common necessities of life at times. I remember I had the honour once of an interview with Liszt at Weimar, and much that I should liked to have asked him about these things I dared not. He received me very kindly, and I had a conversation with him. He described to me the first performance of "Lohengrin," which he said was brilliantly successful, and yet the same impecuniosity as we read of in the history of Wagner was still subsisting, even after that brilliant performance. I am exceedingly obliged for Mr. Praeger's remarks. He is the first person who has enlightened me partially, and I should be much obliged if he could tell me something more about that Dresden period.

The CHAIRMAN.—Wagner's income at Dresden was 1,000 thalers, about £150, during his conductorship, and then he had no other means. He could not teach, he could not do anything else, and he was unfortunately led by his friends to undertake the publishing of "Rienzi" and "Tannhäuser," which did not sell, because they were not performed anywhere else. After 1849, after the Revolution, no one dared to bring them out, and therefore he was called upon to pay back the expenses of his publisher, which crippled him for years and years afterwards. That is not the only time that he has been mulcted where he expected to find resources. I remember a lady from Manchester, a very rich woman, who pretended to be exceedingly taken up with Wagner and was introduced to him in Paris. He wrote to me from Paris, where I went over

to see him, though I was exceedingly ill at the time from rheumatism, and I remember meeting this lady, and she said: "If you are in any way in trouble I will give you £200 at any moment." When she was certainly not well off this £200 was claimed again, and that put him out. The same thing happened to him in Switzerland. Whether he was too easy in believing that it was given or not I do not know, but I remember there was a lady in Switzerland, of very rich people, who made him a present too, but when she died the heirs pretended it was not a present and he had to pay it back, which he did, even when he was at Munich. Wagner was high in favour with the king, by the way. This is the third case in the whole history of music that kings apparently did any good to a composer. They do good to all kinds of men for purposes which had better not be divulged, but not to any genius. But in this case Wagner said: "There, I have to go down to the Chancellor to pay back 800 florins, that I certainly had a right to believe this lady presented me with when I was in Switzerland." He was too generous of nature to have resisted. He might perhaps have brought proofs to show it was given to him, but he would not, and so he was always crippled. Then he was not a man of very keen economical habits. He had certain wants. He said he could not live like other people do. He had no expensive habits; the greatest treat to him was half a bottle of champagne. He did not drink it by himself, but he had a great notion that champagne was a delightful thing. He had also a weakness in his love for his dog; his dog must have an ice when he had one. If people think it is something dreadful that his dog must have an ice at the confectioner's, it is only one of many instances. I am one of those who think that Wagner can never be paid what we owe him, that nothing will ever pay for what he has done. Whether you are a Wagnerian or not it does not matter. To those who are not, I can only say, as I was obliged to tell a professor the other day, when he said "I cannot understand this." "Ah," I said, "that is the old story; you must not accuse Wagner, accuse your understanding, not Wagner's." He thought it was rather rude. But I said, "I have old Johnson to hide myself behind, therefore I cannot gainsay what I have told you."

Mr. EDWARDS.—I should like to say a few words in acknowledgment of the efforts of the reader of this paper. I am speaking as an outsider, and it struck me that Mr. Shedlock had devoted much careful study to these two volumes of letters. He has touched upon all the cities where Wagner has resided during all those years from 1841 to 1861, he touched upon the great men whom he met, and he spoke of some of the phases of Wagner's character which I should like to

