THE LIFE

OF

JOHANNES BRAHMS

BY

FLORENCE MAY

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. I.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO

THE MANY KIND FRIENDS

WHOSE SYMPATHY

HAS HELPED ME DURING THE WRITING OF THESE VOLUMES,

THEY ARE GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

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THE
LIFE OF JOHANNES BRAHMS

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

BADEN-BADEN.

IT was to the kindness of Frau Schumann that I owed my introduction to Brahms, which took place the very day of my arrival on my first visit to Germany. I had had lessons from the great pianist during her visit to London early in the year 1871, and on her departure from England she allowed my father to arrange that I should follow her, as soon as I could possibly get ready, to her home in Lichtenthal, a suburb of Baden-Baden, in order to continue my studies under her guidance.

I can vividly recall the bright morning in the beginning of May on which I arrived at Baden-Baden, rather homesick and dreadfully tired, for owing to a railway breakdown *en route* my journey had occupied fourteen hours longer than it ought to have done, and my father's arrangements for my comfort had been completely upset. It was too early to go at once to Frau Schumann's house, and I remember to have dreamily watched, whilst waiting at the station, a passing procession of young girl communicants in their white wreaths and veils, as I tried to realize that I was, for the first time in my life, far away from home and from England. When the morning was sufficiently advanced, I took an open Droschke, and driving under the great trees of the Lichtenthaler Allée to the door of Frau Schumann's house, I obtained the address of the lodgings that had been taken for me in the village. Without alighting, I proceeded at once to my rooms, where I was almost immediately joined by Frau Schumann herself, who came round, as soon as she had finished breakfast, to bid me welcome.

My delight at seeing the great artist again, combined with her irresistible charm and kindness, at once made me feel less strange in my new surroundings, and I joyfully accepted the invitation she gave me at the close of a few minutes' visit, to go to her house the same afternoon at four o'clock and take coffee with her in her family circle.

On presenting myself at the appointed hour, I was at once shown into a pleasant balcony at the back of the house, overlooking garden and river. In it was seated Frau Schumann with her daughters, and with a gentleman whom she presently introduced to me as Herr Brahms. The name awakened in my mind no special feeling of interest, nor did I look at its owner with any particular curiosity. Brahms' name was at that time almost unknown in England, and I had heard of him only through his arrangement of two books of Hungarian dances for four hands on the pianoforte. As, however, from that day onwards I was accustomed, during a period of months, to meet him almost daily, it may be convenient to say at once a few words about his appearance and manner as they seemed to me after I had had time to become familiar with them.

Brahms, then, when I first knew him, was in the very prime of life, being thirty-eight years of age. Below middle height, his figure was somewhat square and solidly built, though without any of the tendency to corpulency which developed itself at a later period. He was of the blonde type of German, with fair, straight hair, which he wore rather long and brushed back from the temples. His face was clean-shaven. His most striking physical characteristic was the grand head with its magnificent intellectual forehead, but the blue eyes were also remarkable from their expression of intense mental concentration. This was accentuated by a constant habit he had of thrusting the rather thick under-lip over the upper, and keeping it compressed there, reminding one of the mouth in some of the portraits of Beethoven. His nose was finely formed. Feet and hands were small, the fingers without 'cushions.'

'I have none,' he said one day, when I was speaking to him about pianists' hands; and he spread out his fingers, at my request, to show me the tips. 'Frau Schumann has them, and Rubinstein also; Rubinstein's are immense.'

His dress, though plain, was always perfectly neat in those days. He usually wore a short, loose, black alpaca coat, chosen, no doubt, with regard to his ideas of comfort. He was near-sighted, and made frequent use of a double eyeglass that he wore hanging on a thin black cord round his neck. When walking out, it was his custom to go bareheaded, and to carry his soft felt hat in his hand, swinging the arm energetically to and fro. The disengaged hand he often held behind him.

In Brahms' demeanour there was a mixture of sociability and reserve which gave me the impression of his being a kindly-natured man, but one whom it would be difficult really to know. Though always pleasant and friendly, yet there was a something about him—perhaps it may have been his extraordinary dislike to speaking about himself—which suggested that his life had not been free from disappointment, and that he had reckoned with the latter and taken his course. His manner was absolutely simple and unaffected. To his own compositions he alluded only on the very rarest occasions, nor could he be induced to play them before even a small party. His great satisfaction and pleasure were evidently found in the society of Frau Schumann, for whom he displayed the most devoted admiration, an admiration that seemed to combine the affection and reverence of an elder son with the sympathetic camaraderie of a colleague in art. He had established himself for the spring and summer months at Lichtenthal, in order to be near her, and was always a welcome guest at her house, coming and going as he liked. I met him there continually at the hour of afternoon coffee, as on the day of my arrival;

and very often, when the coffee-cups were done with, it was my good fortune to listen to the two great artists playing duets; Brahms, the favoured, being always allowed to retain the beloved cigar or cigarette between his lips during the performance, and taking his turn in playing the treble part.

It was Frau Schumann's kind habit to invite me to her mid-day dinner on Sundays, and frequently to supper during the week. Brahms was rarely absent, and was sometimes accompanied by one or two of his friends. The talk on these occasions was more or less general, but naturally my chief interest was in listening to Frau Schumann and Brahms, who used to discuss all sorts of topics with great animation. Brahms' interest in politics was keen, and although he had been settled in Vienna for some years, and had become much attached to that city and to his friends and surroundings there, yet it was evident that he remained an ardent German patriot.

He was a great walker, and had a passionate love of nature. It was his habit during the spring and summer to rise at four or five o'clock, and, after making himself a cup of coffee, to go into the woods to enjoy the delicious freshness of early morning and to listen to the singing of the birds. In adverse weather he could still find something to admire and enjoy.

'I never feel it dull,' he said one day, in answer to some remark about the depressing effect of the long-continued rain, 'my view is so fine. Even when it rains, I have only another kind of beauty.'

He was considerate for others, even in trifles. I remember that one evening, before we had quitted the supper-table, someone produced a copy of 'Kladderadatsch,' and, pointing out to Brahms a set of sarcastic verses dedicated to John Bull, begged him to read them aloud for the entertainment of the assembled party. Brahms, after glancing down the column, playfully declined to do as he was asked, indicating, with a wave of the hand, his English *vis-à-vis* as his reason for objecting; and it was not until I had laughingly and repeatedly expressed my earnest wish to hear whatever might be in store for me as Mr. Bull's representative, that he at length, and still reluctantly, complied with the request.

Frau Schumann often spoke to me of his extraordinary genius and acquirements both as composer and executant, as well as of his general intellectual qualities, and especially of his knowledge and love of books. She wished me to hear him play, but said it was no easy matter to do so, as he was extremely dependent on his mood, and not only disliked to be pressed to perform, but was unable to do justice either to himself or his composer when not in the right humour. The first time, indeed, that I heard him, at a small afternoon gathering at Frau Schumann's house, I was utterly disappointed. After a good deal of pressing, he crossed over to the piano and gave the first movement of the G major Fantasia-Sonata and the first movement of the A minor Sonata, Op. 42, both of Schubert, but his playing was ineffective. It appeared to me to be forced and self-conscious, and he himself seemed to remain, as it were, outside the music. I missed the living throb and impulse of feeling by which I had been accustomed to be carried away when listening to Frau Schumann, and he left one of his audience, at all events, cold and unmoved. When I told this to Frau Schumann afterwards, she answered that I had not yet really heard him; that he had not wished to play, but had yielded to over-persuasion, and that I must wait for a better opportunity of judging before forming an opinion.

The opportunity came the very next evening, when the same friends were assembled and Brahms played again. The next day I wrote home as follows:

'.... Then Brahms played. It was an entirely different thing from the day before. Two pieces were by some composer whose name I can't remember, and then he played a wild piece by Scarlatti as I never heard anyone play before. He really did give it as though he were inspired; it was so mad and wild and so beautiful. Afterwards he did a little thing of Gluck's. I hope I shall hear him often if he plays as he did last night. The Scarlatti was like nothing I ever heard before, and I never thought the piano capable of it.'

Such were the general impressions I formed of Brahms during the first seven or eight weeks of my stay at Lichtenthal. To say the truth, I thought but little about him at the time, my whole attention being absorbed in my studies and in the charm of my new experiences of life. To me he seemed a very unaffected, kind-hearted, rather shy man, who appeared quietly happy and content when under the influence of Frau Schumann's society. As yet I had had scant opportunity of testing my own capacity for appreciating his musical genius, and next to none of individual personal intercourse with him. Frequently, when my landlady's servant came to attend me to my lodgings after an evening spent at Frau Schumann's house, and Brahms and I took our leave at the same moment, he would say, 'I am coming, too,' and, our ways lying partly in the same direction, would walk the short distance by my side; but these occasions did not add much to my knowledge of him. He would make a few casual remarks, often playful, always kindly, on any topics of the hour, but did not touch on musical subjects. One evening, however, I asked him if he intended to visit England. 'I think not,' he immediately replied, as though his mind were definitely made up on this point. I ventured to pursue the subject, telling him he ought to come, in order to make his compositions known. 'It is for that they are printed,' he said rather decidedly, and with these words he certainly gave me some real insight into his character. The composer of a long series of works which included such masterpieces as the second serenade, the two string sextets, the first and second pianoforte quartets, the inspired German Requiem, and a host of others already before the world (but of which I then knew nothing), could, of course, do no otherwise than allow his compositions to rest quietly on their merits; and doubtless the intense pride which is equally inherent with intense modesty in the higher order of genius had its share in causing Brahms' reticence about all things concerning himself.

From his determination not to visit England I do not believe he ever seriously wavered. Only on one occasion—a few years before his death—did I ever hear him speak doubtfully on the subject, and I then felt sure that he was only playing with the idea of coming. Of when or why he formed his resolution I cannot speak with absolute certainty; it had become fixed before I made his acquaintance. His want of familiarity with our language may have had something to do with it; he could read English a little, but I never heard him attempt to speak it. He had a horror of being lionized and of involving himself in an entanglement of engagements; perhaps, also, he was possessed with an exaggerated notion of the inflexibility of English social laws, especially as to the wearing of dress-clothes and the restrictions with regard to smoking. Before and behind all such superficial considerations, however, I suspect that early in his career the idea had taken root in him, right or wrong as it may have been, that to visit England would not further his artistic development. Brahms had certainly formed the clearest conception not only of his purpose in life, but of the means by which he felt he could best pursue and achieve it, and from first to last he inflexibly adhered to the conclusions he had come to on these points. If his aim was to give the most complete possible expression in his musical creations to the very best that was in him, his method, while it satisfied an inner craving of his being, was yet, as I believe, deliberately adopted; and it was to lay himself open to every kind of influence which could healthily foster the ideal side of his nature, and more or less completely to eschew all others. It would be ridiculous, at the present time, to touch upon the completeness of his technical musical equipment, to dilate on his easy grasp of all the resources of counterpoint, on his mastery of form, of harmonic and rhythmic combinations, and the like. These things are matter of course. But Brahms knew that not alone his intellect, but his mind and spirit and fancy, must be constantly nurtured if they were to bring forth the highest of which they were capable, and he so arranged his life that they should be fed ever and always by poetry and literature and art, by solitary musing, by participation in so much of life as seemed to him to be real and true, and, above all and in the highest degree, by the companionship of Nature.

'How can I most quickly improve?' I asked him one day later on. 'You must walk constantly in the forest,' he answered; and he meant what he said to be taken literally. It was his own favourite prescription that he advised for my application. For such a man, with a name practically unknown in England, life in London, and especially during a concert season, would have been not only uncongenial, but impossible. It would only have been a hindrance to him for the time being. It was not his business to push his works before either conductors or the public, and, after early successes and failures in this direction, he had almost entirely given up planning for the future of his compositions, and had yielded himself wholly to his destiny, which was to create.

In adopting this attitude, there was nothing whatever of outward posing. He simply did faithfully what he found lying before him to do, and did not look beyond.

Life at Lichtenthal passed quickly onwards, and the time approached when Frau Schumann would pay her annual visit to Switzerland. At the close of one of my lessons she said to me:

'I have been thinking that perhaps you might like to have some lessons from Herr Brahms whilst I am away. It would be a very great advantage for you in every way, and he would be able to help you immensely with your technique. He has made a special study of it, and can do anything he likes with his fingers on the piano. He does not usually give lessons, but if you like I will ask him, and I think he would do it as a favour to me.'

I must here explain that my visit to Germany had been undertaken with the special object of correcting certain deficiencies in my mechanism which Frau Schumann had pointed out, she having advised me to study for a year with this aim particularly in view.

It need hardly be said that I now eagerly accepted her proffered kindness, and it was decided that she should sound Herr Brahms on the question of his willingness to give me lessons. If he should show himself favourable to the project, the arrangement was to be considered as decided, subject only to the approval of my father, who was on the point of starting from London to join me at Lichtenthal. The next morning Frau Schumann informed me that Brahms had consented to the plan, and a few days later, on my receiving my father's ready assent to my request, all preliminaries were settled, and it was arranged that I should have two lessons every week from Brahms.

'You must ask him to play to you,' Frau Schumann said; 'and if he will do it, it will give you a real opportunity to hear him. And now, now you will begin to know Brahms.'

BRAHMS AS TEACHER OF THE PIANOFORTE.

Brahms united in himself each and every quality that might be supposed to exist in an absolutely ideal teacher of the pianoforte, without having a single modifying drawback. I do not wish to rhapsodize; he would have been the first to object to this. Such lessons could only have come from such a man. I have never to this day got over the wonder of his giving them, or the wonder and the joy of its having fallen to my lot to receive them.

He was strict and absolute; he was gentle and patient and encouraging; he was not only clear, he was light itself; he knew exhaustively, and could teach, and did teach, by the shortest possible methods, every detail of technical study; he was unwearied in his efforts to make his pupil grasp the full musical meaning of whatever work might be in hand; he was even punctual.

I cannot hope in what I may say to convey more than a faint impression of what his lessons were to me. From the very first hour of coming under his immediate musical influence I felt that it was a power which would continue to act upon and develop within me to the end of life. Perhaps, however, I may succeed in helping lovers of his music to add to their conception of his character and his gifts, by writing of him as he was in a capacity in which, so far as I know, he has not hitherto been described. Such personal details as I may introduce will be given with the object of illustrating that side of Brahms' character which I once knew so well; of exhibiting him as the all-capable, single-hearted, encouraging, inspired and inspiring teacher and friend.

Remembering what Frau Schumann had said of his ability to assist me with my technique, I told him, before beginning my first lesson, of my mechanical difficulties, and asked him to help me. He answered, 'Yes, that must come first,' and, after hearing me play through a study from Clementi's 'Gradus ad Parnassum,' he immediately set to work to loosen and equalize my fingers. Beginning that very day, he gradually put me through an entire course of technical training, showing me how I should best work, for the attainment of my end, at scales, arpeggii, trills, double notes, and octaves.

He not only showed me how to practise: he made me, at first, practise to him during a good part of my lessons, whilst he sat watching my fingers; telling me what was wrong in my way of moving them, indicating, by a movement of his own hand, a better position for mine, absorbing himself entirely, for the time being, in the object of helping me.

He did not believe in the utility for me of the daily practice of the ordinary five-finger exercises, preferring to form exercises from any piece or study upon which I might be engaged. He had a great habit of turning a difficult passage round and making me practise it, not as written, but with other accents and in various figures, with the result that when I again tried it as it stood the difficulties had always considerably diminished, and often entirely disappeared. 'How must I practise this?' I would ask him, with confidence, which was never disappointed, that some short-cut would be found for me by which my way would be effectually smoothed.

His method of loosening the wrist was, I should say, original. I have, at all events, never seen it or heard of it excepting from him, but it loosened my wrist in a fortnight, and with comparatively little labour on my part.

How he laughed one day, when I triumphantly showed him that one of my knuckles, which were then rather stiff and prominent, had quite gone in, and said to him : ‘You have done that!’

It may seem incredible, but it is none the less true, that after a very few weeks of work with him the appearance of my hands had completely changed. My father says, writing to my mother :

> ‘Her hand has an entirely different conformation from what it used to have ; it has lost all its angular appearance, and it really is the case, as she says, that her knuckles are disappearing. I have given up all idea of inducing her to go anywhere with me ; she will allow nothing to interfere with her practising. She is enthusiastic in her admiration of Brahms, and says his patience is wonderful. He keeps her strictly to finger-work.’

He was never irritable, never indifferent, but always helped, stimulated, and encouraged. One day, when I lamented to him the deficiencies of my former mechanical training and my present resultant finger difficulty, ‘It will come all right,’ he said ; ‘it does not come in a week nor in four weeks.’

Perceiving at once the extraordinary value of my technical studies with him, I was desirous of not being hampered by feeling obliged, at first, to get up many pieces to play through. That, he said, was quite right ; I must practise a great deal in little bits for a time. Here is an extract from one of my letters. I copy it exactly as it stands, without altering the careless wording of a girl’s letter hastily penned for home perusal in an interval between practice times :

'My lessons with Brahms are too delightful; not only the lessons themselves, but he makes me feel I must practise all day and all night. I have begun to eat a great deal for the mere purpose of being able to practise! He is so patient, and takes such pains, and I ask all sorts of questions, and the lessons are too delightful. I can't understand his giving lessons, and yet he is never angry at any sort of foolishness, only says, "Ah! that is so difficult." As for an hour's lesson, that is nothing. He systematically arranges for an hour and a half. I absolutely revel in my lessons. He makes the saraband sound on the piano just as on a violin. Then he never expects too much, and does not give much to learn, but is always satisfied with little if one is really trying.'

He was extremely particular about my fingering, making me rely on all my fingers as equally as possible. One day whilst watching my hands as I played him a study from the 'Gradus,' he objected to some of my fingering, and asked me to change it. I immediately did so, but said, knowing there was no danger of his being offended by the remark, that I had used the one marked by Clementi. Brahms, not having had his eyes on the book at the moment, had not perceived this to be the case. He at once said I must, of course, not change it, and would not allow me to adopt his own, as I begged him, saying: 'No, no; he knew.'

I had with me at Lichtenthal my own copies of Bach, which I had brought from England, but the edition was unfingered, and Brahms desired me to get copies with Czerny's fingering, and always to use it. The other indications in the edition I was not to adopt.

A good part of each lesson was generally devoted to Bach, to the 'Well-tempered Clavier,' or the English Suites; and as my mechanism improved Brahms gradually increased the amount and scope of my work, and gave more and more time to the spirit of the music I studied. His phrasing, as he taught it me, was, it need hardly be said, of the broadest, whilst he was rigorous in exacting attention to the smallest details. These he sometimes treated as a delicate embroidery that filled up and decorated the broad outline of the phrase, with the large sweep of which nothing was ever allowed to interfere. Light and shade, also, were so managed as to help to bring out its continuity. Be it, however, most emphatically declared that he never theorized on these points; he merely tried his utmost to make me understand and play my pieces as he himself understood and felt them.

He would make me repeat over and over again, ten or twelve times if necessary, part of a movement of Bach, till he had satisfied himself that I was beginning to realize his wish for particular effects of tone or phrasing or feeling. When I could not immediately do what he wanted, he would merely say, 'But it is so difficult,' or 'It will come,' tell me to do it again till he found that his effect was on its way into being, and then leave me to complete it. On the two or three days that intervened between my lessons, I would, after practising at the pianoforte, sometimes take my music into the forest to try to think myself more completely into his mind, and if, when he next came, I had partially succeeded, he took delight in showing his satisfaction. His face would light up all over, and he would be unstinting in his praise. 'Very good, quite right; Frau Schumann would be very surprised to hear you play like that,' or, 'That will make a great effect with Frau Schumann.'

In spite of his extraordinary conscientiousness about detail, Brahms was entirely free from pedantry and from the tendency to worry or fidget his pupil. His great pleasure was to commend, and if I played anything to him for the first time, in the way he liked, nothing would induce him to suggest, with one word, any change at all. 'That is quite right; there is nothing to say about it,' he would say; and though I have felt disappointed not to get any remark from him, and have entreated him to make some suggestions, he would remain firm. 'No, it must be like that; we will go on,' and there was an end of the matter.

One morning my father, coming into the room at the close of my lesson, asked Brahms: 'Has she been a good girl to-day ?' 'Sehr fein,'* answered he, and suddenly turning to me added imperatively : 'Tell your father that.' I was equal to the occasion, however, and promptly translated : 'Herr Brahms says he is not very satisfied to-day, papa.' My father's face fell a little. Brahms looked straight before him, displeased and impassive. 'I have told him,' said I. 'No, you have not told him.' 'But you don't know that ; you don't understand English.' 'I understand enough to know that'—stonily. 'Herr Brahms says I have done pretty well,' I reassured my father ; then to Brahms : 'Now I have.' 'Yes, now,' he admitted, with relenting countenance.

Another day, in the middle of my lesson, the door of my sitting-room opened, and my landlady begged to speak to me. 'No, Frau Falk,' I said ; 'I am engaged and can see no one : you must please go away.' 'One moment, gnädiges Fräulein,' she said, and persisted, to my displeasure, in coming in. I then perceived she had with her a pretty little girl of about five years old, who held some beautiful yellow roses in her hand. Frau Falk led the child straight up to the piano and made her little speech. The small maiden was the daughter of the gentleman living in the neighbouring villa, and, being with her father in his beautiful rose-garden, had begged him to let her carry some of his roses to the Fräulein to whose playing they had been listening. The little one, seeing I was not alone, became suddenly shy as she handed me the lovely flowers, and, turning away her face, looked downwards with very red cheeks as she stood quietly at Brahms' knee. But this was not the kind of interruption to displease him. 'Na,' he said, coaxing her, 'you must look at the Fräulein, and let her thank you. Look at her ; she wants to thank you.' Between us we reassured the little one, who held up her face to me to be kissed, and sedately allowed Frau Falk to lead her away.

Soon after beginning my work with Brahms, I asked him at the end of my lesson if he would play to me, telling him

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* An expression of commendation peculiarly German.

I did so by Frau Schumann's desire. There was an instant's hesitation; then he sat down to the piano. Just as he was about to begin, he turned his head round, and said almost shyly: 'You must learn by the faults also.' That was the beginning. From that day it became his regular habit to play to me for about half an hour at the close of the hour's lesson, which he never shortened. Oftenest he chose Bach for his performance. He would play by heart one or two of the preludes and fugues from the 'Well-tempered Clavier,' then take up the music and continue from book as the humour took him. When he reached the end of a composition, I would say little or nothing beyond 'Some more,' for fear of stopping him, and he would turn over the leaves to find another favourite. I do not remember his ever making a remark to me either between-whiles or after he had finished playing, beyond, perhaps, telling me to get him another book. Once, and once only, he resisted. I had made my usual request at the end of the lesson, when he quaintly and unexpectedly replied: 'Not every time; it is silly. Frau Schumann would say it is silly to play every time.' 'It is so disappointing,' I wished to say, but was uncertain of the right German word. He, as was his wont on similar occasions, made me show it him in the dictionary. There was some little argument between us, and he returned to the piano and took his place there. It was of no use, however. He could not play that day, and almost seemed to take pleasure in doing as badly as possible. Every time he was conspicuously faulty he turned round to me with a sardonic smile, as though he would say: 'There! you have got what you wanted; how do you like it?' 'Very unkind,' I murmured, and he soon rose. 'I will *not* play next time,' he angrily declared as he took leave. 'I will *never* ask you again,' I rejoined. A shrug of the shoulders was his only answer, and, with the usual 'good-day,' he left the room.

After two days came my next lesson. It passed off delightfully, as usual, and at the close Brahms departed, without a word about his playing being said on either side;

but I was left with a feeling of something having been very much wanting. In the middle of the following lesson, giving way to a sudden impulse which I could not have explained, but which, perhaps, arose from the fear of renewed disappointment, I abruptly ceased playing in the middle of my piece, saying, 'I cannot play any more to-day.' Brahms glanced at me with rather an inquiring expression, and asked, 'Why ?' 'I don't know ; I cannot,' I replied. There was an instant of dead silence, during which I did not look round. Then Brahms spoke. 'I will play to you,' he said quietly, 'in order that you may have something.' We immediately changed places, and he never refused me again.

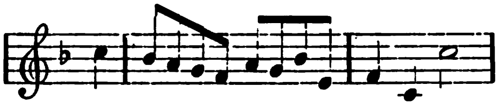
My father, writing to my mother, says :

> 'Brahms is recognised in Germany as the greatest musician living. It is said to be most difficult to get him to play ; however, after every lesson he plays piece after piece. He is a delightful man—so simple, so kind and quiet. He lives in a beautiful situation amongst the hills, and cares only for seclusion, and time to devote himself to composition. He was pleased the other day by F.'s asking him about a passage in Goethe that she could not comprehend, and went into it in a way which delighted her. With all his genius he is thoroughly practical. Punctual to a minute in his lessons, and of extreme delicacy.'

It was my happiness to hear, amongst other things, his readings of many of the forty-eight preludes and fugues, and his playing of them, and especially of the preludes, impressed me with such force and vividness that I can hear it in memory still. His interpretation of Bach was always unconventional and quite unfettered by traditional theory, and he certainly did not share the opinion, which has had many distinguished adherents, that Bach's music should be performed in a simply flowing style. In the movements of the suites he liked variety of tone and touch, as well as a certain elasticity of *tempo*. His playing of many of the preludes and some of the fugues was a revelation of exquisite poems, and he performed them, not only with graduated shading, but with marked contrasts of tone effect. Each note of Bach's passages and figures contributed, in the hands of Brahms, to form melody which was instinct with feeling of some kind or other. It might be deep pathos, or light-hearted playfulness and jollity; impulsive energy, or soft and tender grace; but sentiment (as distinct from sentimentality) was always there; monotony never. 'Quite tender and quite soft,' was his frequent admonition to me, whilst in another place he would require the utmost impetuosity.

He loved Bach's suspensions. 'It is here that it must sound,' he would say, pointing to the tied note, and insisting, whilst not allowing me to force the preparation, that the latter should be so struck as to give the fullest possible effect to the dissonance. 'How am I to make this sound?' I asked him of a few bars of subject lying for the third, fourth, and fifth fingers of the left hand, which he wished brought out clearly, but in a very soft tone. 'You must think particularly of the fingers with which you play it, and by-and-by it will come out,' he answered.

The same kind of remarks may be applied to his conception of Mozart. He taught me that the music of this great master should not be performed with mere grace and lightness, but that these effects should be contrasted with the expression of sustained feeling and with the use of the deep legato touch. Part of one of my lessons was devoted to the Sonata in F major—



etc.

Brahms let me play nearly a page of the first movement without making any remark. Then he stopped me. 'But you are playing without expression,' said he, and imitated me, playing the same portion, in the same style, on the upper part of the piano, touching the keys neatly, lightly, and unmeaningly. By the time he left off we were both smiling at the absurd performance.

'Now,' he said, 'with expression,' and he repeated the first few bars of the subject, giving to each note its place as an essential portion of a fine melody. We spent a long time over the movement that day, and it was not until the next lesson, after I had had two, or perhaps three, days to think myself into his conception, that I was able to play it broadly enough to satisfy him. At the close of the first of these two Mozart lessons I said to him : 'All that you have told me to-day is quite new to me.' 'It is all there,' he replied, pointing to the book.

Brahms, in fact, recognised no such thing as what is sometimes called 'neat playing' of the compositions either of Bach, Scarlatti, or Mozart. Neatness and equality of finger were imperatively demanded by him, and in their utmost nicety and perfection, but as a preparation, not as an end. Varying and sensitive expression was to him as the breath of life, necessary to the true interpretation of any work of genius, and he did not hesitate to avail himself of such resources of the modern pianoforte as he felt helped to impart it ; no matter in what particular century his composer may have lived, or what may have been the peculiar excellencies and limitations of the instruments of his day.

Whatever the music I might be studying, however, he would never allow any kind of 'expression made easy.' He particularly disliked chords to be spread unless marked so by the composer for the sake of a special effect. 'No arpége,' he used invariably to say if I unconsciously gave way to the habit, or yielded to the temptation of softening a chord by its means. He made very much of the well-known effect of two notes slurred together, whether in a loud or soft tone, and I know from his insistence to me on this point that the mark has a special significance in his music.

Aware of his reluctance to perform his compositions, I let some weeks pass before I asked him to play me something of his own. When I at length ventured to do so, he objected : 'Not mine ; something by another composer.' But I had resolved to carry my point. 'No, no,' I insisted ;

'a composition played by the composer himself is what I wish to hear,' and my importunity gained the day. He gave me a splendid performance of a splendid theme with variations, which, as I found out some months afterwards, was from the now familiar string Sextet in B flat. It was the first time I had heard anything of Brahms' composition with the exception of one or two songs, and it raised in me a tumult of delight. Probably I said to him little beyond thanks, but the power of the music and the performance must have worked itself in me to some manifest effect, for on my taking my seat directly after the lesson at the *table d'hôte* of the Hôtel Bär, the village inn where my father and I used to dine, a lady of our acquaintance exclaimed: 'What is the matter with you to-day that you look so excited?' I remember answering her: 'Brahms has just played me something quite magnificent—something of his own—and it keeps going in my head.'

Since then I have heard the movement times innumerable in England and on the Continent, performed by various combinations of artists, but I never listen to it without being carried back in thought to the gardener's house on the slope of the Cäcilienberg where, in my blue-papered, carpetless little room, Brahms sat at the piano and played it to me. The scent of flowers was borne in through the open lattice-windows, of which the green outside sun-shutters were closed on one side of the room to keep out the blazing August sun, and open on another to views of the beautiful scenery.

The merits of our respective views had been the subject of some friendly argument soon after my arrival at Lichtenthal. Brahms had declared that no prospect from any windows in the village could possibly be as fine as his, whilst I was equally sure that mine must be quite unrivalled. Two of my windows looked right across the valley of the Oos as far as the plain of Strassburg, and showed, in fine weather, the distant peaks of the Vosges glimmering in the sunlight. Two others commanded a prospect of the pine-covered ranges of Black Forest hills. The first time Brahms came to my rooms, in order to give me a lesson, the variety and loveliness of my view drew from him an exclamation of delight. 'But yours is really grander and sterner, is it not?' I magnanimously asked. 'This is more suitable for a girl,' he prettily replied.

On the next occasion after the day when he had performed his own work, I reminded Brahms that he had promised he would allow my father, who was anxious to hear him play to better advantage than from the room overhead, to share with me this great pleasure some time. 'But he is not here,' he said, and taking this as a token of assent, I quickly called my father, who was writing letters above, to come down. When we were all three seated, I told Brahms I wished to have the piece he had played to me two or three days before, but he said he would not play anything of his own—'something else.' 'No,' I said, 'something of yours, and the same; my father wishes to hear the same.' 'Ah, I forget what it was; I have composed a great many things. I will play something else.' 'But no, no, no!' I urged. 'I know what it was. I must have the same. Play the first two or three chords.' 'Well, then, I think it was this,' said he, giving way; and he repeated the movement from beginning to end, carrying us both completely away.

Brahms' playing at this period of his life was, indeed, stimulating to an extraordinary degree, and so *apart* as to be quite unforgettable. It was not the playing of a virtuoso, though he had a large amount of virtuosity (to put it moderately) at his command. He never aimed at mere effect, but seemed to plunge into the innermost meaning of whatever music he happened to be interpreting, exhibiting all its details and expressing its very depths. Not being in regular practice, he would sometimes strike wrong notes—and there was already a hardness, arising from the same cause, in his playing of chords; but he was fully aware of his failings, and warned me not to imitate them.

He was acutely, though silently, sensitive to the susceptibility or non-susceptibility of his audience. As I have already mentioned, but few words passed between him and myself during the momentary intervals between his playing of one piece and another, but he would now and then suddenly turn his head round towards where I sat and give me a swift, searching glance, as though to satisfy himself that I understood and followed him. Once only he refused to go on. It was soon after his performance before my father. I had begged for another of his compositions, and he had begun to play one. I was sitting rather behind him, listening intently and trying to follow, but I knew I did not understand. Very soon he turned to give his usual scrutinizing look, and immediately ceased playing, saying: 'No, really I can't play that.' I did not attempt to make him think I had entered into the meaning of the music, but only entreated him to begin it again and give me one more chance, as it was difficult to follow. Nothing would induce him, however, to play another note of it, and he went on to something by another composer, much to my disappointment and mortification.

Brahms disliked to hear anything said which could possibly be interpreted as depreciation of either of the great masters. Once, when two or three people were present, a remark was made on the growing indifference of the younger musicians to Mendelssohn, and particularly on the neglect with which his once popular 'Songs without Words' had for some time been treated. 'If it is the case, it is a great pity,' observed Brahms, 'for they are quite full of beauty.'

He especially loved Schubert, and I have heard him declare that the longest works of this composer, with all their repetitions, were never too long for him.

He greatly admired my copy, which was of the original edition and in good preservation, of Clementi's 'Gradus,' and asked me to lend it him for a day or two to compare with his own. I did not at that time attach much value to original editions; and, fancying he merely wished to prevent me from overworking, against which he often cautioned me, I said I could not spare it. 'You won't lend it me!' he exclaimed, very much astonished indeed. I answered that if he did take it away it would make no difference, as I could practise as well without it. Finding, however, that he really wished to examine the copy, I said it was too hot for him to carry so large a book in the middle of the day, and that I would send it in the evening. 'I am not so weak!' he replied, but consented to the proposal. He sent it back after a few days, strongly scented with the odour of his tobacco, which it retained through many a long year, and which rather enhanced its value to me.

Rather curiously, he liked the scent of eau-de-Cologne. My father brought me a case from Cöln, and if, on my lesson day, I had an open bottle near at hand, and offered some to Brahms, he would place his hands together, palm upwards, for me to pour into, and, dipping his head, would rub the scent over his forehead, protesting as he did so, 'But it really does not become a man.' Seeing that he liked it, I used it sometimes to wash the keys of the piano when he was coming, but I do not think he ever found me out.

He delighted in the music of Strauss' band, which was engaged to play daily at Baden-Baden through some weeks of the season. It was then conducted by the great Johann Strauss, Brahms' particular friend, and he used to walk over every evening to hear it. 'Are you so engrossed?' said a voice behind me one evening as I was standing in the Lichtenthal village street with a friend, looking at the performances of a dancing bear. On turning round I found Brahms, hat in hand, smiling with amusement at our preoccupation, himself on his way, as usual at that hour, to listen to the delicious music of the Vienna waltz-king.

Brahms disliked mere compliment, but he had a warm appreciation of the genuine expression of friendly feeling towards himself, and did not try to hide the pleasure it gave him. His countenance would change, and he would answer in a simple, modest way that was almost touching. One day when I told him how I valued his teaching, and felt it was something for my whole life, 'You ought to tell Frau Schumann,' replied the composer of the German Requiem, as though he were asking me to give a good report of him. On my assuring him that I had already done so by letter, he added hastily: 'But not too much; never praise too highly; always keep within bounds.'

Shortly before Frau Schumann's return I said to him that I hoped he would not lose all interest in my music at the termination of my lessons with him, and that I should like, if it were possible, to make some additional arrangement by which it might be maintained. He did not give me any definite reply at the moment one way or the other, but on my saying the same thing to him another day he replied: 'It is very nice and very kind of you, but I don't think it can be done. You must, however, play to me very often. Everything you learn with Frau Schumann you must play to me.'

About this time, however, my father, who was about to start on his homeward journey, persuaded me to go away with him for a week's holiday before his departure for England, and on my return to Lichtenthal Frau Schumann arranged that I should continue my studies under Brahms for the remainder of my stay, saying I had become more his pupil than hers. There were, indeed, but few more lessons to look forward to. Autumn had set in, and everyone was thinking of departure. Brahms had to go sometimes to Carlsruhe, where he was occupied with rehearsals, but he punctually kept his remaining appointments with me. His concluding lessons were as magnificent as the earlier ones, and when I went back to England my ground was clear. I do not mean to assert that my hand was already completely developed from a pianist's point of view, or my technique as yet fully in my possession. These things were physically impossible; but Brahms had shown me the path which led straight to my goal, and had himself brought me a considerable distance on the way. A cast of one of my hands taken on my return to England, when compared with one that had been done shortly before I left, could not have been recognised as being from the same person.

Those were, indeed, golden days, when Brahms sat by my side and taught me; memorable to me no less for their revelation of an exquisite nature than for the musical advantages they brought. I have often been told that there was another side to his character, and that he could, even at that time, be bitter and rough and satirical. I dare say he was not faultless, but I do not think that he can at any period of his life have been bitter in the sense of being soured. He no doubt had a strong feeling about the indifference and downright antagonism against which his works long had to struggle; but if it had ever been a feeling even of disappointment, I am sure this had mellowed, before I knew him, into a firm though silent belief in the future of his compositions, and had only served to intensify, if possible, his determination to put into them of his very best.

Rough he may have been sometimes, and in later years I had occasional opportunity of perceiving that he was not always gentle, though he was never otherwise with me. His roughness was, in certain instances, no doubt caused by his resolution in protecting his time from celebrity-hunters, and even from friends. It may have been partly traceable, also, to the circumstances of his youth, when he must often have been placed amid surroundings where rough-and-ready frankness of speech was more cultivated than conventional polish of manner. It is, however, certain that during the latter part of his life he sometimes availed himself of the privilege of the *enfant gâté* to yield to the caprice of the moment, and that he now and again said things which could not but wound the feelings of others. This was to be regretted, and it hardly excused him that his pungent words came from the lips only, and not from the heart. I am, however, quite certain that many of his acerbities were assumed to cover his naturally acute sensibility of temperament, of which he stood a little in dread, and which he liked to conceal even from himself. He was a firm believer, for himself and for others, in the salutary process of bracing both mental and physical energies.

A year or two before Brahms' death I revisited Lichtenthal, staying a night at the Hôtel Bär, where I used to dine in the old days. I looked up old acquaintances, and amongst them the former mistress of the dear old inn, whom I found retired and living in a charming villa close by, her brother being still the proprietor of the hotel. She, of course, had known Brahms well, and during the hour or two that I spent with her we talked chiefly about him. She repeated the verdict given by everyone really acquainted with him: 'So simple and natural, so kind and cheerful, able to take pleasure in trifles. He was such a simple-hearted man.' A tease, certainly, but his teasing was never unkind, never more than mere raillery. He would often bring a friend to dine at the Bär in the old days, and she always had the cloth laid for him in a private room or in the back part of the garden, so that he should not be worried by the visitors. 'He never minded what he did. He would sometimes drop in, if he were passing, to say good-morning to us, and if we were very busy he would make a joke of sitting down and amusing himself by helping us cut up the vegetables for dinner. Only he could not bear to go into formal society, or to have to wear his dress-clothes. I have not seen him now for several years. The last time was in September, 1889, when he paid a flying visit to the Bär. He was very angry to find that three pine-trees had been cut down near the house where he used to lodge, thinking the poetry of the view had been impaired, and he said he would never stay in the place again. What a warm heart he had! He liked to know all the country people of the neighbourhood, and took a pride in feeling that every man, woman, and child whom he met in his early morning walks interchanged greetings with him. I begged for his autograph the last time he was here. You will like to see what he wrote;' and my old friend sent for the album in which the master had written:

'Johannes Brahms.
eines schönen Tages
im schönen Baden
im lieben Bären.'

('J. B.
one fine day
in beautiful Baden
at the dear Bear.')

BERLIN.

Years were destined to elapse before my next meeting with Brahms. After my return to England I worked unremittingly on the lines he had indicated, and found that by the observation and practice of his principles I was guided straight onwards in the path of progress. His teaching had been of such a kind that its development did not cease with the actual lessons. As the weeks and months went by I found myself growing continually into a clearer perception of the aims and results it had had in view. It caused me no surprise to find, on becoming acquainted with his pianoforte compositions, that I must postpone for a time the delightful task of getting them up. Brahms himself had prepared me for this. He had always been extremely careful, when selecting music for me to work at, to choose what would develop my technical power without straining my hands, and when I had wished to study something of his had answered that his compositions were unfit for me for the present, as they required too much physical strength and grasp. He fancied, indeed, at that time that nearly all of them were beyond a woman's strength. When I asked why it was that he composed only such enormously difficult things for the pianoforte, he said they came to him naturally, and he could not compose otherwise ('Ich kann nicht anders').

In the winter of 1881-82 I found myself in Berlin. It is difficult to describe the feelings with which I one day read the announcement that von Bülow, in the course of a *tournée* with the Meiningen Orchestra, of which he was conductor, would shortly visit the city to give a three days' series of concerts in the hall of the Singakademie; that Brahms' compositions would figure conspicuously in the programmes; that Brahms himself would be present, and that he would probably take part in one or more of the performances. The life at Lichtenthal had come to seem to me a sort of far-away fairy-tale impossible of any sort of renewal, and I could hardly realize that I should soon see Brahms again. Finding, however, from subsequent announcements, that the concerts were really to take place, I lost no time in securing a subscription ticket for the series.

Feeling sure that every moment of Brahms' short stay in Berlin would be occupied, I decided that my only chance of getting a word or two with him would be to gain admission to one of the rehearsals, and to watch for a favourable moment in which to make myself known to him. As ill luck would have it, I was claimed on the first day by engagements that could not be postponed. I was, however, the less inconsolable since Brahms was to take an active part only in the second and third concerts. Their respective programmes included a new pianoforte concerto still in MS. (No. 2 in B flat), to be played by the composer, with von Bülow as conductor; and the first pianoforte concerto, with Bülow as pianist and Brahms at the conductor's desk.

Betaking myself to the Singakademie in good time for the rehearsal on the second morning of the series, I explained, to the friendly custodian at the entrance-door, my claims to admission. He allowed me to enter the hall and to take my place amongst the small audience of persons privileged to attend.

The members of the orchestra were already assembled, and after some moments of waiting von Bülow came in with several gentlemen. Lusty applause broke forth from platform and stalls, and a small stir of greetings took place. But where was Brahms? I could perceive him nowhere at first, and it was only as the rehearsal proceeded, and he took his place on the platform, that I felt certain he was really present. I had prepared myself to find him looking changed and older, but not beyond recognition. It is, however, no exaggeration to say that as I gazed at him, knowing him to be Brahms, I was utterly unable to recognise the man I had known ten years previously. There, indeed, was the great head with the hair brushed back as of old, though less tidily than in former days; but his figure had become much heavier, and both mouth and chin were hidden by a thick moustache and shaggy, grizzled beard that had completely transformed his appearance. When I first knew him at the time of his early middle age, one might fancy that his countenance and expression had retained more than a trace of his youthful period of *Sturm und Drang*, but this had now quite vanished. I felt, with a shock, that my foreboding that I should never see my old friend again had been realized, though in a way different from that anticipated by me.

Brahms received an ovation when he had finished his performance of the new concerto, and as he was retiring from the platform Bülow, unable to restrain his excitement, darted forward and gave him a kiss. It seemed to take him rather aback, but he submitted passively.

At length the rehearsal came to an end, and Brahms was immediately surrounded by friends eager to offer their congratulations and to receive a word of greeting from him. 'Now or never,' I thought, and, taking my courage in my hand, I managed to get near, though a little behind him. 'I, also, should like to say a word of thanks to you, Herr Brahms,' I said. Brahms turned his head. 'Are you here in Berlin, then?' he rejoined instantly, answering as he might have done if we had met the previous week. Someone else pressed forward to claim his attention as I was replying, and I fell behind again. I did not like to wait for a second opportunity, feeling there was no chance of his being free, so I straightway departed and went back to my lodgings.

Thinking things over on my road, I came to the conclusion that Brahms had not recognised me, but that when my words caught his ear he had uttered the first casual reply that rose to his lips, and which might be appropriate to any acquaintance whom he did not at the moment remember. However exceptional his memory for faces might be, it appeared to me incredible that, after the lapse of so many years, he should have known me without the hesitation of a second at a moment when his attention was preoccupied by the concert business of the day and by the claims of his Berlin friends.

It was in this frame of mind that I took my seat in the evening to hear the concert. Having got over the first excitement of seeing Brahms again, and knowing what I had to expect in regard to his personal appearance, I was able to listen to the music in a more composed mood than had been possible to me in the morning. My pleasure in the performance of the concerto was, of course, in some measure impaired by the circumstance that the long, intricate work was quite new. I think, however, that I should have enjoyed it more if Brahms had conducted and Bülow performed the solo. I did not think Brahms' playing what it had been. His touch in forte passages had become hard, and though he might, perhaps, be said to have mastered the difficulties of his part, he had not sufficiently surmounted them to execute them with ease. It could not, in fact, have been otherwise. No composer having attained to the height of Brahms' greatness could have kept his technical command of the pianoforte unimpaired; life is too short for this. I knew, however, that I had listened to a magnificent work of immense proportions, and longed for opportunity to hear it again that I might assimilate it.

There was a scene of tumultuous enthusiasm at the close of the work. The public applauded wildly, and shouted itself hoarse; the band joined in with its fanfare of trumpet and drum; Brahms and von Bülow were recalled again and again, separately and together; and in the moment of the great composer's triumph I saw the earlier Brahms once more standing before me, for, whilst his eyes shone and his face beamed with pleasure, I recognised in his bearing and expression the old familiar look of almost diffident, shy modesty which had been one of his characteristics in former days.

I did not, of course, seek for a further opportunity of speaking to Brahms on the evening of which I am writing, but I laid my plans for the next morning, and at the proper hour again made my way to the Singakademie and successfully begged for admission to the rehearsal.

During the first part Brahms sat as one of the audience in the front row of stalls, and in a convenient break between the pieces I sent my English visiting-card to him, having written on it a few lines recalling myself to his remembrance. He read it and looked round. 'I know that already,' he said coldly, but rising and coming towards me. 'I saw you yesterday.' 'But you did not know who I was?' I returned, still sceptical. 'Yes, I knew.' 'It seemed to me quite impossible you could have recognised me!' I ejaculated. 'Oh yes, yes—*oh* yes!' said Brahms in quite a different tone, and for a couple of seconds I forgot to look up or say anything.

'Are you taking notes?' he asked by way of recalling me to myself, touching my pencil. But the rehearsal had to proceed, and Brahms presently took his place on the platform with Bülow for the performance of the Concerto in D minor. When the rehearsal was over, I did not leave the hall so quickly as on the previous day, but waited in the hope of getting another word with Brahms, and was rewarded by having a good many.

In the evening, as he faced the audience before the commencement of the concerto, catching sight of me in the third row of stalls, he was at the pains to bestow upon me a kind bow and smile of recognition. He glanced slightly at me again once or twice during the evening, and I knew, though his appearance still seemed a little strange to me, that Brahms was in the world after all.

The execution of the D minor Concerto was one of those rare performances that remain in the memory as unforgettable events. Brahms, when conducting, indulged in no antics, and was sparing of his gestures, often keeping his left hand in his pocket, or letting it hang quietly at his side; but he cast the spell of his genius over orchestra and pianist alike. The performance was remarkable for its power and grandeur, but not chiefly so, for these qualities were to be expected. It was made supremely memorable by the subtle imagination that touched and modified even the rather hard intellectuality of von Bülow's usual style. Good performances of Brahms' orchestral works may not seldom be heard, and great ones occasionally; but the particular quality of his poetic fancy, by which, when conducting an orchestra, he made the music sound from time to time as though it were floating in some rarefied atmosphere, vibrating now with fairy-like beauty and grace, now with ethereal mystery, was, I should say, peculiar to himself, and is hardly to be reproduced or imitated.

As soon as Brahms had finished his share in the evening's programme I quitted the hall, for I was thoroughly exhausted by the excitement of the past two days, and felt I could bear nothing more. Early the next morning he left Berlin to fulfil engagements in another town.

VIENNA.

During the next four years much of my time was passed in Berlin. I delighted in the concerts and general musical atmosphere of the German capital, and did not allow my plans to be disturbed by a vague invitation to visit Vienna which Brahms had given me in the course of our short interview in the hall of the Singakademie. I felt that however kind and friendly his recollection of me might have remained, yet I could not hope to derive direct musical benefit from one absorbed in the intense thought and brooding to which the life of a really great composer must be largely devoted.

It was not until December, 1888, that I paid my first visit to Vienna. I arrived there towards the end of the month, armed with letters of introduction which met with a kind response and obtained for me immediate admission into those English and Austrian circles to members of which they were addressed. I waited for a week before letting Brahms know of my arrival, as I wished not only to be settled before calling on him, but also to be in such a position in regard to my acquaintance as would make it impossible for him to suspect that I could want anything whatever of him beyond the delight and honour of seeing him again, and of recalling myself to his remembrance.

Meanwhile I gathered, from all I heard, that his dislike of anything approaching to general society had steadily grown upon him. Some, even, of his old friends spoke of the increasing rarity of his visits. A lady at whose house he had been intimate for many years told me it had once been his custom to announce himself for the evening from time to time at a few hours' notice, with the proviso that he should find her and her husband alone in their family circle, or at most with one or two chosen friends. On these occasions he had been used to play to them one after another of his newest compositions. This habit, however, he had almost entirely given up.

I heard but one opinion, both from friends and outsiders, as to his essentially high character and sterling qualities of nature; but his manners were described with unanimity, by those not within his immediate circle, as difficult, sarcastic, and arrogant. I was, indeed, so repeatedly assured that I should do no good by trying to see him that I almost began to fear I should find he had become rude and impossible, if not hopelessly inaccessible. To all that was said to me on the subject I answered merely that I had once known him well, and had never found him otherwise than kind and simple, but that I had prepared myself to find him changed and rough in his behaviour to me.

At length, on a dark afternoon of one of the closing days of the year, I made my way to the Wieden, the quarter of Vienna inhabited by Brahms, and, turning in at the doorway of No. 4, Carlsgasse, I ascended the worn stone staircase as far as the third *étage*. Here I pulled the shining brass handle of the old-fashioned door-bell, and the feeling of doubt which had possessed me changed to one of positive alarm as I listened to the prolonged peal I had awakened. I thought it must sound to Brahms like the announcement of a most daring and determined intruder, and that it would inevitably prove the death-knell of any chance of my admission.

The door was soon opened by a friendly maid-servant, who told me, indeed, that the Herr Doctor was not at home, but satisfied me that I was not being put off with a mere phrase by adding that she thought he would probably be back by six o'clock, and that she advised me to return about that hour if I particularly wished to see him, as he was to start on a journey early the next morning. I thanked the girl, said I would follow her suggestion, and, without leaving my name, returned to my rooms to wait for the evening.

The second visit was again unsuccessful, but on trying a third time, at seven o'clock, I found that Brahms had returned. 'Please to walk in,' said the landlady, who this time opened the door. But this unexpected facility of access to the master was even more embarrassing than would have been the conflict of argument I had anticipated. 'Please take my card,' said I, 'to the Herr Doctor, and ask if he will see me.' 'Oh, it is not necessary,' she said; but took it in, returning immediately and asking me to enter. As I advanced, the formidable and overbearing Brahms hastened to meet me. 'Why did you not leave your address? I should have come to find you out,' he said, giving me his hand. And returning with me to the sitting-room, he bade me take a seat on the sofa, whilst he placed himself on a chair opposite.

He did not try to hide that he was pleased to see his old pupil. He evidently wished me to understand that our acquaintanceship was to be taken up from the exact point at which it had been last left, and reminded me, when I alluded to his lessons at Baden-Baden, that he had seen me since those early days. 'Oh, for a moment at the rehearsals at Berlin,' I answered. 'But since then,' he insisted. 'Only at the concert,' said I, rather surprised. 'Yes, at the concert,' he agreed, 'and you sat downstairs, I remember.'

I told him I had lately been getting up the same B flat Concerto which he had played at the time, and had performed it in London before a private audience. He was interested in hearing the particulars of the occasion, and when I said, laughingly, that the fatigue entailed by the practice of its enormous difficulties had given me all sorts of aches and pains, and made it necessary for me to go into the country for change of air after the performance was over, he replied in the same vein: 'But that is very dangerous; one must not compose such things. It is too dangerous!'

He informed me rather slyly, 'I am the most unamiable of all the musicians here,' as though he would like to know if I had heard of his reputation for cross-grained perversity, and was frankly gratified when I answered: 'That I will never believe, Herr Brahms—never!' He was to be absent at the longest for ten days only, and when I took leave of him it was with the pleasant consciousness that he would be glad to find me still in Vienna on his return.

In appearance, Brahms had again greatly altered since our meeting in Berlin. Though not fifty-six, he looked an old man. His hair was nearly white, and he had grown very stout. I had a good opportunity of observing him, myself unnoticed, soon after his return from his journey. The first public performance in Vienna was given of his newly-published Gipsy Songs, at the concert of a resident singer, one of his friends. Brahms had not been announced to take part in the performance, but when the evening came, he walked quietly on to the platform as the singers were arranging themselves in their places and took his seat at the pianoforte as accompanist. Of course his appearance was the signal for an outburst of enthusiastic welcome from the crowded audience, some hopes, but no certainty, having been entertained that he would show himself.

As I sat in my corner and watched, I was aware that not only his general aspect, but his expression also, had undergone another and a curious change during the last years. He now wore the happy, sunshiny look of one who had realized his purpose, and was content with his share in life; of one to whom the complete measure of success had come, and not too late to be valued. If in Baden-Baden he had made upon me the impression of a man awaiting full recognition, who had already waited long for it; if in Berlin, the impression of one who, having attained a glorious pinnacle of fame whilst still in the plenitude of his powers, was untiringly pressing onward towards higher summits of fulfilment—I had the feeling, when I looked at him in Vienna, that the second phase, too, was more or less belonging to the past, and that he had entered upon a period of reward, and perhaps of less strenuous exertion.

One of the very few opportunities I ever had of seeing Brahms avail himself of a great man's license to follow his whims regardless of convention, and, perhaps, of due respect to others, was afforded me at a meeting of the Vienna Tonkünstlerverein, the musicians' club, of which he was honorary president. It was one of the special social evenings of the society, when the members supped together. Brahms was late in coming, and when he arrived supper was proceeding. He allowed himself to be conducted to the place, at the top of a long table, which had been reserved for him as president, but did not sit down. Leisurely scanning the assembled company, he picked out the position he preferred, which happened to be at the side near the bottom. A slight space was certainly there, but not enough for a seat. 'There,' he said, pointing to it, and he sauntered down the room, apparently quite unconcerned at the disturbance and inconvenience which he caused, a bench having to be moved and several people being obliged to shift their places to make room for him. When once in occupation of the seat he fancied, he contributed his share to the cordiality of the evening, and was in no hurry to leave.

Another occasion was very similar. He was again dissatisfied with a place that had been assigned him at a supper-party. This time it was at a private house, and, as he could not have declined the seat without making himself unbearably rude, he submitted, with a kind of half-protest, to occupy it. During the greater part of the entertainment, however, he was not only in a wayward mood, but in a thoroughly bad temper, which he could not control. There was, when all is said, certainly no ill-natured intention in what he did on either occasion, but at the worst a mere childish petulance and over-excitability under slight disappointment.

I discovered, though Brahms had no fixed hour, that the right time to call upon him was about eleven o'clock. Always an early riser, he had then completed his morning's work, and if at home, as was generally the case, was ready to receive a visitor. He was sometimes to be found seated at the piano with an open volume (often Bach) on the music-stand, which was placed on the closed top lid of the instrument, playing softly, or silently studying the work in front of him. I have never felt that I was disturbing him when I called. It is true that I only went occasionally, and when provided with a legitimate excuse. Still, I do not altogether understand how he acquired such a reputation for incivility. He was, in his own way, of a sociable disposition.

One day when I was with him, some terrible pianoforte strumming was going on in the flat above him. I commented on the strange constitution of people who could deliberately plant themselves in his immediate neighbourhood—for he had occupied the same rooms for years—and then worry him with such noise. He said there was sometimes bad singing and violin-playing, both of which he found even harder to bear than the piano, but added: 'They have their rights, and I know how to help myself;' and he held out his hands in keyboard position, to indicate that when too much disturbed to do anything else, he shut out the sounds and employed his time by playing.

Brahms generally went out at about a quarter to twelve at latest, and would arrive before one o'clock at his favourite restaurant, Zum Rothen Igel. After his early dinner he walked, finding his way to a café in another part of the town, where he would read the papers over a cup of black coffee. After this was his best time for paying visits, and about six o'clock he often returned to his rooms to write letters or do other work. Later on he would go out again to fulfil his evening engagements. Sometimes it happened that he did not go home, after leaving in the morning, until after supper. These details I learnt incidentally in the course of my stay in Vienna.

Brahms made a great point of being polite to ladies on the question of smoking, and was very particular in asking permission before lighting his cigar. Of course, if I found him alone, he never smoked. One day, however, when I had been with him only a very few minutes, the door-bell rang, and two gentlemen appeared, one a friend of Brahms', the other a youth whom he had brought to introduce to the master. Brahms wished me to remain, and I therefore kept my seat. Very soon he produced his box of cigars, according to Continental custom, and handed it to his visitors, saying, however: 'But I do it unwillingly, as a lady is present.' The elder of the two gentlemen put his cigar into his breast-pocket, the younger lighted his and vigorously puffed away alone, from sheer confusion, I think, at finding himself in the presence of the master. Brahms returned to his seat without taking one. 'But won't you smoke, Herr Brahms?' I said, after a few seconds. 'If you allow it,' he answered, making as much as possible of the few words, and taking a cigar.

Though Brahms was not, during the latter part of his life, a frequenter of concert-rooms, he nearly always attended the concerts of the Philharmonic Society and of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna, sitting, usually, in the 'artists' box' in the gallery. In the intervals between the pieces he would lean forward, both arms on the front, with his opera-glasses to his eyes, spying out his acquaintances in different parts of the hall.

When I called to say good-bye to him at the close of my first visit to Vienna, I happened to mention that I had made a small collection of works written for the keyed instruments of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and had picked up one or two rather valuable first editions. He was greatly interested, and saying, 'We have done the same thing,' took down from the bookcase one or two of his own old music-books to show me. I especially remember an original edition of Scarlatti's Sonatas, in first-rate preservation, but without the title-page, of which he was particularly fond and proud. He asked if I would bring one or two of mine to show him on my next visit, and I told him that I happened to have one with me—an original Rameau—and that if he had not got a copy I would send it him at once.

'No,' he answered; 'it is too late now—you are going away to-morrow—but next year when you come again.' 'But I mean,' I rejoined, 'that I will give it you.' Brahms did not immediately answer, and I added: 'Would you rather not? If so, I will not do it.' 'No, I would *not* "rather not," but you must not immediately give your things away,' he replied. 'Then I will do it,' I declared, delighted that I possessed something he would like to have, and to accept from me. Later in the day I sent him the book, with a few lines telling him how much pleasure it would give me if I might leave it with him as a remembrance. Early the next morning I left Vienna. I was not to arrive in London for another week, having engagements *en route*, and this Brahms knew. On the evening of my return home, as soon as my mother's first greetings were over, she said: 'There is a letter for you from Brahms; it arrived this morning.' 'From Brahms! How do you know?' I answered. 'From his having written his name on the outside,' she returned, handing me the precious missive.

On the outside of the envelope, above the adhesive, he had written 'J. Brahms, Vienna, Austria,' and, opening the envelope, I read as follows:

'VERY ESTEEMED AND DEAR FRÄULEIN,

'It was too late the other evening for me to be able to do as I wished, and come and express my thanks to you in person.

'Let me, therefore, send them very heartily after you, for your so kind and valuable gift.

'It was indeed much too kind of you to part with the pretty treasure in order to give me pleasure, and it shall still be at your disposal next year!

'In the hope of seeing you here again next year, and of being able to repeat my hearty thanks,

'Yours very sincerely,
'J. Brahms.'[*]

On my first visit to Brahms in the following winter, he led the way to his bookcase and showed me the Rameau, saying: 'I shall die in ten years, and you will get it back again.' I told him that should I outlive him I should prefer not to have it back, but to let it go with his collection, and thus the matter remained.

The success of my first visit to Vienna induced me to pay several subsequent ones, the last of which took place rather more than a year before Brahms' death. A minute account of each would be wearisome, and I will only allude, therefore, to the opportunity that I had, in the course of two separate winters, of hearing the concerts of the Joachim Quartet in Vienna, and of seeing Brahms as one of the audience. On one of these enchanting evenings the Clarinet Quintet was given, with Mühlfeld as clarinettist. Brahms had his seat downstairs, at the end of the room reserved for resident and other musicians, and separated from the general audience by the performers' platform. My place was only two or three away from his, and so situated that I could see him all the time the work was being played. His face wore an unconscious smile, and his expression was one of absorbed felicity from beginning to end of the performance. When the last movement was finished, he was not to be persuaded to come forward and take his part in acknowledging the deafening clamour of applause, but, as it were, disclaimed all right in it himself by vigorously applauding the executants. At the last moment, however, as the noise was beginning to subside, up he got, and stepping on to the platform, in his loose, short, shabby morning-coat, made his bow to the audience. Another item in the programme was the Clarinet Trio, played by himself, Mühlfeld, and Hausmann. Joachim, sitting on the right-hand side of the piano, turned over for him. I changed my seat during the performance of this work, taking the place that Brahms had vacated, which was close to the piano and gave me a full view of the key-board. In spite of my several experiences of the master's tenacious memory for small things, I confess that I felt a thrill of surprise at the end of the first movement, and again at the end of the second, when he turned his head suddenly round and glanced straight at me in the very same quick, searching way to which I had been accustomed in the old Lichtenthal days, as though to satisfy himself as to whether or not I had understood.

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[*] 'Sehr geehrtes und liebes Fräulein,

'Es war neulich zu spät am Abend geworden als dass ich, wie ich wünschte, Sie selbst noch hätte aufsuchen u. Ihnen meinen Dank aussprechen können.

'So lassen Sie mich denn nachträglich diesen sehr herzlichen sagen für Ihr so freundliches u. werthvolles Geschenk.

'Es war in der That gar zu liebenswürdig von Ihnen sich mir zu gefallen von dem hübschen Schatze zu trennen u. es soll Ihnen im nächsten Jahre auch noch zur Verfügung stehen!

'In der Hoffnung Sie aber im nächsten Jahre wieder hier zu sehen u. Ihnen meinen herzlichen Dank wiederholen zu können,

'Ihr sehr ergebener,
'J. Brahms.'

ISCHL.

I spent several weeks at Ischl during the summers of 1894 and 1895, and was much interested in observing the life of my old friend in surroundings that were new to me. His habits, during these closing years of his life, were in all essential respects the same as when I had first known him in Baden-Baden. Rising soon after four o'clock, his days were passed in the same simple, natural routine of walking, studying, and composing, in the enjoyment of the society of his friends and of the cordial relations which he maintained with the people of the country, between whom and himself a perfect understanding existed.

His love of children has often been recorded. I have seen him sitting reading on the bench of the little garden of his lodgings, apparently quite undisturbed by his landlady's boys, who romped round and about him, jumping on and off the bench, playing hide-and-seek behind his back, and the like. Now and then he would interrupt his studies to caress a couple of kittens that were taking part in the frolics.

'I know this man,' said a droll, tiny boy of about five or six, in a funny red suit, who, taking a stroll along the promenade one afternoon with some companions, came upon Brahms sitting under the trees before Walter's coffee-house, the centre of a large group of musicians and friends. The great composer was quite ready to acknowledge the acquaintanceship, and called his small friend to his table to receive a spoonful of half-melted sugar from his coffee-cup.

'My Katie knows Brahms,' said a village dressmaker to me, alluding to her pretty little fair-haired daughter of eight. 'We have met him out walking very early in the morning, but Katie was frightened the other day and cried because he ran round her and pretended he wanted her piece of bread.

'The Herr Doctor has already seen him,' a young peasant mother observed to me as she showed me her three-months-old son, 'and says he is a strapping boy.'

One morning when I called on Brahms to say good-bye, I found him in the midst of preparations for his own departure. An open portmanteau, in process of being packed, was in the sitting-room, and there was a litter of small things about. Brahms invited me to take a seat on the sofa. A book which he had been reading lay open, face downwards. I ventured, with an apologetic glance at him, to take it up and look at it. This he did not at all mind. He had been amusing himself with an essay on Bismarck. After we had chatted a little while, as I rose to say farewell, my eye was caught by a table on which were a number of cheap German playthings—small boxes of puzzles, toy knives and forks, etc., evidently destined for parting or returning gifts to quite poor children.

'What is this?' I involuntarily exclaimed, taking up, before I knew what I was doing, a toy fork of most ungainly make, broad, squat, and almost without handle. An inquisitiveness, however, which seemed to hint at the soft side of Brahms' nature could not be allowed. 'What does that matter to you?' he cried. Then, instantly, as though afraid he had been rough, he added: 'It is for small things—fruit, fish, or the like.' Only I, having seen the clumsy toy, can quite appreciate the comicality of the answer, which of course simply meant: 'No allusion, if you please.' Brahms, however, had saved appearances, and without being hard on me, had drawn a thin veil over his kind intentions to his little friends. I held the fork another instant, and then replaced it on the table, saying with gravity: 'I thought it was a plaything, Herr Brahms.'

A young lady, an inhabitant of Ischl, who taught singing, and gave an annual concert there, and who, during the season, presided over a milliner's business on the Promenade, was a great ally of Brahms', and never omitted to stand outside the door of her atelier as the hour approached for him to pass to his café, in order to get a greeting from him. The little ceremony was duly honoured by the great composer, who was always ready with, at the least, his genial 'Good-day.'

Fräulein L. talked of him to me in just the same way as all others did who were content to be natural and unostentatious in their manner towards him. He was so good-natured and bright, she remarked, and though he loved to tease, his teasing was so kindly. He made a point of calling on her formally once every season. Taking advantage of this ceremony, she one day placed before him a cabinet photograph of himself, and asked if he could do her the honour of writing his name underneath.

'Yes, I can do that,' he answered in his cheerful tone, 'I learned that at school. But why do you keep this ugly old face? Why not have a handsome, curly-haired one? Ah, what have we here?'—catching sight of a little saucer containing cigar-ash. '*You smoke!*'

Fräulein L. laughingly assured him that neither she nor her assistant had been guilty of the cigar. 'So much the worse!' he retorted. 'Who was it? Is he dark or fair?'

By such genial intercourse and harmless banter, Brahms endeared himself to all the towns-people with whom he came in contact, and his preference for Ischl was a source of pride and gratification to them. His sociability had in it no suggestion of patronage; it was that of a friend with friends, and was valued accordingly.

A few words spoken to me by his landlady at Ischl are not without their value, coming, as they do, from one who had the opportunity of knowing him in small things. The occasion was as follows. My lodging was opposite to Brahms' on the other side of the valley, but on a much higher mountain slope. I could see his house from my balcony and windows, but was too far away to have the least apprehension that he could be disturbed by hearing anything of my piano. Someone suggesting to me, however, that, with the wind in a certain direction, the sound might possibly reach his windows, I went across one afternoon, when I knew he would be out, to interview his landlady on the subject. She assured me nothing had ever been heard, and added: 'You can play quite without fear, gnädiges Fräulein; nothing is heard here — the water makes too much noise. And even if a tone were to be heard now and then—it could not be more—the master is not so particular: it would not disturb him. He is not capricious: no one can say that of him.'

That Brahms had his little prejudices and limitations, however, cannot be denied, and these grew more pronounced as he advanced in years and became less pliable. The mere circumstance of his having inflexibly adhered to the particular method of life adopted by him as a young man, by which he shut himself away as much as possible from whatever was at all distasteful to him in ordinary social intercourse, contributed, as time went on, to increase his sensitiveness and make him impatient of contradiction. He became rather too prone to suspect people to whom he did not take a fancy, of conceit and affectation; and, without knowing it, he acquired a habit, which sometimes made conversation with him difficult, of dissenting forcibly from trifling remarks made more with the object of saying something than for the sake of asserting a principle. He had his own particular code of polite manners, and was rigorous in expecting others to adhere to it, yet he was apt, in his latter years, to be intolerant of those whose ideas of what was due to the amenities of life were more extended than his own, or somewhat differed from them.

What, however, were his prepossessions, his little sarcasms, and occasional roughnesses, but as the tiniest flecks on the sun ? We may well be thankful, we musicians and music-lovers of this generation, to have passed some part of our lives with Brahms in our midst—Brahms the composer and Brahms the man. As his music may be searched through and through in vain for a single bar that is not noble and pure, so also in his mind dwelt no thought which was otherwise than good and true. We may even be glad that he was not perfect, but human, the dear, great, tender-hearted master, whose lofty message, vibrating with the pulsations of the nature he so loved, was of such rare beauty and consolation.

The few lines with which I conclude these slight personal reminiscences were the last I ever received from Brahms. They were written on his card and sent, enclosed in an envelope, when I was at Ischl. I had been expecting him to come to see me, and he had not appeared.

'ESTEEMED FRÄULEIN,

'Prevented by many things, I venture to ask if it is not possible for you to call on

'Your most sincerely

'JOHANNES BRAHMS.'*

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* 'GEEHRTES FRÄULEIN,

'Mannichfach abgehalten, erlaube ich mir die Anfrage ob es Ihnen nicht möglich ist vorzusprechen bei

'Ihrem ergebensten

'JOHANNES BRAHMS.'

CHAPTER I

1760–1845

The Brahms family—Johann Jakob Brahms: his youth and marriage—Birth and childhood of Johannes—The Alster Pavilion—Otto F. W. Cossel—Johannes' private subscription concert.

JOHANNES BRAHMS came of a race belonging to Lower Saxony. This is sufficiently indicated by the family name, which appears in extant church records variously as Brahms, Brams, and Brahmst. The word Bram belongs to the old Platt-Deutsch, the near kin to the Anglo-Saxon and English languages. It is still the common name in the Baltic districts of Germany, the Hanoverian provinces, and, with a modified vowel, in England, for the straight-growing *Planta genista*, the yellow-flowering broom, and is preserved in its original form in the English word 'bramble.'

The letter *s* at the end of a name has the same meaning in German as in English, and just as 'Brooks' is a contraction of the words 'son of Brook,' so 'Brahms' signifies, literally, 'son of Bram,' or 'Broom.'

Peter Brahms, the great-grandfather of the composer, and the first of his family of whom there is authentic record, was a child of the people. He trekked across the mouth of the Elbe from Hanover into Holstein, and settled down to ply his trade of joiner at Brunsbüttel, a hamlet or small township situated in the fertile fen-country which lies along the shore of the Baltic between the mouths of the Elbe and the Eider. This district is remembered as the land of the Ditmarsh Peasants, who were distinguished, some centuries ago, by their fierce and obstinate struggles for the maintenance of their independence, but who finally settled down about the year 1560 under the dominion of the Princes of Holstein. They are said to have been pre-eminent amongst neighbouring peoples, not only in courage, but in a simple untaught genius for the arts of poetry and music. They loved to turn their various adventures into verse, which they afterwards sang to the most expressive and appropriate melodies of their own invention, and their war-songs and ballads, though now forgotten, were long a cherished possession of their children's children. The little country has in recent times proved not unworthy of its former reputation. Niebuhr the traveller, and his son, the celebrated historian, both belonged to Meldorf. Claus Groth, the Low-German poet, was a native of Heide, where his grandfather and father were millers living on their own land in patriarchal fashion. Groth has drawn, notably in his volume 'Quickborn,' pathetically naïve pictures of his beloved Ditmarsh; of its homely scenery, its changing cloud-effects, its sudden bursts of storm, its simple, hard-working, honourable peasant life; and it is a striking circumstance that he should have been in a position to describe, as old family friends and neighbours, living amongst the memories of his childhood, the great-grandfather, grandfather, father, and uncle of Johannes Brahms.*

Old Peter the trekker was respected as a thoroughly well-mannered, orderly citizen. He was short and robust, and lived to a ripe old age. He passed the closing years of his life at Heide, where he spent most of his time sitting on a bench in front of his house, smoking a long pipe, and was wont to startle the dreamy Claus Groth, as he passed by every morning on his way to school, with a loud, jocular greeting.

Johann his son, who was tall and handsome, with straight, yellow hair and fair complexion, combined the callings of innkeeper and retail dealer first at Wöhrden and afterwards at Heide. He married Christiana Asmus, a daughter of the country, and who knows what strain of latent poetic instinct, inherited from some old minstrel and patriot ancestor, may have been transmitted, through her veins, into the sturdy Brahms family ? There is some presumption in favour of such a conjecture.

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* 'Brahms Erinnerungen,' in *Die Gegenwart*, No. 45.

Two sons were born of her marriage with Johann, each of whom had a marked individuality. Peter Hinrich, the eldest, married at the age of twenty, and settled down as his father's assistant and future successor. Groth has described his adventure in the fields one memorable Sunday afternoon. Accompanied by his little son, he carried a huge kite, taller than himself, with a correspondingly long, thick string, which he successfully started. A strong north-west wind carried it along, and, to the delight of a crowd of small spectators, he tied to it a little cart of his own manufacture, in which he placed his boy. The cart began to move, drawn by the kite, slowly at first, then more quickly. Faster and higher flew the monster, quicker and quicker rolled the wheels, the child in the carriage, the father by its side. Then a scream, a crash! The terrified Claus knew no more till next day, when he heard that the little carriage had been dragged over a wall and upset, that the child had fallen out unhurt, and the kite been found on a high post a mile or two distant.

This Peter Hinrich added to the vocations of his father that of pawnbroker, and gradually acquired a large business as a dealer in antiquities. In the end, however, his delight in his possessions gained decided predominance over his business instincts. Becoming partially crippled in old age, he would sit in a large arm-chair for which there was barely space, surrounded by his beloved pots and pitchers, weapons and armour, and point out desired objects to would-be purchasers with a long stick. Often, however, he could not persuade himself to part with his curiosities, and would send his customers away empty-handed, satisfied with the mere pleasure of showing the treasures with which he packed his house quite full. His children and grandchildren remained and spread in the Ditmarsh, where some of them prosper to this day.

Johann Jakob, the second son of Johann and Christiana, destined to become the father of our composer, was his brother's junior by fourteen years, and was born on June 1, 1806. From his early boyhood he seems to have had no doubt as to his choice of a vocation. He could by no means be persuaded to settle down to the routine of school-work, to be followed in due course by the humdrum existence of a small country innkeeper or tradesman, such as had sufficed for his father and grandfather, and was contentedly accepted by his elder brother. He was upright, good-natured, and possessed of a certain vein of drollery, which made him throughout life a favourite with his associates; he was born, also, with a quietly stubborn will. He had an overmastering love of music—music of the kind he was accustomed to hear at neighbours' weddings, at harvest merry-makings, in the dancing-rooms of village inns. A musician he was resolved to be, and a musician, in spite of the determined opposition of parents and family, he became.

There existed, not far from his home, a representative of the old 'Stadt Pfeifereien,' establishments descended directly from the musicians' guilds of the Middle Ages, whose traditions lingered on in the rural districts of Germany for some time after the original institutions had become extinct. The 'Stadt Pfeiferei' was recognised as the official musical establishment of its neighbourhood, and was presided over by the town-musician, who retained certain ancient privileges. He held a monopoly for providing the music for all open-air festivities in the villages, hamlets, and small townships within his district, and formed his band or bands from apprenticed pupils, who paid a trifling sum of money, often helped with their manual labour in the work of his house and the cultivation of his garden or farm, and, in return, lived with him as part of his family and received musical instruction from himself and his assistants. At the termination of their apprenticeship he provided his scholars with indentures of character and efficiency, according to desert, and dismissed them to follow their fortunes. Country lads with ambition, who desired to see something of the world, or to attain a better position than that of a peasant or journeyman, would persuade their parents to place them in one of these establishments. They were expected to acquire a practical knowledge of several instruments, so as to be able to take part upon either as occasion might demand, and the bands thus formed were available for all local functions. Johann Jakob would readily have applied himself to learn, from the nearest town-musician, all that that official was able to teach him, but his father could not be brought to consent to his exchanging the solid prospects of a settled life in the Ditmarsh for the visionary future of an itinerant performer. The boy's inclination was, however, unconquerable, and he settled the matter in his own fashion. He ran away from home several times and made his own bargain with his musical hero. Twice he was recalled and forgiven, and after the third escapade was allowed to have his own way, and bound over to serve his time in the usual manner. 'I cannot give such proofs of my devotion to music,' wrote his son Johannes to Claus Groth many years afterwards. Five years of apprenticeship were spent, the last three at the more distant town of Weslingbüren, in the study of the violin, viola, 'cello, flute, and horn, and, in the beginning of the year 1826, the quondam musical apprentice obtained his indentures, which testified to his faithfulness, desire to learn, industry, and obedience,* and quitted the old home country to try his luck at Hamburg.

It is not easy to imagine the feelings of this youth of nineteen or twenty on his arrival, fresh from the simple life of the Ditmarsh peasants, in the great commercial fortress-city, still the old Hamburg of the day, with its harbour and shipping and busy river scenes; its walls and city gates, locked at sunset; its water-ways and bridges; its churches and exchange; its tall, gabled houses; its dim, tortuous alleys. Refined ease and sordid revelry were well represented there; the one might be contemplated on the pleasant, shady Jungfernstieg, the fashionable promenade where rich merchants and fine ladies and gay officers sat and sipped punch or coffee, wine or lemonade, served to them by the nimble waiters of the Alster Pavilion, the high-class refreshment-house on the lake hard by; the other, in the so-called Hamburger Berg, the sailors' quarter, abounding in booths and shows, small public-houses, and noisy dancing-saloons, in which scenes of low-life gaiety were regularly enacted. Johann Jakob Brahms was destined to appear, in the course of his career as a musician, in both localities. He made his début in the latter.

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* Printed verbally in Max Kalbeck's 'Johannes Brahms,' p. 4.

Thrown entirely on his own resources, with a mere pittance in his pocket for immediate needs, he had to pick up a bare existence, as best he could, in the courtyards and dancing-saloons of the Hamburg Wapping. He seems to have preserved his easy imperturbability of temper throughout his early struggles, and to have kept his eyes open for any chance opportunity that might occur. Helped by his natural gift for making himself a favourite, he managed, by-and-by, to get appointed as one of the hornists of the Bürger-Militair, the body of citizen-soldiers, or town-guard, in which, with a few exceptions, every burgher or inhabitant between the ages of twenty and forty-five was bound to serve. Each battalion of the force had its own band, and each band its own uniform, the musicians of the Jäger corps, to which Johann Jakob was attached, wearing a green coat with white embroidered collar, headgear decorated with a white pompon, and a short weapon called a Hirschfänger. This was a distinct rise in the fortunes of the wanderer. He won for himself a recognised place in the world, obscure though it might be, when he acquired the right to wear a uniform of the city of Hamburg, and in due time he enrolled himself as one of its burghers. The document of his citizenship has been preserved, and will be mentioned again near the close of our narrative.* It cannot be said that his further advancement was rapid. His partiality for the music he knew of is suggestive rather of a struggling instinct than an actual talent. His professional acquirements were slender, and of general education he had none; but he was not without shrewdness, was upright and diligent, and he made gradual progress. He and his colleagues used to form themselves into small brass bands, and to play wherever they saw opportunity, sometimes getting trifling engagements in dancing-rooms, sometimes dependent on the goodwill of a chance audience in a beer-garden or small house of entertainment. He did not earn much, but was no longer entirely dependent on the very meanest exercise of his industry, and may be said to have obtained a footing on the lowest rung of fortune's ladder.

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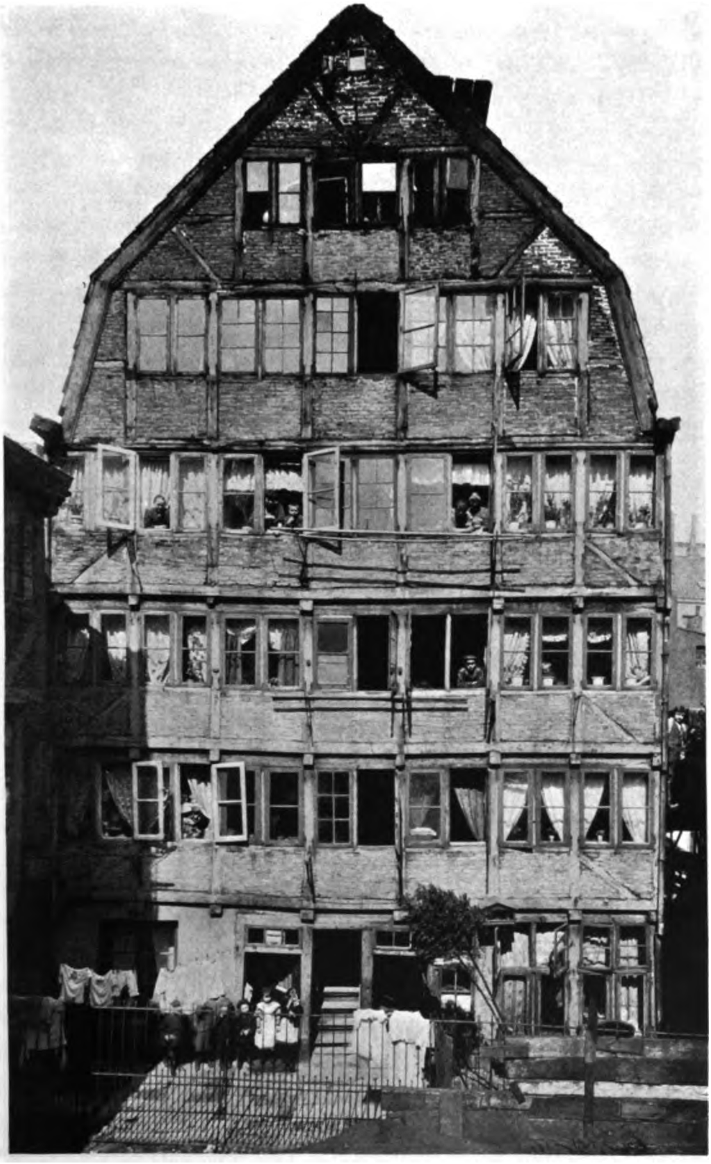
* Vol. II., Chap. X.

On June 9, 1830, a few days after completing his twenty-fourth year, Jakob committed himself to the second great adventure of his life. He married, choosing for his wife Johanna Henrika Christiana Nissen, who was forty-one years of age and in very humble circumstances. She was small and plain, and limped badly; was sickly in health, and somewhat complaining; of a very affectionate if rather over-sensitive disposition, and had a sweet expression in her light-blue eyes that testified to the goodness of her heart. She was an exquisite needlewoman, possessed many good housewifely virtues which she exercised as far as her very limited opportunities allowed, and is said to have been endowed with great refinement of feeling and superior natural parts. One of her husband's colleagues has described her as having faded, later on, into a 'little withered mother who busied herself unobtrusively with her own affairs, and was not known outside her dwelling.'

The strangely-matched couple began their life together on the smallest possible scale, and in February of the following year a daughter was born to them, who was christened Elisabeth Wilhelmine Louise. The young father's material resources seem to have remained much as they were, but before this time his dogged perseverance had added yet another instrument to the list of those he had already practised. He contrived to learn the double-bass, and as his friends increased, and he became more known, he began to get occasional engagements as double-bass substitute in the orchestras of small theatres. Meanwhile he did not neglect his other instruments, but performed on either as occasion presented itself.

On May 7, 1833, the angel of life again visited the poor little home, and Johanna Henrika Christiana presented her husband with a son, who was baptized on the 26th of the same month at St. Michael's Church, Hamburg. The child, being emphatically the 'son of Johann,' was called by the single name Johannes, after his father, mother, and paternal grandfather, and the grandfather was one of the sponsors.

The house in which Johannes Brahms was born still stands as it was seventy years ago, and is now known as 60, Speckstrasse. The street itself, which has since been changed and widened, was then Speck-lane, and formed part of the Gänge-Viertel, the 'Lane-quarter' of the old Hamburg. Want of space within the city walls had led to the construction of rows of houses along a number of lanes adjacent to one another, which had once been public thoroughfares through gardens. A neighbourhood of very dark and narrow streets was thus formed, for the houses were tall and gabled, and arranged to hold several families. They were generally built of brick, loam, and wood, and were thrown up with the object of packing as many human beings as possible into a given area. The Lane-quarter exists no longer, but many of the old houses remain, and some are well kept and picturesque to the eye of the passer-by. Not so 60, Speckstrasse. This house does not form part of the main street, but stands as it did in 1833, in a small dismal court behind, which is entered through a close passage, and was formerly called Schlüter's-court. It would be impossible for the most imaginative person, on arriving at this spot, to indulge in any of the picturesque fancies supposed to be appropriate to a poet's birthplace; the house and its surroundings testify only to the commonplace reality of a bare and repulsive poverty. A steep wooden staircase in the centre, closed in at night by gates,



No. 60 Speckstrasse, Hamburg.

leads right and left, directly from the court, to the various stories of the building. Each of its habitations is planned exactly as every other, excepting that those near the top are contracted by the sloping roof. Jakob and Johanna lived in the first-floor dwelling to the left on facing the house. On entering it, it is difficult to repress a shiver of bewilderment and dismay. The staircase door opens on to a diminutive space, half kitchen, half lobby, where some cooking may be done and a child's bed made up, and which has a second door leading to the living-room. This communicates with the sleeping-closet, which has its own window, but is so tiny it can scarcely be called a room. There is nothing else, neither corner nor cupboard. Where Jakob kept his instruments and how he managed to practise are mysteries which the ordinary mind cannot satisfactorily penetrate, but it is probable that his easy-going temperament helped him over these and other difficulties, and that he was fairly content with his lot. If Johanna took life a little more hardly, it is certain that husband and wife resembled each other in their affection for the children, and that the strong tie of love which bound the renowned composer of after-years to father and mother alike, had its earliest beginning in the fondness and pride which attended his cradle in the obscure abode in Schlüter's-court.

The family moved several times during the infancy of Johannes, and their various homes are partly to be traced in back numbers of the Hamburg address-book, which may be consulted in the library of the Johanneum. These early changes, however, have but little interest for the reader, and it will suffice to record that when the hero of our narrative was four or five years old, and the proud senior by two years of a little brother Friederich, known as Fritz, they moved into quarters less confined than those they had yet occupied, at 38, Ulricus-strasse. Here the anxious wife and mother was able to add a trifle to Jakob's scanty earnings, by engaging on her own account in a tiny business for the sale of needles, cottons, tapes, etc., which had been carried on for many years previously at No. 91 of the same street by the 'sisters Nissen,' and by taking as boarder an acquaintance of her husband's, who, though not a musician, remained a life-long family friend. The intimacy descended to the next generation, and his son, Herr Carl Bade, has many a droll anecdote to relate of Jakob, whom he remembers with affectionate regard.