say a few words upon. He touched on that curious one with reference to a great Englishman, Carlyle, and I should much like to complete the parallel to Richard Wagner. He said he could not help recalling the phrase of Carlyle when Wagner was complaining of his bad indigestion or something. Now those two men were wonderfully alike in many phases of their character. They were both thinkers to begin with—deep thinkers. Neither of them would concede anything to what they conceived to be false art. They both preferred to starve. Then there is another parallel between those two men. When Carlyle came to London, and was writing for one of the periodicals, he went to the publisher with a letter from Lord Jeffrey. He was going to write an article on Cromwell. The editor was not at home, but an assistant was there (this is told in Froude's "Reminiscences"), and the assistant editor said: "Oh, you need not do that, I am going to do it myself." This very much angered Carlyle, and we know what was the result of Carlyle saying "I will write my own Cromwell." When Wagner was in Paris he went from Meyerbeer to the Grand Opera, and he showed the music of "Rienzi." He had only completed two acts, but he had written of course the whole of the libretto, and he had also the libretto of the "Flying Dutchman." There they said to him: "We do not want your music for that, we have someone who has promised to do it." The phase that makes an outsider, an amateur love Wagner far more than musicians do, is his immense thorough earnestness. Mark you, he took twenty-five years, as Mr. Shedlock told us, for "Parsifal." If we omit the first opera, which was the "Dutchman," and which was written in about six weeks in a small suburb of Paris, none of Wagner's works were written off the reel.

Mr. SHEDLOCK.—With the exception of "Tristan."

Mr. EDWARDS.—And that took two years.

Mr. SHEDLOCK.—But that was a comparatively short time for Wagner.

Mr. EDWARDS.—Still that is a long period. It is curious, I venture to think, that all those works of Wagner were works of a man who *thought*. As Wagner has left it on record in those twelve volumes, no great work except it be of reflection can go down to posterity. That seems to have been the key to Wagner's work. You must think, you must reflect. Carlyle said the great thing of all others in all ages is the appearance of a thinker, and it seems to me that Wagner is likely to go down to posterity because he did think and because he did strive to do his utmost for the good of art.

Mr. COLERIDGE.—There is just one more question I should like to ask. I have always been greatly interested about the single year when he conducted the Philharmonic concerts here. It was a bitter period for him, as we have heard, and I

remember it being stated that he resolved never to come back to this country again. My recollection of the newspapers of those days is that he had not one single friend in the press. I do not know whether I am wrong, but it was one torrent of abuse day by day and week by week, and I do not wonder myself that anybody, especially such an eminent man as that, should have turned his back on this country and declared he would never come here again.

The CHAIRMAN.—I am afraid it would be the very worst thing to ask me about that period, because I caused that period. It was I, as I can prove by the minutes of the Philharmonic Society, that made him come over here. It was through my friend Sainton, when there was no conductor. I worked my French friend up to such a state of frenzy, that there was only one man who could conduct, and that was Wagner. He proposed it to the directors of the Philharmonic, and Wagner was written to. There was a special meeting in which I received the thanks of the directors, all worthy men, although of a different texture to Richard Wagner. This will all be published in my book, including some things no one would fancy would ever be known at all, because I have made a point of not keeping back the slightest thing, good, bad, or indifferent. I had the advice not to do so from a great man, the man who wrote Carlyle's life, who said: "I should warn you against being too open, because I have suffered very much from it." That was Mr. Froude; but I can quite afford to suffer. I am at a time of life when it is very likely I shall not see the end of the controversy, and I should be delighted if it caused ever so much excitement, because I think all that belongs to a great man must come out, good, bad, or indifferent. It is the property of the public to know what their great men were. Even their defects give us a kind of consolation that, after all, if we are no geniuses, we have no worse defects than geniuses, and that is a consolation for people to know. As to this affair, I have made extracts from all the papers, and it will read very curiously to see what in 1855 people thought of the works of Wagner, and how exceedingly shabbily, scurvily, and in many instances I may say infamously, they treated him. Because it was not always their opinion; their private opinion did not always come out on paper. That I can prove, and am in a position to prove, and all the opposition there was was owing to all kinds of things, except the real worth of the composer and his works. I have now to propose a very hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Shedlock for the very able way in which he has presented the matter before us.

Mr. JACQUES, in seconding the motion, said: I might make one remark that occurs to me, and that is, that the balance which Mr. Shedlock struck in the lecture seemed to me

exceedingly able—the way in which he managed to give us much information without leaning too much on one side or the other—though he pointed out at the early part of the lecture how easy it was to make a thing bear on one side or the other. I think in that respect we have to thank him for a very careful work, as all who have done any work of that kind know what trouble it takes.

The vote of thanks was carried unanimously, and a similar compliment to the Chairman, proposed by Mr. SHEDLOCK, terminated the proceedings.