From such particulars as can be gathered, it is evident that the childhood of 'Hannes' gave early promise of the striking characteristics of his maturity, and that some of the most powerful sentiments of his after-life are to be traced to influences acting on him from his birth. Indications of his possession of the musical faculty were apparent at a very tender age. He received his first actual instruction from his father, but his sensitive organization, aided by the music of one sort and another that he was constantly hearing, seems almost to have anticipated this earliest teaching. In his clinging affection for his parents the child was father to the man, and one of his constant petitions was to be allowed to 'help.' It is easy to imagine the little tasks he learned to perform for the mother whom he worshipped, and the feeling of pride with which he watched his tall father on the exercise-days of the Jäger corps may have had something to do with his partiality for his beloved lead soldiers, the favourite toys which he kept locked in his writing-table long after he was grown up. He was sent, when quite a young child, to a little private school on the Dammthorwall, close to his parents' house, where the teaching was probably neither better nor worse than that of the very small English day-schools of the period. Until he was nearly eight his musical education was carried on at home, and did not include the study of the piano. It seems to have been taken for granted that he would, in due course, follow his father's calling, which was gradually ripening into that of a reliable performer in the humbler orchestras of the city. It is hardly surprising that Jakob, who knew nothing about genius, and was not troubled by notions about art for its own sake, should have looked forward contentedly to the career of an orchestral player for his boy. He himself, after more than twelve laborious years, was only struggling into a position of acceptance by musicians of this class. That Johannes should begin life by taking his place amongst them as a fiddler or 'cellist, who might work his way to some distinction, must necessarily have appeared to him a sufficiently ambitious object, the attainment of which would enable his son to support himself and help the family. The orchestral players of the Hamburg of that time carried on their work under peculiar circumstances. They were bound together in a kind of musical trade-union, the Hamburger Musikverein, founded in 1831, which protected them from competition, no member being allowed to play in any band that included an outsider. They met constantly at their 'Börse,' or club, through which most of their engagements were made. It was open every morning for a couple of hours for the transaction of business, and there was a Lokal in the same building available for a chat over a glass of beer and a smoke. The establishment was, for some time, presided over by the father of Carl Rosa (originally Rose), who lived on the premises, and Johann Jakob Brahms was one of the original members of the society. His copy of the rules is still in existence, and bears, underneath his signature the date May 1, 1831. The system of working by deputy was extensively practised in the arrangements of the union. If a member engaged for a certain performance happened to get a more lucrative offer for the same day and hour, he would give notice to the 'Börse' to furnish a substitute for the first appointment. The substitute might repeat the process in his turn, and it sometimes happened that a single engagement passed through several hands in succession before the date of its fulfilment. Under these conditions music was very much a mere business, but, on the other hand, orchestral players were expected to be fairly good all-round musicians, capable of performing passably on several instruments, and able to fill a gap at short notice. Many of these men, who made the musical atmosphere with which Johannes Brahms was familiar in his childhood, lived in the Lane-quarter, partly because it was cheap, partly in order to be near their 'Börse,' which was situated in the Kohlhöfen. They were, as a rule, shrewd, hard-working, honourable members of their profession, happy in their calling and in their mutual friendly intercourse, and striving to bring up their children to improved circumstances. Those among them who were not able to obtain better employment were glad to acquire experience, and to earn something, by playing in dancing-saloons and Lokals of various degrees of repute, hoping for a rise of fortune in days to come.

Proofs of continual advancement in Jakob's career are to be found in the fact that, from about the year 1837 onwards, his services were requisitioned from time to time as substitute in the small band which played from six till eleven, every evening throughout the year, in a room of the Alster Pavilion, and especially in the circumstance that he by-and-by became one of its regular members, succeeding to the duties of double-bass player. The orchestra was composed of two violins, viola, two flutes, and double-bass, and performed 'evening entertainment-music,' consisting of overtures, airs, operatic selections, and pot-pourris. The public, which was a good one, was served with light refreshments outside, or crowded into the house to listen, according to inclination and the season, and the musicians were paid by contributions collected during intervals between the pieces. Count Woronzow from St. Petersburg, who was present with his son in the audience one fine summer evening, was so delighted with the music, and so gratified at hearing the Russian national air played *con amore* in his honour, that he not only put a gold piece on the plate, but wanted to carry off the six performers to Russia, guaranteeing that they would make their fortunes there, and would not take a refusal till they had had a week or two to consider the matter.

There lived at this time at No. 7, Steindamm a young pianist of Hamburg, Otto Friedrich Willibald Cossel, who was well known to the set of men belonging to the musicians' union, and in great and just repute with them as a teacher of his instrument. He was a pupil of the eminent teacher and theorist Marxsen of Altona, and had cherished dreams of fame as a pianoforte virtuoso. Adverse circumstances, delicate health, and want of self-confidence, may have been the causes of his failure to realize his aspirations; but whether or not this be the case, he has left behind him the reputation of having been a good player, an excellent instructor, and a thoroughly high-minded man. He was devoted to his art, and had a large number of pupils; but they were chiefly recruited from the classes who could not afford to pay much, and it was not in Cossel's nature to be difficult on the question of remuneration. He was fain to content himself with the consciousness of hard work well done as a great part of his reward.

To Cossel came, one day in the winter of 1840-41, Jakob Brahms with the little seven-year-old Hannes, a pale, delicate-looking child with fair complexion, blue eyes, and a mane of flaxen hair falling to his shoulders. He was as neat and trim as a new pin—a little 'Patent-Junge'—and wore over his home-knitted socks pretty wooden shoes such as are seen to this day in the shops of Hamburg, an effective protection against the wet climate of the city. Too pale and serious to be called pretty, there was a something most attractive in his appearance, and when his face lighted up on hearing the conclusion of his father's business Cossel's heart was won.

'I wish my son to become your pupil, Herr Cossel,' said Jakob, speaking in his native Low-German tongue. 'He wants so much to learn the piano. When he can play as well as you do, it will be enough!'

The short interview brought about important results to Hannes, whilst for Cossel it insured the future enduring respect of the musical world. He soon perceived that in his new scholar he had no ordinary pupil, and his affection went out more and more to the docile, eager, easily-taught child. He got into the habit of keeping the little fellow after his lesson that he might practise on his piano, and be spared some of the fatigue entailed by constant walks between home, school, and the somewhat distantly-situated Steindamm. Hannes, on his part, grew passionately fond of his teacher, and the special relation in which he stood to him was soon recognised and accepted by Cossel's other pupils. The two were brought still closer together at the end of about a year, for Jakob and his wife, on the impending marriage of their boarder, moved again into smaller quarters close by—at No. 29, Dammthorwall—whilst Cossel took over their rooms in Ulricus-strasse. Well for Hannes that an admirable method of instruction enabled him to get through the necessary drudgery of acquiring a good position of the hand and free movement of the fingers at a very early age, and that he was prepared by wise guidance easily to encounter successive steps of his master's system, which included the practice of the best masters of études—Czerny, Cramer, Clementi—of the great classical masters, and of pieces of the bravura school in fashion at the time.

In the course of the year 1843 Cossel added to the many proofs he had already given of his affection for his pupil, an admirable instance of generosity and sacrifice of personal considerations. It became evident to him that, notwithstanding—or perhaps in consequence of—the rapid progress made by Hannes, influence was being brought to bear on Jakob to induce him to transfer the boy to the care of some other teacher, and he at once determined that in spite of the keen pangs of disappointment any change would cause him, his darling should, if possible, be placed under Marxsen. Various causes may have led him to this resolution—anxiety to protect the boy from the chance of being thrown too early on the world as a regular bread-winner, to the detriment of the quiet course of his development; unselfish desire that he should grow up with the prestige of association with a man of established musical authority; above all, a profound sense of his own responsibility in regard to the genius of which he found himself guardian, and of the duty incumbent on him to submit its possibilities to the direction of the widest experience and best skill attainable.

La Mara* has related, on Marxsen's authority, the steps taken for the fulfilment of the plan, and their immediate issue. Cossel brought the ten-year-old Johannes to Altona, with the request that his master would examine the boy, and, if satisfied of his possession of the necessary gifts, undertake his further musical instruction. Marxsen, however, did not prove ready to accept this charge. After hearing Johannes play 'very capitally' some studies from Cramer's first book, he pronounced him in the best hands, saying nothing could be more desirable for the present than that he should remain, as heretofore, under Cossel's guidance.

The friends of the family, however, continued to press Jakob, pointing out that Cossel had been too retiring in his own case, prophesying that the history of his career would be repeated in that of Johannes if some change were not made, and insisting that the teacher was too cautious and pedantic in his methods with the boy, who now required to be brought forward. The upshot of these things was that, a few months after the interview with Marxsen, a private subscription concert was arranged 'for the benefit of the further musical education' of Johannes, which took place in the assembly-room of the Zum Alten Rabe, a first-class refreshment-house, long since pulled down, that stood in its own pleasure-garden near the Dammthor. The programme included a Mozart quartet for pianoforte and strings, Beethoven's quintet for pianoforte and wind, and some pianoforte solos, amongst them a bravura piece by Herz, the execution of which, by the youthful concert-giver, seems to have caused immense sensation in the circle of his admiring friends. Hannes, who was the only pianist of the occasion, was assisted in the quintet by Jakob and three of his friends, and in the quartet by Birgfeld and Christian Otterer, two well-known musicians of Hamburg, and Louis Goltermann of the same city, afterwards professor at Prague (not to be confounded with the 'cellist-composer C. E. Goltermann, native of Hanover). The concert was a great success both from an artistic and a financial point of view, and as its result Jakob himself visited Marxsen to prefer, in his own name and that of Cossel, a second request that the distinguished musician would accept Johannes as a pupil. This time Marxsen consented, saying he would receive him once a week provided that the lessons from Cossel were continued without interruption side by side with his own. The mandate was carried into effect, and the arrangement worked smoothly for a time without let or hindrance; but the successful concert had brought danger as well as advantage in its train. An impresario, who had obtained admission on the occasion to the 'Old Raven,' conceived the idea of taking Johannes on a tour and exhibiting him as a prodigy, and presently made proposals to this effect to Jakob, who, not unnaturally, was transported to the seventh heaven by the dazzling prospects which the wily stranger presented to his imagination. The first step to be taken, for which he prepared, probably, with some perturbation of mind, was to break the news to Cossel.

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* 'Musikalische Skizzen Köpfe,' vol. iii.

'Well, Cossel,' he said, finding the young musician at home, 'we are going to make a pile of money.'

'What?' shouted Cossel.

'We are going to make a pile of money. A man has been who wants to travel with the boy.'

Poor Cossel! all his worst fears seemed about to be realized; his heart leapt to his mouth.

'Then you are a word-breaker!' he thundered.

It was now Jakob's turn to look aghast, for Cossel, as described by all who knew him personally, was no stickler for ceremony, and could show his wrath right royally when he felt he had righteous cause for indignation. 'You are a word-breaker!' he cried, and, adopting a sudden idea, went on: 'You said to me, "You shall keep the boy till he knows as much as you do." He can only learn that from Marxsen!'

A heated argument followed, which ended in a compromise. The affair was to be allowed to stand over for a time, and, in fact, several succeeding months passed as quietly as heretofore. But the impresario renewed his proposal, and the struggle recommenced. Cossel perceived the only means of securing a permanent victory for the benefit of Hannes, and he determined to use it, cost him what it might. It lay in his own complete self-renunciation. He went again to Altona, and besought Marxsen to take entire charge of the boy's musical career, only to be once more refused. Marxsen did not yet feel convinced that the great progress made by Johannes during the past year had been due to other qualities than those of assiduous industry and eager wish to learn. Cossel, however, was not to be beaten. He returned to the attack, actually declaring to his bewildered master that the boy made such rapid strides he felt he could teach him nothing more. The kind Marxsen at length gave way, and consented to take the musical education of Johannes into his own hands henceforth, and to teach him without remuneration, saying he did so the more willingly since the parents were not able to pay for the training they wished to secure for their child, and because he had become fond of the little pupil for his own sake.

'How could you let yourself be put off from such business?' said Aunt Detmering after the impresario had been finally dismissed. She had been partner with Johanna in the little shop of the 'sisters Nissen,' and had married into somewhat better circumstances than Jakob's wife. 'I can't interfere in it,' answered Johanna simply, for her boy's good was more precious to her than silver and gold, in spite of her hard, struggling existence. 'Min soote Hannes!' she would say, throwing her arms round him, when he came up sometimes to give her a kiss.

Thus was the rich, budding faculty of Johannes guided to the safe shelter of Marxsen's fostering care, and it is not too much to say that Cossel, by his noble action, secured the future of the genius the significance of which he was the first to recognise. It would be idle to speculate about the unrealities of a non-existent might-have-been, and to contemplate a fancied picture of Brahms' career based upon circumstances and events other than those actual to his childhood. It is, however, certain that no mere natural musical endowment, however splendid, can attain to its perfect growth without having been put in the right way, and those who have entered into the heritage of Brahms' songs and symphonies, his choral works and chamber music, may well cherish Cossel's name in grateful remembrance. Although he will not again occupy a prominent place in our account of Brahms' life, his private relations with his pupil did not cease. His piano and his sympathy were still at the service of Hannes, who was grateful for one and the other, and who, remembering his early teacher and friend to the end of his life with admiring affection, strove, as opportunity served in later years, to obtain for him the more widely-known professional position to which his qualities so justly entitled him. Cossel died in 1865 at the age of fifty-two.

CHAPTER II

1845–1848

Edward Marxsen—Johannes' first instruction in theory—Herr Adolph Giesemann — Winsen-an-der-Luhe — Lischen — Choral society of school-teachers — 'ABC' Part-song by Johannes — The Amtsvogt Blume—First public appearance—First visit to the opera.

EDWARD MARXSEN was born on July 23, 1806, at Nieustädten, a village close to Altona, where his father combined the callings of schoolmaster and organist. His musical talent showed itself in early childhood, and was cultivated by his father to such good purpose that, whilst still a lad, he became competent to take the organist's duty from time to time when a substitute was needed. He was not, however, destined for the musical profession, and was on the verge of manhood when he was at length allowed to follow his unconquerable desire to apply himself with all his energies to the serious study of art. At eighteen he became the pupil of Johann Heinrich Clasing, a musician well qualified to bring up his students in the traditions of the classical school in which he had himself been trained.* His warm interest was soon aroused by the enthusiasm and unremitting application of his new pupil. Marxsen allowed nothing to interfere with the regularity of his lessons, and walked the two miles separating Nieustädten from Hamburg and back again, on dark winter evenings, by the light of his hand-lantern, no matter how stormy the weather. He continued to live at home, studying, teaching, and helping more and more frequently with the organ, till he reached the age of twenty-four, when his father's death left him free from ties. He soon resolved to go to Vienna, with the especial purpose of perfecting his theoretical knowledge under Ignaz von Seyfried, a prolific composer now chiefly remembered as editor of the theoretical works of his master, the renowned Albrechtsberger. Seyfried received the newcomer cordially, and, probably finding Marxsen's musicianship to be but little inferior to his own, treated him, during his lengthened sojourn at Vienna, more as a friend than a pupil. He did not give him formal instruction, but admitted him to frequent musical intercourse, which was chiefly devoted to the discussion of artistic questions and to the free interchange of opinion, and which brought to the younger musician, amongst other benefits, the special gain of thorough familiarity with the great forms of Beethoven. Seyfried's society was interesting and stimulating. He had had pianoforte lessons, as a child, from Mozart, and had been on terms of personal acquaintance with Haydn and with Beethoven, who was his hero. He was of a kind disposition, moreover, and the many opportunities he was able to offer for forming friendships, for hearing music, and for living in musical society, were placed unreservedly at the disposal of his protégé. Marxsen at the same time pursued his study of the pianoforte under Carl Maria von Bocklet, a pianist and musician of eminence, and a very successful teacher, who had enjoyed the favour of Beethoven and been the close intimate of Schubert. Bocklet was one of the earliest to appreciate the genius of the younger master, and, with his colleagues Schuppanzigh and Klincke, gave the first performances, early in 1828, of Schubert's two pianoforte trios, written a few months previously.

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* Clasing was a pupil of C. F. G. Schwenke, who succeeded C. P. Emanuel Bach as cantor and music-director of St. Catharine's Church, Hamburg. On the death of Emanuel Bach in 1788, a portion of his library came into Schwenke's possession, including the score, in Sebastian Bach's own handwriting, of the great B minor Mass.

Marxsen returned to Altona, after an absence of between two and three years, with the matured confidence of the travelled musician who has associated with the authorities of his art, his previous enthusiasm for the works of the great Vienna masters and for the then known instrumental works of the mighty Sebastian Bach fanned into ardent worship. That his mind was sufficiently powerful to rise entirely above the musical artificiality and bad taste of his time cannot be said. To us, who belong to a generation that has been educated on the purist principles first made widely acceptable by Mendelssohn's influence and since popularized by the genius of a few famous executants, with Clara Schumann, Rubinstein, and Joachim at their head, it is difficult to realize the revolution that has taken place in the general condition of musical art since the days when Marxsen, three years Mendelssohn's senior, was young. Many things were then accepted and admired in Vienna, in Berlin, in Leipzig, in London, which would now be regarded as impossible atrocities. Marxsen was capable of setting the Kreutzer Sonata for full orchestra, but this is hardly so surprising as that the Leipzig authorities should have produced the arrangement at one of the Gewandhaus concerts, or that Schumann should have mentioned it indulgently, on whatever grounds, in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*.

Marxsen came for the first time before the public of Hamburg on November 19, 1833, at the age of twenty-seven, in a concert of his own compositions. Such a programme was a novelty in the northern city, and excited attention. The occasion was successful, and established the reputation of the concert-giver as a sound and earnestly striving musician, and from this time his position as a teacher and theorist continuously rose. He was a man of catholic tastes and liberal culture, and his influence over his pupils was not merely that of the instructor of a given subject, but was touched with the power of the philosopher who has a wide outlook on life. The central aims of his theoretical teaching were to guide his pupils to a mastery of the principles illustrated in the works of the great composers, and to encourage each student to develop his own creative individuality on the firm basis thus afforded. He produced a very large number of works, which include examples of the most complex as well as of the simpler forms of composition, and many of them were brought to a hearing. That few show the attempt to appeal to a higher tribunal than the musical taste of the day may, perhaps, be a sign that Marxsen was conscious of not being endowed with original creative power, and did not try to go beyond his natural limitations. He had a genial, encouraging manner which invited his pupils' confidence, and his lively interest 'n all questions concerning literature, philosophy, and art gave constant impulse to the minds of the really gifted amongst them, which was not the least of the benefits they derived from association with him.

We shall not be far wrong if we fix the age of Johannes, at the time he became entirely Marxsen's pupil, as about twelve; and from this date his time, always well employed, must have been very fully occupied. He had to go to Altona for his pianoforte lessons (the question of his learning composition had not yet arisen), to practise at Cossel's or at the business house of some pianoforte firm—for there were too many interruptions at home—and to go regularly to school. Not to the one on the Dammthorwall mentioned above. He now attended F. C. Hoffmann's school in ABC-strasse, an establishment several grades higher than that of which he had formerly been a pupil, and one of good repute in its degree. Hoffmann was a conscientious as well as a humane man, and won the liking and respect of his scholars. He gave them sound elementary instruction, and even had them taught French and English. Brahms retained some knowledge of both languages, as the present writer can testify from her personal acquaintance with him, begun when he had entered middle age. He could read English to some extent, though he could not speak it, and was able to help himself out, when necessary, with a phrase or two of French, though his accent was hopeless. He preserved a pleasant remembrance of Hoffmann in after-life, recommended his school on one or two suitable occasions, and sent him a present on the celebration of his jubilee in the middle of the seventies.

Marxsen's interest and pleasure in Johannes' progress increased every week as he became more convinced of his exceptional capacity. 'One day I gave him a composition of Weber's,' he says,* 'going carefully through it with him. At the following lesson he played it to me so blamelessly and so exactly as I wished that I praised him. "I have also practised it in another way," he said, and played me the right-hand part with the left hand.' (No doubt Weber's *moto perpetuum*, published by Brahms, without opus number, as a left-hand study.)

Part of Marxsen's discipline was to accustom Johannes to transpose long pieces at sight, a practice he had probably learnt from Seyfried, who relates as a *tour de force* of Albrechtsberger that on some public occasion, when he had to play on a low-pitched organ, he transposed an entire Mass from G to G sharp at sight, and without error. Brahms, it may be parenthetically remarked, continued to find diversion in this pastime, and would play fugues of Bach and other works for his own edification in various transposed keys when at the height of his mastership.

The boy had, almost from infancy, shown signs of the tendency to creative activity. Widmann† speaks of a conversation held with Brahms within the last decade of his life, during which the master, recalling early memories, described the bliss experienced by him as a very young child on making the discovery, unaided, that a melody could be represented on paper by placing large round dots in higher or lower positions on lines. 'I made a system for myself before I knew of the existence of such a thing.' When a few years older, he was fond of writing the separate parts of concerted works one under the other—of copying them into score, in fact. Nor was he to be kept from trying his hand at original composition. Louise Japha, an eminent pianist of Hamburg, whose more intimate acquaintance the reader will make later on, speaks of having heard him play a sonata of his own when he was about eleven, at the pianoforte house of Baumgarten and Heins, where she one day found him practising. Cossel, responsible for his advance in playing, is said to have been anxious at his spending too much of his time in these childish attempts; but the instinct was unconquerable, and Marxsen no doubt discovered this when he had Johannes constantly with him. After a time he began to teach him theory. Referring to the commencement of the new study, he writes to La Mara:

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* La Mara, 'Studien Köpfe.'

† 'Brahms in Erinnerung.'

> 'I was captivated by his keen and penetrating intellect, and yet, when he came later on to original composition, it was at first difficult to him, and required a good deal of encouragement from me. Still, though his first attempts produced nothing of consequence, I perceived in them a mind in which, as I was convinced, an exceptional and deeply original talent lay dormant. . . . I therefore spared myself neither pains nor trouble to awaken and cultivate it, in order to prepare a future priest of art, who should proclaim in a new idiom through his works, its high, true, and lasting principles.'

At what age precisely Johannes began to earn regular money by playing in the dancing-rooms and Lokals of Hamburg cannot now be ascertained. It is possible that he occasionally performed on the violin from early childhood, in cases of emergency, as substitute for his father or one of his father's colleagues, though the conjecture is not borne out by reliable record. There is no doubt, however, that loosely repeated anecdotes have given rise to considerable false impression on the point. The notion which has been partially prevalent, that Jakob made systematic use of his boy from a tender age, employing his gifts for the family benefit, is warmly repudiated by those who have the best means of knowing the circumstances. 'With the best will,' says Christian Otterer, who, about twelve years Johannes' senior, has till lately led an active professional life, and retains a bright and unclouded remembrance of old days, 'I cannot recollect that Johannes played, as a young child, in Lokals. I was daily with his father at the time, and must have known if it had been the case. Jakob was a quiet and respectable man, and kept Hannes closely to his studies, and as much as possible withdrawn from notice.'

'It cannot be true,' said Mrs. Cossel repeatedly, referring to such tales; 'my husband never mentioned such a thing to me when speaking of Johannes' childhood; and even if it had been proposed, I am sure he would never have allowed it.' Two authentic sources of information, however, establish the fact that from the age of about thirteen the boy regularly fulfilled engagements of the kind. The earnings derived from them were eagerly contributed to the general family fund.

A glimpse of him at this period is furnished by Christian Miller,* then a young musical student, who has related that he used to play for a small payment on Sunday afternoons during the summer of 1846, at a restaurant in Bergedorf, near Hamburg. Miller heard him there, and, fascinated by his performance, begged to be allowed to play duets with him. After this the two lads met frequently until Miller left Hamburg to become a pupil of the Leipzig Conservatoire. The companionship would seem to have been tolerated rather than actively desired by Johannes, who rarely spoke when out walking with Miller, but was accustomed to march along hat in hand, humming!

The reader will not have forgotten the band of six members which had, during the late thirties, delighted the fashionable loungers of the Jungfernstieg, patrons of the Alster Pavilion. Its activity had been continuous up to the year 1842, when the disastrous fire which broke out in Hamburg during the night of May 4-5, and was not extinguished till the morning of the 8th, destroying the churches of St. Nicholas and St. Peter, St. Gertrude's Chapel, the Guildhall, the old Exchange, the Bank, and over 1,200 dwelling-houses and warehouses, had interrupted the pleasant labours of the musicians. The Alster Pavilion had miraculously been left untouched by the flames, whilst the Alster Halle, a similar establishment close by, had been razed to the ground; and the demolition of the row of shops and houses on the Jungfernstieg had changed the agreeable promenade into a scene of ruin. Little could be thought of in the city for a time save how to meet and repair the ravages inflicted by the calamity, which had stricken the grave citizens of Hamburg with dismay, and made an impression of mixed bewilderment and awe upon the sensitive soul of our little Hannes that was never completely effaced. Gradually, however, public edifices and private houses were rebuilt, Hamburg was restored and beautified, and long before the year 1847, at which our story has arrived, the little orchestra had again become used to assemble, though with a somewhat changed personnel, in the familiar room of the Pavilion, to discourse in lively strains before the ever-shifting guests of the establishment. Jakob retained his position as bass player, and, from his long association with the house, had come to be regarded as an important support to its artistic attractions.

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* Steiner's 'Johannes Brahms.' Neujahr'sblatt der Allg. Musikgesellschaft in Zürich, 1898.

Amongst the most faithful patrons of the Pavilion concerts of this period was a certain Herr Adolph Giesemann, owner of a paper-mill and a small farm in the not very distant country townlet of Winsen-an-der-Luhe. He was in the habit of paying frequent business visits to Hamburg, and, being very fond of music, a performer on the guitar, and the possessor of a good voice, liked nothing better than to spend a leisure hour on the Jungfernstieg listening to a movement of Haydn or Mozart. A familiar acquaintance had grown up between him and Brahms. Giesemann willingly listened to Jakob's eager talk about the achievements of Johannes and the promise of his younger brother Fritz. He had a little daughter of his own at home in Winsen, and hoped she might some day be able to take her part in the private musical doings there—at any rate, learn to play the piano well enough to accompany his guitar. One evening in spring Jakob approached him with a request. His Hannes had found constant employment during the past winter in playing the piano until well into the night in the dancing-rooms of various Hamburg Lokals, and the something under two shillings earned by each engagement had amounted to a valuable addition to the scanty family means. But the late hours had told sadly upon his health. Now the work had ceased for a time, and the little toiler could be spared from home. Would Giesemann give him a few weeks' holiday at Winsen ? The boy's muscial services would be at his command in return. He could accompany him, play to him, and give pianoforte lessons to the little Lischen, a year younger than himself.

Giesemann's kind heart was instantly touched. He had no need to think twice about his own reply, and could answer for that of his wife. Johannes was to be made ready to accompany him back to Winsen after his next visit to Hamburg, which would take place very soon.

And so, in the bright springing month of May, when the buds were bursting and the birds singing, and the gray skies of Hamburg beginning to show a little blue, our dear Hannes took his departure from his big, busy native city to taste for the first time the delights of a free country life, with a kind little sister as companion. He never for a moment felt like a visitor on his arrival, but forgot his constitutional shyness, becoming a child of the house to be petted and brought back to health by fresh air and good food and Frau Giesemann's motherly care. Lischen was at school all the morning, but this was quite a good thing. Hannes had his tasks to attend to also, and could not afford to lose time, for Jakob had made such arrangements as were at his limited command to ensure that his boy's general progress should not suffer by the holiday.

Fresh air, however, was all-important, so he had come provided with a small dumb keyboard for the mechanical exercise of his fingers, and every day after breakfast, after he had got through such practice as had to be done in the house, Frau Giesemann used to turn him into the fields with a bag slung over his shoulder, containing his books and lunch, the clavier under his arm, the notebook, without which he never stirred anywhere, peeping from his pocket, and orders not to show himself again till dinner-time.

Johannes had already been enjoying himself out of doors long before this hour. He used to rise at four o'clock, and begin his day by bathing in the river. Joined not long afterwards by Lischen, the two would spend a couple of delightful hours rambling about, discovering birds' nests and picking flowers. Johannes was quite a simple child in spite of his fourteen years and hard experience, and revelled in the happy days passed amidst sunshine, wild blossoms, and fragrant air. He was very pale and thin, and had little strength on his arrival, but soon gained flesh and colour, to which the glass of fresh milk put by for him every day no doubt contributed. The animals about the place—the cows and pigs, the big dog, the doe—gave him great delight, and he was charmed when the crane spread its wings and flew high overhead as he and Lischen approached it, clapping their hands. He liked to join in the games with which the children of Winsen amused themselves by the river-side on cool summer evenings, but could not be persuaded to take part in the boys' rough sport, and would only play with the girls. The lads, of course, despised him for this, telling him he was no better than a girl himself; but he did not seem to mind, and continued quietly to follow his inclination. One evening, however, soon after his arrival, before he had picked up much strength, as he was returning with several children from wading in the river, Lischen well on in front, one or two rough boys set on him, emptied his pockets, and robbed him of all his possessions, even of the precious pocket-book. He could not help crying at this, but Lischen, seeing him standing on the bank rubbing his knuckles into his eyes, soon found out what was the matter, and, dashing back into the water, forced the molesters to restore everything to her. To the pocket-book Johannes confided his inspirations on every subject. Sometimes it was a melody, sometimes a line or two of verse, that occurred to him. Then, whether he were walking, or climbing trees, or practising, or doing his lessons, out came the book that the idea might be fixed on the spot.

It was not long before his musical talents awakened the admiration of the neighbourhood. There was a pleasantly situated Lokal at Hoopte, a village about two miles from Winsen, which contained a large apartment suitable for dancing and music. This and one or two adjoining rooms were annually taken by the Giesemann circle for the Sunday afternoons of the summer season, and after morning church and mid-day dinner as many of the subscribers as felt inclined would meet there to pass a few sociable hours. Johannes soon became the central figure of these occasions. It was found that he could play, not only the most inspiriting music for the dancers, but a variety of solos also, including some lovely waltzes to which it was delightful to listen quietly; and on being asked, one day, to conduct the men's choral society that was to contribute to the afternoon's programme, he showed himself so astonishingly competent for the rôle he consented to assume, and inspired such confidence and sympathy, as he stood before his forces in short jacket and large white turn-down collar, his fair girlish face, with its regular features and shock of long, light hair, adding to the impression made by his childlike manner, that he was unanimously elected conductor of the society for so long as he should remain at Winsen; a period which was, as now decided, to be prolonged until he should be recalled to the recommencement of his autumn duties.

The men's choral society of Winsen consisted of about twelve members, the majority of whom were school-teachers of the neighbouring villages. The teachers Backhaus of Winsen, Albers of Handorf, Schröder of Hoopte, belonged to it; other prominent members were the goldsmith Meyer and the big master-baker Rieckmann, who had a splendid bass voice. The practices were held on Saturdays from six to eight o'clock, generally in Rector Köhler's schoolroom, because it contained a piano, but when this was not available, in the billiard-room of the Deutsches Haus, Winsen's best Lokal. The singers used to stand round the billiard-table, and Johannes would take his place at the top. Lischen was privileged to attend all meetings of the society during the period that her friend officiated as its conductor.

The boy found a most valuable ally in teacher Schröder, who had great talent and love for music, had worked hard at thorough-bass and counterpoint, and been a composer since his fourteenth year. When Johannes came upon a knotty point in his theoretical studies that required discussion, he would walk over to Hoopte and consult Schröder, who was always ready with sympathy and counsel. He had not returned late one evening from an expedition of the kind, and Giesemann, becoming uneasy, was about to start in search of his young guest, when up drove Mr. Carriage-overseer Löwe from Pattenzen, a few miles away. 'Here is your Johannes,' he cried as the boy jumped from the gig; 'he went out by the wrong gate this morning and missed his way. I found him asleep by the side of a ditch some distance out on the Lüneburg Heath, the clavier by his side and the notebook fallen from his pocket; lucky they had not all rolled in together!'

The theoretical exercises and the little compositions for voices on which Marxsen encouraged his pupil to try his hand were regularly carried to Altona, for, with Marxsen's concurrence and the advice of the schoolmaster Hoffmann, it had been arranged that Johannes should go every week by steamboat to Hamburg and remain there two nights, which allowed him a clear day for his music-lessons and for general private instruction. Now and then Lischen was invited to accompany him, and to share sister Elise's tiny chamber in the Brahms' little dwelling on the Dammthorwall. The journeys were easily managed, for 'Uncle' Adolph Giesemann's brother, manager of the restaurant at the Winsen railway-station, was also contractor for the refreshment department of the steamboat service to and from Hamburg, and nothing could be simpler than for one or both of the children to go and return as his friends. Frau Giesemann used to see that they started with a liberal supply of 'belegtes Brödchen,' a crusty roll cut through, buttered, and put together again, with slices of cold meat, sausage, cheese, or what not, between the two halves. Their friend the restaurateur provided each of them, at the proper time, with a large mug of thin coffee, and Lischen and Hannes, sitting together in the bottom of the boat, thoroughly enjoyed these picnic dinners.

Johannes always began the day after his arrival at Hamburg by exercising his fingers on the upright piano that stood against the parlour wall, on the music-desk of which a book invariably stood open, into which he poked his head—for he was very near-sighted—reading as he worked. Lischen saw little of him afterwards, for his time was occupied by his various lessons, but she did not mind this. She soon became very fond of his dear, kind old mother, and liked to watch her at her duties, sometimes able to help her by fetching water from the pump at the bottom of the steps outside the house, a task which Johanna's lameness prevented her from performing herself. Lischen much admired the portrait of Frau Brahms that hung above the piano, and thought, as she looked at the youthful figure arrayed in a pink dress made Empire fashion, with flowing skirt, short waist, and low neck, the hair dressed with little curls in front and a high comb behind, that Hannes' mother must have been very pretty in her youth. The parlour was rather bare, containing little beyond the piano, table, chairs, a few shelves filled with books, and one or two small prints; but Lischen did not think this mattered, as everything was so neat and shining. She felt sorry, however, that it was so dark, and that its one small window had no other prospect than a close, dreary courtyard—for Johanna still had her little shop in front—and proposed to Hannes that they should bring some scarlet-runners from Winsen, which could be planted in the courtyard and trained up sticks. There would soon be something bright in front of the parlour window. Johannes greatly approved of the plan, which worked well up to the planting of the beans and the placing of some immensely high sticks in readiness for the training. After this stage it disappointed expectations, as the plants failed to do their part and firmly abstained from growing.

It would have been impossible for Johannes to pass with entire enjoyment through the months of his visit to Winsen if he had been without the means of gratifying a taste hardly less strong in him than his passion for music. From the very early age at which he was first able to read, he had been devoted to books, and, whilst showing the child's natural preference for the romantic and wonderful, had displayed strange discrimination in the choice of his favourite tales. He had always contrived by some means or other to provide himself with reading material, preferring books for his little birthday and Christmas gifts, buying them from time to time from pedlars' wheelbarrows with his collection of halfpennies, or begging the loan of a volume from a friend. Brahms' exceptional knowledge of the Bible grew from the time when, as a young child, he was accustomed to eat his dinner with the book lying open beside his plate, absorbed in the Old Testament stories which were then his prime favourites, misty speculations forming in his brain which laid the foundation of his future attitude towards many of life's problems. He had not been long at Winsen before he had exhausted the mental nourishment afforded by Uncle Giesemann's collection of volumes. Fortunately, another resource was at hand. There was a lending library in the neighbourhood belonging to a certain Frau Löwenherz, a Jewess, who had a son called Aaron. With Aaron the two children made friends, and of him, in the absence of sufficient funds to pay the full price of a constant supply of literature, they sought counsel. He proved an able adviser, and, whilst promising to obtain for them access to the coveted books, showed that he was not wanting in the capacity of turning opportunity to profit on his own account. He promised that he would, on his private responsibility, bring one volume at a time for the perusal of Hannes and Lischen, to be put back when done with and replaced by another; the price demanded and agreed to for this secret service being one groschen (about a penny) for each supply.

By this expedient Hannes and Lischen—the latter having probably been the active partner in striking the bargain, for Johannes had few spare pennies—found themselves provided with as many books as they could desire. Their best time for reading was when they sat together by the river-bank, or fished in the pond during the afternoon. Forgetting their rods, they used to pore silently over the open book supported between them, devouring one tale after another of knights and tournaments, outlaws and bandits. Aaron received very particular instruction as to the kind of selections he was to make, and took pains to suit the taste of his patrons. He appeared one afternoon with a volume containing the history of 'The Beautiful Magelone and the Knight Peter with the Silver Keys.' That was a red-letter day in the history of the young subscribers to the lending library which neither Hannes nor Lischen ever forgot. The romance made an indelible impression on both of them. As for bandits, what better could Johannes desire than a work bearing the stimulating title of 'The Robbers,' which Aaron offered another day, insisting with justifiable pride on the success of his researches? The book was written by one Schiller, and proved so satisfactory that Hannes begged Aaron to be on the look-out for other volumes bearing this name on the title-page.

It might be expected that the young conductor of the Winsen Choral Society and the pupil of the distinguished musician of Altona would turn his studies to account by writing something for the use of his choir, and so it was. Johannes composed an 'ABC' four-part song for his school-teachers, consisting of thirty-two bars in two-four time, preceded by three bars of introduction and followed by a kind of signature. The introduction and first three of the four eight-bar phrases had for their text the letters of the alphabet arranged, first in order, and then in syllables of two letters as in a first spelling lesson; the fourth phrase was set to a few words introduced at random. The composition closed with the words 'Winsen, eighteen hundred seven and forty,' sung in full chorus, *lento* and *fortissimo*, on the reiterated tonic chord. The little composition, tuneful and spirited, showing a feeling for independent part-writing, and conceived in a vein of boyish fun that was fully appreciated by the teachers, was soon succeeded by a second, 'The Postilion's Morning Song,' composed to the well-known words 'Vivat! und in's Horn ich stosse.' The young musician was also requested by a deputation from the school-children of Winsen to assist them in the performance of a serenade with which they were desirous of greeting their Rector Köhler on his birthday. He accordingly looked out one suitable to the occasion, arranged it in two parts, practised the boys and girls until they were perfect with it, and conducted the performance outside the Rector's house on the eve of the birthday celebration. He was very strict and serious when engaged in these professional duties, beat time with great verve, and insisted on careful observance of the *pianos* and *fortes*, as well as on the proper graduation of the *rallentandos*. The singing of the Ständchen was declared brilliantly successful by the quite considerable audience that assembled near the Rector's house to enjoy it.

Rumours of the increased musical activity of Winsen could not fail to reach the ears of the Amtsvogt, Herr Blume, an official of good social standing residing there, whose duties, as administrator of some of the rural districts of northern Hanover, brought him into touch with the life of such parts of the country as were included in his circuit. Herr Blume was not far short of seventy when Johannes paid his first visit to the Giesemanns, but his interest in music and love for Beethoven's art were as strong as ever, and Johannes, before leaving Winsen, was invited to his house, and pressed to use his piano for practice. The boy delighted the Amtsvogt by playing with him some four-hand pianoforte arrangements of Beethoven's works, and won the heart of Frau Blume, in spite of his shy, awkward manner, by his simple, childlike nature. If, as was hoped, he should be able to repeat his visit to Uncle Giesemann next year, he was to come often to the Blumes' house, and use the piano as long as he liked. Great regret was felt throughout the circle of Winsen friends at the news of the young musician's impending departure, but the arrival of autumn brought with it the necessity for the resumption of duties in Hamburg, and nothing remained save to hope for a renewal of the pleasures his long visit had brought to many beside himself.

Johannes returned to his home in such a satisfactory condition of health and spirits that he was able, with Marxsen's approval, to take a decided step forward in his career. He played in the Apollo Concert-room on November 20, at a benefit concert given by Birgfeld, already known to our readers as the violinist of the subscription concert at the 'Old Raven,' performing Thalberg's Fantasia on airs from 'Norma.' Marxsen's affection for his pupil and appreciation of his gifts are clearly to be read in the summary of concerts which appeared a week later in the *Freischütz*, a widely-read Hamburg paper to which he was one of the chief contributors:

> 'Birgfeld's concert is said to have been interesting and enjoyable as regards both the vocal and instrumental portions of the programme. A very special impression was made by the performance of one of Thalberg's fantasias by a little virtuoso called J. Brahms, who not only showed great facility, precision, clearness, power, and certainty, but occasioned general surprise and obtained unanimous applause by the intelligence of his interpretation.'

On the 27th of the same month, Johannes appeared in the small room of the Tonhalle at a concert of the pianist Frau Meyer-David, whom he assisted in the performance of a duet for two pianofortes, also by Thalberg, whose fame was at this time at its height. Marxsen's influence is again apparent in the special mention of Johannes in the *Freischütz* review, though it is evident, from the misspelling of the name, that he was not the writer of the notice:

> 'The duet performed by the concert-giver and the young pianist Bruns, who lately appeared for the first time in public with such marked success, gave satisfaction, and was played with laudable unity and facility.'

With the exception of a mere record of the same performance in the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, no further mention of Johannes is to be found in the newspapers of the winter 1847-48. It was passed by the young musician in much the same routine of severe study by day and fatiguing labour by night as the previous one had witnessed. He was, however, spared in the spring for another visit to the Giesemanns' house, to which he returned as to a second home. The members of the choral society were delighted to welcome their conductor, who, in the course of the season, added to their répertoire by arranging two folk-songs for use at the practices. These must be accepted as the earliest recorded illustrations of the partiality for national songs and melodies which remained one of the great composer's most characteristic traits, and which culminated, less than three years before his death, in the publication, in seven books, of his well-known collection of German Volkslieder.

Johannes was frequently at the Blumes' this year, and often played duets with the Amtsvogt. Lischen's pianoforte lessons were not resumed, as they had not been attended by any great result. It was difficult to confine her to the house to practise on bright summer afternoons, when she longed to be enjoying herself out of doors. She never entirely forgot what Johannes had taught her on his first visit, however, and continued to be very fond of music. It was hoped that by-and-by it might be possible to have her voice thoroughly trained. Johannes felt sure it would develop into a fine one.

Meanwhile she succeeded in procuring for her companion the greatest pleasure he had as yet experienced. He wanted very much to hear an opera, and Lischen thought she would like it, too, so one day, when they were going together to Hamburg, she persuaded her father to stand treat for two places in the gallery. It was to be a great night. Formes, then of Vienna, had been secured for a few weeks by the managers of the Stadt Theater (the opera-house of Hamburg), and was making a great sensation. Lischen and Hannes were to hear him in 'Figaro's Hochzeit,' the title-rôle of which was one of his great parts. They started early from the house on the Dammthorwall, supplied by Frau Brahms with some buttered rolls, and waited for two hours in the street before the door opened, which was part of the pleasure. They got capital places, and enjoyed sitting in the gallery before the performance, looking at the house and seeing the people come in. But when the music began Johannes was almost beside himself with excitement, and Lischen has never to this day forgotten his joy. 'Lischen, Lischen, listen to the music! there never was anything like it!' Uncle Adolph was made so happy when he heard all about the evening and perceived the delight he had given, that he said the visit to the opera must be repeated, and accordingly the pair of friends went a little later on, to hear Kreutzer's 'Das Nachtlager von Granada,' which both of them enjoyed very, very much.

Johannes was not able to stay so long at Winsen this year as last, and still greater sadness was felt as the day drew near on which his visit would terminate, as it was the last of the kind he would pay. It was his confirmation year. He was past fifteen now, his general school education was finished, and he was to take his position in the world as a musician who had his way to make and would be expected to contribute regularly to the support of his family and the education of his brother Fritz, destined for a pianist and teacher. He copied out the four-part songs, dedicated to the Winsen Choral Society, beautifully, as a parting present to Lischen, putting headings to each in splendid caligraphy, and adding her name with a special inscription. Lischen treasured the manuscripts long after she had become a wife and mother, in memory of a happy episode of her youth.

There was a solemn farewell ceremony at the last meeting of the choral society, which took place at the Deutsches Haus. After the conclusion of the practice, the conductor addressed his singers in a poem written by himself for the occasion, which began with the line: 'Lebt wohl, lebt wohl, ihr Freunde schlicht und bieder' (Farewell, farewell, ye friends upright and simple). An instant's sorrowful silence followed; then there was a tremendous stamping and clapping and shouting, and the big master-baker Rieckmann, calling out, 'Here, young one!' hoisted Johannes over his shoulder pickapack, and marched several times round the table, followed by Lischen and the other members of the society singing a last chorus.

It was the concluding scene of Johannes' childhood, which had been unusually protracted, in spite of its drawbacks; but, as everybody said, he was to come often again to Winsen, and whenever he should be able to take a short relaxation from the serious duties of life awaiting him, he would know where to find a number of friends ready to greet his arrival amongst them with heartiest welcome.

CHAPTER III

1848–1853

Johannes' first public concert—Years of struggle—Hamburg Lokals—Louise Japha—Edward Reményi—Sonata in F sharp minor—First concert-tour as Reményi's accompanist—Concerts at Winsen, Celle, Lüneburg, and Hildesheim—Musical parties in 1853—Leipzig and Weimar—Robert Schumann—Joseph Joachim.

It was on September 21 that Johannes made his fresh start in life by giving a concert of his own, thus presenting himself to his circle as a musician who was now to stand on an independent footing. It took place in the familiar room of the 'Old Raven,' 'Herr Honnef's Hall,' with the assistance of Marxsen's friends, Madame and Fräulein Cornet, and some instrumentalists of Hamburg. The price of tickets was one mark (about a shilling), and the programme, as printed in the *Hamburger Nachrichten* of the 20th, was as follows :

First Part.

1. Adagio and rondo from Rosenhain's Concerto in A major for Piano, performed by the concert-giver.
2. Duet from Mozart's 'Figaro,' sung by Mad. and Fräul. Cornet.
3. Variations for Violin, by Artôt, performed by Herr Risch.
4. 'Das Schwabenmädchen,' Lied, sung by Mad. Cornet.
5. Fantasia on Themes from Rossini's 'Tell,' for Piano, by Döhler, performed by the concert-giver.

SECOND PART.

6. Introduction and Variations for Clarinet, by Herzog, performed by Herr Glade.
7. Aria from Mozart's 'Figaro,' sung by Frl. Cornet.
8. Fantasia for Violoncello, composed and performed by Herr d'Arien.
9. *a*) 'Der Tanz' } Lieder, sung by Mad.
   b) 'Der Fischer auf dem Meer' } Cornet.
10. *a*) Fugue by Sebastian Bach
    b) Serenade for left hand only, by E. Marxsen
    c) Étude by Herz, performed by the concert-giver.

Unattractive as it now seems, this selection of pieces was no doubt made with a view to the taste of the day, and the inclusion of a single Bach fugue was probably a rather daring concession to that of the concert-giver and his teacher. The two vocal numbers from 'Figaro' may be accepted as echoes of the boy's delight on the evening of his recent first visit to the opera. No record remains of the result of the concert, but its success may fairly be inferred from the fact that it was followed, in the spring of 1849, by a second, for which the price of the tickets was increased to two marks. This was announced twice in the *Nachrichten* as follows:

'The undersigned will have the honour of giving a musical soirée on April 14 in the concert-room of the Jenisch'schen Haus (Katharine Street, 17), for which he ventures herewith to issue his invitation. Several of the first resident artists have kindly promised their assistance to the programme, which will be published in this journal.

'J. BRAHMS, Pianist.'

The programme was appended to the third and last advertisement of April 10:

FIRST PART.

1. Grand Sonata in C major, Op. 53, by Beethoven. (The concert-giver.)
2. Romance from Donizetti's 'Liebestrank.' (Th. Wachtel.)
3. Schubert's 'Ave Maria,' performed on the Horn by Herr Börs.

4. ‘O geh’ nicht fort,’ Lied, by E. Marxsen, sung by Frl. Cornet.
5. Fantasia for Piano on a favourite Waltz, composed and performed by the concert-giver.

SECOND PART.

6. Concerto for Violin, by Fr. Mollenhauer, performed by Herr Ed. Mollenhauer.
7. Songs. Me. Cornet.
8. Fantasia on Themes from ‘Don Juan,’ by Thalberg, performed by the concert-giver.
9. Duet, sung by Me. and Frl. Cornet.
10. Variations for Flute, by Fräsch, performed by Herr Koppelhöfer.
11. Air Italien, by C. Meyer, performed by the concert-giver.

The performance of Beethoven’s ‘Waldstein’ sonata, Op. 53, was regarded long after the close of the forties, as a great technical feat, and, taken together with the execution of the ‘Don Juan’ fantasia, would represent something near the height of the pianistic virtuosity of the time, whilst with the Fantasia on a favourite waltz the concert-giver made his first public entrée as a composer. This work must be identified with the variations on a favourite waltz mentioned by La Mara as having been played at his concert by the young Brahms, of which one variation took the form of a ‘very good canon.’ Marxsen’s notice of the concert in the *Freischütz* of April 17 was the only one that appeared:

> ‘In the concert given by J. Brahms, the youthful virtuoso gave most satisfactory proofs of advancement in his artistic career. His performance of Beethoven’s sonata showed that he is already able to devote himself successfully to the study of the classics, and redounded in every respect to his honour. The example of his own composition also indicated unusual talent.’

Although the report adds that the room was so full as to oblige many listeners to be content with seats in the anteroom, it is probable that the young musician found concert-giving more vexatious and expensive than useful or profitable. Though he appeared from time to time at the benefit-concerts of other artists, and repeated his own fantasia at one given on December 5 by Rudolph Lohfeldt, his third soirée in Hamburg, given under conditions of which he could not at this time have dared to dream, did not take place till after the lapse of another decade. The four or five years immediately succeeding his formal entry into life were, perhaps, the darkest of Brahms' career. Money had to be earned, and the young Bach-Mozart-Beethoven enthusiast earned it by giving wretchedly-paid lessons to pupils who lacked both talent and wish to learn, and by his night drudgery amid the sordid surroundings of the Hamburg dancing-saloons.

It was an amelioration in his life and a step forward in his career, when he was engaged by the publisher, August Cranz, as one of several contributors to a series of popular arrangements of light music, published under the name 'G. W. Marks.' We have read in Widmann's pages of the spirit in which the great composer, a few years before his death, recalled these passages of his struggling youth:

> 'He could not, he said, wish that it had been less rough and austere. He had certainly earned his first money by arranging marches and dances for garden orchestras, or orchestral music for the piano, but it gave him pleasure even now, when he came across one of these anonymously circulating pieces, to think that he had devoted faithful labour and all the knowledge at his command, to such hireling's work. He did not even regard as useless experience that he had often had to accompany wretched singers or to play dance music in Lokals, whilst he was longing for the quiet morning hours during which he should be able to write down his own thoughts. "The prettiest songs came to me as I blacked my boots before daybreak."'

And if the master could so speak and think of his early trials, must not we, who are, perhaps, the richer through them, treasure the remembrance of the nights of uncongenial toil through which he passed to become, even on the threshold of life, its conqueror and true possessor? The iron entered his soul, however, and the impression derived from his night work remained with him till death. He was accustomed to read steadily through the hours of his slavery. Placing a volume of history, poetry, or romance on the music-desk before him, his thoughts were away in a world of imagination, whilst his fingers were mechanically busy with the tinkling keys. He did not lift his eyes to the scene before him after his first entrance, though there were times when he felt it with shuddering dismay. It is, however, right to repeat that, as we have hinted in a previous chapter, this kind of industry was a more or less recognised means by which struggling musicians of the class to which Jakob Brahms belonged, were enabled to help their needy circumstances, and it would not be difficult to name more than one executant afterwards well known who fulfilled similar engagements in youth. The position of Johannes was not in itself exceptional, though the contemplation of it is now startling from its contrast with his tender nature, his sensitive genius, and the great place which he ultimately won.

An engagement of which Kalbeck speaks, to act as accompanist behind the scenes and on the stage of the Stadt Theater, may have been less irksome to the young musician than his other hack work, and it is possible to believe that the experience drawn from it may have been of some appreciable value to him in after-life, even though his artistic development did not result in dramatic composition. Evidence is not wanting, however, to show that he kept his thoughts steadily fixed upon the higher practical possibilities of his profession, and that, though his position continued very obscure, it did not remain at a standstill. His terms to pupils increased to about a shilling a lesson, and occasionally he was able to get more. Every now and then he obtained a small concert-engagement, or officiated at a private party, and on one occasion he appeared with Otto Goldschmidt, the then leading pianist of Hamburg, who was about four years his senior, in a performance of Thalberg's duet for two pianofortes on airs from 'Norma.'

Conditions at home remained unfavourable for practice, and Johannes now worked regularly at the establishment of Messrs. Baumgarten and Heinz, where an instrument was always at his service. Here, one day, he met Fräulein Louise Japha, who remembered the circumstance, already recorded in these pages, of having heard him play five or six years previously as a child of eleven. A talk ensued, a sympathetic note was struck, and a comradeship quickly grew up between the two young musicians. Louise, born in 1826, and therefore some seven years the senior of Johannes, was possessed of high musical endowment. At the time of which we write, she was the pupil of Fritz Wahrendorf for pianoforte, and of William Grund for theory and composition. She achieved eminence later on, becoming well known in Germany and a great favourite with the public of Paris. Frau Dr. Langhans-Japha is now not far from eighty, but there is still a peculiar charm in her playing, which is especially distinguished by beauty of tone and phrasing. Her competent sympathy was a valuable addition to young Brahms' pleasures in life, in the days when he knew little of congenial artistic companionship. They met constantly to play duets and compare notes as to their compositions, for Louise was a song-writer of ability. Johannes used to discuss with her both his favourite authors and his manuscripts. One day it was a long exercise in double counterpoint that he brought to show her, another day a pianoforte solo. On a third occasion he produced a pianoforte duet in several movements, which he begged her to try with him, and, acknowledging its authorship at the close of the performance, asked her opinion of the work. This proving generally favourable, the composer, going more into detail, took exception to one of his themes, which he feared was rather 'ordinary'; but when Louise was half inclined to agree with him, he cried angrily: 'Why did you not say so yourself? Why was I obliged to ask you?'

He was always composing, and as time went on, was ably guided by Marxsen to the practice of the large musical forms, over which he soon acquired conspicuous mastery, showing extraordinary facility in applying to them the skill he had gradually attained in free contrapuntal writing, whilst allowing to his fancy the stimulus of the classical-romantic literature that appealed with special force to his imagination. 'It came into my head after reading so-and-so,' he would say. The whole of his small amount of spare cash was devoted to the purchase of second-hand volumes from the stalls to be found in the Jews' quarter of Hamburg, and what he bought he read. Sophocles and Cicero, Dante and Tasso, Klopstock and Lessing, Goethe and Schiller, Eichendorff, Chamisso, Pope, Young, and many other poets, were represented in the library collected by him between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one.* His favourite romances were those of Jean Paul and E. T. A. Hoffmann, whose influence over his mind is easily recognisable in the published compositions of his first period. No other work on which he might be engaged, however, prevented him from the composition of many songs. He threw one off after another. 'I generally read a poem through very slowly,' he said to Louise, 'and then, as a rule, the melody is there.'

Fräulein Japha was before her time in conceiving an enthusiasm for Schumann's art, and tried hard to win over Johannes to an appreciation of its beauties, but he was too entirely under the influence of Marxsen, who, in training him as a composer rightly proceeded on strictly orthodox lines, to become a present convert. He, on his part, made efforts to induce Louise to change her teachers and put herself under his master. She had quite other views, however. Schumann and his wife paid a visit to Hamburg in 1850, appearing several times in public, and Louise resolved that if it could be made possible, she would enter on a fresh course of study of composition and the piano under the two great artists respectively. She only waited for a convenient opportunity to carry out her plan. Johannes approached Schumann in another fashion, by sending a packet of manuscripts to his hotel and begging for his opinion. It is no wonder that the master, who was besieged on all sides during his week's stay, found no time to look at them, and returned the parcel unopened.

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* *Cf.* Kalbeck, p. 186.

It must not be supposed that the young Brahms was always so companionable as we have shown him when in the society of his chosen friends. He had his moods. Christian Miller's early experiences of his persistent taciturnity had not been exceptional. He spent a few evenings at the Japhas' house, but Louise's family, her sister Minna only excepted, by no means took a fancy to her favourite. One evening, when he was about eighteen, a gentleman of the Japha circle, who had been interested in hearing him play the scherzo now known as Op. 4, the earliest written of his published instrumental works, accompanied him on the way home, and made repeated but quite hopeless efforts after sociability. Not one word would Johannes say. Perhaps he felt subsequent secret prickings of conscience, for he made confession to Louise, though not in any apparently repentant spirit. 'One is not always inclined to talk,' he said; 'often one would rather not, and then it is best to be silent. You understand that, don't you?' 'No, you were very naughty,' she told him, but forgave him nevertheless. She could overlook his occasional whims. She perceived his genius, admired his candid nature, and felt her heart warm to him when he talked to her of the old mother to whom he was devoted, and of Marxsen, whom he revered with all the enthusiastic loyalty of his true heart. Soon after his walk with the Japhas' friend he had a chance opportunity of playing his scherzo to Henry Litolff, who bestowed high praise on the composition.

Meanwhile the friends at Winsen faithfully remembered their young musician. Uncle Adolph and friend Schröder seldom missed going to see him when occasion brought either of them to Hamburg, and Lischen came over to be introduced to Madame Cornet and Marxsen. Johannes persevered in his desire that her voice should be trained for the musical profession, and wished her to obtain a good opinion on the subject. The verdict of the authorities proved, however, unfavourable to the project.

Of the general invitation to visit the Giesemanns Brahms gladly availed himself, staying sometimes for a few days, sometimes in the summer for a week or two, as his occupations allowed. He was never again able to undertake the choral society, but there was always a great deal of music at the Amtsvogt's house when he was at Winsen, as well as at the Giesemanns' and Schröders'. Town-musician Koch was a good violinist, and but too happy to have the chance of playing the duet sonatas of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven with such a colleague, and every now and again compositions were looked out in which Uncle Giesemann could take part with his guitar. Pretty Sophie Koch, the younger of the town-musician's two daughters, took great interest in these artistic doings, and it was rumoured, as time went on, that her fondness for music was not untinged by a personal element connected with the Giesemanns' popular guest. If this were so, Johannes himself was probably the last person to become observant of it. He was wholly absorbed in his profession, and several quite independent informants have concurred in describing him to the author as being, at this time of his life, something less than indifferent to the society of ladies, and especially of young ones. For his early playmate, Lischen, his affection continued unchanged, and with her he remained on the old terms of frank and cordial friendship.

It happened as a natural consequence of the political revolution which took place early in the year 1848 in Germany and Austria, that, during the year or two following its speedy termination, there was an influx into Hamburg and its neighbourhood of refugees on their way to America. Conspicuous among them were a number of Hungarians of various sorts and degrees, who found such sympathetic welcome in the rich, free merchant-city that they were in no hurry to leave it. Some of them remained there for many months on one pretext or another, and amongst these was the violinist Edward Reményi, a German-Hungarian Jew whose real name was Hoffmann.

Reményi, born in 1830, had been during three years of his boyhood a pupil of the Vienna Conservatoire, studying under Joseph Böhm, now remembered as the teacher of Joachim. He had real artistic endowment, and played the works of the classical masters well, if somewhat extravagantly; but something more than talent was displayed in his rendering of the airs and dances of his native country, which he gave with a fire and abandon that excited his hearers to wild enthusiasm. Eccentric and boastful, he knew how to profit to the utmost by his successes in Hamburg, where he created a *furore*. Johannes, engaged one evening to act as accompanist at the house of a rich merchant, made his personal acquaintance, and Reményi, quickly perceiving the advantage he derived from having such a coadjutor, made overtures of friendship in his swaggering, patronizing way, which were not repulsed by the young pianist. Brahms had, in fact, been fascinated by Reményi's spirited rendering of his national Friskas and Czardas; he was willing that the chance acquaintance should be improved into an alliance, and, on his next visit to the Giesemanns' house, was accompanied by his new friend.

The violinist had connections of his own in the neighbourhood. Begas, a Hungarian magnate, had settled down into a large villa at Dehensen, on the Lüneburg Heath, that had been placed at his disposal for as long a time as he should find it possible to elude or cajole the police authorities, and kept open house for his compatriots and their friends. To his circle Brahms was introduced, and much visiting ensued between Dehensen and Winsen, for one or two musicians staying with Begas were pleased to come and make music with Reményi and Johannes, and to partake of the Giesemanns' hospitality. It was a feather in Brahms' cap, in the eyes of many of his friends, that he had been able to capture for Winsen such a celebrity as Reményi, though they were not all quite of one mind. Lischen, for example, did not care for him at all, but much preferred the tall, handsome fiddler Janovitch, with his flashing black eyes and his velvet jacket, who wrote a splendid characteristic waltz expressly that he might dedicate it to her. The jolly party broke up suddenly at last, running off to take speedy ship for America, for they had heard that the police were on their heels. Johannes, who happened to be at Winsen when this crisis occurred, accompanied them as far as Hamburg, where he remained to pursue his ordinary avocations. Meanwhile the Friskas and Czardas continued to revolve in his brain.

Time went on, the Hungarians were no longer vividly regretted, and somewhere about the autumn of 1852, Brahms was left more lonely than ever by the departure of Louise Japha, who found opportunity to carry out her cherished wish to stay at Düsseldorf, where the Schumanns had now been settled for about two years. Her sister Minna was to accompany her, to carry on the cultivation of her own special gift under Professor Sohn, of the Düsseldorf Academy of Art. The thought of losing his friend caused Johannes great sorrow. 'Do not go,' he entreated; 'you are the only person here that takes any interest in me!' His prospects do not seem to have been improving at this time, and his best encouragement must have been derived from his own sense of his artistic progress. This was advancing by enormous strides, the exact measure of which is furnished by the manuscript of the Sonata in F sharp minor now in the possession of Hofcapellmeister Albert Dietrich. It bears the signature 'Kreisler jun.,' a pseudonym adopted by Brahms out of love for the capellmeister Johannes Kreisler, hero of one of Hoffmann's tales, and the date November, 1852.

This work, which, though published later on as Op. 2, was written earlier than the companion sonata known as Op. 1, is, in many of its fundamental characteristics, immediately prophetic of the future master. In it the mastery of form and skill in contrapuntal writing, the facility in the art of thematic development, the strikingly contrasted imaginative qualities—here subtly poetic, there large and powerful—bring us face to face with the artist nature which united in itself high purpose, resolute will, sure capacity, sensitive romanticism, boundless daring. The fancy, however, has not yet crystallized; the young musician has still to pass out of the stage of mental ferment natural to his age before he will be able to mould his thoughts into the concentrated shape which alone can convince the world. The sonata, not perhaps destined ever to become widely familiar, must always remain a treasure to the sympathetic student of Brahms' art, not only by reason of the beauties in which it abounds, but also because it is absolutely representative of its composer as he was at nineteen. We may read his favourite authors in some of its movements without the need of an interpreter, and we know, from his own communication to Dietrich, that the melody of the second movement was inspired by the words of the German folk-song, 'Mir ist leide, Das der Winter Beide, Wald und auch die Haide, hat gemachet kahl.'

It would be difficult, and is fortunately unnecessary, to trace the exact steps of Reményi's career after his flight from Germany. For the purpose of our narrative the facts suffice that he reappeared in Hamburg at the close of 1852, giving a concert in the Hôtel de l'Europe, which does not seem to have created any great sensation, and that he found himself in the same city in the spring of 1853. Brahms, depressed by the hopeless monotony of his daily grind, was no doubt glad enough to see him, and, as his slack time was at hand, it was proposed, perhaps by Reményi, perhaps by Uncle Giesemann, possibly by Johannes himself, that the two musicians should give a concert to their friends in Winsen, who would, no doubt, hail the prospect of such an event, and assist it to the utmost of their power. Communications were opened, and the proposal was not only entertained, but developed, as such ideas are apt to do. If at Winsen, why not also at Lüneburg and Celle? Amtsvogt Blume had influence in both towns, which he would be too happy to exert. In the end, the project expanded into the plan of a concert-tour. Johannes and Reményi would give performances in the three localities named, and from Celle it would be no distance to go on to Hanover, where the twenty-one-year-old Joachim, already a European celebrity, had a post at Court. Reményi had known him for a short time when they had both been boys at the Vienna Conservatoire; they would go and see him. He was bound to welcome his compatriot and former fellow-pupil. Who could tell what might happen ?

No doubt Brahms' heart beat fast when he left home on this his first quest of adventure, and probably not the least ardent of his anticipations was that of making the personal acquaintance of the celebrated violinist whose first appearance in Hamburg at the Philharmonic concert of March 11, 1848, with Beethoven's Concerto, remained vividly in his remembrance as one of the few great musical events of his own life. Before starting, he exacted a promise from his mother that she would write to him regularly once a week—not a mere greeting, but a real letter of several pages. It was a serious undertaking for Johanna, who was not practised in penmanship, but she gave her word to Hannes, and found means to keep it. The travellers took but little luggage with them. Such as Johannes carried was made the heavier by his packet of manuscripts, which contained his pianoforte sonata-movements and scherzo, a sonata for pianoforte and violin, a pianoforte trio, a string quartet, a number of songs, and possibly other works. One programme was to suffice for the concert *tournée*, and this the two artists had in their heads.

The exact date of the Winsen concert is forgotten, apparently beyond chance of recall, but the event may be fixed with certainty as having taken place in the last week of April. Both musicians were the guests of the Giesemanns for several days beforehand, and spent the greater part of their mornings practising together, beginning before breakfast. They gave a great deal of time to the Hungarian melodies, and it would seem as though Johannes had been preparing a pianoforte accompaniment; for they repeated the periods over and over again, Reményi becoming very irritable during the process. The season was a warm one ;

they worked energetically in their shirt-sleeves, and the violinist more than once drew a scream of pain from his colleague, by bringing the violin bow suddenly down on his shoulder to emphasize the capricious *tempo* he required. One morning Johannes, very angry, jumped up from the piano, and declared he would no longer bear with Reményi; but the concert came off nevertheless, and turned out a brilliant success. It took place in the large room of the Rusteberg club-house; the entrance fee was about eightpence, and the profits to be divided came to rather over nine pounds. Beethoven's C minor Sonata for pianoforte and violin headed the programme, and was followed by violin solos; Vieuxtemps' Concerto in E major, Ernst's 'Elégie,' and several Hungarian melodies, all accompanied by Brahms, who, it must be remembered, was but the junior partner in the enterprise. Only one thing was to be regretted. Schröder had been ill, and could not come to Winsen for the concert. He managed, however, to attend a repetition of the programme, which the two artists gave the next day in his schoolroom at Hoopte, expressly in order that he might get some amount of pleasure out of the great doings of the neighbourhood.

The next concert took place on May 2 at Celle. It had been arranged for with the assistance of Dr. Köhler, a well-known inhabitant of the town, probably a relation of the Rector of Winsen, and a friend of Amtsvogt Blume, who, besides seeing through the business arrangements, had neglected no opportunity of arousing general interest in the event. The single public announcement appeared in the *Celles'sche Anzeigen* of Saturday, April 30:

> 'Next Monday evening at seven o'clock the concert of the Herren Reményi and Brahms will take place in the Wierss'schen room. The subscription price is 12 g.gr.* Tickets may also be obtained of Herr Wierss jun. at Herr Duncker's hotel, and on the evening at the room for 16 g.gr.'

At Celle there was a sensation. The two artists, going, on the morning of May 2, to try their pieces in the concert-room, were dismayed to find that the only pianoforte of which it boasted was in such an advanced state of old age as to be unusable for their purpose. Classical concerts were rare events in Celle, and it had occurred to no one to doubt the excellence of the instrument; a piano was a piano. It was arranged that every effort should be made, during the few hours that remained, to procure a better one, and a better one was actually discovered and sent in just as the hour had arrived for the concert to begin. But a fresh difficulty arose. The second instrument proved to be nearly a semitone below pitch, and Reményi refused to make so considerable a change in the tuning of his violin. What was to be done? The practised and intrepid Johannes made short work of the difficulty. If Reményi would tune his fiddle slightly up, so as to bring it to a true semitone above the piano, he himself would transpose his part of the Beethoven sonata a semitone higher than written, and play it in C sharp instead of C minor. No sooner said than done. The young musician performed the feat without turning a hair, though his colleague allowed him no quarter, and the performance was applauded to the echo. Reményi behaved well on this occasion. Addressing the audience, he related the circumstances in which he and his companion had found themselves placed, and said that all approval belonged by right to Brahms, whose musicianship had saved the situation for everyone concerned. History does not relate whether the young hero transposed his parts throughout the evening, or whether the old instrument was sufficiently serviceable for the accompaniments of the violin solos, and the question does not appear to have suggested itself until the present time, when it cannot be solved. Johannes himself seems to have thought but little of his achievement. Writing presently to let Marxsen know how he was getting on, he mentioned the incident, not as worthy of comment, but as one amongst others.

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* Two Guter Gröschen were of about the value of 2½d.

The day after these events Reményi and Brahms retraced their steps as far as Lüneburg, where they were to remain for a week as the guests of Herr Calculator Blume, son of the

Amtsvogt. At his hospitable house they were presented to the musical circle of the town, so far as it included members of the sterner sex. At the earnest persuasion of Brahms, no ladies were invited to the party arranged by Frau Blume in the interests of the forthcoming concert. 'It is so much nicer without them,' he said, and was so serious about the matter that his hostess regretfully gave way to him. He played part of the C major Sonata, on the composition of which he had lately been engaged, on this private occasion, making but little impression with it. Perhaps the double consciousness, which cannot but have been secretly present with him, of his great artistic superiority to Reményi, and of the quite secondary place to which he found himself relegated whenever they appeared together, may have increased the awkward shyness which placed him at such a disadvantage by the side of his colleague. He was incapable of making any effort to assert himself in general society, and attracted little notice from ordinary strangers who had no particular reason for observing him closely. However, everyone behaved very kindly to him throughout the journey. He was certainly a good pianist, and accompanied Reményi delightfully.

The concert was advertised in the *Lüneburger Anzeige* of May 7, the twentieth birthday anniversary of our Johannes:

> 'The undersigned propose to give a concert on Monday evening, the 9th inst., at 7.30, in Herr Balcke's Hall, and have the honour to invite the attendance of the music-loving public. Amongst other things, the concert-givers will perform Beethoven's Sonata for Pianoforte and Violin in C minor, Op. 30, and Vieuxtemps' grand Violin Concerto in E major.
>
> 'Tickets to be had,' etc.
>
> 'EDWARD REMÉNYI.
> 'JOHANNES BRAHMS.'

Again a great success was scored, and the next day a second concert 'by general desire' was announced, with the same programme and special mention of the 'Hungarian Melodies,' for Wednesday, May 11. It brought the visit to Lüneburg to a brilliant conclusion, and the performances were again repeated on the 12th at a second concert in Celle, advertised in the Celle journal of the 11th.

With the account of these five soirées, exact record of the public concerts of the journey is exhausted. Neither advertisement nor local recollection of any other can be traced, though Heuberger speaks, on the authority of Brahms' personal recollection, of two given at Hildesheim.* The first was very sparsely attended, and the artists, after supping at a restaurant where they seem to have made merry with some companions, paraded the streets with a queue of followers until they arrived underneath the windows of a lady of position who had been their principal patron. Reményi greeted her with some violin solos, the assembled party followed suit with a chorus, and the ingenious advertisement proved so successful that a second concert-venture on the following evening drew a crowded audience. The circumstances thus related point to the conclusion that the first concert at Hildesheim was hastily arranged, and the explanation may be that some unexpected introduction caused the musicians to visit the town. This would fit in with the fact that there is no reference in any Hildesheim journal of the date to Brahms and Reményi, and with the absence of all knowledge, on the part of several persons still living who have personal associations with the journey, of any other concerts than those in Winsen, Lüneburg, and Celle, and of one other of a different kind in Hanover, to which we shall return.

It is necessary for the understanding of what is to follow that we should here part company, for a time, with the travellers. Before introducing Johannes to the great musical world which he is to enter before long, we must glance at the party questions by which it was agitated in the early fifties, and which had hitherto been unknown or unheeded by our young musician in the inexperience of his secluded life.

The musical world of Leipzig, the city raised by the leadership of Mendelssohn to be the recognised capital of classical art, had become split after the death of the master in November, 1847, into two factions, both without an active head. The Schumannites, whilst receiving no encouragement from the great composer whose art they championed, decried Mendelssohn as a pedant and a phrase-maker, who, having nothing particular to say, had covered his lack of meaning by facility of workmanship. The Mendelssohnians, on the other hand, declared Schumann to be wanting in mastery of form, and perceived in his works a tendency to subordinate the objective, to the subjective, side of musical art. The division soon spread beyond Leipzig throughout Germany, and, in the course of years, to England, with the result that Mendelssohn, once a popular idol, is now rarely represented in a concert programme.

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* Heuberger, 'Musikalische Skizzen.'

Meanwhile Franz Liszt, perhaps the greatest pianoforte executant of all times, and one of the most magnetic personalities of his own, had exchanged his brilliant career of virtuoso for the position of conductor of the orchestra of the Weimar court theatre, with the avowed noble purpose of bringing to a hearing such works of genius as had little chance of being performed elsewhere. He declared himself the advocate of the 'New-German' school, and, making active propaganda for the creeds of Hector Berlioz and Richard Wagner, succeeded in attracting to his standard some of the most talented of the younger generation of artists, amongst whom Joachim, Raff, and the gifted and generous Hans von Bülow, were some of the first converts. There were, therefore, three different schools of serious musical thought in the year 1853, each of which boasted numerous and distinguished adherents.

The purists of Leipzig held sacred the memory of Mendelssohn, clung to the methods as well as the forms of classical tradition, and declined to recognise as legitimate art anything that savoured of progress.

The Schumannites believed it possible to give musical expression to the world-spirit of the time by expanding their methods within the old forms—*i.e.*, by free use of chromatic harmonies, varied cadences, mixed rhythms, and so forth.

The Weimarites, rejoicing in the potent leadership of Liszt, declared they would no longer be hampered either by old methods or old forms, which they regarded as worn out and perishing of inanition.

The party disputes as to the respective merits of Mendelssohn and Schumann, were as nothing beside the violent controversies which raged for years around the theories professed by the founders of the so-called 'music of the future.' For some time the battle was fought chiefly between the 'academics' of Leipzig and the 'revolutionists' of Weimar. The classical-romantic art of Schumann had points of contact with that of each of the extremists. Animated by new impulse and instinct with modern thought, it was by no means coupled by the leaders of the new party with that of Mendelssohn, but was accepted by them for some years with more than toleration, and some of the master's works, as 'Genoveva' and 'Manfred' were performed at Weimar under Liszt's direction. Schumann himself, however, whilst warmly appreciating the great qualities of Wagner's musicianship, was well aware that any relationship between his own works and that of the new school was merely superficial. He was second to none in his reverence for the forms of the great masters, upon which he based his compositions, and, though it is probably the case that the originality of his art-methods did not attract the sympathy of Mendelssohn, he clung to the memory of this departed friend as that of a beloved comrade in arms.

Schumann, who had long since retired from his labours as editor of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, of which he was the founder, lived quietly at Düsseldorf, where he had, in 1850, succeeded Ferdinand Hiller as municipal conductor. The success achieved by him there, during the first season of his activity as director of the orchestral subscription concerts and the choral society, was only transient. His reserved nature, and the progress of the malady that threatened him, unfitted him for the position, and he was subject to the constant annoyance that resulted from differences with his committee. To this was added the serious disappointment of knowing that the periodical to which he had devoted untiring energy during some of the best years of his life, had become, under the editorship of Franz Brendel, the organ of the New-German party, from whose principles he felt increasing alienation. These vexations probably augmented his nervous condition, and his habitual silence and reserve increased. His chief pleasure was found in the absorbing work of composition, and in his generous sympathy with a group of young musicians who regarded themselves as his disciples. Perhaps feeling that the best part of his own career was already behind him, he lived in the constant hope that someone would appear of creative genius sufficiently decisive to indicate him as the worthy successor to the prophet's mantle of classical art.

Many of our readers are aware that Joseph Joachim was born on June 28, 1831, at Kittsee, a village near Presburg in Hungary; that at the age of twelve he had learnt all that the distinguished violinist Böhm, of the Vienna Conservatoire, master of many famous pupils, could teach him; and that he lived at Leipzig, well known at the conservatoire, though not its pupil, for the next six years, happy during the first four of them in the affection of Mendelssohn, to whom he was passionately attached, and who lost no opportunity of furthering his protégé's genius and of laying the foundation of his future career.

It was not until after Mendelssohn's death that either of the party questions to which we have referred became acute, and Joseph grew up an unquestioning believer in the principles of musical tradition, which he reverenced with something of religious fervour. The loss of Mendelssohn left him, at the age of sixteen, lonely and disconsolate, in spite of his being himself already a distinguished personality and a universal favourite. The peculiar place in his life which the master had occupied could not again be filled, and for more than two years he was unable to regard anyone as even the partial successor to his best affections.

It happened, however, that two events of the year 1850, awakened in his heart something of the personal enthusiasm which had made his early happiness. A week spent by the Schumanns at Leipzig in the month of March, convinced him of his sympathy with the composer and his art; and a visit which he paid to Weimar in August, on the occasion of the first performance of Wagner's 'Lohengrin,' stirred him so strongly that by the end of the year he had resigned his position in Leipzig and taken up his residence in Weimar as concertmeister in Liszt's orchestra.*

Here he lived for two years, and it seemed for a time as though he would become one of the most enthusiastic of the band of young musicians, amongst whom were Bülow, Raff, Cornelius, and the violoncellist Cossmann, who proclaimed themselves disciples of the new school. His genius and his already eminent position as an artist made him by far the most important member of the group, and he was treated by Liszt almost on equal terms, as a younger colleague. In the constant companionship of this fascinating master, Joachim felt some renewal of the satisfaction in life which he had experienced when with Mendelssohn at Leipzig; but his early convictions and affections were too deeply rooted to be effaced by newer impressions, and his allegiance to the school of the future was not permanent. Liszt's aspirations, as the composer of sounding orchestral works which Joachim ought to have admired, but could not, gradually caused the young concertmeister to feel his position a false one, and he was glad to accept a post offered him, at the close of 1852, as court concertmeister and assistant capellmeister at Hanover. By this step he regained his independence without hurting the feelings of his Weimar friends. His absence of warmth on the subject of the Symphonic Poems had, indeed, been observed by Liszt, but Joachim had naturally refrained from expressing himself about them in detail, and Liszt could not guess that his young companion had conceived a positive aversion to his compositions. Joachim remained for some years yet on terms of affectionate intimacy with Liszt, Bülow, and the others, and was, indeed, so lonely and depressed during the first few months of his residence in Hanover, that he was impelled to express his state of mind by the composition of an overture to 'Hamlet.' Sending the manuscript to Liszt in the middle of March, he wrote:

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* The concertmeister is the leader—*i.e.*, leading violin of the orchestra. The capellmeister is the conductor of the orchestra.

> 'I have been very much alone. The contrast between the atmosphere which is constantly resounding, through your influence, with new tones, and an air which is completely tone-still, is too barbarous. Wherever I have looked there has been no one to share my aims—no one; instead of the phalanx of like-minded friends at Weimar . . . I took up "Hamlet" . . . I am certain that you, my ever-indulgent master, will look through the score, and will advise me as though I were sitting near you, dumb as ever, but listening eagerly to your musical wisdom.'*

The Festival of the Lower Rhine, held in the year 1853 at Düsseldorf (May 15-17), was a particularly brilliant function. The names of Robert and Clara Schumann, Ferdinand Hiller as chief conductor, Joseph Joachim, the English artist Clara Novello, and others of high distinction, roused lively expectations which were perhaps exceeded by the performances. Schumann's D minor Symphony, Pianoforte Concerto played by his wife, and Overture and final chorus from the 'Rheinweinlied,' all given under his own direction, were received with enthusiasm; and the first appearance on the Rhine of the young concertmeister from Hanover, with Beethoven's then little-known Violin Concerto, resulted in a triumph that defies description. 'He opened a veritable world of enchantment,' 'He was the hero of the festival,' 'We will not attempt to describe his success; there was French frenzy, Italian fanaticism, in a German audience,' say the critics of the day.

For our readers, the peculiar interest of the occasion lies in the fact that Joachim, increasingly attracted by Schumann's art and individuality, took advantage of his few days' stay in Düsseldorf to draw closer his relations with the master, and it may be said that his future attitude was finally determined at this time. He saw in Schumann the living representative of the music that he loved, and to him and his he became bound henceforth by ties that death itself was but partially able to sever.*

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* Moser's 'Life of Joachim.'

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* To assist those of our readers to whom the terms 'musical form,' 'absolute music,' 'programme music,' convey no distinct ideas, and who do not realize with exactness what the real position of Wagner's art was in its relation to the school of Weimar, we have entered into these subjects, in Appendix No. I. of this volume, in detail which cannot be conveniently introduced into the body of our narrative.

CHAPTER IV

1853

Brahms and Reményi visit Joachim in Hanover—Concert at Court—Visit to Liszt—Joachim and Brahms in Göttingen—Wasielewski, Reinecke, and Hiller — First meeting with Schumann — Albert Dietrich.

LEAVING Düsseldorf on May 18, the day following the close of the festival, Joachim proceeded on a week's visit to Weimar, and, returning thence to spend a day or two at home in Hanover before settling for the summer at Göttingen, where he proposed to attend University lectures, was surprised by a call from Reményi and Brahms.* His first attention was naturally devoted to his old school-fellow, but by-and-by he turned to the stranger, and an account of the interview may be given in his own words:

'The dissimilar companions—the tender, idealistic Johannes and the self-satisfied, fantastic virtuoso—called on me. Never in the course of my artist's life have I been more completely overwhelmed with delighted surprise, than when the rather shy-mannered, blonde companion of my countryman played me his sonata movements, of quite undreamt-of originality and power, looking noble and inspired the while. His song "O, versenk dein Leid" sounded to me like a revelation, and his playing, so tender, so imaginative, so free and so fiery, held me spell-bound. No wonder that I not only foresaw, but actually foretold, a speedy end to the concert-journey with Reményi. Brahms parted from him soon afterwards, and, encouraged before long by an enthusiastic recognition, marched proudly onwards in his own path of endeavour after the highest development.'*

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* The accounts of some authors place the visit in Göttingen. They must be regarded as, in this respect, mistaken. Dr. Joachim is positive on the point. 'The whole scene lives clearly in my memory; it occurred in my rooms in Princes Street, Hanover,' he lately said to the present writer.

Reményi had not been mistaken in building hopes for the success of the concert-journey upon the chance of an interview with Joachim, who proved the medium through which both he and his companion were guided to the respective spheres for which each was peculiarly fitted. The great violinist was at this, his first interview with Brahms, so deeply penetrated by the certainty of his genius, so impressed by its daring, and so profoundly touched by the evident sincerity and childlike freshness of his nature, that he took him then and there to his heart, and made his cause his own. He at once exerted his influence in Hanover to such purpose that the travellers were engaged to appear before King George and the royal circle.

'There is in his (Brahms') playing,' he wrote to the Countess Bernstorff, a lady of great musical accomplishment attached to the Hanoverian Court, 'that concentrated fire, what I may call that fatalistic energy and precision of rhythm, which prophesy the artist, and his compositions already contain much that is significant, such as I have not hitherto met with in a youth of his age.'†

Joachim's engagements did not allow him to wait in Hanover till the date of the proposed court concert; but before his departure he cordially invited Johannes, who called to bid him farewell, to visit him in Göttingen if his relations with Reményi should come to as early a termination as Joachim thought likely.

Mention of the concert before King George and the royal family is to be found in a volume, 'Aus allen Tonarten,' by Heinrich Ehrlich, court pianist at Hanover, who was present, and has recorded that Brahms played the E flat minor

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* Festival address at Meiningen, October 7, 1899.

† Moser's 'Life of Joachim.'

Scherzo. In a subsequent letter to this musician Joachim wrote :

'. . . It was his exceptional talent for composition, and a nature which could have been developed in its integrity only in close retirement, pure as the diamond, tender as snow.'

From Hanover, Reményi and Brahms travelled to Weimar, where Joachim had ensured them a welcome by writing to Liszt on their behalf. Of the first meeting between the world-famous musician, who lived in a style of ostentatious luxury in a house on the Altenburg belonging to the Princess Caroline von Sayn-Wittgenstein, and the obscure young composer from the Lane-quarter of Hamburg, we have, fortunately, the account of an eye-witness, William Mason, of New York, who was at the time resident in Weimar as a pupil of Liszt, and one of the ardent young champions of the new school.

'One evening early in June,' says Mason,* 'Liszt sent us word to come up the next morning to the Altenburg, as he expected a visit from a young man who was said to have great talent as a composer, and whose name was Johannes Brahms. He was to come accompanied by Edward Reményi.

'The next morning, on going to the Altenburg with Klindworth, we found Brahms and Reményi already in the reception-room with Raff and Prückner. After greeting the new-comers, of whom Reményi was known to us by reputation, I strolled over to a table on which were lying some manuscripts of music. They were several of Brahms' unpublished compositions, and I began turning over the leaves of the uppermost of the pile. It was the pianoforte solo, Op. 4, Scherzo in E flat minor. . . . Finally Liszt came down, and after some general conversation he turned to Brahms, and said : "We are interested to hear some of your compositions whenever you are ready and feel inclined to play them."

'Brahms, however, who was in a highly nervous state, declared that it was quite impossible for him to play, and as the entreaties of Liszt and Reményi failed to induce him to approach the piano, Liszt went over to the table, saying, "Well, I shall have to play"; and taking the first piece at hand from the heap of manuscripts, he performed the scherzo at sight in such a marvellous way, carrying on, at the same time, a running accompaniment of audible criticism of the music, that Brahms was surprised and delighted. Raff found reminiscences, in the opening bars, of Chopin's Scherzo in B flat minor, whereupon Brahms answered that he had neither seen nor heard any of this composer's works. Liszt then played a part of Brahms' Sonata in C major, Op. 1.

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* 'Memoirs of a Musical Life.'

'A little later, someone asked Liszt to play his own sonata, a work which was quite recent at that time, and of which he was very fond. Without hesitation he sat down and began playing. As he progressed, he came to a very expressive part, which he always imbued with extreme pathos, and in which he looked for the especial interest and sympathy of his listeners. Glancing at Brahms, he found that the latter was dozing in his chair. Liszt continued playing to the end of the sonata, and then rose and left the room. I was in such a position that Brahms was hidden from my view, but I was aware that something unusual had taken place, and I think it was Reményi who told me what had occurred. It is very strange that among the various accounts of this first Liszt-Brahms interview—and there are several—there is not one which gives an accurate description of what took place on the occasion; indeed, they are all far out of the way. The events as here related are perfectly clear in my own mind; but not wishing to trust implicitly to my memory, I wrote to my friend Klindworth, the only living witness of the incident except myself, as I suppose, and requested him to give me an account of it as he remembered it. He corroborated my description in every particular, except that he made no specific reference to the drowsiness of Brahms, and except also that, according to my recollection, Brahms left Weimar on the afternoon of the day on which the meeting took place; Klindworth writes that it was on the morning of the next day—a discrepancy of very little moment.'

It is to be observed, in the first place, with reference to this interesting account, that Brahms' panic was probably caused by his finding that he was expected to play before not only Liszt himself, but a party of his pupils, the most unnerving kind of audience with which he could possibly have been confronted; and in the second, that Reményi, in saying his companion had fallen asleep, unquestionably merely intended to convey the meaning that he had not taken prudent advantage of his opportunity to ingratiate himself with the great man. The very different methods employed by the violinist for the advancement of his own ambition are illustrated by a letter written by him to Liszt —evidently soon after this first interview—which throws an illuminating sidelight upon the scene and its immediate sequel. It is clear that Reményi at once took steps for the purpose of ingratiating himself with the leader of Weimar and his rising young musicians by acquainting himself with, at all events, the names of Liszt's compositions, and announcing himself a convert to the New-German music. He remained associated with the party for a considerable time, and Liszt recognised his gifts whilst ridiculing his extravagances. The letter referred to opens with a kind of preamble:

'This scribbler ventures to address the great man, after having heard the sonata, the scherzo, the rhapsodies, the Dante fantasia, etc. One must have courage to dare to write to such a man. Let us see, let us try, nevertheless. We shall see whether I have the talent to continue. Now to work!

'TISZTELT LISZT UR!

'Admirable compatriot!

'I am here on the Altenburg, the place where I have had the happiness (read effrontery) of being received by Liszt, and where I have the happiness of finding myself again!

'Conceive the immense joy you have given me by forwarding the letter addressed to me from Hungary. Every bad thing is of some use; when I reflect that this bit of a Hungarian letter has procured me the sublime lines of Liszt —Ah! yes, I have read this letter four or five times—no! devoured it, but not altogether; some fragments fortunately remain for me to point to proudly in the future (when I shall have become a great man ? ? ! !): do you see, gentlemen ? I am a happy mortal. I possess the writing—no, *a personal letter from Liszt*. You may be assured that that is *everything* for me—it will be my talisman! If you by chance ask what I am doing, really I cannot tell you—of what interest can it be to you if I scrape on the violin or compose some new mazourek fantastiques? That is zero for you. . . .

'As for my political confession, it is already sent—Raff has edited it!

'Now, I think this letter is much too long. I shall finish it by telling you quite simply, but very sincerely, that the good God has you in His holy keeping, and that He ever directs your genius for the honour and glory of the human race in general, and particularly (but particularly) of your dear country.

'Adieu, great compatriot!

'I subscribe myself,
'E. Reményi,
'*Citizen of the Altenburg, ci-devant of Hungary.*

'P.S.—Brahms has left for Göttingen.'*

And no wonder! one feels inclined to exclaim, on reading the postscript, the first of three appended to the epistle. Johannes must have felt that his power of endurance was being strained to its utmost limit by daily association with such a comrade, and determined to break it, helped, very likely, to his resolution by the recollection of the very different personality of that other violinist, the young king of fiddlers, who had invited him to Göttingen. The story frequently related, that Brahms and Reményi, or one of them, stayed on for several weeks as Liszt's guests at the Altenburg, is contradicted by all contemporary testimony, negative as well as positive. No such visit is mentioned in any known letter of the period, whilst Reményi's communication to Liszt would of itself be fairly good evidence that none such took place, and, taken together with the independent accounts of Mason and Klindworth, must be accepted as conclusive against the supposition. The morning at the Altenburg can, indeed, have left little behind it in the mind of our musician beyond a feeling of mortification, and Mason expressly states that the impression it produced on the young men present was that it had not been a success.

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* From La Mara's 'Briefe hervorragender Zeitgenossen an Franz Liszt.'

It is likely that Klindworth was substantially correct as to the exact date of Brahms' departure from Weimar. Perhaps hoping to appear to better advantage in a *tête-à-tête* interview, he seems to have called a second time on Liszt, who presented him with a leather cigarette-case in which was placed an autograph inscription in remembrance of their meeting.*

Somewhere about the middle of June, then, Joachim, at work one day in his rooms at Göttingen, had hardly time to call out, 'Come in' in answer to a knock at the door, before the door opened and in walked Brahms. This was the beginning of the intimate acquaintance between the two youthful musicians, which ripened into the historic friendship that endured until the death of Brahms forty-four years later. What a discovery was each to the other! Alike in no respect, perhaps, save in earnest devotion to art, and a profound feeling of obligation in her service, the dissimilarity of their dispositions was such as to make them mutually interesting and to cement the growing bond between them. To Joachim the worship of art, adored goddess though she might be, could never be all in all; it could never appease the craving for human sympathy which, since Mendelssohn's death, he had at times felt to be almost intolerable. Johannes, haunted by a vision of the delight of intimate sympathy, was not convinced of its being either possible or indispensable, and knew that he could, if necessary, live his life without it. To Joachim, possessed of strong likings and antipathies, and firm to convictions involving a principle, it was not difficult, in a conflict of mere inclinations, to yield. In Johannes, with all his childlike sweetness of nature, there dwelt an ineradicable combative instinct. To Joachim life had been one continued triumph; he had never known even the taste of failure. A personality from childhood, he had conquered his world once and for all with scarcely an effort. Hannes had passed his days in obscurity, and had seen and known only struggle. And now, to Joachim, who had never had to plan for his own advancement, what a fresh joy it was to think and hope and suggest for the future of Johannes, and to Johannes, who had known little of the satisfaction of intelligent appreciation from colleagues of his own standing, what an astonishing experience was this enthusiastic and authoritative approval from such a comrade! The companions, engrossed in the first place by their compositions—for Joachim was engaged upon two overtures, and Johannes busy with sonatas and songs—found plenty of time for other occupations. They studied and made music together, and walked and talked and dined together, and compared opinions and argued and agreed together. No doubt Johannes heard much about the Leipzig of Bach and Mendelssohn, and he found to his surprise that Joachim, the unparalleled interpreter of Bach and Beethoven, shared Louise Japha's opinion of Schumann's music. He certainly touched Joachim's heart by his loving talk of Hamburg, rich in proud traditions, and not without art memories of its own, associated with the great names of Klopstock and Lessing, of Telemann and Keiser, of Handel and Mattheson and Emanuel Bach. The fêted violinist, familiar since his ninth year with one or other centre of musical learning, brilliant pupil of the conservatoire of Vienna, beloved favourite of that of Leipzig, listened, moreover, with no little interest to all that Johannes chose to relate of his solitary studies with his Marxsen. The happy young Hamburger felt that he could tell Joseph anything. He spoke to him of his struggles, his kind friends at Winsen, his acquaintance with Louise Japha, the difficulties of his journey with Reményi. Joachim was so much interested in the Winsen episodes that he could not refrain from writing to Uncle Giesemann to tell him that his young musician would be a great man some day.

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* According to a personal communication to the author by Frau Dr. Langhans-Japha, to whom Brahms showed the case.

In one thing only Johannes would not bear his friend company. He declined to attend the university lectures of Ritter and Waiz, voting lectures a bore, and preferring to take his mental food, as usual, from books. He was very ready, however, to join the jovial fellowship that met at the Saxsen, the students' club-restaurant frequented by Joachim and his friends. He entered with great zest into all the fun of the social evenings, and on the night when he and Joachim were called upon, as the youngest of the party, to perform the 'Fox-ride,' he sat astraddle on his little chair, and galloped round the table with the court concertmeister from Hanover as though he were bent on keeping his terms with the most serious-minded student of them all. The happy holiday was crowned by a concert given by the two 'students,' which attracted an overflowing audience and provided Brahms with welcome funds for the prosecution of his immediate plans. He wished to make a walking excursion along the Rhine before the summer should have passed away, and left Göttingen about the middle of August, armed with several of his friend's visiting-cards with which to introduce himself to musical houses on his route. The acquaintance which Joachim desired to secure for him above all others was that of Schumann, but Johannes, probably sore from his recent experiences of an interview with a leader surrounded by his followers, was uncertain if he should stay at Düsseldorf. The separation between himself and Joachim was to be a short one only. They were to meet in October at Hanover, where Johannes was to pass the winter in his friend's society.

We have to picture our traveller as passing, during the next two or three weeks, from point to point along the beautiful Rhine valley in a frame of mind rendered almost ecstatic by the combined influences of his daily surroundings, his recent experiences, and his well-grounded hopes for the future. We meet him again early in September in the house of J. W. von Wasielewsky, who at this period filled a post as music-director at Bonn, and who has given an interesting account of Brahms' arrival in that city.

'Towards the end of the summer,' he says,* 'I was surprised by a visit from an attractive-looking, fair-haired youth, who delivered to me one of Joachim's visiting-cards, on the reverse side of which was his own humorously-written signature.* Coming in the direction from Mainz, he had travelled on foot through the Rhine valley, and presented himself to me staff in hand and knapsack on his back. His fresh, natural, unconstrained manner impressed me sympathetically, so that I not only bade him welcome, but invited him to stay a day or two with me, to which he then and there consented. After the first hours of our intercourse, I naturally felt a desire to learn to know my guest from the musical side. He at once favoured me with a performance of one of his then unpublished early works, a pianoforte sonata, the quality of which immediately revealed to me his great talent for composition. I also heard him in other things. I particularly remember his characteristic execution of the Rakóczy March, which he was fond of playing and gave with great effect.'

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* 'Aus siebzig Jahren.'

Asked by Wasielewsky whether he intended to visit Schumann, Johannes replied that he had come to no decision on the point, giving as the reason for his uncertainty, the failure of his effort to approach the master on his visit to Hamburg in 1850, and no persuasion of his new friend availed to bring him to a resolution. He did not quit the neighbourhood of Bonn immediately. Acting, no doubt, on Wasielewsky's advice, he retraced his steps a little in order to present himself at a great house in the vicinity—that of Commerzienrath Deichmann, a gentleman widely known, not only from his wealth and hospitality, but also by the warm interest taken by himself and his family in matters connected with literature and art. Distinguished visitors of many varieties of social rank, from royal personages downwards, were entertained by Frau Deichmann at her residence at Mehlem, opposite Königswinter. Celebrities on a visit to the Rhine country were generally to be met in her drawing-rooms in the course of their stay, many of the artists resident in the neighbourhood belonged to her intimate circle, and young musicians of promise were received by her with especial kindness. Needless to say that the arrival of Brahms as Joachim's intimate was hailed by her with lively satisfaction, and the familiar friends of the house, amongst whom were Franz Wüllner, the 'cellist Reimers, Wasielewsky himself, and other young musicians, hurried to Mehlem on receiving her hasty summons, prepared to extend to the new-comer's performances as much approbation or criticism as the event might justify.

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* 'Joh. Kreisler jun.'

'I found,' said Wüllner, in a memorial speech delivered after Brahms' death in the conservatoire of Cologne, 'a slender youth with long fair hair and a veritable St. John's head, from whose eyes shone energy and spirit. He played us the just-finished C major Sonata, the earlier completed F sharp minor Sonata, the E flat minor Scherzo, and several songs—amongst them the now familiar "O versenk dein Leid." We young musicians were immediately delighted and carried away by his compositions.'

As might have been expected, Brahms was not allowed to leave Mehlem immediately. He was persuaded to remain on as the Deichmanns' guest, to improve his acquaintance with their friends, and to further explore the Rhine and its beauties from their house, and it was during this visit that he found the opportunity, eagerly desired by him since his stay at Göttingen, to begin the real study of Schumann's compositions, till now but little known to him. What must have been his wonder and his joy as he found himself brought face to face in many of their pages with his favourite authors, Jean Paul and E. T. A. Hoffmann, and perceived in them as in a mirror the dreamings of his own soul! His surprise was probably but little less on making the discovery that Schumann's tone-poems, with all their fresh originality of method and their fascinating romance, were no mere erratic imaginings, but were firmly rooted in the great traditions of classical art. It is, perhaps, impossible to realize in its strength the revulsion of feeling that must have attended this first real spiritual meeting of 'Kreisler jun.' with the composer of the 'Kreisleriana'; but it is safe to say that it settled him in the determination to pay the visit to Schumann which Joachim had planned, and that it had its share in producing the temper of mind manifest in a letter written by Johannes in the third week of September, whilst he was on a few days' excursion with the boys of the Deichmann family, to the Amtsvogt Blume of Winsen:

'DEAR HERR AMTSVOGT,

'Permit me to offer most heartfelt wishes for your own and for Frau Blume's happiness on the joyful festival which you celebrate this month. The great esteem and love which I have for you may excuse me for troubling you from so great a distance, and perhaps at the wrong time, with these lines; I only know that you celebrate your golden wedding in the middle of this month. May God long preserve you in health, that I may often again, as hitherto, spend many happy hours at your house. In case you still feel some interest in my fate, you may, perhaps, be pleased to hear that I have passed a heavenly summer, such as I have never before known. After spending some gloriously inspiring weeks with Joachim at Göttingen, I have now been rambling about for five weeks according to heart's desire on the divine Rhine. I hope to be able to pass this winter at Hanover in order to be near Joachim, who is equally noble as man and artist. Begging you to remember me most warmly to your wife and daughter, I would also request you to express my heartiest greeting to your son with his wife and children, to dear Uncle Giesemann, and to all acquaintances. With best greeting, Your JOH. BRAHMS.

'IN THE LAHNTHAL, *Sept.* 1853.'*

Johannes' thoughts were engaged at this time on the Pianoforte Sonata in F minor, Op. 5, that was finally completed early in November. Who that has really tasted of the enchantment of that wonderful composition, great in spite of its immaturity, can doubt, on reading these lines, that the shining Rhine with its wooded heights, that the Rolandseck and the Nonnenwerth and the Drachenfels, and the deep blue sky and gorgeous starry nights, had their part, with the romance and wonder and gratitude and delight dwelling in his young heart, in the making of the work—not in the sense of supplying the composer with a programme for his inspiration; but as the sunbeam caught by the plant—as mingling with his nature and becoming a portion of the very elemental force that blossomed into the flower of his imagination?

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* This letter and another to Amtsvogt Blume, which follows in Chapter VI., were first published in the *Lüneburger Anzeige* March 29, 1901.

Yet another important halt was made by Brahms at Cologne, where two more interesting names were added to the long list of acquaintances already formed by him during the short five months of his absence from home. He delivered a letter from the university music-director of Göttingen, Arnold Wehner, and a greeting from Wasielewsky, to Carl Reinecke, at the time professor of pianoforte and counterpoint in the conservatoire of the Rhenish capital, and Reinecke, after hearing some of his compositions, conducted him to Ferdinand Hiller's house, and subsequently accompanied him to the railway-station at Deutz. Here he took train for Düsseldorf,* full, no doubt, of fluttering expectation at the thought that he was about to seek an interview with the great master of his day; sole successor, since the death of Mendelssohn, to the mighty giants in whose traditions he had been steeped since early childhood by Cossel and Marxsen. And as we accompany the young musician in imagination on this last stage of his Rhine journey, we may fittingly pay the tribute of passing remembrance to these two men. To their talents and attainments and character he owed it that he was able to approach the supreme hour of entrance upon the manhood of his artistic life, shortly to dawn for him, with the certainty of equipment and devotion of purpose that had already stamped upon his genius the unmistakable pledge of mastership.

Several accounts, agreeing in essential points, have been given by Dr. Schübring and others of Brahms' first acquaintance with Schumann. After some preliminary conversation, the master desired his visitor to play something of his own. Scarcely was the first movement of the C major Sonata concluded, when he rose and left the room, and, returning with his wife, desired to hear it again. And as Johannes had played it three months previously to the amazement and delight of Joseph Joachim, so he now played it to the amazement and delight of Robert and Clara Schumann; and when he had finished one movement these two great artists bade him play another, and at the end of that, another, and still desired more, so that when, at length, the performance was at an end their hearts had gone out to him in affection, whilst in his the first link had already been forged of that chain of love by which he soon became bound to the one and the other till the end of both their lives.

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* 'Gedenkenblätter an berühmte Musiker,' by Carl Reinecke.

Johannes lost no time in finding out his old friends Louise and Minna Japha. What wonderful adventures he had to relate to them, more than could be got through in one or even two interviews! There was the tour with Reményi, the performance at Court—how far away these things seemed!—then the visit to Weimar, the student-life at Göttingen, the journey along the Rhine. He had made the acquaintance of many young musicians, who had one and all welcomed his coming amongst them; he had been introduced to Hiller, become Joachim's closest friend, and now had, he thought, won Schumann's approval. 'He patted me on the shoulder,' Johannes told Louise, 'and said, "We understand each other." What did he mean?' Schumann's meaning was made very obvious to Joachim, who received the following note from the master in answer to the introduction and messages of greeting he had sent him by Brahms: 'This is he that should come.'

We may now turn to the delightful account given by Albert Dietrich,* one of Schumann's favourite disciples, who lived at Düsseldorf in daily intercourse with the great composer, of his first acquaintance with the new-comer:

> 'Soon after Brahms' arrival in September, Schumann came up to me before the commencement of one of the choral society practices with mysterious air and pleased smile. "Someone is come," said he, "of whom we shall one day hear all sorts of wonderful things; his name is Johannes Brahms." And he presented to me the interesting

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* 'Erinnerungen von Johannes Brahms.'

and unusual-looking young musician, who, seeming hardly more than a boy in his short gray summer coat, with his high voice and long fair hair, made a most agreeable impression. Especially fine were his energetic, characteristic mouth, and the earnest, deep gaze in which his gifted nature was clearly revealed.'

Here was another companion of the right sort for Brahms. He and Albert met daily from this time forward during his four weeks' stay at Düsseldorf, breakfasting together at an open-air restaurant in the Hofgarten, and sharing each other's confidences and pleasures. Albert's recognition of the powers of his new friend was no less thorough than Joachim's had been, and he sent enthusiastic reports of him to Kirchner, Naumann, and other young musicians of the Schumann set. Himself a *persona grata* in the various artistic circles of Düsseldorf, he was able to open to Johannes a new and inexhaustible source of interest. He introduced him to Schirmer, Lessing, Sohn, and other of the leading painters, at whose houses the young musician heard much talk about the sister arts which bore due fruit in a mind whose first need was, in Joachim's words, 'the harmonious cultivation of its various powers and the loving assimilation of all sorts of knowledge.' A charming young society was quite ready to welcome a new playfellow—and such a playfellow—into its midst, and Johannes was invited by Albert's friends to many parties and excursions. He managed to waive the objection to ladies' society which he had once found insuperable, and discovered that a festivity from which they were not rigorously excluded was not therefore a necessarily tiresome affair! Music in general and his music in particular, was much in demand at frequent evening gatherings, and his hearers knew not whether they were more delighted by his interpretations of the great masters or of his own compositions.

'Everyone was filled with astonishment,' says Dietrich, 'and the young people, especially, were dominated by the impression of his characteristic, powerful, and, when necessary, extraordinarily tender playing. He used to receive the enthusiastic praise accorded to his performances in a modest, deprecatory manner.

'His constitution was thoroughly sound; the most strenuous mental exertion scarcely fatigued him, but then he could go soundly to sleep at any hour of the day he pleased. With companions of his own standing he was lively, sometimes arrogant, dry, and full of pranks. When he came to see me, he used to rush up the stairs, thump on the door with both fists, and burst in without waiting for an answer. . . . Brahms never spoke of the works with which he was busy, or of his plans for future compositions, but he told me one day that he often recalled folk-songs when at work, and that then his melodies suggested themselves spontaneously.'

At the Schumanns' house Brahms learned chess and table-turning. He was soon made free of the master's library, and borrowed from it many a book to lend to the Japhas, who had to submit to a term of quarantine during Minna's recovery from an attack of measles. Johannes refused, for his own part, to acquiesce in the decree, and paid long daily visits to the sisters as soon as they were able to receive him. He often sat at Louise's side reading with her from an open volume placed between them, as he had once been used to do with Lischen in the Winsen fields. One day he brought some volumes of Hoffmann, to reread his favourite tales from Schumann's own copy. He carried the old memories and friends, and the simple home with its dear affections, faithfully in his heart throughout his excitements and successes, and throughout the weeks and months of his absence Johanna kept her promise to her boy. 'Look, said Hannes one day, pulling a letter out of his pocket, and holding it open before Louise and Minna as he told them of the stipulation he had made, 'I get one like this every week; my old mother keeps her promise. Some of it is copied from the newspapers; what is she to do when she has no more news? she cannot write a philosophical treatise, but she always sends me three whole pages.'*

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* At this period envelopes were not in universal use. The large 'letter-paper' was folded and sealed, and addressed on the blank fourth page.

The passionate admiration quickly conceived by Brahms for the character and genius of Schumann, which was intensified by the recollection of his past misconception of the great composer's art, was returned in appropriate measure. Schumann became every day fonder of his young friend, and inclination united with conviction to strengthen the strong first impression he had received as to the extraordinary nature of his gifts. 'Facile princeps' is written in one of Schumann's pocket-books against the name Johannes Brahms, added, in the master's handwriting, to a list of his favourite young musicians. It has sometimes been suggested that the secret of the immediate fascination exercised over him by Brahms' compositions lay in his perception of their dissimilarity from his own. This, however, is only part of the truth. Though it be the case that Schumann's influence is not traceable either in the melody, harmony, or structure of Brahms' first published movements, it is equally the fact that the 'delicate youth with dreamy expression, who, without a tinge of affectation, spoke naturally in poetic phrases; who signed his manuscripts "Joh. Kreisler jun."; who exactly answered Joachim's description, "pure as the diamond, tender as snow"';* had elements in his many-sided nature of near kin to the characteristic spirit of Schumann's genius, which were by no means without influence on the individuality of his works, and especially the works of his first period. Schumann, astonished beyond measure by the mastery and originality of Brahms' technical attainment, was, in regard to his ideal qualities, certainly penetrated as much by the romance as by the independence, by the tenderness as by the power, by the subjective, as by the objective side, of his art, and the elder musician loved the younger as much because of the affinity as of the difference between them. Both contrasting sides of Brahms' nature are strikingly manifest in the very beautiful drawing of him which was executed for Schumann at this time by the painter de Laurens, a representation of which we are enabled, by the kindness of Frau Professor

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* Ehrlich, 'Dreissig Jahre Künstlerleben.'

Böie, to whom the original now belongs, to place before the reader at the beginning of this volume.

Schumann had not been forgetful of the overtures to closer intimacy made to him by Joachim in the spring of the year, and composed two concert-pieces for violin and orchestra about this time, during the writing of which, the famous young violinist and his performances at the Düsseldorf festival were constantly present to his mind. In a letter to Hanover concerning these and other matters, written by him on October 8, the following passages occur :*

'I think if I were younger I could make some polymetres about the young eagle who has so suddenly and unexpectedly flown down from the Alps to Düsseldorf.† Or one might compare him to a splendid stream which, like Niagara, is at its finest when precipitating itself from the heights as a roaring waterfall, met on the shore by the fluttering of butterflies and by nightingales' voices. . . .

'The young eagle seems to be content in the Lowlands; he has found an old guardian who is accustomed to watch such young flights, and who knows how to calm the wild wing-flapping without detriment to the soaring power.'‡

On the same day he wrote to Dr. Härtel, head of the great Leipzig publishing firm :

'A young man has just presented himself here who has most deeply impressed us with his wonderful music. He will, I am convinced, make the greatest sensation in the musical world. I will take an opportunity of writing more in detail about him.'§

Five days later, writing again on business to Joachim, who was to take part on the 27th, in the first Düsseldorf subscription concert of the season, he adds :

'I have begun to put together my thoughts about the young eagle. I should wish to help him on his first flight through the world, but fear I have grown too fond of him to be able to describe the light and dark colours of his wings quite clearly. When I have finished the paper, I should like to show it to his comrade [Joachim], who knows him even better than I do.'

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* 'Robert Schumann's Briefe.' Neue Folge. Edited by Gustav Jansen.

† These words sufficiently disprove the assumption occasionally adopted, that Schumann expected Brahms before receiving his call at Düsseldorf.

‡ The movements of the F minor Sonata were no doubt submitted to Schumann's criticism during the process of their composition.

§ See, for this and other letters of Schumann, Dr. Jansen's collection referred to above.

A postscript is subjoined: 'I have finished the essay and enclose it. Please return it as soon as possible.'

A second letter to Dr. Härtel enters into some of the promised detail:

'You will see before long, in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, an article signed with my name on young Johannes Brahms from Hamburg, which will give you further information about him. I will then write to you more fully about the compositions he intends to publish. They are pianoforte pieces and sonatas, a sonata for violin and piano, a trio, a quartet, and a number of songs—all full of genius. He is also an exceptional pianist.'

And now, whilst Schumann, with Albert and Johannes, was eagerly looking forward to Joachim's arrival for the concert of the 27th, Schumann proposed that they should prepare a surprise for him in the shape of a new sonata for pianoforte and violin, to be written by the three of them jointly. Thereupon Dietrich undertook the first movement, Schumann the intermezzo and finale, and Brahms the scherzo.

The popular young concertmeister had been passing his time pleasantly enough during the progress of some of the events just related; had attended a festival at Carlsruhe, where he met his friends of the Weimar circle in force—Liszt, Wagner, Cornelius, Bülow, and the others; and had played for Berlioz at a concert in Brunswick. He was to be Schumann's guest during the two days of his stay in Düsseldorf, and was greeted, on his arrival on the 26th, by the assembled party of his intimate friends. Amongst them was an attractive, youthful lady attired in rustic costume, who stepped forward from the rest and handed him a basket of flowers. Hidden beneath these was the manuscript sonata of welcome, on the title-page of which Schumann had written:

'F. A. E.*

'This Sonata has been written in expectation of the arrival of the honoured and beloved friend Joseph Joachim by Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, Albert Dietrich.'

There was a small gathering of intimate friends in the evening at the Schumanns' house, when the sonata was performed and Joachim was required to guess the authorship of the several movements, a problem he had no difficulty in solving correctly. Schumann was in a bright mood. He was always at his happiest in his home circle with one and another of the young musicians who might be said to belong to it about him, and he had taken both Brahms and Joachim into his most special affection. 'One cannot be fond enough of him,' he whispered to Fräulein Japha as Joachim, accompanied by Frau Schumann, came to the concluding bars of the new fantasia for violin. Johannes was nervous and excited this evening. 'What shall I play ?' he said, crossing over to Louise when Schumann summoned him to the piano. She suggested the scherzo, which the master had not yet heard, but eventually got a scolding for her pains. Johannes persuaded himself that his performance was a failure. 'Why did you give me that advice ?' he asked reproachfully, returning to his faithful friend. 'Liszt did not care for the scherzo; and now Schumann does not like it !'

The concert of the following day was the last given in Düsseldorf under the direction of Schumann, who was about to start with his wife on a concert tour in Holland. He was at this time seriously contemplating a permanent removal to Vienna, whence he had received overtures that were attractive to himself and Frau Schumann. Whether he would have made up his mind to the step cannot be determined. The decision was, as we know, taken out of his hands by one of the tragedies of fate.

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* 'Frei aber einsam' (Free but lonely), Joachim's favourite device at this time.

CHAPTER V

1853

Schumann's article 'New Paths'—Johannes in Hanover—Sonatas in C major and F minor—Visit to Leipzig—First publications—Julius Otto Grimm—Return to Hamburg viâ Hanover—Lost Violin Sonata—Songs—Marxsen's influence as teacher.

On October 28 Schumann's article appeared in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik.* Brahms seems to have read it for the first time in Hanover, whither, in pursuance of the plans formed in the summer between himself and Joachim, he accompanied his friend from Düsseldorf. Its contents were so unexpected, and their influence on Brahms' career was so far-reaching, that, though it may already be familiar to many readers, it seems right to quote it *in extenso.*

'New Paths.

'Years have passed—almost as many in number as those dedicated by me to the previous editorship of this journal, namely, ten—since I appeared on this scene so rich to me in remembrances. Often, in spite of arduous productive activity, I have felt tempted; many new and considerable talents have appeared, a fresh musical energy has seemed to announce itself through many of the earnest artists of the present time,* even though their works are, for the most part, known to a limited circle only. I have thought, watching the path of these chosen ones with the greatest sympathy, that after such a preparation someone must and would suddenly appear, destined to give ideal presentment to the highest expression of the time, who would bring us his mastership, not in process of development, but would spring forth like Minerva fully armed from the head of Jove. And he is come, a young blood by whose cradle graces and heroes kept watch. He is called Johannes Brahms, came from Hamburg, where he has worked in obscure tranquillity, trained in the most difficult laws of art by an excellent and enthusiastic teacher, and was lately introduced to me by an honoured, well-known master.* He bore all the outward signs that proclaim to us, "This is one of the elect." Sitting at the piano, he proceeded to reveal to us wondrous regions. We were drawn into circles of ever deeper enchantment. His playing, too, was full of genius, and transformed the piano into an orchestra of wailing and jubilant voices. There were sonatas, more veiled symphonies — songs, whose poetry one would understand without knowing the words, though all are pervaded by a deep song-melody, — single pianoforte pieces, partly demoniacal, of the most graceful form,—then sonatas for violin and piano—quartets for strings—and every one so different from the rest that each seemed to flow from a separate source. And then it was as though he, like a tumultuous stream, united all into a waterfall, bearing a peaceful rainbow over the rushing waves, met on the shore by butterflies' fluttering, and accompanied by nightingales' voices.

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* 'I have here in my mind Joseph Joachim, Ernst Naumann, Ludwig Norman, Woldemar Bargiel, Theodor Kirchner, Julius Schäffer, Albert Dietrich, not forgetting the earnest-minded E. F. Wilsing. As trusty heralds in the right path, Niels W. Gade, C. F. Mangold, Robert Franz, and St. Heller should also be named here.'

'If he will sink his magic staff in the region where the capacity of masses in chorus and orchestra can lend him its powers, still more wonderful glimpses into the mysteries of the spirit-world will be before us. May the highest genius strengthen him for this, of which there is the prospect, since another genius, that of modesty, also dwells within him. His companions greet him on his first course through the world, where, perhaps, wounds may await him, but laurels and palms also; we bid him welcome as a strong champion.

'There is in all times a secret union of kindred spirits. Bind closer the circle, ye who belong to it, that the truth of art may shine ever clearer, spreading joy and blessing through the world.

'R. S.'

Such was the proclamation by which Schumann, carried away by the impulsive generosity of his nature, designed to facilitate the entrance into the jealous musical world of the composer of twenty, whose gifts had not been tested by the publication of a single composition, whose name was hardly known to rumour.

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* Joachim.

> 'It is doubtful,' says Mason, 'if, up to that time, any article had made such a sensation through musical Germany. I remember how utterly the Liszt circle in Weimar were astounded at it. It was at first, no doubt, an obstacle in Brahms' way, but, as it resulted in stirring up great rivalry between two opposing parties, it eventually contributed much to his final success.'

In sober truth, Brahms' worst enemy could scarcely have weighted him with a heavier mantle of immediate difficulty. It made his name an easy subject of ridicule to those who would in any case have been inclined to regard a new-comer with incredulity; it drew upon him the sceptical attention of others who might have been prepared to receive him with indifference or indulgence; it was calculated to awaken extravagant expectations in the minds of some whom it disposed to be his friends.

The musical world generally, adopted an attitude of hostile expectancy, and this was shared especially by the 'Murls,'* as the young satellites of Liszt styled themselves. Their 'Padisha,' Liszt himself, could afford to be more or less indifferent, though he was not unobservant. 'Avez-vous lu l'article de Schumann dans le dernier numéro de Brendel?' he says, writing on November 1 to Bülow, who replies on the 5th, alluding to supposed Brahms resemblances: 'Mozart-Brahms ou Schumann-Brahms ne trouble point du tout la tranquillité de mon sommeil. Il y a une quinzaine d'années que Schumann a parlé en des termes tout-à-fait analogues du génie de W. Sterndale Bennett. Joachim, du reste, connait Brahms, de même l'ingermanique Reményi.'

What Brahms' own feelings were on reading the paper cannot be difficult of conjecture. Joy and bewilderment, gratitude and dismay, must have struggled within him for mastery. The steady sense of proportion which was one of his lifelong characteristics, the consciousness of the almost crushing weight of artistic responsibility thus thrust upon him at the outset of his career, must have conflicted severely with his natural loyalty and his delight at having won from Schumann such an overflowing measure of approval. To a man of weaker moral fibre, the temptation to overmuch exaltation or undue depression might have proved more than perilous. Brahms, however, was made of stuff that enabled him to face the situation, to accept it, and finally to triumph over it, and the means which he used are the only means that can enable even genius to win the kind of victory that he obtained. They were unswerving loyalty and single-hearted devotion to an exalted purpose.

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* Anti-philistines.

The matter of the selection of works to be submitted for the approval of the publishers was much discussed both before and after the departure of Joachim and Johannes from Düsseldorf, with the result that Schumann, wrote on November 3, to Dr. Härtel, and proposed for publication; as Op. 1, String Quartet; 2, Set of six Songs; 3, Pianoforte Scherzo; 4, Second set of six Songs; 5, Pianoforte Sonata in C major. He hoped, he said, to arrive at an understanding by which, whilst the young composer would derive an immediate pecuniary advantage, the publishers would not run too much risk, and he suggested that if the sale of the works should, after five years, have realized expectations, Brahms should then receive further proportionate remuneration. He proposed as first payments; ten Louis-d'ors (about £9 10s.) each, for the quartet and sonata, eight Louis-d'ors (about £7 12s.) for the scherzo, six (£5 14s.) for each of the two sets of songs—in all about £38. Should these proposals meet Dr. Härtel's views, he would put Brahms into direct communication with him in order that the works might be submitted for his consideration.

'He is an intimate of Joachim's in Hanover, where he proposes to spend the winter. Joachim has written an extremely fine overture to Hamlet, and an equally original and effective concerto for violin and orchestra, which I can recommend to you with the warmest sympathy.'*

Schumann's kindness did not stop here. He sent a sympathetic note to Jakob Brahms at home in Hamburg, tidings of which, and of the rejoicing family circle, just established in a new dwelling at No. 7 Lilienstrasse, were forwarded by the father to the young musician at Hanover. Dr. Härtel did not delay in sending word that he would be glad to see the manuscripts, for on November 9, Schumann wrote him a letter of thanks for his favourable reply, and added :

> 'I will write to-day to Brahms, and beg him to go as soon as possible to Leipzig to introduce his compositions to you himself. His playing belongs essentially to his music. I do not remember to have heard such original tone effects before.'

Dr. Härtel's note was forwarded to Hanover by Schumann in a letter to Joachim with the words : 'Give the enclosed to Johannes. He must go to Leipzig ; persuade him to do this, or they will get a wrong idea of his works ; he must play them himself. This seems to me very important.' After relating the arrangements pending with the publisher, he adds : 'Once again, pray urge him to go to Leipzig for a week ;' and concludes : 'Now good-bye, dear friend. Write again before our Dutch journey, and tell Johannes, the lazy-bones, to do the same.'

Johannes had, in fact, not written to Schumann since leaving Düsseldorf, and he still waited, letting nearly three weeks go by before thanking the master for his article in the *Neue Zeitschrift*. Perhaps this fact may be regarded as confirmation of the surmise that he had not read Schumann's prophetic announcement with feelings of unmixed satisfaction, but if it be so, he allowed no other sign to appear of such a possibility. He very anxiously reconsidered his choice of works for publication, however, and before receiving Härtel's letter to Schumann, had forwarded to Leipzig a somewhat different selection from that decided on at Düsseldorf, withholding from it the string quartet. Having settled this matter as far as he could to his satisfaction, and brought himself to consent to Joachim's persuasions that he should go to Leipzig for a week, his attitude to Schumann remained one of unmixed gratitude and affection, as may be read in the following letter :*

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* 'Robert Schumann's Briefe.' Neue Folge. Edited by Gustav Jansen.

'HONOURED MASTER,

'You have made me so immensely happy that I cannot attempt to thank you in words. God grant that my works may soon prove to you how much your affection and kindness have encouraged and stimulated me. The public praise you have bestowed on me will have fastened general expectation so exceptionally upon my performances that I do not know how I shall be able to do some measure of justice to it. Above all it obliges me to take the greatest care in the selection of what is to be published. I do not propose to include either of my trios, and think of choosing as Op. 1 and 2 the Sonatas in C and F sharp minor, as Op. 3 Songs, and as Op. 4 the Scherzo in E flat minor. You will think it natural that I should try with all my might to disgrace you as little as possible.

'I put off writing to you so long because I had sent the four things I have mentioned to Breitkopf and Härtel, and wished to wait for the answer, to be able to tell you the result of your recommendation. Your last letter to Joachim, however, informs us of this, and so I have only to write to you that I shall go, as you advise, within the next few days (probably to-morrow) to Leipzig.

'Further I wish to tell you that I have copied out my F minor Sonata, and made considerable alterations in the finale. I have also improved the violin sonata. I should like also to thank you a thousand times for the dear portrait of yourself that you have sent me, as well as for the letter you have written to my father. By it you have made a pair of good people happy, and for life Your

BRAHMS.'

'HANOVER, 16 *Nov.* 1853.'

The reader may have noted that the work chosen by Brahms with which to introduce himself, not only to Joachim, but to the Deichmann circle, to Wasielewsky, and to Schumann himself, was the C major Sonata now known as Op. 1; and the natural inference to be drawn, that he considered it his best as it was his latest achievement, is confirmed by his reply to Louise Japha when she asked him, later on, why he had numbered his scherzo, a much earlier work, as Op. 4. 'When one first shows one's self,' he said, 'it is to the head and not the heels that one wishes to draw attention.'

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* The letters in this and the following chapters from Brahms to Schumann were first published by La Mara in the *Neue Freie Presse* of May 7, 1897.

That the composer was not mistaken, if we may thus take his own estimate of his published works by implication, may be safely affirmed. Sharing the fundamental characteristics, technical as well as temperamental, of the earlier written work of the same form—unity of plan, wealth of resource, impetuous vigour, dreamy romance, a breath that is repeatedly suggestive of the folk-lore in which the composer loved to steep his imagination—the Sonata in C gives evidence that the process of crystallization had already begun which was to distinguish Brahms' development towards maturity, which, indeed, did not stop at maturity, but may be traced continuously down to the close of his career. This process is to be observed, as regards the work in question, in the themes of the principal movements, which are not only more pregnant in themselves, but are presented in more concentrated form than those of the Sonata in F sharp minor. That the first theme of the opening movement bears traces of the composer's study of Beethoven's Sonata in B flat, Op. 106, is of no great consequence. The question of musical reminiscence is so frequently misunderstood that it may be well to devote a few words to it on the threshold of our narrative of Brahms' career as a composer, which will take but little account of such occasional examples as may easily be found in his works—in the opening bars of the scherzo of Op. 5, the second subject of the first allegro of Op. 73, and so forth. No one would affirm that reminiscences are in themselves desirable, but they are almost inevitable, and the important question is, not whether this or that rhythmical figure, this or that passing melodic progression, may be found anticipated in some earlier work, but whether it has been so used the second time as to have become an integral part of a composition with a distinct individuality of its own. The parentage of Brahms' sonata Op. 1, as, indeed, of every work published by him, is loudly proclaimed by each one of its pages. The opinion entertained by our composer, when in his maturity, of the self-satisfied reminiscence-hunter, is well illustrated by his reply to a conceited acquaintance who was courageous enough, on an occasion late in the seventies, to draw his attention to a transient resemblance in one of his great works to a passage of Mendelssohn. 'Some booby has already been telling me something of the kind' (So was hab'ich schon von einem Rindvieh gehört), he answered. 'Such things are always discovered by the donkeys,' he said one day to a friend.

That the C major Sonata has been heard more frequently than that numbered as Op. 2, and is still occasionally to be found in a concert-programme, may be accepted both as evidence and result of its advance upon the Sonata in F sharp minor. The step from the C major to the F minor Op. 5, is, however, more remarkable. In this work we find that the 'wild wing-flapping' of which Schumann wrote has been calmed by the faithful guardian, not only without detriment, but with strange increase of strength and certainty, to the 'soaring power.' The progress shown in the facility of expressing the idea seems almost to have reacted on the idea to be expressed. No work in the entire catalogue of Brahms' compositions more convincingly exhibits the composer's title to rank as a seer of visions. In this one respect, in its exalted imaginative energy, it may almost be associated with the wonderful first symphony. Truly, it requires an interpreter who can decipher the vision, and hearers capable of receiving the interpretation. In spite, however, of the difficulties it presents both to listener and performer, as well as of its defects of immaturity, this sonata, which was a favourite with von Bülow, has grown very gradually into some measure of general acceptance, and it seems not impossible that it may some day be frequently heard in the concert-room. It is the only one of Brahms' extant works which was submitted to Schumann's criticism whilst in process of completion. In consequence of a mischance presently to be related, the violin sonata referred to in the letter quoted above was never published.

Amongst the young Schumannites who had been roused by Joachim's and Dietrich's accounts of Brahms to an extreme expectation, which had not been lessened by the appearance of Schumann's essay, was one Heinrich von Sahr, a musician from choice rather than necessity, who lived at Leipzig in the intimacy of the notabilities of its artistic circle. He had written in October to Dietrich:

> 'Send me your real opinion of Brahms. I am dreadfully anxious to know him. . . . What is he like personally? Ah, write! do please write soon and tell me what you think of him. Is he still in Düsseldorf? What is his music like? What has he composed?'

Von Sahr was the first person in Leipzig to make Brahms' acquaintance, and, on the day after his arrival, insisted that he should leave his hotel to become his guest. He introduced him to Mendelssohn's old friend, the celebrated concertmeister, David; to Julius Rietz, conductor of the Gewandhaus concerts; to the personal acquaintance of Dr. Härtel; to Wieck and his daughter Marie (Frau Schumann's father and sister); to Ernst Ferdinand Wenzel, one of Schumann's special friends; to Julius Otto Grimm, a young musician whose room was on the same staircase as his own, and who soon became numbered amongst Johannes' particular chums; and, generally speaking, to the entire Leipzig circle.

> 'He is perfect!' he exclaims in a letter to Albert; 'the days since he has been here are amongst the most delightful in my recollection. He answers so exactly to my idea of an artist. And as a man!—But enough, you know him better than I do. . . . Unfortunately, he can only stay till Friday. He has, however, promised, and I think he will keep his promise, to come again soon.'

There was a performance in von Sahr's rooms one morning, by Brahms and David, of the sonata for pianoforte and violin, and performances on the same and the following days of the C major Sonata and other solos, with the now customary result. Johannes also writes to Albert:

> 'The Härtels have received me with immense kindness. . . . If our master is still in Düsseldorf, tell him this, and say how highly I honour him, how much I love him and how grateful I should like to be.'

Brahms left Leipzig on Friday, November 25, in Grimm's company, for a few days' visit to the Countess Ida von Hohenthal, a lady living on her estate not far from Leipzig, who was devoted to music, liked to receive young artists, and always had a particularly warm welcome for Grimm and his friends. Her name, which appears on the title-page of Brahms' Sonata in F minor, Op. 5, is of interest from its association with this period of the composer's début in the circle of the Leipzig notabilities, whose number was swelled, during the first ten days of December, 1853, by the presence of Berlioz from Paris, and that of Liszt, supported by a body of his 'Murls,' from Weimar.

The occasion of the assembling of the members of the New-German party in the city of Leipzig was one of great importance to them. Berlioz had been invited to conduct a selection of his works within the precincts of the classical Gewandhaus itself, and the second part of the subscription concert of December 1, was to be devoted to the following compositions: 'The Flight into Egypt,' 'Harold in Italy,' 'The Young Shepherd of Brittany,' the fairy Scherzo from 'Romeo and Juliet,' selections from 'Faust,' and the overture to the 'Carnaval Romain.' Brahms and Grimm returned in time to be present with their friends on the occasion, which was made lively by the demonstrations and counter-demonstrations of two conflicting parties in the audience, but seems to have resulted as satisfactorily for the Weimarites as they could reasonably have expected. Brahms and his messiahship were discussed, and none too gently handled, at a supper-party at which Berlioz, Liszt, Gouvy, and others of their set, met after the concert, but the hostile attitude adopted towards the young musician was not enduring. The personal animus which Schumann's essay had aroused against him was generally disarmed, as he became known in Leipzig, by the attraction of his unassuming manner—the more speedily, perhaps, because it was felt that his modesty rested upon an underlying feeling of confidence in himself and his purpose. He at once showed his indifference to party jealousies, and perhaps ran some risk of offending his companions, by calling on Liszt, who, with Berlioz, Raff, Laub, Reményi, and others, was staying at the Hôtel de Bavière, and it will presently be shown that Liszt reconsidered his position to the young musician towards whom public attention had been so suddenly and strikingly directed.

Johannes presented himself on the Sunday (December 4) following the Gewandhaus concert at two houses always open to visitors on the first day of the week, into both of which we are enabled to penetrate by means of detailed accounts written immediately after the occurrences they describe. One is contained in a volume by Helene von Vesque;* the other in an 'open letter' written by Arnold Schloenbach to the editor Brendel, for publication in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* of December 9, 1853.

Hedwig, younger daughter of the wealthy house of Salamon, was not only possessed of literary and artistic talents, but of a magnetic personality which enabled her to form many distinguished friendships. She was long intimate with the families of Mendelssohn, Schumann, Schleinitz, Hauptmann, and other leaders of musical Leipzig, knew Joachim as a boy, and was for some time looked upon by her circle as the probable future wife of the Danish composer, Niels Gade. At the time of which we write she had nearly completed her thirty-second year, but her marriage with the composer Franz von Holstein did not take place until nearly two years later. The extracts from her diaries and letters contained in Helene von Vesque's book include several of interest to musical readers. Of young Brahms she says:

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* 'Eine Glückliche. Hedwig von Holstein in ihren Briefen und Tagebuchblättern.'

'Yesterday Herr von Sahr brought me a young man who held in his hand a letter from Joachim. He sat down opposite me, this young hero of the day, this young messiah of Schumann's, fair, delicate-looking, who, at twenty, has clearly-cut features free from all passion. Purity, innocence, naturalness, power, and depth—this indicates his being. One is so inclined to think him ridiculous and to judge him harshly on account of Schumann's prophecy; but all is forgotten; one only loves and admires him. In the evening he came to a small party at Elizabeth's [Hedwig's sister, Frau von Seebach]. . . . He placed himself at a little table near me, and spoke so brightly and continuously that his friends at the other table could not be surprised enough, for he is generally extremely quiet and dreamy. We had plenty of points in common: Joachim, the Wehners, our mutual favourite poets, Jean Paul and Eichendorf, and his, Hoffmann and Schiller. . . . He vehemently urged me to read "Kabale und Liebe" and the "Serapionsbrüder," but above all Hoffmann's musical novels, of which he spoke with real enthusiasm. "I spend all my money on books; books are my greatest pleasure. I have read as much as I possibly could since I was quite little, and have made my way without guidance from the worst to the best. I devoured innumerable romances of chivalry as a child until the 'Robbers' fell into my hands, of which I knew nothing except that it had been written by a great poet. I asked for something more by the same Schiller, however, and so made gradual progress." He speaks in the same fresh way of music, and when I said to him, "You will not care so much about music when you have a post as music-director or professor," he answered smiling, but quite decidedly: "Yes; I shall not take a post."

'And with all this independent strength, a thin boy's voice that has not yet changed! and a child's countenance that any girl might kiss without blushing. And the purity and firmness of his whole being, which guarantee that the spoiled world will not be able to overcomethis man; for, as he has been able to bear his elevation from obscurity to the perilous position of an idol without losing any of his modesty, or even his naïveté, so God, who created such a beautiful nature will continue to help him!'

Schloenbach's 'open letter' is written in too inflated a style to deserve lengthy quotation, but one or two extracts may be welcome as describing our composer's first semi-public appearance in Leipzig. Franz Brendel's 'at home' on the particular Sunday in question was a more than usually brilliant function. 'Composers, teachers, virtuosi, lyric and dramatic poets, romancists, booksellers, critics and journalists—even preachers—clever, artistic women, charming girls,' were gathered in the editor's reception-rooms, and one artist after another performed for the edification of the distinguished audience. A harp solo executed by Jeanette Paul, and rewarded by a double handshake from Berlioz; one on the pianoforte by Krause; a number of vocal contributions by the great tenor Götze—songs by Schumann and Wagner, and, in association with the accomplished amateur and Wagner enthusiast Frau Lily Steche, the famous 'Lohengrin' duet—formed the earlier part of the impromptu programme.

'The last performance of all was of special interest. Following maturity came immaturity, but immaturity of rare endowment and rich promise; immaturity already considerably defined, because possessed of individual power and true originality. We listened now to the young Brahms from Hamburg, referred to the other day in Schumann's article in your journal. The article had, as you know, awakened mistrust in numerous circles (perhaps in many cases only from fear). At all events it had created a very difficult situation for the young man, for its justification required the fulfilment of great demands; and when the slender, fair youth appeared, so deficient in presence, so shy, so modest, his voice still in transitional falsetto, few could have suspected the genius that had already created so rich a world in this young nature. Berlioz had, however, already discovered in his profile a striking likeness to Schiller, and conjectured his possession of a kindred virgin soul, and when the young genius unfolded his wings, when, with extraordinary facility, with inward and outward energy, he presented his scherzo, flashing, rushing, sparkling; when, afterwards, his andante swelled towards us in intimate, mournful tones, we all felt: Yes, here is a true genius, and Schumann was right; and when Berlioz, deeply moved, embraced the young man and pressed him to his heart, then, dear friend, I felt myself affected by such a sacred tremour of enthusiasm as I have seldom experienced. . . . If you should smile now and then whilst reading my letter, remember that it is the poet who has spoken, and that it was yourself who invited him to do so.

'LEIPZIG,
'*December* 5, 1853.'

It must not be forgotten, in connection with these effusive lines, that the party circumstances of the time and the excitement caused by Schumann's article made Brahms' appearance amongst the guests of Brendel, who had identified himself with the New-Germans, an event of importance, to be regretted by the younger and more excitable of the Leipzigers, and welcomed by the Weimarites. It no doubt contributed to the satisfaction expressed by Liszt, in a letter to Bülow, on his return to Weimar after a second appearance of Berlioz in Leipzig, and the sympathetic tone of this communication clearly shows that the motive of policy which dictated it was supported by a more personal feeling of approbation. He says on December 14:

'Je viens de passer quelques jours à Leipzig, où j'ai assisté aux deux concerts de Berlioz le 1er et le 11 de ce mois. Le resultat d'opinion à été en somme très favorable à Berlioz.'

And two days later:

'Écrivez-moi de Hanovre, où vous ferez bien de passer une quinzaine de jours. Vous y trouverez Brahms auquel je m'intéresse sincèrement et qui s'est conduit avec tact et bon goût envers moi durant les quelques jours que je viens de passer à Leipzig en l'honneur de Berlioz. Aussi l'ai-je invité plusieurs fois à dîner et me plais à croire que ses "Neue Bahnen" (New Paths) le rapprocheront davantage de Weimar par la suite. Vous serez content de la Sonate en Ut dont j'ai parcouru les épreuves à Leipzig et qu'il m'avait déjà montré ici. C'est précisément celui de ses ouvrages qui m'avait donné la meilleure idée de son talent de composition. Mille et mille tendres amitiés à Joachim, auquel j'ai fait demander sa partition de l'ouverture de

Hamlet par Brahms et par Cossmann. Rappelez-lui que je désire beaucoup la faire exécuter à la prochaine représentation et la maintenir pour les représentations subséquentes.'*

Brahms was persuaded to make his first public appearance in Leipzig at one of the David Quartet Concerts, which took place regularly in the small hall of the Gewandhaus. The programme of the occasion consisted of Mendelssohn's D major Quartet, Brahms' C major Sonata and E flat minor Scherzo, and Mozart's G minor Quintet. The reception of the new works by the audience was not discouraging, in spite of the absence from them of the qualities that go to the making of an immediate popular success, and most of the critics treated the composer sympathetically. Some of them, not content with writing about his music, discussed his appearance, and one described his 'Raphael head.'

'In the second Quartet concert, which took place on December 17,' says 'Hoplit' [Dr. Richard Pohl, a writer in the interests of the Weimar school, who was on the staff of the *Neue Zeitschrift*], 'Johannes Brahms presented himself to the public with his Sonata in C major and his Scherzo. Schumann's article caused much division amongst the uninitiated, but all doubt has been dispelled by Brahms' public appearance, and we concur with all our heart, and with the warmest satisfaction, in Schumann's opinion of the unassuming and richly-endowed young artist. There is something forcible, something transporting, in the works which Brahms performed the other evening. A ripeness rare in one so young, a creative power springing spontaneously from a rich artist-mind, are revealed in them. We find ourselves in the presence of one of those highly-gifted natures, an artist by the grace of God. Some roughnesses and angularities in the outward, very independent form of Brahms' compositions may be overlooked for the sake of the imposing beauty of their artistic aim. His modulations are often of striking effect; they are frequently surprising, but always fine and artistically justifiable. Brahms' spirit is in affinity with the genius of Schumann. He will, advancing steadfastly and safely along his "new paths," some day become what Schumann has predicted of him, an epoch-making figure in the history of art.'

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* 'Liszt's Briefe.' Edited by La Mara.

Stress was laid by the orthodox *Signale* on the originality and freshness of the composer's invention, on the significance of his thematic material, and on his eminent gift for presenting his ideas in varied and interesting forms. His facility in unexpected modulations was noted, but, by this critic, not always approved. With regard to the performance, 'much appeared more difficult to the executant than to the creator, for the sonata is very hard to play, and Brahms is a better composer than virtuoso.'

The composer's Leipzig successes had, indeed, been sufficient to enable him to arrange with a second publisher, Bartolf Senff, for the production of his sonata for violin and pianoforte, and of a third set of songs, as Op. 5 and Op. 6, respectively. His satisfaction at the remarkable turn in his affairs is summed up in a letter, overflowing with happiness, to the master at Düsseldorf. The style of the address is in allusion to the Schumanns' just completed brilliantly successful concert-journey in Holland.

'MYNHEER DOMINE,

'Forgive him, whom you have made so boundlessly glad and happy, for the jesting address. I have only the best and most satisfactory news to relate.

'To your warm recommendation I owe my reception in Leipzig, friendly beyond all expectation, and especially beyond all desert. Härtels declared themselves ready, with great pleasure, to print my first attempts. They are these: Op. 1, Sonata in C major; Op. 2, Sonata in F sharp minor; Op. 3, Songs; Op. 4, Scherzo in E flat minor.

'I delivered to Herr Senff for publication: Op. 5, Sonata in A minor for Violin and Pianoforte; Op. 6, six Songs.

'May I venture to place Frau Schumann's name upon the title-page of my second work? I scarcely dare to do so, and yet I should like so much to offer you a little token of my respect and gratitude.

'I shall probably receive copies of my first things before Christmas. With what feelings shall I then see my parents again after nearly a year's absence. I cannot describe what is in my heart when I think of it.

'May you never regret what you have done for me, may I become really worthy of you. Your

'JOH. BRAHMS.'

The letter was written from Hanover, whither Johannes proceeded on the 20th, accompanied by Grimm, with whom the acquaintance of the first Leipzig days had already ripened into an intimacy that remained one of the closest of our composer's life. A treasured memorial of its commencement is in the possession of Fräulein Marie Grimm—the original manuscript of the set of six Songs, Op. 6, as arranged for publication, with Brahms' autograph inscription on the title-page: 'Meinem lieben Julius zur Erinnerung an Kreisler jun., 8 Dec., 1853.'

There was quite a reunion at Hanover, for Dietrich had come over by Johannes' particular desire to meet him, and the four young men spent two pleasant days in each other's society. Grimm now first made acquaintance with Joachim, and remained behind to cultivate his friendship when the two others departed. By the end of the week Johannes was in his parents' arms.

It is not difficult to imagine something of the mother's feelings as she welcomed back the long-absent Hannes, who had always been as the apple of her eye, or to picture the simple preparations, the sweeping and scouring, the polishing and decorating, with which she and Elise anticipated his arrival; but who shall measure the father's joy on the return of his young conquering hero? The swiftly-progressing successes of Johannes' journey had been most literally Jakob's own personal triumphs, vindicating emphatically every one of the stages of his career; the obstinate disobedience of his boyhood, the pertinacious struggle of his youth, the reckless adventure of his marriage. What wonder that, as time went on, Johannes became to him as a sacred being in whose presence he felt awed and unable to speak or act naturally, but of whom, when alone with a sympathetic listener, he would talk unweariedly by the hour, tears of joy running down his cheeks.

As to Johannes himself, the feelings he had not been able to describe in his letter to Schumann were probably strong enough within his heart to touch the joy of the first home embraces with a gravity that did not immediately admit of speech. The first emotions over, however, an exuberant mirthfulness asserted itself in the bearing of the happy young fellow. He established at this time a custom from which he never afterwards departed. The first visit paid by him after his arrival was to Marxsen. One to the Cossels soon followed, and, on this occasion of his return from a first real absence, he went the round of several Lokals, where he had been accustomed to work regularly, and in his lightness of heart flourished on some of the instruments that had been the sign of his bondage, in very joy at his emancipation.

The radiance of this year's Christmastide in the little home where the young genius dwelt for a few days, the simple, unspoiled child of loving and beloved parents, might have been taken for granted. We possess an assurance of it, however, in some words written by Johannes, at the end of the year, to Schumann :

'Honoured Friend,

'Herewith I venture to send you your first foster-children (which are indebted to you for their world citizenship), very much concerned as to whether they may rejoice in your unaltered indulgence and affection. To me, they look in their new form much too precise and timid, almost philistine indeed. I cannot accustom myself to seeing the innocent sons of Nature in such decorous clothing.

'I am looking forward immensely to seeing you in Hanover and being able to tell you that my parents and I owe the most blissful time of our lives to your and Joachim's too-great affection. I was overjoyed to see my parents and teacher again, and have passed a glorious time in their midst.

'I beg you to express the most cordial greetings to Frau Schumann and your children of

'Your
'Johannes Brahms.

'Hamburg, *in December*, 1853.'

As we have said in a previous chapter, the violin and pianoforte sonata that was to have been published as Op. 5 was not given to the world. The manuscript was mysteriously lost. How or by whose agency has never been made clear. That Brahms delivered it to Senff for publication is expressly stated in his letter to Schumann. The known circumstances of the case lead to the conclusion that it was borrowed from the publisher by Liszt during his Leipzig visit—no doubt with Brahms' concurrence—for performance with Reményi at the Hôtel de Bavière, and not returned. In a letter written by Liszt six months later to Klindworth, who was giving concerts in England with Reményi, he says:

> 'Reményi does not answer me about the manuscript of Brahms' violin sonata. Apparently he has taken it with him, for I have, to my vexation, hunted three times through the whole of my music without being able to find it. Do not forget to write to me about it in your next letter, as Brahms wants the sonata for publication.'

There is a ring of vexation in these words which suggests that Liszt felt responsible for the work. No trace of it was discovered, however, until 1872, nineteen years after its disappearance, when, says Dietrich, 'whilst I was staying in Bonn to conduct my D minor Symphony, Wasielewsky showed me a very beautifully copied violin part, and asked me if I knew the handwriting. I immediately recognised it as that of Brahms' first period. We regretted very much that the pianoforte part was not to be found. It will have been the violin part of the lost sonata.'

The works actually published, therefore, before and after the New Year were—by Breitkopf and Härtel, the Sonatas in C, Op. 1, and in F sharp minor, Op. 2, dedicated respectively to Joachim and Frau Schumann; the set of Songs, Op. 3, dedicated to Bettina von Arnim, whose acquaintance Brahms had made, through Joachim, during his visit to Hanover in November; and the Scherzo, Op. 4, dedicated to Wenzel: and by Bartolf Senff, the Sonata in F minor, Op. 5, dedicated to the Countess Ida von Hohenthal, substituted for the lost work; and the set of Songs dedicated to Louise and Minna Japha, Op. 6. Schumann presented a copy of the songs, Op. 6, to the Japhas immediately on their publication, on which he wrote: 'Den Fräulein Japha, zum Andenken an das Weihnachtsfest, 1853, als Vorbote des eigentlichen Gebers. R. Schumann' (To the Misses Japha, in remembrance of the Christmas Festival, 1853, as forerunner of the real giver).

In the two sets of songs, Op. 3 and 6, and in the third, Op. 7, dedicated to Dietrich and published but little later, may already be perceived the composer whose lyrics were destined to take their place in the heart of the great German people as a unique portion of a peculiar national treasure. Deeply original, absolutely sincere, of an imagination that is angelic in its purity, feminine in its tenderness, and virile in its reticent strength, Brahms' songs admit us to communion with a rarely ideal nature, and the intuitive power of perfect expression which marks some of his early lyrics anticipates the experience of his later years. The beautiful 'O versenk dein Leid' will, no doubt, always be treasured as the most exquisite example, in its domain, of this early period of his fancy, but each of the three first song collections contains one or more tone-poems to which the music-lover returns with delight. Amongst them may be mentioned 'Der Frühling' (Op. 6, No. 2) and 'Treue Liebe' and 'Heimkehr' (Op. 7, Nos. 1 and 6). The last-named little gem is the earliest written of the published songs; unfortunately, it has only one verse.

The energy of imagination dwelling within Brahms' songs is often the more striking from its concentration within the short form preferred by the composer in the majority of instances. In it, as time went on, he gave vivid expression to thoughts wistful or bright, playful or sombre, naïve or deeply pondered; and whilst his lyrics are especially characterized by the clear shaping of the song-melody, and the distinctness of the harmonic foundations upon which it rests, many of them derive an added distinction from a quiet significance in the accompaniment, which, whilst helping the musical representation of a poetic idea, never embarrasses the voice. In spite of their apparent simplicity, the accompaniments are, however, frequently difficult both to read and to perform.

It is to be said, generally, of Brahms' songs that they do not betray the marked influence of either of the two great lyrical composers who preceded him. They have no affinity with those of Schumann, and if many of them share the fresh naturalness of Schubert's inspirations, this is rather to be traced to a partiality for the folk-song, in which both composers found an inexhaustible stimulus to their fancy. On the other hand, in Brahms' songs we frequently meet the musician who has penetrated so deeply into the art of Bach that it has germinated afresh in his imagination, and placed him in possession of an idiom capable of serving him in the expression of his complex individuality. Each song bears the distinctive stamp of the composer's genius, though hardly two resemble each other, and it would be difficult to point to one that could be mistaken for the work of another musician.

The young Kreisler was in the habit of presenting his manuscripts, and especially those of his songs, to intimate friends. Most of these gifts bear his boyish, affectionate inscriptions, some only the date and place of composition. 'Göttingen, July, 1853,' is written at the end of an autograph copy of 'Ich muss hinaus' presented at Düsseldorf to the Japhas. 'Weit über das Feld' has a friendly inscription in his hand to the sisters. His manuscripts—probably the originals—of some of the songs from Op. 3, notably 'O versenk' and 'In der Fremde,' the latter dated 1852, were given 'To my dear Julius in kind remembrance' (J. O. Grimm). Touching pictures arise in the mind as one looks at these pages, some of them discoloured by time, of the young idealist with his girlish face and long fair hair sitting at his night toil, his soul whole and in his possession, his thoughts straining towards the early morning hours, the only ones of the twenty-four which he was certain of being able to devote to the loveliest inspirations of his muse. In the eager affection of the inscriptions is to be read his bounding joy at his release; in the devoted remembrance with which his gifts have been treasured may be perceived one of the qualities of his personality which he, perhaps, but little understood—the power of attracting the abiding love of loyal friends.

It is now time to sum up the real significance in the life of Brahms of the remarkable first concert-journey, the account of which has so long occupied our attention, and this may be done in a very few words. The journey was the transformation scene of his life. The obscure musician who, having been guarded from the dangers of prodigy fame, had started from Hamburg in April without prestige, without recommendations, without knowledge of the world, its manners or its artifices, had passed from the two or three provincial platforms on which he had appeared as Reményi's accompanist, to present himself as pianist and composer in the Leipzig Gewandhaus, and to return to his home in December the accepted associate of the great musicians of the day; recognised by Weimar, appreciated by Leipzig; encouraged by Berlioz and Liszt, claimed by Schumann and Joachim. Before he had well begun to climb the steep hill of reputation he had found himself transported to its summit. Starting hardly as an aspirant to fame, he had come back the proclaimed heir to a prophet's mantle. His life's horizon had been indefinitely widened, his whole existence changed. Back again amid the familiar scenes of Hamburg, the events of the past nine months must have seemed to him as the visions of an enchanted dream.

To the wise and faithful friend in Altona the occurrences which had startled the musical world had seemed in no wise astonishing.

> 'There was probably,' wrote Marxsen later to La Mara, 'but one man who was not surprised—myself. I knew what Brahms had accomplished, how comprehensive were his acquirements, what exalted talent had been bestowed on him, and how finely its blossom was unfolding. Schumann's recognition and admiration were, all the same, a great, great joy to me; they gave me the rare satisfaction of knowing that the teacher had perceived the right way to protect the individuality of the talent, and to form it gradually to self-dependence.'

These last words seem to indicate that here is a fitting opportunity for the brief consideration of a question which has not seldom been raised, and has received various answers, often biassed by prepossession. What was Marxsen's share in the art of Brahms ? A Brahms would have learned what he did learn, if not from Marxsen then from someone else, has been the opinion of some people to whose judgment respect is due. Such influence as Marxsen had on Brahms' development was merely negative, is the reply of others; and it has been affirmed, on the authority of Herr Oberschulrath Wendt, that Brahms declared on one occasion that he had learned nothing from his master.*

Without stopping to discuss whether it has been just to the memory either of Brahms or of Marxsen to give the permanence and emphasis of print to whatever depreciatory words Brahms may have let fall in an unguarded moment to an intimate friend, it may safely be asserted that if our composer fortunately became aware, at an early age, of what had been the weak points of his master's teaching, he preserved, when at the height of his mastership, a clear recognition and grateful appreciation of the strong ones.

Marxsen has himself indicated, in the last sentence of the above quotation from his letter, the two main purposes of his teaching, both of which were attained by him in the case of Brahms with absolute success. To have 'protected the individuality' of an endowment so powerfully original as that of our composer might, perhaps, be regarded as an easy achievement if taken alone; though even here it should be remembered that Marxsen made himself responsible, when the affectionate and impressionable Hannes was at a tender age, for his musical education, and must, therefore, have been instrumental in directing his creative energy to that study of the highest art by means of which it developed to such good purpose. To have trained his talent to the 'self-dependence' it had attained by the time the young composer was twenty, however, implies in the teacher a distinctness of aim, a knowledge of method, an insight and originality, an active and potent influence, which few will fail to attribute to Marxsen who have a real acquaintance with the large works of Brahms' earliest period, written at the time that his formal pupilage was drawing or, in the case of one work, had just drawn, to its close.

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* Kalbeck's 'Johannes Brahms,' p. 35.

Limitation of space prevents the possibility of giving here a detailed description of Marxsen's methods of instruction, but, as some account of their excellencies and shortcomings seems to be called for, it may be said that as a teacher of free composition, and especially of the art of building up the forms which may be studied in the works of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, he was great—the more so that he did not educate his pupils merely by setting them to imitate the outward shape of classical models. He began by teaching them to form a texture, by training them radically in the art of developing a theme. Taking a phrase or a figure from one or other of the great masters, he would desire the pupil to exhibit the same idea in every imaginable variety of form, and would make him persevere in this exercise until he had gained facility in perceiving the possibilities lying in a given subject, and ingenuity in presenting them. Pursuing the same method with material of the pupil's own invention, he aimed at bringing him to feel, as by intuition, whether a musical subject were or were not suitable for whatever immediate purpose might be in view. The next step was that the idea should be pursued not arbitrarily, but logically, to its conclusion—a conclusion that was not, however, allowed to be a hard-and-fast termination. Marxsen's pupils were taught to aim at making their movements resemble an organic growth, in which each part owed its existence to something that had gone before. ' Unity clothed in variety ' might have been his motto.

The strength and freedom of craftsmanship, the immense resource imparted by such training, and the assistance lent by its earlier stages to the later study of construction, hardly need pointing out, nor is it necssary to dwell upon particular instances of its efficacy in the case of Brahms. Every page of his instrumental music teems with illustrations of the fruitfulness of his youthful studies; their result lives in the very core of his technique, and to them may in great part be traced, not only his mastery of form, but the elasticity which from the first marks his essential adherence to the models of classical tradition.

The severe course of apprenticeship in the art of free contrapuntal writing to which Marxsen subjected his pupil, which furthered, and was itself helped, by his training, in thematic development, is abundantly evident in the movements of the three pianoforte sonatas, and the estimation of the precise value especially of the two first of these works is facilitated by some knowledge of the methods from which they resulted. That Brahms, when at the summit of his mastership, expressed his exact sense of his indebtedness to his teacher, to whom he constantly testified his gratitude and affection both by word and action, is in the knowledge of the present writer. Gradually in the course of his career he had, he said, made the acquaintance of nearly all the foremost musicians of Germany, and he believed that in the teaching of the logical development of a theme, and in the teaching of form, especially what is called 'sonata form,' Marxsen, even if he could be equalled could not be excelled.

Eminent as he was, however, as an instructor in the art of free imitative composition, in that of pure part-writing Marxsen was no trustworthy guide. That he had gone through a course of training in strict counterpoint, canon and fugue—the surest foundation for the attainment of facility in part-writing—in his early days under Clasing, and that he carried his pupils through the same branches of study, goes without saying; but he had retained neither the exact knowledge, nor the interest, necessary to enable him to impart to his pupils purity and ease in the strict style of writing, or to train them to the effective application of the contrapuntal skill they might have acquired, in compositions in pure parts for voices or instruments.

It would be a nice question to determine, however, whether the very fact of Marxsen's deficiencies did not result in a balance of gain to Brahms. While his powers of imagination obtained from what his master did do, encouragement and strength and facility in concentrating themselves into shape, they were exempt by the absence of that which he did not do from the danger of being dwarfed or intimidated. Marxsen helped Johannes to the putting forth of his strength in confidence and joy, and if the young musician ever felt it irksome to have to go back to the confining and polishing processes, he knew that the conquests won by him during the time of his pupilage ensured him final victory in the fresh course of serious study to which he soon voluntarily submitted himself.

Marxsen's indifference to the study of part-writing is strangely illustrated by the absence of his name from the list of subscribers to the great Leipzig edition of Bach's works; an absence which can hardly be accounted for, in view of his enthusiasm for the instrumental works of the mighty master, otherwise than by the supposition that his vehement intolerance of religious creeds had impaired his interest in the branch of musical art which originated and reached its highest development in the service of the churches. The majority of the works made generally known by the publications of the Bach Society were written for use in the two churches for the musical portion of whose services Bach was for many years responsible. This hypothesis is equally plausible in its application to the church composers and learned contrapuntists of the early Italian and German schools.

An interesting article on Marxsen is to be found in a little book called 'Künstler Charakteristiken aus dem Concert-Saal,' by his friend Professor Joseph Sittard, and in an address given by this author at a Brahms memorial concert in Hamburg immediately after the master's death, the following sympathetic allusion was made to the beloved teacher:

> 'Brahms had the rare good fortune of being trained under a teacher whose like does not fall to the lot of many young musicians. Pledged to no special artistic creed,

sworn to no particular tendency or party, Marxsen had interest to bestow upon every important development of musical art. He never gave instruction on an inflexible scheme, but allowed himself to be guided by the separate requirements of each case. He was careful not to interfere with the individuality of young talent, not to meddle with the distinctive peculiarities of his pupil's creative ability; he only guided them within artistic confines. Brahms regarded his teacher with touching gratitude, and when at the height of his creative power still continued to send his compositions, before their publication, for Marxsen's critical inspection. Nothing is more indicative of the intimate relation between the two men than the letters (from Brahms to Marxsen) that I was permitted to see years ago.'

Unfortunately for the musical world, only one or two scraps of this correspondence remain. On the death of Marxsen in 1887, Brahms' letters to his teacher were returned to him at his request, and were destroyed.

CHAPTER VI

1854–1855

Brahms at Hanover—Hans von Bülow—Robert and Clara Schumann in Hanover—Schumann's illness—Brahms in Düsseldorf—Variations on Schumann's theme in F sharp minor—B major Trio—First public performance in New York—First attempt at symphony.

WITH the opening of the year 1854, Brahms may be said to have entered upon the first chapter of his new life. The transition stage of his career had been defined with unusual sharpness of outline. The eventful journey had been as a bridge by which he had passed from youth to manhood. Behind it were the dark years of lonely effort with issue still untried, the gathering up of strength and treasure but dimly recognised by the worker, labouring under a thick haze of obscurity; in front lay, straight and clear, the pathway of endeavour towards a fixed goal, cheered by companionship and illumined by the consciousness of a measure of success already won. Having tranquillized his mind and shaken off the effects of months of excitement by nearly a fortnight's intercourse with his family and friends at Hamburg, Johannes was impatient to get quietly to work again, all the more since new and forcible motives—the sense of his responsibility to Schumann, and the desire to become as far as possible worthy of his encomiums—added their influence to the energy of his nature, and helped to spur him on to the resolve to outdo even his utmost.

Bringing his stay in Hamburg to a close with the opening of the New Year, he left on January 3 or 4 for Hanover, where he found a new introduction awaiting his arrival.

Hans von Bülow, who had passed Christmas in Joachim's 'dear society,' writes on the 6th to his mother :

> 'I have become tolerably well acquainted with Robert Schumann's young prophet Brahms. He arrived two days ago, and is always with us. A very lovable, frank nature, and a talent that really has something God-given about it.'*

Bülow took an early opportunity of carrying out Liszt's desire, hinted at in the letter of December 16. He played the first movement of the C major Sonata on March 1 at Frau Peroni-Glasbrenner's concert in Hamburg, and was thus the first artist—always excepting the composer himself—to perform a work of Brahms in public. That his attitude towards our composer did not, during the succeeding twenty years, correspond with this promising beginning, as will be seen hereafter, may be chiefly attributed to the disappointment with which the disciples of the New-German school gradually realized that their artistic aims were at variance with the mature convictions of Joachim, whom they reckoned for a while as one of themselves, and of Brahms, whose allegiance they had hoped to secure.

Johannes, established in a lodging of his own at Hanover, began the routine of work, diversified by intimate association with a few chosen friends, which he preferred to the end of his life, and was soon absorbed in the composition of his B major Pianoforte Trio. The intimacy between Joachim and himself was now widened to a triple alliance by the addition of Grimm, and lively discussions were carried on in Joachim's rooms late into the night by the three friends. The young violinist had not been a smoker up to this time, but his companions used to envelop him and themselves in such thick clouds of tobacco, that one night, unable any longer to endure his sufferings passively, he suddenly declared his surrender, and began to puff away with the others, to Brahms' and Grimm's great delight.

Schumann had accepted an invitation from Hille, the founder and conductor of the 'New Singakademie' at Hanover, to be present at a performance of his 'Paradise and the Peri' on January 28, and, to the joy of the young musicians, wrote to Joachim to suggest that his visit, which was to be made in the company of his wife, should be the occasion of several public appearances. He continues :

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* Bülow's 'Briefe und Schriften.' Edited by Marie von Bülow.

> 'Now, where is Johannes ? Is he with you ? If so, greet him. Is he flying high—or only amongst flowers ? Is he setting drums and trumpets to work yet ? He must call to mind the beginnings of the Beethoven symphonies ; he must try to do something of the same kind. The beginning is the main point; when one has begun, the end seems to come of itself. . . .
>
> 'I hope also to see, or better still to hear, something new of yours soon. You, too, should remember the above-named symphony beginnings, but not before Henry and Demetrius.*
>
> 'I always get into a good humour when I write to you. You are a kind of physician for me.
>
> 'Adieu.
>
> 'Your R. Schu.'

Some idea of the happy week passed by the three friends in the constant society of their 'master' may be gathered from Moser's charming description in his Life of Joachim. Schumann could not see enough of his beloved young favourites, Joachim and Brahms, and readily extended his cordiality to their companion Grimm. The third subscription concert was a veritable Schumann festival. Joachim conducted the master's fourth symphony, 'evidently with great delight and love,' says the *Hanover Courier*, as well as Beethoven's Pianoforte Concerto in E flat, played by Frau Schumann, and performed Schumann's lately-written Violin Fantasia dedicated to him and first played at Düsseldorf. There were plenty of opportunities for private meetings in Joachim's rooms, in the railway restaurant, and elsewhere, that were unshadowed by any presentiment of an impending catastrophe ; for Schumann was unusually bright and communicative, and took pleasure in amusing his young friends with anecdotes of his own early experiences. The hours thus passed were tenderly remembered in after-years by those who had been gladdened by the setting radiance of a light soon to be extinguished.

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* Two overtures on which Joachim was working.

'What a high festival we have had through the Schumanns' visit,' writes Brahms, a few days after their departure, to Dietrich in Düsseldorf. 'Everything has seemed alive since. Greet the great ones from me many times.'*

A week after their return Schumann wrote:

'*February* 6, 1854.

'DEAR JOACHIM,

'We have been at home eight days, and have not yet sent a word to you and your companions. I have, however, frequently written to you with invisible ink. . . . We have often thought of the past days; may others like them come quickly! The kind royal family, the excellent orchestra, and the two young dæmons moving amid the scenes—we shall not soon forget it.

'The cigars are very much to my liking. It seems they were a handshake from Brahms, and, as usual, a very substantial and agreeable one.

'Write to me soon—in words and in tones!

'R. SCHU.'

It is sad to realize that the very day after sending this letter, so free from signs of depression, so bright and healthy in tone, Schumann wrote down his last musical thought, the now well-known Theme in E flat; and that three weeks later he was overtaken by the crisis of his terrible malady. Alarming symptoms declared themselves as the month went on; the master became a prey to attacks of mental agony, and was distressed by illusions, imagining that he constantly heard one or more notes from the impression of which he was unable to rid himself. In the intervals of relief from his sufferings he continued to compose, and wrote several variations on his theme, which he fancied had been brought to him in the night by the spirits of

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* This and all other extracts from Dietrich are taken from his well-known 'Recollections of Brahms.'

Schubert and Mendelssohn; but his condition gave rise to such grave apprehension that he was constantly watched by his wife in turn with one or another devoted friend. On February 27, however, he managed to leave his house unobserved, and a few moments afterwards had thrown himself into the Rhine. He was rescued by some sailors belonging to a steamboat near, and conveyed to his home in a carriage, but his state continued so distressing that Frau Schumann, herself needing care at the time, was not allowed by the doctors to see him, and he was taken, on March 4, to the private establishment of Dr. Richarz at Endenich, near Bonn.

It would be difficult to describe in exaggerated terms the consternation with which a great part of the musical world, and especially the friends of Schumann's immediate circle, became aware of these overwhelming occurrences. Sorrow for the great master, love for the indulgent friend, alarmed sympathy for the stricken wife, kept the younger of his disciples in a state of restless agitation, which seems to have found its principal relief in the writing of letters of excited inquiry to Dietrich, the only one of their number on the scene of the catastrophe.

> 'Never in my life has anything so moved and deeply shaken me,' wrote Theodor Kirchner, 'as the dreadful occurrence with our honoured, beloved Schumann. . . . We should all be terribly lonely without him, and as regards myself, all pleasure in my own endeavours would be gone.'

> 'Pray send me an exact description of the whole catastrophe *as quickly as possible*,' so ran Naumann's letter, 'especially if there is any hope of Schumann's complete restoration, how his unhappy wife has borne this cruel stroke of fate, and how you are yourself. I repeat my request for *immediate* news.'

To the friends in Hanover, who had so lately seen Schumann in apparent enjoyment of unwonted health both of body and mind, the tidings, of which they first became informed through a paragraph in the *Cologne Gazette*, seemed too sudden and tragic to be credible.

'DEAR DIETRICH—' Joachim dashed off—

'If you have any feeling of friendship for Brahms and me, relieve our anxiety, and write word instantly whether Schumann is really as ill as the paper says, and let us know at once of any change in his condition. It is too grievous to be in uncertainty about the life of someone to whom we are bound with our best powers. I can scarcely wait for the hour that will bring me tidings of him. I am quite beside myself with dread.

'Write soon.

'Your J. JOACHIM.'

It was impossible, however, to wait for an answer, and no letter could have appeased the desire of the affectionate young musicians to be on the spot; so Brahms, having no fixed duties to detain him, started immediately for Düsseldorf, and Joachim hoped to follow, if only for a couple of days. On March 3 Johannes sent his report:

'DEAREST JOSEPH,

'Do come on Saturday; it comforts Frau Schumann to see certain dear faces.

'Schumann's condition seems to be improved. The physicians have hope, but no one is allowed to see him.

'I have already been with Frau Schumann. She wept very much, but was very glad to see me and to be able to expect you.

'We expect you on Sunday morning, and Grimm on Wednesday.

'Your

'JOHANNES.'*

'To my great relief,' wrote Dietrich a fortnight later to Naumann, 'Brahms came at once after hearing the dreadful news. Grimm is also here. Joachim was here for two days, and is coming again in a few weeks.'

At the end of the letter he adds:

'Brahms has written a quite wonderful trio, and is a man to be taken in every respect as a pattern. With all his depth, he is healthy, fresh, and lively, entirely untouched by modern morbidness.'

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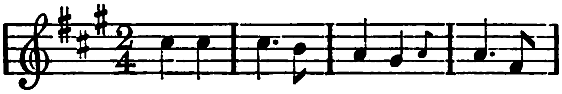
* From the original letter, presented by Dr. Joachim to the author.

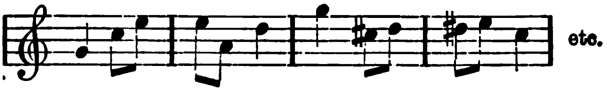
It now became the cherished duty of the young men to do what in them lay to support and comfort the sorely-tried wife in her desolation. Nothing, perhaps, could have helped and soothed her so much as the feeling that the tie which primarily bound them to her was that of their devotion to her husband, the knowledge that they mourned with her in a common grief, and that their sympathy was touched by their personal sense of what she had lost. Never, indeed, was more loyal sympathy offered for the consolation of sorrow, and it had its reward. After the first terrible days had been lived through, a calm and self-possession returned to the illustrious lady, which heightened, if possible, the young artists' admiration of her. The news from Endenich improved towards the end of the month, and on April 1 even became reassuring. The patient was now passing his time walking, or quietly sleeping, undisturbed by fits of anxiety or delusions of hearing; was gentle towards his attendant, had conversed a little with him, and had even made a joke appropriate to the day. Frau Schumann summoned up courage to look with hope to the future, and allowed herself to be persuaded to resume some of her ordinary avocations. The short remainder of the musical season was, indeed, passed in necessary retirement; but the great pianist found solace in quietly studying her husband's compositions anew with Dietrich, Brahms, Grimm, and others of the circle, playing his great orchestral and choral works with them on the pianoforte, and listening in turn to their performances. Dietrich writes in March:

> 'Yesterday and the day before she went through the whole of Schumann's "Faust" music with us. We are with her every day, and it is impossible for me to think of leaving at present.'

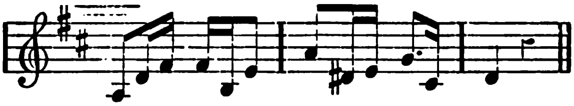
Frau Schumann found congenial occupation in the summer in writing a set of variations on the theme of her husband's Album-Blatt, Op. 99, No. 1:



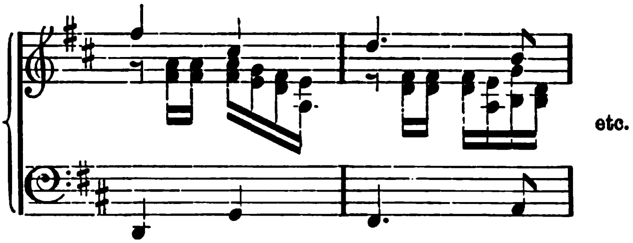
—which itself refers to the composer's early work, Op. 5, Variations on a theme by Clara Wieck, and a touching memorial of Brahms' efforts to assist in diverting her mind from its burden of sorrow exists in his treatment of the same theme in his Variations for the pianoforte on a theme of Robert Schumann, Op. 9, dedicated to Frau Clara Schumann. This work was begun during the period of Frau Schumann's convalescence after the birth of her seventh child on June 11. Each new variation was brought to her as it was completed. Grimm, who remained at Düsseldorf during these months in close companionship with Johannes, christened the work 'Trost-Einsamkeit' (Consolation in loneliness), and remembered it as such ever afterwards. It tells plainly enough the story of the young composer's thoughts. It is full of references to Schumann and his wife—notably in the ninth variation, which contains note for note reminiscences of Schumann's Album-Blatt, Op. 99, No. 2, and in the tenth, in which the first four bars of Clara Wieck's original theme



are introduced by diminution into the middle voice:



The work is astounding in its evidence of the mastery already achieved by the young composer over the technique of variation form, in which he uses the complicated resources of contrapuntal science with absolute playfulness. For one illustration of this the reader may again be referred to the tenth variation, in which the original bass of Schumann's theme is used as the melody of the upper part and its inversion as the bass part, whilst the original melody (quoted on p. 159) is imitated by diminution in the middle part.



We must resist the temptation to linger over the many interesting details of this noble work, as the aim of our pages is not a technical one; but we may note in passing that, of the sixteen variations which it contains, five are written in keys varying from that of the theme, a circumstance which again brings it into a certain association with Schumann.* Brahms, in his five other independent sets of variations for pianoforte, nearly follows the practice of the earlier masters, who confined themselves to the major and minor modes of one key.

Johannes had meanwhile, according to custom, sent the completed manuscript of his trio to Marxsen, and had speedily received it back again with his master's critical remarks. These he acknowledged on June 28 in a letter from which the following brief extracts are taken, sending Marxsen, at the same time, a collection of short pieces written at odds and ends of time, which he proposed to call 'Leaves from the Journal of a Musician, published by the Young Kreisler.'

'Let me thank you very much for having vouchsafed such a long letter, such a detailed examination to my trio. I will write about the proposed little alterations when I send you the printed copy. I have allowed the trio to lie in order to accustom myself to them.'

Asking Marxsen if he considers the pianoforte pieces worth publishing, he adds as to the proposed title: 'What do you think of it? Doesn't it please you? I must confess I should be sorry to strike it out.'* It must be presumed that Marxsen's opinion, coinciding with that of some of the young colleagues to whom the pieces were also shown, was unfavourable, for they did not see the light. We shall, however, meet with one or two of them in a few concert-programmes before long, and one will be found to have a particular interest for English readers.

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* *Cf.* Schumann's great variations: the 'Etudes Symphoniques.'

The B major Trio, published in 1854 by Breitkopf and Härtel as Op. 8, which remained for many years but little known, has, with its beautiful youthful qualities, long since become dear to those who have yielded their hearts to the spell of Brahms' music. The composer's fertile fancy has betrayed him, in the first allegro, into some episodical writing which somewhat clouds the distinctness of outline, and impedes the listener in his appreciation of the distinguished beauties of the movement, and there are places in the finale where a certain disappointment succeeds to the conviction inspired by the impetuous opening subject; but in wealth of material, in the rare beauty of its principal themes, and in noble sincerity of expression, the trio occupies a distinguished place even amongst the examples of Brahms' maturity. The scherzo with its trio are already masterly both in conception and treatment, and in the adagio we have promise of the deeply impressive slow movements which were moulded in ever-increasing perfection of structure by the composer's ripening genius. That Brahms retained an affection for this child of his young imagination is shown by his having published a revised edition of the work so late in his career as the year 1891. We must confess our preference for the original version, which is consistently representative of the composer as he was when he wrote it. The later one does not appear to us to have solved the difficulty of successfully applying to a work of art the process of grafting, upon the fresh, lovable immaturity of twenty-one, the practised but less mobile experience of fifty-seven.

The trio was performed for the first time in public, to the lasting musical distinction of America, on November 27, 1855, at William Mason's concert of chamber music in Dodsworth's Hall, New York, by the concert-giver, Theodor Thomas, and Carl Bergmann, to whom, therefore, belongs the honour of having inaugurated the public performances of Brahms' great series of works of this class. It was played, for the second time, at Breslau on December 18 of the same year. Many years elapsed before it was heard in England.

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* Sittard's 'Künstler-Charakteristiken.'

Frau Schumann changed her residence to another in Düsseldorf in the month of July, and immediately afterwards went with one of her young daughters to stay with her mother in Berlin, whither Joachim also proceeded on a visit to some of his own particular friends. Dietrich had quitted Düsseldorf some months previously to follow prospects of success in Leipzig; Grimm and Brahms remained behind to take charge of any urgent tidings from Endenich. To Johannes was specially entrusted the congenial task of arranging Schumann's books and music in the new dwelling. This was soon accomplished to his satisfaction, as he writes to Dietrich :

> 'And now I sit there the whole day and study. I have seldom felt so happy as I do now, rummaging in this library.'

On July 19, the very day of Frau Schumann's departure, the happy news arrived that a marked improvement had taken place in her husband's health. He had spoken of feeling better, expressed a desire to visit his friend Wasielewsky at Bonn; above all, had picked flowers, and evidently wished them to be sent to his wife, whom he had not mentioned during his illness. News and flowers were instantly despatched to Berlin, and were received with almost overwhelming feelings of hope and longing.

> 'I cannot describe my feelings,' Frau Schumann writes to Dietrich after informing him of the tidings, 'but I never knew till now how difficult it is to bear a great happiness . . . it often seems to me as though I should lose my reason ; it is too much, all that I have gone through and that is still before me !'

She returned to Düsseldorf after about a fortnight's absence. The succeeding movements of the party are chronicled in a letter written by Johannes to the Amtsvogt Blume of Winsen :

'ULM, *August* 16, 1854.

'HONOURED SIR,

'You certainly think that your dear letter did not give me the least pleasure, as I have left it so long unanswered ? Ah, the time lately has been so full of excitement that I was obliged to put it off from day to day. Frau Schumann went with a friend on the 10th of this month to Ostend for the benefit of her health. I, after much persuasion, resolved to make a journey through Swabia during her absence. I did not know how greatly I was attached to the Schumanns, how I lived in them ; everything seemed barren and empty to me, every day I wished to turn back, and was obliged to travel by rail in order to get quickly to a distance and forget about turning back. It was of no use ; I have come as far as Ulm, partly on foot, partly by rail ; I am going to return quickly, and would rather wait for Frau Schumann in Düsseldorf than wander about in the dark. When one has found such divine people as Robert and Clara Schumann, one should stick to them and not leave them, but raise and inspire one's self by them. The dear Schumann continues to improve, as you have read in my letter to my parents. There has been a great deal of gossip about his condition. I consider the best description of him is to be found in some of the works of E. T. A. Hoffmann (Rath Krespel, Serapion, and especially the splendid Kreisler, etc.). He has only stripped off his body too soon.—If you would give me pleasure, let me find a letter from you in Ddf.—is that quite too bold ? I will write to you again, and more rationally, from there. I am writing this letter in the waiting-room of the railway-station, which accounts for its having become, probably, very confused.—A thousand hearty greetings to dear Uncle Giesemann, I will write to him also from Ddf. ; heartiest greetings also to Frau Blume and your daughter. Remember with affection

'Your JOHANNES BRAHMS.'*

Stopping at Bonn on his return journey to inquire after the patient at Endenich, Brahms obtained permission to look at Schumann, himself unseen, and from his position behind an open window was able, after he had sufficiently controlled his first agitation, to assure himself that the master looked well and wore the kind, tranquil mien natural to him; and on his arrival at Düsseldorf, whom should he find there but Grimm, who, having missed the object of a journey on which he, too, had set out, had likewise been to Endenich, seen Schumann, and gained an impression of his appearance and manner similar to that which had reassured Johannes!

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* See footnote on p. 117.

Grimm left Düsseldorf in November for Hanover, and remained there till the following year, when he accepted a post as conductor of a choral society at Göttingen. Johannes also went north on a visit to his parents, but for a few weeks only. The Schumanns' house had become a second home to him, and his place in the affections of its master and mistress that of a beloved elder son. Almost every particular that had marked the course of his year's acquaintance with them had been of a kind to stir his true, loving, high-strung nature to its depths. Schumann's noble character, his quick affection for the young stranger and unconditional acceptance of his art, the ideal relation which united the great composer with his wife, the distinguished qualities of the gifted woman who found her greatest happiness in consecrating her genius to the service of her romantic love, the terrible blow which had separated the two lives so closely linked, the sadness of the present, the uncertainty of the future—each and all of these things had aroused in the heart of Johannes a tumult of feeling, a poignancy of affection, that allowed him no rest when he was out of immediate touch with the two people who were its object. He could study to his heart's content in Schumann's library, where books and music were unreservedly at his disposal; could be of use to Frau Schumann, who truly valued his sympathy and returned his affection; he was in constant communication with Joachim, and could have as much pleasant society as he cared for. In short, he felt that for the present his place was at Düsseldorf, and at Düsseldorf he remained.

It was in the spring of 1854 that he made the acquaintance of Julius Allgeyer, who, four years his senior, was at the time a student of copper-plate engraving in Düsseldorf under Josef Keller.

> 'Brahms,' says Allgeyer in a letter of this date, 'has Schiller's striking profile; his compositions sound different from everything else known to me. He has the bad manners of a frolicsome child and the understanding of a man.'

There was much in the circumstances and characters of the two young men to foster an intimacy between them. Allgeyer's youth had, like that of Johannes, been passed in struggle, and he resembled Brahms in his restless hunger after general culture, which he endeavoured to satisfy by constant and varied reading. The composition of Brahms' Ballades for pianoforte, Op. 10, which belongs to this time, has a direct association with Allgeyer, to whom the young musician was indebted for his acquaintance with Herder's 'Stimmen der Völker,' the volume containing a translation of the Scotch ballad 'Edward' that inspired the first of the pieces in question. Brahms' memory for such details is well illustrated by his dedication to Allgeyer of the Lieder und Romanzen for two voices, with pianoforte accompaniment, Op. 75, published in 1878, the first number of which is a setting of 'Edward.' Another avowed instance of his partiality for Herder's collection is to be found in a still later work, No. 1 of the three Intermezzi for pianoforte, Op. 117, and it may be surmised that the book contains the secret key to the composer's thoughts during the writing of more than one other of the short pieces for pianoforte designated by the general name of 'Intermezzo' or 'Capriccio.'

Brahms and Allgeyer remained intimate, though with intervals of some estrangement—if this be not too strong a term to express a temporary cessation of intercourse without alleged cause—until Brahms' death; and Allgeyer, who was introduced by Johannes to Frau Schumann, came to be regarded by her as belonging to the circle of her valued friends.*

Schumann's desire that his young protégé should apply his powerful ideal gifts and his skill in the handling of form to the composition of an orchestral work had not been disregarded by Brahms. He had tried his hand at an overture early in the year, and had worked through the spring and summer at a symphony, making his first attempts at instrumentation with the help of Grimm. It could not be otherwise than that the rapid succession of extraordinary events and vivid emotions which had agitated his spirit should prove a strong stimulus to his imagination; and it is not surprising to find that they moved him to the composition of a series of movements, two of which remain amongst the most powerful produced by him, one having been accepted by thousands of mourners all the world over as the most fitting musical expression known to them in the presence of profound grief. The symphony, as such, was never completed, but the work was thrown into the form of a sonata for two pianofortes, of which the first two movements have become known to the world as the first and second of the Pianoforte Concerto in D minor, and the third is immortalized in the 'Behold all Flesh,' the wonderful march movement in three-four time of the German Requiem. Brahms frequently played the sonata in private at this period with Frau Schumann or Grimm.

The two sets of Variations on Schumann's theme were published simultaneously, by Brahms' desire, in the autumn, with his Songs, Op. 7, dedicated to Dietrich, and the B major Trio; the variations by Johannes appearing as his Op. 9. The song 'Mondnacht' also appeared this year, without opus number, in a book of 'Album-Blätter' published at Göttingen.

The improvement in Schumann's condition went on so steadily that on September 13, the thirty-fifth anniversary of his wife's birthday, he was permitted to receive a letter from her. It contains no allusion to Brahms, but brings Schumann's tenderness in his home relationships so vividly before the mind that a short extract from it will, we think, be welcomed by the reader:*

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* Professor Carl Neumann's introduction to the second edition (1904) of Allgeyer's 'Life of Anselm Feuerbach.'

'ENDENICH, *Sept.* 14, 1854.

'How I rejoiced, beloved Clara, to see your handwriting. High thanks for having written to me on such a day, and that you and the dear children still remember me. Greet and kiss the little ones! Oh, if I could see you and speak to you again, but the way is too far. So much I should like to know; how your life is going on; where you are living and if you still play as gloriously as formerly; if Marie and Elise continue to make progress, if they still sing also—if you still have the Klems pianoforte [a present from Schumann to his wife], where my collection of scores is (the printed ones) and what has become of the manuscripts (such as the Requiem, the Sänger's Fluch); where our album is, containing autographs of Goethe, Jean Paul, Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, and many letters addressed to you and me.'

On the 18th he writes:

'What joyful news you have again sent me . . . that Brahms, to whom you will give my kind and admiring greetings, has come to live in Düsseldorf; what friendship! If you would like to know whose is my favourite name, you will no doubt guess his, the unforgettable one! . . . If you write to Joachim, greet him. What have Brahms and Joachim been composing? Is the overture to Hamlet published? Has he finished anything else? You write that you are giving your lessons in the pianoforte-room. Who are the present pupils? Who the best? Are you not doing too much, dear Clara?'

He goes on to recall the happiness of the journeys made in his wife's company, begs that their double portrait may be sent him, would like some money, in order to be able to give to the poor people whom he meets in his walks, wants a list of his children's birthdays.

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* This and the following letters written by Schumann at Endenich were first published by Edward Hanslick in the *Neue Freie Presse* of October 27 and 29, 1896, and afterwards republished in Hanslick's 'Am Ende des Jahrhunderts' (Robert Schumann in Endenich).

A week later, September 26, he says :

'What you write about . . . has given me the greatest pleasure. So also about Brahms and Joachim and their compositions. I am surprised that Brahms is working at counterpoint which does not seem like him. I should like to make acquaintance with Joachims' three pieces for pianoforte and viola. I can remember de Laurens' portrait of Brahms, but not the one of me. Thank you for the children's birthday dates. Who are to be sponsors for the little one, and in what church is he to be baptized ? . . .'

In October he acknowledges the arrival of Brahms' variations, sent him by his wife :

'DEAREST CLARA,

'What pleasure you have again given me ! Your letter and Julie's, Brahms' variations on the theme which you have varied, the three volumes of Arnim Brentano's Wunherhorn. . . . I remember Herr Grimm very well, we used to be together with Brahms and Joachim at the railway-station [in Hanover]; greet him and above all Fräulein Leser. I shall write to Brahms myself. . . .'

That this renewal of intercourse with her husband cheered and encouraged Frau Schumann for the performance of her arduous public duties during the autumn season will be readily believed. Under the necessity of a heavily increased weight of responsibility to her young children, she had bound herself to the fulfilment of a long list of concert engagements, which scarcely allowed her an interval of rest. Happily, the reports from Endenich continued favourable. Joachim, writing to Liszt on November 16, says :

'What a happiness it is that Schumann's condition is distinctly improved. I had a letter from him from Endenich lately. He relates some of our common experiences quite clearly, expressing himself in a kind, gentle way as though he had just awakened from a dream. Everything seems new to him, and he would like to participate in what is going on ; asks about compositions, about friends ; one may certainly hope for the best.'

On November 27, having had time to study Brahms' variations, he writes, in the course of a letter to his wife :

'The variations of Johannes delighted me at first sight and do so still more on deeper acquaintance. I shall myself write also to Brahms ; does his portrait by de Laurens still hang in my study ? He is the most attractive and gifted young fellow. I recall with delight the splendid impression he made that first time with his C major Sonata, and afterwards with the F sharp minor Sonata and the Scherzo in E flat minor. Oh, if I could only hear him again ! I should like his ballades also.'

To Brahms, enclosed in the above :

'Could I but come to you myself, to see you again and to hear your splendid variations, or [to hear them] from my Clara of whose wonderful interpretation Joachim has written to me. How incomparably the whole is rounded off, how one recognises you in the rich brightness of the imagination and again in the profound art, united as I have not yet known them. The theme emerging here and there, but very secretly, then so vehement and tender. The theme then quite vanishing, and at the end, after the fourteenth [variation], so ingeniously written in canon in the second ; how splendid is the fifteenth in G flat major, and the last. And I have to thank you, dear Johannes, for all your kindness and goodness to my Clara ; she always writes to me about it. She sent me yesterday to my pleasure, as you perhaps know, volumes of my compositions and Jean Paul's Flegeljahre. Now I hope soon to see your handwriting, however great a treasure it is to me, in another form also. The winter is fairly mild. You know the Bonn neighbourhood. I enjoy Beethoven's statue and the beautiful view of the Siebengebirge. We saw each other last in Hanover. Only write soon to

'Your affectionate and appreciative

'R. SCHUMANN.'

Brahms' answer speaks for itself :

'HAMBURG, 2 *December* 1854.

'MOST BELOVED FRIEND,

'How can I describe to you my pleasure at your dear letter ! You have already so often made me happy when you have remembered me so affectionately in the letters to your wife, and now I have a letter belonging entirely to myself. It is the first I have had from you; I value it beyond measure. Unfortunately I received it in Hamburg, where I had come to visit my parents; I would much rather have received it from the hand of your wife.

'I expect to return to Düsseldorf in a few days; I long to be there.

'The overmuch praise which you bestow on my variations fills me with happiness. I have been studying your works industriously since the spring; how much I should like to hear your praise of them also! I have passed this year since spring-time at Düsseldorf; I shall never forget it, I have learned all the time to love you and your glorious wife more and more.

'I have never yet looked forward so cheerfully and confidently, never believed so firmly in a splendid future as now. How I wish it were near, and nearer still the happy time when you will be quite restored to us.

'I cannot then leave you any more; I shall try to earn more and more of your dear friendship.

'Good-bye, and think of me with affection.

'Your warmly venerating JOHANNES BRAHMS.

'My parents and your friends here think of you with the greatest veneration and love. The parents, Herr Marxsen, Otten, and Avé, particularly beg me to give you their most cordial greetings.'*

About the middle of the month Schumann wrote again to Johannes:

'ENDENICH, *December* 1854.

'DEAR FRIEND,

'If I could but come to you at Christmas! Meanwhile I have received your portrait from my dear wife, your familiar portrait, and I know the place in my room quite well, quite well—under the mirror. I am still refreshing myself with your variations; I should like to hear several of them from you and my Clara; I am not completely master of them; especially the second, the fourth not up to time and the fifth not; but the eighth (and the slower ones) and the ninth—A reminiscence of which Clara wrote to me is probably on p. 14; what is it from? a song ?*—and the twelfth—— Oh, if I could only hear you!'

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* See footnote on p. 181.

The andante and scherzo from Brahms' F minor Sonata, Op. 5, were included by Frau Schumann in several of her programmes of the season, and, though received with indifference by the general public, were, on the whole, noticed encouragingly by the press. The *Vossische Zeitung* of Berlin dismissed the movements as wanting in clearness and simplicity, but the *National Zeitung* of the same city pronounced that the sonata, associating itself with the school of Schumann, gave evidence of eminent creative power, and a Frankfurt critic wrote :

> 'Frau Schumann deserves high commendation for introducing Brahms' compositions to the public with her master-hand, and thereby preparing the way for their general acceptance.'

Joachim, who was frequently Frau Schumann's artistic colleague during the season, giving concerts with her in various parts of Germany, spent the Christmas festival with his friends in Düsseldorf, making time on his way thither to call at Bonn to get news of Schumann. To his joy, he was admitted to the first interview with a personal friend allowed to the patient since his residence at Endenich. The impression he derived was reassuring to a certain extent, and there was comfort in the mere fact that he had seen and conversed with Schumann. A touching picture of the little gathering in Düsseldorf of those who stood first in the affections of the great composer is given in Brahms' next letter to him :

> 'MOST HONOURED FRIEND,
>
> 'I should like to write a great deal about the Christmas evening, which was made so happy to us by Joachim's news; how he told us about you the whole evening and your wife wept so quietly. We were filled with joyful hope that we may soon be able to see you again.

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* The introduction by diminution of Clara Wieck's theme mentioned on p. 160.

'You always turn the days which would otherwise be days of mourning for us, into high festivals. On her birthday your wife was allowed to write you the first letter. At Christmas a friend first talked with you, the only one to whom we should not grudge this happiness, but only desire for ourselves to be allowed to succeed him soon.

'On the first day of the festival your wife gave her presents. She will now be writing to tell you about it; how well Marie played your A minor Sonata with Joachim, and Elise the Kinderscenen, and how she delighted me with Jean Paul's complete works. I had not hoped to be able to call them my own for many years. Joachim got the scores of your symphonies, which your wife had already given me.

'I returned here the evening before Christmas; how long the separation from your wife seemed to me! I had so accustomed myself to her inspiring society, I had lived near her so delightfully all the summer and learned to admire and love her so much, that everything seemed flat to me, and I could only long to see her again. What nice things I have brought back with me from Hamburg, however! The score of Gluck's Alcestis (the Italian edition, 1776) from Herr Avé, your first dear letter to me and several from your beloved wife. I must thank you most warmly for a pleasant word in your last letter, for the affectionate "thou"; your kind wife also makes me happy now by using the nice, intimate word; it is the highest proof to me of her favour; I will try always to deserve it more.

'I had a great deal to write to you, dearest friend, but it would probably only be a repetition of what your wife is writing, therefore I conclude with the warmest handshake and greeting. Your

'JOHANNES.

'DÜSSELDORF, 30 *December*, 1854.'

Frau Schumann, having before her the fatigues of a concert-journey in Holland, allowed herself a brief rest during the early part of January, and was cheered by the most encouraging letters from her husband. He wrote on the 6th:

'. . . I wish also to thank you most particularly, my Clara, for the artist letters and Johannes for the sonata and ballades.* I know them now. The sonata—I remember to have heard it once from him—so profoundly grasped; living, deep, and warm throughout, and so closely woven together. And the ballades—the first wonderful, quite new; only I do not understand the *doppio movimento* either in this or the second, is it not too fast?* The close beautiful—original! The second how different, how diversified, how suggestive to the imagination; magical tones are in it. The bass F sharp at the end seems to lead to the third ballade. What shall we call this? Demoniacal—quite splendid, and becoming more and more mysterious after the *pp* in the trio. And the return and close! Has this ballade made a similar impression on you, my Clara? In the fourth ballade how beautifully the strange melody vacillates at the close between minor and major, and remains mournfully in the major. Now on to overtures and symphonies! Do you not like this, my Clara, better than organ? A symphony or opera, which arouses enthusiasm and makes a great sensation, brings everything else more quickly forward. He must. Now greet Johannes warmly and the children, and you, my dearest heart, remember your, as of old, loving

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* In manuscript: Ballades for Pianoforte, Op. 10.

'ROBERT.'

Brahms was permitted to follow Joachim, and paid the master a visit of several hours' duration, in the course of which he played both to and with him. At its close Schumann walked back to Bonn with his dear young friend, and could not make up his mind to part with him. Johannes tore himself away just in time to catch his train, and wrote a few days afterwards:

'DEAR HONOURED FRIEND,

'I must thank you myself for the great pleasure you give me by the dedication of your splendid concertstück.† How I rejoice to see my name thus printed! Especially, too, that I, like Joachim, have a concerto of my own.‡ We have often talked of the two works and which we like best—we have not been able to decide.

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* The *doppio movimento* marked in the manuscript of the first ballade was changed before publication to *allegro ma non troppo*, no doubt in deference to Schumann's suggestion.

† Concert-allegro with Introduction for Pianoforte and Orchestra, Op. 134.

‡ Fantasia for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 131, dedicated to Joachim.

'I think with joy of the short hours that I was allowed to spend with you, they were so delightful—but passed so quickly. I cannot tell your wife enough about them; it makes me doubly glad that you received me with such friendship and kindness, and that you still think of the hour with so much affection.

'We shall be able to see you thus more and more frequently and pleasantly till we possess you again.

'I have taken the catalogue (chronological), as you wished, to your copyist (Fuchs).

'I expect you would like the original of Jenny Lind's letter. It is probably the handwriting that you want. I need not write out the contents for you.

'We are sending Bargiel's new work, it will give you great pleasure, as it does us; Op. 8 is a great advance upon Op. 9. Both are dedicated to your wife; that is what I should like to do always. I should like to take turns with the names Joachim and Clara Schumann till I had courage to add your name. That, probably, will not soon come to me.

'Now good-bye, dear man, and think sometimes with affection of your

'JOHANNES.

'DÜSSELDORF, *in January* 1855.'

'Do you remember that you encouraged me last winter to write an overture to "Romeo"? For the rest, I have been trying my hand at a symphony during the past summer, have even instrumented the first movement and composed the second and third.'

During the entire winter, the devotion to Frau Schumann, through which Joachim and Brahms were alike eager to express their veneration for the beloved master in his awful trial, was shared between them in the most practical way. Joachim remained her constant artistic companion after her return from Holland, and the success achieved by the two great musicians on the innumerable occasions of their giving concerts together, during this and the following season, was extraordinary and unvarying. Johannes remained at Düsseldorf to attend to Schumann's little requirements, and to send cheery news of all that was going on at home to the anxious wife and mother. In February he writes to Endenich:

'DEAR HONOURED FRIEND,

'Herewith I send you the things you wished for; a necktie and the *Signale*. I must be responsible for the first; as your wife is in Berlin, I had to decide. I only hope you will like it, and that it is not too high?

'I also send you the *Signale;* some of the numbers are missing, we have not been careful enough about them. From this time forward you shall have them regularly.

'I can now already give you the most positive assurance that Herr Arnold has had your proof of the "Gesänge der Frühe." There must be some other reason for his having delayed the publication so long.

'I wonder if the long walk with me did you good? I expect so. With what pleasure I think of the delightful day; I have seldom been so perfectly happy! Your dear wife was very much calmed and pacified by my blissful letter.

'I am entrusted with many greetings to you from all your friends here. I will particularly mention those from your children and Fräulein Bertha.*

'May all go well with you, and may you often think with affection of your

'JOHANNES.

'DÜSSELDORF, *in February* 1855.'

Another letter follows early in March:

'HONOURED MASTER,

'You will have wondered very much that I wrote of an F sharp minor Sonata which was to be sent you with the other things, and none was there. I quite forgot to put it up this morning. I send it you now with the songs and choruses from "Maria Stuart." I think you will like to have them; you have often mentioned them.

'Your wife just writes to me, quite delighted with your letter. She is going to send you some beautiful music-paper. I was certainly quick, but not so particular. Only women do everything quickly and well at the same time.

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* Fräulein Bertha Bölling, a young lady who was resident for some years in the Schumanns' house as domestic help to Frau Schumann, to whom she was greatly attached, and in whose confidence she stood high. During the first few days of Schumann's illness, before his removal to Endenich, she was allowed by the doctors to go in and out of the sick-room, and her presence had a tranquillizing effect on the patient.

'With warmest greetings, Your

'JOHANNES BRAHMS.

'DÜSSELDORF, *March*, 1855.'

Of the F sharp minor Sonata, Op. 2, Schumann answers:

'Your second sonata, my dear, has brought me much nearer to you. It was quite new to me; I live in your music, so that I can half play it at sight, one movement after the other. I am thankful for this. The beginning, the *pp*, the whole movement—there has never been one like it. Andante and the variations and the scherzo following them, quite different from those in the others; and the finale, the sostenuto, the music at the beginning of the second part, the animato and the close—in short, a laurel-wreath for the from-elsewhere-coming Johannes. And the songs, the first one; I seemed to know the second; but the third—it has (at the beginning) a melody in which there are many good girls, and the splendid close. The fourth quite original. In the fifth such beautiful music—like the poem. The sixth quite different from the others. The rushing, rustling melody-harmony pleases me.'

To Joachim, Schumann writes on March 10:

'Your letter has put me into quite a happy mood. The great gaps in your artistic cultivation, and the so-called violinist's eye and the address; nothing could have amused me more. Then I recalled the Hamlet overture, Henry overture, Lindenrauschen, Abend-glocken, Ballade—books for viola and pianoforte—the remarkable pieces which you played with Clara one evening at the hotel in Hanover;* and as I went on thinking I began this letter. . . . Johannes has sent me last year's *Signale*, to my great pleasure, for everything that has happened since February 20 was new to me. There has never been such a musical winter [1853-54] as that and the following; such travelling and flying from town to town, Frau Schroeder-Devrient, Jenny Lind, Clara, Wilhelmine Claus . . .'

Thus the months passed on. At the close of Frau Schumann's concert-season Johannes travelled with her to

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* Joachim's compositions.

Hamburg, in response to an invitation from Capellmeister Otten, a well-known musician of the city, to be present at a performance of Schumann's 'Manfred' at his subscription concert of April 21. They passed a day at Hanover on their return journey, and on May 7, Brahms' twenty-second birthday anniversary, were joined at Düsseldorf by Joachim, who had promised to make his headquarters near them this season during the period of his 'free time'—free from the fixed duties of his post in Hanover—which, according to his contract, extended till the month of October.

Brahms' birthday-presents included the manuscript of a romance for the pianoforte composed for him by Frau Schumann, and from the master the score of his overture to 'The Bride of Messina,' both with affectionate inscriptions. The following letter of thanks was the last written by him to Endenich:

'Beloved, honoured Friend,

'I must send you most heartfelt thanks for having remembered me so affectionately on May 7. How surprised and delighted I was by the beautiful present and the loving words in the book!

'The day was altogether such a delightful one as one does not often experience. Your dear wife understands how to give happiness. You, however, know this better than anyone.

'A portrait of my mother and sister surprised me. In the afternoon Joachim came, we hope for a very long time.

'I heard the overture to "The Bride of Messina" the other day in Hamburg, as you know. How much the deeply-earnest work took hold of me, and after "Manfred"! I was wishing all the time that you were there to hear and see what joy you give by your splendid works.

'I have been longing for some time past to hear especially "Manfred" or "Faust." I hope we shall hear the last, greatest, together some time.

'Only your long silence, which made us uneasy, could have kept me from sending you my thanks sooner; accept now the heartiest thanks for your dear remembrance on May 7, 1855.

'In hearty love and veneration,
'Your Johannes.'

CHAPTER VII

1855–1856

Lower Rhine Festival—Madame Jenny Lind-Goldschmidt—Edward Hanslick—Brahms as a concert-player—Retirement and study—Frau Schumann in Vienna and London—Julius Stockhausen—Schumann's death.

EXTRAORDINARY interest was lent to this year's Festival of the Lower Rhine, again held at Düsseldorf (May 27-29), by the appearance at each of its three concerts of Madame Jenny Lind-Goldschmidt. According to traditional custom, and, indeed, by the *raison d'être* of these great Whitsuntide gatherings, the programmes of the first two days each included a large work for chorus and orchestra, and on this special occasion the combined singing societies of about a dozen towns furnished over 650 voices, perfected by many weeks' previous practice, for the performance of Haydn's 'Creation' and Schumann's 'Paradise and the Peri.' That the selection of Schumann's beautiful work was due, in the first place, to a desire expressed by Madame Lind-Goldschmidt is, under the circumstances of the time, a specially interesting detail. The direction of the concerts was in the experienced hands of Ferdinand Hiller, and Concertmeister David of Leipzig had been invited to lead the splendid body of strings.

It hardly needs telling that Madame Goldschmidt's performance of the soprano solos in the two works mentioned created the usual extraordinary impression. The name 'Jenny Lind' is almost synonymous with triumph.

'The most perfect purity and certainty of intonation,' says Otto Jahn, 'the most strictly correct interpretation, the distinctness and clearness of accent, the extraordinary virtuosity in everything that belongs to vocal technique—all this would suggest a great singer, and that she unquestionably is; but her peculiar characteristic lies in something beyond such qualities. Her phenomenal power is to be traced to the genius which, without disturbing the composer's intention, makes everything she sings literally her own—the mystery of artistic reproduction in its highest perfection, which is as inexplicable as production itself, and cannot be described by ordinary expressions.'*

At the third and so-called 'artists' concert,' chiefly devoted to solos, Madame Lind was heard in trios from Mozart's 'Nozze' and Bellini's 'Beatrice di Tenda,' and in Mendelssohn's song 'Die Sterne schaun in stiller Nacht.' The stormy applause, recalls, orchestra flourishes, flowers, and poems, in which the enthusiasm of her audience found expression were duly chronicled by the critics of the day. The instrumental solos of this final programme were in the hands of Otto Goldschmidt and Concertmeister David, who performed respectively Beethoven's G major Pianoforte Concerto and a violin concerto by Julius Rietz, conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus.

The festival is remembered as one of the most brilliant on record. The immense audience brought together by the magic of one name was as remarkable for its character as its numbers.

'To give a list of the celebrities is impossible,' continues Jahn. 'Who could count them? To mention a few of the foremost: critics were there, from Chorley of London to Hanslick of Vienna; pianists, from Stephen Heller of Paris to Stein of Reval; composers, from Gouvy to Verhulst; conductors, from Franz Lachner to Franz Liszt. The music-directors were almost more numerous than the privy councillors in Berlin.'

'In Jacobi's garden,' says Hanslick,† 'a spot hallowed to me by its associations with Goethe, I met Brahms and Joachim one morning. Brahms resembled a young ideal hero of Jean Paul, with his forget-me-not eyes and his long fair hair. From him and from Clara Schumann I heard the news that Robert was completely restored, reading, writing, and composing by turns with a clear mind.'

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* 'Gesämmelte Aufsätze über Musik.'

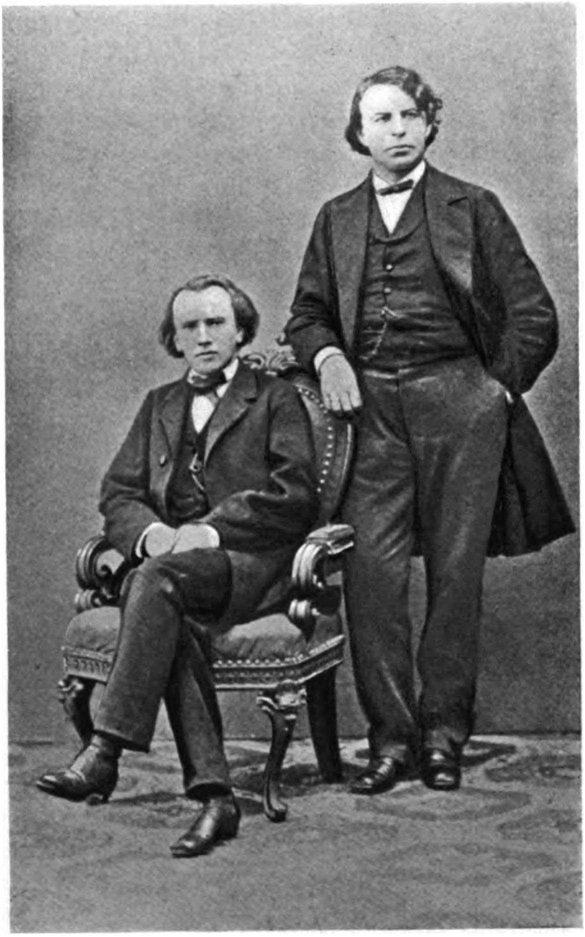
† 'Aus meinem Leben.'

This was Brahms' first meeting with the man who was to be one of his most intimate friends and appreciative critics during more than thirty years of his later career.

At a matinée given by Frau Schumann in honour of a few of the famous musicians assembled at Düsseldorf, Johannes again renewed his acquaintance with Liszt, in whom equal ennui seems to have been produced by the works of Haydn and of Schumann to which he had listened on the two first concert days, and it may be accepted as certain that the meeting did not further a rapprochement between the leader of Weimar and Schumann's ardent young friend. Our musician was introduced the same afternoon to Madame Lind-Goldschmidt, meeting her on speaking terms for the only time in his life. No especial feeling of personal interest was awakened between the two artists. Johannes' large capacity for the sentiment of particular enthusiasm was already absorbed by his devotion to Frau Schumann, and it is not surprising, on the other hand, that his lack of training in social conventionalities, which allowed him on this and other occasions to perpetuate some innocuous but decidedly pointless jokes, should have somewhat offended the taste of the fastidious lady who had had the élite of Europe and America at her feet. Madame Goldschmidt's first personal impression was strengthened by an occurrence shortly to be related, nor did she ever develop any great sympathy for Brahms' music. Special circumstances, however, placed her, in later years, in a certain association with it which has an interest of its own, and particularly to the music-lovers of England. On the occasions of the fine performances of the composer's Schicksalslied (April 29, 1878), and of his German Requiem (March 16, 1880, and April 6, 1881), given in St. James's Hall, London, by the Bach Choir under the direction of its then conductor, Otto Goldschmidt, the great songstress, long since retired from public life, was to be found amongst her husband's forces as leader of the sopranos; and the inspiration has not yet been forgotten which was lent to the choir by the co-operation of one, peculiarly fitted by her exalted temperament to appreciate, at all events, the penetrating earnestness of the master's art.

Joachim's prolonged sojourn at Düsseldorf brought with it, through the private quartet evenings which he held regularly twice a week, an important addition to his friend's musical experience. Brahms' opportunities of hearing the great examples of chamber music for strings had not been frequent, and he was, at this time, not only enabled to extend his acquaintance with this form of art by delightful means, but often had the chance of taking part in the performance of some work for pianoforte and strings included in the evening's selection. In spite of the melancholy cirsumstances that kept them at Düsseldorf—and anxiety about Schumann was again increasing—the time was a happy one to the two young men, who passed many hours of the day in each other's society. Johannes lodged in a flat above Frau Schumann's dwelling; Joachim lived close by. The mornings were devoted by each to his particular avocations, but these frequently brought them together, and they always made part of Frau Schumann's family party at her mid-day dinner during the few weeks she was able to remain at home. The afternoons and evenings were often spent in long walks and excursions. Joachim had forgotten his loneliness, and Johannes' affection for his dearest Joseph had become one of the mainsprings of his life.

The greater part of June was spent by Frau Schumann at Detmold, capital of the small principality of Lippe-Detmold, which, during the fifties and sixties, possessed a very flourishing and enterprising musical life. The reigning Prince, Leopold III., had inherited from his mother, a Princess of Schwarzburg-Sondershausen, a fine taste for music that was shared by his brothers and sisters, and



BRAHMS AND JOACHIM, 1855.

soon after his accession he established a private orchestra, consisting of thirty-three, soon augmented to forty-five members, under the conductorship of the violinist Kiel, a pupil of Spohr. A certain number of court concerts were given every year, the programmes consisting of a symphony, two overtures, and several solos, selected from the works of the best classical and modern composers. The Prince was not without interest in the New-German school, and compositions by Wagner and Berlioz were given from time to time. Now and then there was a performance of the whole or part of some large choral work.

Prince Leopold's mother, the Dowager Princess, resided with her daughters, the Princesses Luise, Friederike, and Pauline, in the old castle not far from the palace, and it had been settled that the talented Princess Friederike should enjoy the advantage of lessons from Frau Schumann during the short interval at the disposal of the artist. The arrangement proved a great success, and not only with regard to the lessons. Frau Schumann delighted a circle of sympathetic listeners by playing at several court soirées, was enthusiastically received at a public concert, and, on the eve of her departure, played one of Beethoven's pianoforte concertos at an orchestral court concert, which was made further memorable by the presence of Joachim and his performance of the same master's concerto for violin.

Soon after the return of the two artists, the little party at Düsseldorf dispersed for a time. Joachim started for a tour in the Tyrol, and Frau Schumann, accompanied by Fräulein Bertha and Johannes, went to Ems, where she had announced a concert for July 15, for which Madame Lind-Goldschmidt had, during the week of the Düsseldorf festival, proferred her services. The date decided upon was somewhat in advance of the one originally selected, and Goldschmidt had been called to Sweden meanwhile on affairs of importance. He interrupted his engagements, however, and travelled to Ems, in order to put his services at Frau Schumann's disposal by superintending the general business of the concert and acting as his wife's accompanist; and it was in this connection that a certain appearance of nonchalance in Brahms' proceedings caused a feeling of irritation in Madame Goldschmidt and himself.

The concert was to take place in a room of the Kurhaus, and, owing to the procrastination of some of the authorities, the arrangements to be made on the spot, including those for receiving and seating the large number of ticket-holders, could not be begun until within an hour or two of the time appointed for the commencement of the music. The result was hurry and confusion indescribable, and many last things had to be done even during the assembling of the audience. The brunt of the difficulties was borne by Goldschmidt, who successfully overcame them, but who was annoyed that Brahms, on his arrival with Frau Schumann and Fräulein Bertha, passed quietly to his seat amongst the audience without offering to make himself useful. Perhaps he may have thought he could help matters best by keeping out of the way. He added to his delinquency, however, by disappearing after the concert, which was, of course, a huge artistic and financial success, without even showing himself in the artists' room, and was seen no more in Ems. Starting for Braubach, he wandered about alone for a couple of days, until the winding up of the concert business left Frau Schumann at leisure, when he rejoined her at Coblenz. There is no question that on this occasion it was his invincible dislike to a fashionable crowd which overcame his judgment, but it is not to be wondered at that his real or apparent indifference was commented on by those to whom it seemed inexplicable.

Johannes passed ten happy days walking along the Rhine from Coblenz to Mainz and visiting Frankfurt and Heidelberg in the society of Frau Schumann and her companion, and, on their departure for a short stay at Baden-Baden, to be followed by a month's rest at the seaside, he returned to Düsseldorf to work hard at his pianoforte-playing. He had not been unsuccessful in obtaining pupils there, but the means he derived from his teaching were unreliable, and he had resolved to take the advice of his two best friends to try his luck again as a concert-player. He looked forward with dread to the ordeal, and shrank from the partings it would involve, but kept to his plan; and in the course of September a paragraph appeared in the *Signale* announcing his intention of making a concert-journey. He began, not at Leipzig, as he had intended, but by joining Frau Clara and Joachim in giving two concerts at Danzig on November 14 and 16, a change of plan which was of benefit both to his spirits and his pocket. A picture of him on his arrival in the town, given by Anton Door,* forms an amusing and perhaps instructive sequel to the foregoing account of the occurrences at Ems :

> 'I had hardly been a week in Danzig, when I saw great bills in the streets announcing the coming concert of Clara Schumann, Joseph Joachim, and Johannes Brahms. I at once called on Joachim, who received me with cordiality, and we chatted, as old acquaintances, of home and our experiences.
>
> 'During the whole time we were together, a slender young man with long, fair hair paced continually to and fro in the background smoking cigarettes, without troubling himself in the least about my presence, or even showing by an inclination of the head that he observed me; in a word, I was as empty air for him. This was my first meeting with Johannes Brahms.'

Door became, nevertheless, in later years, a cordial friend and admirer of the composer.

Complete equality amongst the three performers was observed in the arrangement of the programmes. Each played solos, and both pianists performed with the violinist at either concert. Brahms' contributions included Bach's Chromatic Fantasia, which remained one of the *pièces de résistance* of his répertoire throughout his pianistic career, and two manuscript pieces, Saraband and Gavotte, from amongst the 'Album-Leaves' which he had contemplated publishing in 1854.

The critical moment had now arrived when Johannes was obliged to bid farewell to his friends and go his own way. He played with success at one of the Bremen subscription concerts on November 20, contributing to the programme Beethoven's G major Concerto and Schumann's great Fantasia, Op. 17; and on the 24th, the date which he had anticipated with ever-increasing anxiety as it drew nearer, made his first appearance in Hamburg since the wonderful turn that had taken place in his fortunes in 1853, at one of G. D. Otten's annual series of orchestral subscription concerts.

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* *Die Musik*, first May number, 1903.

No doubt he was additionally weighted by nervousness—that *bête noire* of executive artists to which, from the rarity of his public appearances, Brahms was peculiarly a prey—by feeling, not only that he was on his trial before his fellow-citizens, but that there were, in the audience, loving friends prepared to triumph on his behalf. He had chosen for performance Beethoven's E flat Concerto and unaccompanied solos by Schumann and Schubert, but achieved at most a *succès d'estime.*

> 'The pianoforte part of the concerto,' said the critic of the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 'was played by Brahms with the modesty of a young artist, and was kept throughout in subordination to the whole musical effect of the symphonic concerto. In our opinion, he carried his reserve too far. He might, without detriment to the spirit of the work, have displayed rather more virtuosity. That he possesses it was shown by his playing of a canon by Schumann, and a march by Schubert for four hands, arranged by Brahms for two hands.'

It will not have escaped the reader's attention that Brahms introduced no new important composition of his own on either of the occasions now chronicled, and that no mention has been made of any fresh publication from his pen since the autumn of 1854. The reason is not far to seek. Neither the extraordinary praise bestowed on his works by Schumann, Joachim, and their circle, nor the reserve with which they had been received by many musicians whose good faith could not be doubted, nor the acrimonious attacks of a portion, and especially the Rhenish portion, of the musical press, could influence to any appreciable extent the tribunal to which he had thus early in his career accustomed himself to submit his works in the last instance—his own searching self-criticism. He had, as has been seen, carried out Schumann's wish, and had tried his hand on a symphony. The discovery that he had not sufficiently mastered some of the fundamental technical qualifications necessary for the successful fulfilment of such an attempt no doubt prevented his carrying it to a conclusion. It will be remembered, also, that he had withheld the string quartet recommended to Dr. Härtel for publication by Schumann in 1853. By the middle of 1855, he had sufficiently gauged both his strength and his weakness to have made the resolve to apply himself to a fresh course of severe study—study which should widen and strengthen and refine his capacity in every direction, but which should have as its special aim the attainment of greater facility and purity in part-writing in the strict style. From this time, for a period of five or six years, he worked on without view to immediate publication, but only with a set determination to become worthy of Schumann's high hopes. He insisted before long that Joseph should join him in his studies, though his friend's training in strict counterpoint and part-writing under Moritz Hauptmann of Leipzig had been much more thorough than his own under Marxsen; and an exchange of exercises at fixed intervals, agreed upon between the two young musicians, was kept up for some years. Joachim was inevitably much less regular than Brahms in sending his papers, and Johannes by-and-by instituted a system of fines, to be paid and spent in books in case of unpunctuality on either side. The chief burden of the new rule certainly fell upon the famous young concertmeister, whose great and increasing popularity brought innumerable concert-journeys in its train. The difference in the character of the two men is pleasantly illustrated by this episode, which shows Johannes insisting on having his own way, and Joachim, from whom no excuse was accepted, good-naturedly yielding, and wishing to do more than he could possibly fulfil. Many interesting memorials of Brahms' studies are in existence in the form of music-books, printed or in manuscript, of which he possessed himself at this period. Amongst them is an original edition of the first part of Emanuel Bach's collection of his father's setting of German chorales (1765), on the cover of which is Brahms' autograph and the date 1855, and at the end of the book is an alphabetical index in Brahms' writing.* There is also a very beautifully copied manuscript (not by Brahms) of Sebastian Bach's 'Kunst der Fuge,' containing one or two trifling pencil corrections in our musician's unmistakable hand. On the fly-leaf is written 'Joh. Brahms, Nov. 1855, Hamburg,' also in pencil, in large and bold penmanship, probably in one of the styles taught at Hoffmann's school.* There are, too, a volume containing compositions by Orlando di Lasso;† and manuscript copies of, amongst other works, Palestrina's 'Missa Papæ Marcelli,' with Brahms' autograph and the date 1856; of Rovetta's 'Salve Regina'; and, in Frau Schumann's hand, of a 'Gloria' of Palestrina.‡ Still more valuable are the manuscripts of several original Mass movements in four and six parts, presented later on by the composer to his friend Grimm,§ and these recall Dietrich's mention of an entire Mass written in canon for two voices. This list shows clearly enough the nature of Brahms' aims. He was determined to become thoroughly acquainted with the historical development of his art, to know the why and wherefore, as well as the how and when, of what he had studied in the works of succeeding masters. The fascination exercised over his mind by the clear, pure style of the great early writers, whose learning is often used with such consummate ease as to be unsuspected by the untrained hearer, is evident enough in many of the choral works published by him later on. He exercised himself in the acquisition of their technique until it had become an instrument in his hand for the production of works which, like everything else that he gave to the world, bear the impress of his own individuality.

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* In the author's possession.

† In the possession of Professor Julius Spengel.

‡ In the library of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Vienna.

§ In the possession of Fräulein Marie Grimm.

In the issue of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* of December 14 a long article on Brahms appeared, the closing one of a series of three begun in July. Until this date, since the very sympathetic notice written by 'Hoplit' after the young musician's début at the Leipzig Gewandhaus, not a word had been printed in this paper about his compositions save the bare announcements of publication, in spite of the fact that nine opus numbers had been given to the world in the interval, five of them being important instrumental works, and three consisting severally of six songs. 'Hoplit' had now come forward to take upon himself entire blame for the omission, which, he declared, must not be attributed to any indifference of the editor. Brendel had not only sent him each work as it appeared, but had urged him to write, asking repeatedly, 'Why nothing about Brahms?' His own great interest in the young composer, his desire to find himself in complete accord with Schumann's opinion, his incapability of entirely agreeing with it, had, he said, always led him to defer his criticism; and, indeed, the reluctant and hesitating tone of the articles leads to the conviction that they were written in complete good faith.

'That Brahms found many opponents on his first appearance was an unusual distinction; it showed that he possessed a very significant artistic individuality. When, however, enthusiastic friends saw in him the prophet of a new time, and especially when they proclaimed the completely developed, ripe artist, we can only regard it as an amiable excess of enthusiasm.'

'Brahms,' says the third and most interesting article, 'has sometimes been described as the most talented and pronounced of the Schumannites. So far as this is true, we regret it. . . . Schumann cannot be carried further. . . . His very important individuality quite unquestionably possesses a high value, but only in its originality. Brahms is, however, no imitator of Schumann. He displays, in the whole bent of his nature and creative activity, an inner affinity with him which is more than mere sympathy, and

> has about it nothing forced or borrowed; but he possesses an element not in Schumann which makes us believe that, if it is only given to him to attain to full development, he will find his own paths. The more he succeeds in freeing himself from the characteristic Schumann nature, the more may be looked for from his future. . . .
>
> 'Brahms is not free from Schumann's danger; he, also, has the subtle habit of mind, the tendency to the indefinite and misty, which characterize the romanticists. He shares Schumann's strong faith, moreover, in impulses of genius and inspirations of the moment, to be followed without discrimination or resistance. He sometimes introduces passages which have neither presupposition nor consequence, but which are not therefore heaven-bestowed. His work is inconsistent and defective in style. He should have been regarded as an artist not yet mature. When all is said, however, it was an unusually striking phenomenon that such a young composer should exhibit in his first works a freedom in the handling of form, a diversity of harmonic and rhythmic development, and an abundance of ideas, such as are to be found in the works only of those who are called to become one day masters. And yet who will deny that much "lies in the air" to-day which had formerly to be won by hard fighting, or to be developed entirely from within?'

Dr. Pohl's doubt evidently overcomes him again in the last sentence, and it would be quite unjust to refer his hesitation to the influence of party spirit, or to say that he had no ground for his feeling of uncertainty as to the destiny of our composer's genius. It is difficult now to realize the position of the critic who, in 1855, wished to write without bias of the Brahms of twenty-two; but the good faith of these *Neue Zeitschrift* articles is curiously confirmed by a few forcible words written in 1893 by an intimate friend of the Brahms of past sixty.

> 'Brahms' first works,' says Hanslick,* 'had interested me in a high degree—interested, however, rather than satisfied me. A young Hercules at the parting of the ways. Will he turn to the left, to the most extreme romanticism, or to the right, to the path of our classics?'

* 'Aus meinem Leben.'

That Brahms himself had become aware of the problem that faced him is conclusively shown by the future course of his development; and, with the exception of the Ballades for pianoforte, Op. 10, dedicated to Grimm, mentioned by Schumann in his letter of January, 1855, and produced by Breitkopf and Härtel early in 1856, no work of his composition succeeded the publications of 1854 until after a period of six years.

Johannes again passed Christmas with Frau Schumann, and on January 10 played Beethoven's G major Concerto and unaccompanied solos by Schumann at the Leipzig Gewandhaus concert. The impression generally created by his performance is summed up by a few words in the *Signale* which suggest that he again rather overdid his artistic self-restraint:

> 'Many artists could certainly have displayed more technical brilliancy, but few have the capacity for bringing out so convincingly the intentions of the composer, or following as Brahms does the flight of Beethoven's genius and disclosing its full splendour.'

The critic adds that the young artist, who thinks more of the work he happens to be interpreting than of self-display, has already won many friends in the art world by his compositions.

Paying a flying visit to Hanover on his way back to Hamburg, which is, just now, to be considered as his settled home, Johannes for the first time heard Rubinstein, who had come to play at one of the subscription concerts conducted by Joachim, and who shortly afterwards wrote to Liszt:

> '. . . As regards Brahms, I hardly know how to describe the impression he made on me. He is not graceful enough for the drawing-room, not fiery enough for the concert-room, not simple enough for the country, and not general enough for the town. I have but little faith in this kind of nature.'

It may be remarked here that Rubinstein never acquired a liking for Brahms' art, and that, to the end of his life, he expressed the opinion that the series of great masters had ceased with Schumann. Rubinstein obtained a powerful following, not only as pianist, but as composer, at Leipzig, and in later years his works were pitted against those of Brahms by the large and influential set of musicians and amateurs of the typical Gewandhaus circle. The generosity of Rubinstein's nature is too well established to leave room for any suspicion of his having been moved by paltry feelings of professional jealousy, and his repeated asseverations that he could find no music in Brahms' works must be accepted as genuine expressions of his sentiments.

Many celebrations took place, during the opening month of 1856, of the centenary of Mozart's birth (January 27, 1756), and Johannes, making his second appearance at Otten's concerts on the 26th, contributed the D minor Concerto to a programme selected from the great master's works. Whilst practising for the occasion at the house of Messrs. Baumgarten and Heins, he made the acquaintance of the critic and journalist E. Krause, between whom and himself a permanent friendship was established. Krause became one of the earliest and ablest supporters of his art.

But two concerts of the season remain to be mentioned—one at Kiel, given by Brahms in association with the composer Grädener, of Hamburg, and the violinist John Böie, when his solos were Beethoven's E flat Sonata, Op. 27, No. 1, and C minor Variations; the other at Altona, where he played Bach's Organ Toccata in F major, Beethoven's 'Eroica' Variations, and, with Böie and Breyther, Schumann's trio movements 'Märchen Erzählungen' and Beethoven's Sonata for pianoforte and violin, Op. 96. He passed February and March quietly with his parents, making as much money as he could by teaching. Mention may be made of a pupil in whom he was interested at this time—Fräulein Friedchen Wagner, a cousin of Otten's, and herself a pianoforte-teacher. Brahms' acquaintance with her has an association, to which we shall presently refer, with some of the works published by him in the early sixties.

Frau Schumann, who travelled without break, save for a short interval in December, during the season 1855-56, spent more than two months of the early part of the year in Vienna, where Schumann's works were as yet but little known to the general public. Appearing as the inspired missionary of her husband's art, she succeeded in arousing interest in his compositions, whilst her personal achievements as an executant excited extraordinary enthusiasm. She gave six recitals, and introduced into two of her programmes respectively Brahms' Saraband and Gavotte and the andante and scherzo from his F minor Sonata. The critic of the *Wiener Zeitung* of that date, Carl Debrois van Bruyck, speaks of them as 'pieces of special beauty, which confirm the impression of the young composer's exceptional talent' already formed by him from the study of other works, especially of a set of variations [Op. 9] and a book of songs. The successful début of Brahms' name in a concert-programme and a prominent journal of the city to which he was to belong during the second half of his life is an interesting point in his history.

It will be convenient to refer at once to a detailed review of our composer's early works contributed to his journal by van Bruyck on September 25, 1857. At this date, as the reader is aware, Brahms' publications had not increased beyond the ten numbers already mentioned, and consisted of the three sonatas, scherzo, variations, and ballades for pianoforte, the B major Trio, and the three first books of songs. The similarity of the remarks of the Vienna critic with those contained in 'Hoplit's' *Neue Zeitschrift* articles, already referred to, is the more striking since van Bruyck did not concern himself with the party conflicts of Germany. He was, however, a very great lover of Schumann's art, and if he had any bias in regard to that of Brahms, it inclined in favour of Schumann's young prophet.

He regards the variations as decidedly pre-eminent amongst the ten works. They convince him that Brahms has

> 'a genuine and entirely original talent, a finely-endowed artist nature. . . . Some of them are quite magic and

ethereal, although the finest of all recalls Schumann, perhaps intentionally; and in others, especially the last, the young composer's tendency to the vague and mystical is rather unpleasantly and dangerously apparent. Next to the variations I should place the songs, which contain tones of penetrating depth and sweetness. . . . Brahms certainly stands within the sacred circle, and has already acquired a very definite power of achievement, though it may not at present be sufficient for his purpose; and it is the duty of serious, unbiassed criticism to protect him against the derision which the more highly gifted men have never escaped, especially when their endowment has been peculiarly individual. As we have said, Brahms' natural power seems to be lofty beyond all question, and the danger and doubt as regards his development lies, we think, in his partly instinctive, partly conscious striving after over-refinement; in his excessive bent to the dæmoniacal, the fantastic. Should he succeed in restraining this inclination, we may await with confidence many riper, more perfect fruits whether in the nearer or farther future.'

The derision from which van Bruyck desired to protect Johannes emanated chiefly or entirely at this period from the Rhenish press. As it consisted chiefly of the vulgar commonplaces of the journalist—familiar at all times and in all countries—who has neither knowledge of his subject nor instinct to avoid displaying his ignorance, no example will be given of it in these pages.

Whilst Frau Schumann was achieving a series of unbroken successes in Vienna, her private anxieties pressed upon her with ever-increasing severity. The apparent improvement in Schumann's health had been but transitory. He had steadily lost ground since the spring of 1855, and before the winter had well come to an end the physicians were unable to conceal from themselves that his case was hopeless. The afflicted wife was sustained for the fulfilment of her duties by the best accounts that the situation admitted of, but she was obliged, on her return from Vienna, to relinquish all immediate hope of an interview with her husband, whom she had not seen since the hour before the catastrophe of 1854. Nor could she allow herself the solace of remaining near him. She was now sole bread-winner for the family, and a group of young children depended on her exertions. She had entered into engagements for the London season, and, after a very short interval of rest, started on April 7 for England.

For Brahms, bound as he was by the closest ties of affection and gratitude to Schumann and his family, it was impossible, under the melancholy trend of events, to remain quietly at his studies in Hamburg. There was some idea of removing the patient from Endenich; at all events, it would be a satisfaction to obtain the opinion of fresh experts on brain disease; and Johannes undertook to make personal inquiries of certain eminent doctors, and to send his report as soon as possible to England. On April 15 Frau Schumann wrote from London to Dietrich, who had in the summer been appointed Wasielewsky's successor as music-director at Bonn:

'DEAR HERR DIETRICH,

'I enclose a long letter from Gisela von Arnim. Will you give it to Johannes on his return? I must again thank you and Professor Jahn very fervently for the sympathy which you show Johannes in his undertaking; it is a comfort to me that he does not stand alone, it would be too hard for him. Of myself I have little satisfactory to relate. In spirit I am always in Germany. I played yesterday at the Philharmonic with a bleeding heart. I had a letter from Johannes in the morning, in which I read hopelessness between the lines as regards my beloved husband, although he had tried in all affection to tell me everything as gently as possible. Whence the power to play came to me I do not know; I could do nothing at home, and yet in the evening things went.

'Think sometimes kindly of your
'CLARA SCHUMANN.

'I really think the enclosed letter is worth consideration. Johannes will certainly show it to you and Professor Jahn. I have just heard something about cold-water treatment for brain disease, which makes me very anxious to try it for my husband. Please tell Johannes I will write about it to-morrow.'

All was in vain, however. Schumann was already in an advanced stage of the disease which, technically described under different learned names, according to its many varieties, is known to the layman as softening of the brain. Anyone who has watched the powers of friend or acquaintance gradually succumbing to this most cruel of all maladies is familiar with the general course of the symptoms. Minute particulars need not be described. Enough that Johannes, permitted to see Schumann again after an interval of more than a year, had been unutterably shocked, and had felt that the time had arrived when it was his duty to prepare Frau Schumann for the worst. As gently as possible he allowed her, as she expresses it, to read between the lines that no change of treatment could alter the inevitable. All the doctors were agreed in opinion; none, therefore, was attempted.

The concert so pathetically referred to in the letter quoted above was the Philharmonic concert at the Hanover Square Rooms of April 14, the occasion of Frau Schumann's first appearance in England. Could any incident of fiction be more heart-rending in its pathos than this occurrence of real life—this picture of the sensitive, highly-strung woman, whose nerves were habitually in a state of strained tension, obliged to force herself, for the sake of her children's existence, to step for the first time on to a London concert platform, a sea of unknown faces before her, her kith and kin far away, a few hours after she had accepted the certainty of her passionately loved husband's tragic doom? No wonder she could 'do nothing' before the concert. Those who knew her best can understand how it was that, after all, 'things went.' Her début in England was made with Beethoven's E flat Concerto and Mendelssohn's Variations Sérieuses, and things went with such brilliant success that she was re-engaged for the next Philharmonic concert.

Through the remainder of April, through May, June, and part of July, did this great artist work incessantly, going in desolation of spirit from triumph to triumph; and some of Schumann's shorter compositions which were encored by the public became something more than tolerated, even by the conservative press, for the sake of her perfect playing of them. Her numerous concert-journeys through the British Islands extended as far as Dublin. Amongst the most important of her London appearances were those at the Musical Union (John Ella's) concerts and at her own three recitals. At the second of these, which took place on June 17, she imitated her own precedent at Vienna, and introduced Brahms' name for the first time to an English public. The entire selection belongs so peculiarly to the events and period occupying our attention that it may interest the reader to have the complete programme :

Variations (Eroica) - - - - -	*Beethoven.*
Two Diversions, Op. 17, from Suite de Pièces, Op. 24, No. 1 - - -	*Sterndale Bennett.*
Variations on a theme from the 'Bunten Blättern' - - - - - -	*Clara Schumann.*
(*a*) Saraband and Gavotte in the style of Bach - - - - - - -	*Johannes Brahms.*
(*b*) Clavierstück in A major - -	*Scarlatti.*
'Carnaval' - - - - - - -	*Schumann.*

The Brahms Gavotte was enthusiastically applauded, but Frau Schumann, having regard to the performance of the 'Carnaval' still before her, refused the encore. At the close of the recital, however, she returned to the piano in response to continued demonstrations, and repeated the composition. Her performances were given on a pianoforte by Erard, whose instruments were preferred at that date by all the great pianists of Europe. A magnificent 'grand' was presented by the house to Frau Schumann at the close of her London season, and despatched to her residence in Düsseldorf. It continued to be her favourite instrument for private use until 1867, when she reappeared in England after an absence of ten years, and used a Broadwood pianoforte. On her departure a Broadwood concert-grand was sent to her house near Baden-Baden by Messrs. John Broadwood and Sons. Some years later, when the author was intimate at Frau Schumann's residence, the Broadwood pianoforte stood in the drawing-room, the Erard in the dining-room.

On the former Frau Schumann and Brahms often played duets after afternoon coffee; on the latter Johannes—always 'Johannes' to his old friend—played one evening after supper several numbers of the third and fourth books of the Hungarian Dances, not yet published, not yet books, his eyes flashing fire the while.

Brahms gave up all idea of returning to Hamburg for the present. Duty and inclination alike prompted him to remain in Schumann's neighbourhood, and the fact of Dietrich's residence at Bonn gave him additional satisfaction in resolving to pass the summer on the Rhine. It was at this time that he made the personal acquaintance of the poet Claus Groth, who was staying at Bonn to be near Otto Jahn; and the musical festival of the year (May 11-13) marked the beginning of his intimacy with the great singer Julius Stockhausen, who, making his first appearance on the Rhine, was heard in the part of Elijah in Mendelssohn's oratorio, in 'Alexander's Feast,' in an aria by Boieldieu, and in songs by Schubert, Mendelssohn, and Schumann.

Stockhausen had been a pupil of Manuel Garcia in Paris and London, and was well known to the musical public and the private artistic circles of both cities before he became a celebrity in Austria and Germany.

> 'His delivery of opera and oratorio music,' says Sir George Grove*—'his favourite pieces from "Euryanthe," "Jean de Paris," "Le Chaperon Rouge," and "Le Philtre"; or the part of Elijah, or certain special airs of Bach—was superb in taste, feeling, and execution; but it was the Lieder of Schubert and Schumann that most peculiarly suited him, and these he delivered in a truly remarkable way. The rich beauty of the voice, the nobility of the style, the perfect phrasing, the intimate sympathy, not least, the intelligible way in which the words were given—in itself one of his greatest claims to distinction—all combined to make his singing of songs a wonderful event. Those who have heard him sing Schubert's "Nachtstück," "Wanderer," "Memnon," or the "Harper's Songs," or Schumann's "Frühlingsnacht" or "Fluthenreicher Ebro," or the "Löwenbraut," will corroborate all that has been said. But perhaps his highest achievement

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* Grove's 'Dictionary of Music and Musicians.'

was the part of Dr. Marianus in the third part of Schumann's "Faust," in which his delivery of the "Drei Himmelskönigin" ("Hier ist die Aussicht frei"), with just as much of acting as the concert-room will admit, and no more, was one of the most touching and remarkable things ever witnessed.'

Cordial relations were so quickly established between Stockhausen and Brahms that before the close of the month they had given two concerts together—one on the 27th, in the 'yellow room of the casino' at Cologne; the other on the 29th, in the hall of the Lesegesellschaft at Bonn. Stockhausen's performances, accompanied in each instance by Brahms, created a furore on both occasions. Brahms' solos—consisting on the 27th of Bach's Chromatic Fantasia and Beethoven's C minor Variations, and on the 29th of Beethoven's E flat Variations, Clara Schumann's Romance, a Schubert Impromptu, and the great Bach Fugue in A minor, to be found in vol. iii. of the Leipzig Society's edition—were coldly received. This is not to be wondered at. During the half-century which has elapsed since these concerts took place musical taste has passed through more than one revolution; it is, however, questionable whether at any time within the interval a pianist, of whatever qualifications, not already accepted into the prime affections of the public, could have successfully courted its favour beside the attraction of a really great singer in full possession of his powers, whose selections included a number of the most fascinating lyrics of Schubert, Mendelssohn, and Schumann. One of the Cologne critics, at all events, was satisfied with the pianist. It is rather surprising to read, in the *Niederrheinische Musik Zeitung*, that Herr Johannes Brahms played his two solos on the 27th 'with such purity, clearness, musical ripeness, and artistic repose, that his performances gave true pleasure.'

Brahms' temperament was not really suited, however, to the career of a virtuoso, nor had the obscure circumstances of his youth fitted him for it. He generally felt too nervously self-conscious when before the public to have a chance of gaining its entire confidence, and was too dependent on his mood to be able to throw himself at all times completely out upon his audience and compel their sympathy. The achievement of striking and lasting success as a performer involves a concentration of the best energies of body and mind upon this career, whilst the attainment of real greatness as a composer means the devotion of a life to the end. No illustration of these truths could be more apt than the contrasted careers of Brahms and Joachim. Whatever Joachim's natural creative faculty may have been, his boundless success as an interpreter was fatal to its development. The divergence of the paths pursued by the two friends resulted not altogether, or perhaps chiefly, from variety of musical endowment, but largely from the radical differences in their characters and circumstances. From early childhood Joachim has never appeared on a platform without exciting, not only the admiration, but the personal love of his audience. His successes have been their delight. They have rejoiced to see him, to applaud him, recall him, shout at him. The scenes familiar to the memory of three generations of London concert-goers have been samples of the everyday incidents of his life in all countries and towns where he has appeared. Why? It is impossible altogether to explain such phenomena, even by the word 'genius.' Joachim followed his destiny. His career is unparalleled in the history of musical executive art. It began when he was eight; it is not closed now that he is seventy-four. All possibility of his achieving greatness as a composer—notwithstanding that he has produced one or two great works—was excluded by the time he had reached the age of fourteen.

The mistress of Brahms' absorbing passion, on the other hand, was from first to last his creative art, to which all else remained secondary. He never swerved by a hair's-breadth from his devotion, but accepted poverty, disappointment, loneliness, and failure in the eyes of the world, with all the strong faith that was in him, for the sake of this, his true love. He was never drawn by inclination to his virtuoso career, to which he submitted only as a necessity, discarding it as soon as circumstances allowed. He was seldom able to disclose the infinite possibilities of his playing under circumstances in which he was not at ease ; and though he possessed a great technique which he could easily have developed into something phenomenal, and which, as it was, enabled him to excite an audience now and again by sounding and dramatic performances of Bach's organ compositions and other imposing works, yet the more distinctive beauties of his style were too subtle for the appreciation of a mixed body of listeners. His imagination of effects of tone was, to quote Schumann's article, quite original, and this was even more strikingly displayed in later years, when he conducted one or other of his orchestral works. His playing even of such a trifle as Gluck's Gavotte in A, arranged for Frau Schumann in 1871, which the author more than once heard, was full of unsought graces that were the immediate reflection of his delicate spirit. His performance of this little piece, and his conception of many works of the great masters, together with his whole style of playing, differed *in toto* from Frau Schumann's. The two artists admired each other's qualities. Frau Schumann courted Brahms' criticisms, and has, on some occasions, quoted to the author his sayings as to the reading of certain of Beethoven's sonatas, declaring she felt them to be right. Nevertheless, her temperament would never have allowed her to carry out these suggestions in actual public performance, and she was better fitted by temperament than Brahms for the interpretation, to the large public, of the masterpieces of musical art.

The author has been carried by this digression, which is the result of her personal intercourse with these great musicians, to a date many years later than that reached by the narrative. Its insertion here may, however, be of advantage to the reader by preparing him to expect that Brahms' career as a pianist, though not without success, was attended by few brilliant triumphs.

On June 8, the forty-sixth anniversary of Schumann's birthday, Johannes again went to Endenich, accompanied on the walk from Bonn by Jahn, Dietrich, Groth, and Hermann Deiters, another notable acquaintance of this summer. He looked very serious on rejoining his companions, though he said that Schumann had recognised and seemed pleased to see him. The end was, indeed, not far off. The mists that had so long been gathering around the lofty spirit of the master continued to close him into ever-increasing darkness. Bad news attended Frau Schumann's return from England towards the middle of July, and on the 23rd of the month she was summoned by a telegraphic despatch to Endenich. Even now the longed-for interview had to be deferred. Fresh symptoms appeared before her arrival, and she was obliged to return to Düsseldorf to live through three more days of agonizing suspense. She returned to Bonn on the evening of the 26th, there to await the end, and at length, on Sunday morning, July 27th, passed with Johannes into the solemn chamber of death. Schumann was lying quietly with closed eyes as she entered, but opened them presently on the figure kneeling at his bedside, and it became evident after a few moments that he knew his wife. His power of speech was almost gone, but a look of recognition passed over his countenance. He received with satisfaction a few drops of wine with which she tenderly moistened his lips, and suddenly, with a last accession of strength, was able to place one of his arms round her. Those faint looks of love, that last embrace, dwelt in Frau Schumann's memory as an ever-present solace through the forty years of her widowhood, and, in spite of her many sorrows, the radiance was never dimmed that had been shed over her spirit once and for all by the enchantment of an early ideal happiness.

Schumann lingered yet a day or two, growing weaker hour by hour as his wife and his young friend watched at his side. He passed quietly away at four o'clock on Tuesday afternoon, July 29 ; and Frau Schumann, returning from a short interval of repose at her hotel, accompanied by Brahms and Joachim, who had taken immediate train to Bonn on receiving a hopeless report, learned that her husband's sufferings were over for ever.

Two days more, and on Thursday, July 31, in the stillness of a balmy summer evening, the mortal remains of the master were laid to rest in the cemetery of Bonn. The funeral was arranged with touching simplicity. A pleasant spot had been chosen by the city, some plantain-trees planted by the grave. The coffin, borne from Endenich by the choristers of the Concordia, was immediately followed by the three chief mourners—Brahms, who carried a laurel wreath, Joachim, and Dietrich. Next came the clergyman, Pastor Wiesemann, and the Mayor of Bonn, and at an appointed spot in the city a long string of friends and musicians joined the procession, which passed on foot through the streets accompanied by a band of brass instruments playing one and another of the most solemnly beautiful of the old German chorales. At the graveside Brahms stepped forward and placed the wife's wreath upon the coffin, bare of other floral decorations. A short address was delivered by Pastor Wiesemann, then came a sacred part-song by the choristers, a chorale, a few simple words spoken by Ferdinand Hiller, the last farewell of friends throwing earth upon the coffin, and all was over.*

On the anguish of the widow looking out despairingly to the future of her lonely life, who yet might not despair because of the little ones clinging to her side, on the steadfast loyalty of the affectionate friends in whose sympathy she had found, and continued to find, support, it is unnecessary to dwell; they are matter of history. Rather let the chapter be closed in silent remembrance of the departed master and of the group of his loved ones who lamented together in the sacred presence of an irreparable grief.

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* Chiefly taken from the account written at the time for the *Neue Zeitschrift*, by Ferdinand Hiller.

CHAPTER VIII

1856–1858

Joachim and Brahms in Düsseldorf—Grimm in Göttingen—Brahms' visit to Detmold — Carl von Meysenbug — Court Concertmeister Bargheer — Joachim and Liszt — Brahms' return to Detmold — Summer at Göttingen — Pianoforte Concerto in D minor and Orchestral Serenade in D major tried privately in Hanover.

Frau Schumann returned to Düsseldorf the day after the funeral, accompanied by Brahms and Joachim. There were certain things to be done, the performance of which she desired to entrust to the two young musicians who had been so near the master's heart. Together they set in order the papers left by the deceased composer, wrote necessary letters, and made plans for the immediate future. Joachim writes on August 2 to Liszt:

> 'Frau Schumann returned here yesterday; the presence of her children and of Brahms, whom Schumann loved like a son, comforts the noble lady, who appears to me, in her deep grief, a lofty example of God-given strength. I shall remain here for some days.'

Johannes had taken over some lessons which Frau Schumann had arranged to give, on her return from England, to Fräulein von Meysenbug, daughter of the late Minister and sister of the then Hofmarschall at the Court of Lippe-Detmold, and by so doing had added four people to the list of his friends: his pupil, her mother and sister—all settled for a few weeks in Düsseldorf—and her young nephew Carl, who came from Detmold to visit his relations.

'On the occasion of one of the lessons,' says Freiherr von Meysenbug,* 'I first saw and heard the almost boyish-looking, shy, and socially awkward young artist, who played to us Schubert's "Moment Musical" in F minor. His rendering of the piece made an indelible impression on me.'

The boy's admiration led later on to a fast alliance between Brahms and Carl. The ladies, on their part, became enthusiastic in their admiration of the young musician, and on the termination of the lessons, which could not long be continued on account of the sad circumstances of the moment, they invited him to stay with them in the spring at Detmold, with a view to his appearance at Court.

It was felt that the all-important necessaries for Frau Schumann were rest and good air. Since the crisis of her husband's malady in February, 1854, followed after a few months by the birth of her youngest son, she had enjoyed but little repose, and since the autumn of 1855 practically none. During November and December of that year she travelled, as we have seen, in Germany, giving concerts with Joachim in Leipzig, Berlin, Danzig, Berlin again, Rostock, and many other towns. At home for Christmas, she gave her first concert in Vienna on January 7, which was followed by five others, the last taking place on March 3. Travelling meanwhile, she combined her engagements in the Austrian capital with performances at Prague and other cities. Returning early in March by way of Leipzig, she was at home about a fortnight, and on April 7 started for England, to remain until the second week of July. We have seen to what she returned, and may well understand that she seemed to Joachim and Brahms 'an example of God-given strength.' It was now decided that she should go to Switzerland, and that Johannes' sister, whom she knew and liked, should accompany her. Elise Brahms was not artistic, and had little education. She had suffered all her life from bad headaches, and the constitutional tendency had been aggravated by her employment of plain sewing, carried on at home or in the houses of her clients. She was not pretty, her single personal attraction being an abundance of light-brown hair which grew to a great length, but she was simple, unselfish, and kind; she was the sister of Johannes; and Frau Schumann hoped that a respite from her confined life, in fine air and scenery, might do her good. The whole party—Frau Schumann with some of her children, Elise, and Johannes—set off together as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made, accompanied on the first part of their journey by Joachim, and proceeded by short stages to Gersau, on the Lake of Lucerne, where they settled down for several weeks. The time was spent in quiet walks and excursions, with some amount of music and a few meetings with close friends, and the return was made in the same leisurely way, with ten days' stay at Heidelberg. The holiday had its effect, and the beginning of October found the three musicians prepared to take up the ordinary duties of life. Frau Schumann began to practise for her concert-season, Joachim was at his post at Hanover, and Johannes about to return to his home in Hamburg, to apply himself to the occupations which had been interrupted by the events of the past six months. He appeared at Otten's concert of the 25th of the month with Beethoven's G major Concerto, and this time with immense success. 'The concerto was played with such fire and élan as to excite enthusiastic demonstration.' Some special outward circumstance or inner mood probably stirred him on this occasion. His performance was so powerful that it is still vividly remembered, with its effect upon the audience. His appearance on November 22 at a Philharmonic concert chiefly devoted to Schumann's works awakened no enthusiasm. He played the master's Pianoforte Concerto, and the indifference with which his performance was received was the more marked by contrast with the stormy applause that followed Joachim's playing of Schumann's Violin Fantasia and of Bach's Chaconne.

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* 'Aus Johannes Brahms' Jugendtagen,' by Carl, Freiherr von Meysenbug (*Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, April 3 and 4, 1902).

It was, however, a joy to Brahms to have his friend with him for a day or two. Kalbeck speaks* of a quartet which he had ready to show Joachim, and which was tried in private at one or other friendly house—Grädener's or Avé Lallement's (a well-known Hamburg musician). Internal evidence points to the probability of its having been the Pianoforte Quartet in C minor, now known amongst its companion works as No. 3, or some of its movements. There is a great deal in this composition which is suggestive of Brahms' early period, and the scherzo is unmistakably founded on, though it is not identical with, the movement contributed by Johannes to the sonata of welcome written for Joachim in October, 1853, by Schumann, Dietrich, and Brahms.

The season 1856-57 was passed uneventfully by Brahms in the studies and other occupations already described, varied by occasional journeys. He may at this time be said to have had three if not four homes, in addition to that of his parents at Hamburg. In Düsseldorf, Hanover, Göttingen, and Bonn he was alike welcome. Grimm had married in the spring of 1856, choosing for his wife Fräulein Philippine Ritmüller, daughter of the head of the Göttingen pianoforte firm of that name. There was a large room in Ritmüller's establishment available for private performances, and in it the idea originated which has enriched the world with Brahms' first pianoforte concerto.

One day after a performance of the symphony movements of 1854 for which Grimm cherished an enthusiastic affection, in their arrangement for two pianofortes, the young musician again urged upon the composer his frequently expressed opinion of the inadequacy of this form for the expression of the great ideas of the work. Johannes, however, had quite convinced himself that he was not yet ripe for the writing of a symphony, and it occurred to Grimm that they might be rearranged as a pianoforte concerto. This proposal was entertained by Brahms, who accepted the first and second movements as suitable in essentials for this form. The changes of structure involved in the plan, however, proved far from easy of successful accomplishment, and occupied much of the composer's time during two years. The movements were repeatedly sent to Hanover for Joachim's inspection, and returned with his suggestions ; for his time, sympathy, musicianship, and knowledge of the orchestra, were placed, with unfailing generosity, at Brahms' disposal during all the years of ripening experience that led up to the composer's maturity. The immediate fortunes of the work after it was at length completed will be related in due course.

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* 'Johannes Brahms,' p. 297.

The invitation of the von Meysenbugs having been duly renewed and accepted, the young musician paid a short visit to Detmold at Whitsuntide. Arriving at the little town one pleasant afternoon, the last stage of his journey having been made by post, he was met by his pupil and her nephew Carl, and brought by them to Frau von Meysenbug's house. The article of the Vienna *Neues Tagblatt* already referred to, by Freiherr von Meysenbug, the 'Carl,' or 'Charles,' as he was generally called, of 1857, gives a pleasant account of the visit :

> 'I can still see the young fellow standing in silent embarrassment in the old Excellency's drawing-room, not quite knowing how to begin a conversation with the ladies, who were still practically strangers to him. Just then—it was about four o'clock—a princely carriage drove through the quiet street, in which were seated the three sisters of the reigning Prince on their way to dine with their brother at the palace. The ladies were accustomed to look up, as they passed, to the windows of my relations, and my aunt, seeing the carriage coming, said, "I will just nod to the Princess (Friederike) that Herr Brahms is come." Upon this Brahms broke silence with the words, "Do they live close by, then, like everyone else ?" evidently thinking that the sign was to be given to an opposite window. This set the conversation going till I showed Brahms his room.'

The same evening Charles reappeared with his parents and Concertmeister Bargheer, of the Detmold court orchestra, a fine player, pupil of Spohr and Joachim, and already an acquaintance of Brahms. The Hofmarschall wished to hear the new-comer as a preliminary to his appearance at Court, and listened to most convincing performances of a thundering prelude and fugue of Bach and of Beethoven's C sharp minor Sonata, Op. 27. An orchestral court concert was immediately arranged, at which Johannes played his favourite Beethoven Concerto in G major and took part in a performance of Schubert's 'Forellen' Quintet with Concertmeister Bargheer, viola-player Schulze, violoncellist Julius Schmidt, all soloists of the court orchestra, and a bassist, member of the same body. His success was unequivocal, and he appeared with Bargheer at an assembly of musicians and their friends held after the concert at the chief confectioner's, in rollicking boyish spirits. Capellmeister Kiel, on the other hand, who looked rather askance at a probable future favourite at Court, assumed airs of even unusual importance. He was at present, he said, setting one of the Psalms as a chorus; he often composed Biblical texts, but was sometimes puzzled by the Scriptural expressions. For instance, 'To the chief musician on the Gittith.' 'Pray, can you inform me what a Gittith was?' solemnly to the young hero of the evening. 'Probably a pretty Jewish girl,' returned Brahms, with a serious air—an answer which procured him a suspicious look over the spectacles of the old musician, and enraptured Charles, who, supposed by his parents to be in bed, had found means of his own to join the party. The entertainment having been prolonged until dawn, the more ardent spirits of the gathering proposed a walk to a neighbouring height to see the sun rise, and Brahms and Charles strode off together, leading the way. Their enthusiasm survived that of their companions, who gradually dropped off; and overcome by weariness as they reached the beginning of the last steep climb, they turned into the garden of a restaurant hard by, where Charles dropped on to the corner seat of an arbour bench, and Brahms, stretching himself out at full length with his head on his companion's knee, immediately went soundly to sleep.

'Just as I, too, was giving way to fatigue,' continues Freiherr von Meysenbug, 'a fine brown spaniel came sniffing at Brahms' face, and he suddenly jumped up, roused by the dog's cold nose. Meanwhile the house had awakened, we drank some hastily-prepared coffee, satisfied our healthy young appetites with delicious country black bread and golden-yellow butter, and trotted back to the little town. We both presented rather a questionable appearance in the streets, which were already astir, especially so the small Brahms in dress-coat, crumpled and disarranged white necktie, and crush-hat on one side. Paying a passing visit to the faithless Bargheer, whom we disturbed in his morning slumbers, we next set out for my grandmother's dwelling. There—oh, horror!—we suddenly came upon my aunt setting out for her morning walk. A distant look of righteous indignation travelled up and down the two night-enthusiasts, for Brahms' attire betrayed but too clearly that he had not been back since the previous evening. A stormy atmosphere prevailed during the day in the house of the hospitable ladies, who were not only unused to visits from men, but could never have imagined that the ideal artist would commit himself to such extravagances. I was severely censured by grandmother and aunts as the hare-brained youth who had led the honoured guest astray. Brahms left the next day, not having been very warmly pressed to prolong his visit! He had, however, given such satisfaction in high quarters that his return in the autumn for a long stay in Detmold was definitely arranged. He was to give lessons to the Princess, play at Court, and conduct an amateur choral society, which, by invitation of the Prince, held its weekly meetings at the castle, and to which His Serene Highness, together with his brothers and sisters, belonged as regular members.'

Brahms, who could now look forward to the autumn without anxiety as to his finances, and who appreciated in anticipation the advantages he would derive as a composer from his position as conductor of a choral society and from constant association with a standing orchestra, met Frau Schumann on her return from England, where she had again passed the London season, in happy mood. Any regret he may have felt at resigning his freedom of action for a few months by a binding engagement was mitigated by the fact that his association with Düsseldorf must in any case shortly be severed. Frau Schumann had made up her mind that she would best serve her own happiness and the interests of her family by settling near her mother in Berlin, and was to take up her residence there in September, in readiness for the concert season and for the more advantageous opportunity of working as a teacher in the Prussian capital, by which she hoped to supplement her income. Born September 13, 1819, the great pianist, now not quite thirty-eight, was in the zenith of her powers, and, with the probability of a long career before her, it is not surprising that she should have resolved to begin a new chapter of life away from the town that was chiefly associated in her mind with painful recollections. A short summer vacation was passed by her on the Rhine in the more or less constant society of Brahms, Joachim, and Grimm, and a memorial of a few specially pleasant days spent at St. Goarshausen is in existence in the shape of a copy, in her handwriting, of Brahms' Variations, Op. 21, No. 2. On the outside page is written:

> 'Ungarische Variationen von Johannes. Herrn Julius Otto Grimm, zur Erinnerung an die Tage in St. Goarshausen. August, 1857. Clara Schumann.'*

It was at this moment that Joachim resolved on a step which contributed not a little to inflame the party feeling animating the younger disciples of the New-German school. That they had felt increasingly aggrieved by the position taken up by him since the crisis of Schumann's illness, by his thoroughgoing association of his name and influence with the art of the master and his wife, by his intimacy with Brahms, and by his passive attitude towards Liszt's Symphonic Poems, may be read in letters of the period. Bülow, whose correspondence up to the middle of 1854 contains repeated affectionate references to Joachim, to whom he was immensely attached, wrote to Liszt in reference to the numerous concert journeys of 1855 undertaken with Frau Schumann:

> 'Joachim and the statue of which he is making himself the pedestal are not coming here till the beginning of next month. I am afraid we shall have difficulty in recognising

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* In the possession of Fräulein Marie Grimm.

each other, for we are at work in completely opposite directions.'

Perhaps their secret conviction of Joachim's artistic sincerity added to the disappointment of the Weimarites, which undoubtedly increased during the two following years, though his dislike of the Symphonic Poems was only to be guessed by his silence about them. On the publication of the works in 1857, however, with a somewhat pretentious preface, the embarrassment he felt from the consciousness that he would be unable to live up to the desires of his quondam associates, stimulated beyond a doubt by the sympathy of Johannes, who fully shared his sentiments, induced him to pen a letter to Liszt in which he made full confession of his apostasy. The intense pain which the writing of it caused him, attached as he was to everything about Liszt excepting his compositions, may be read in every line of the epistle, which is dated August 27, 1857.

'. . . But of what use would it be if I were to delay any longer saying plainly what I feel? My passivity towards your works could not but reveal it to you, who are accustomed to be treated with enthusiasm, and who regard me as capable of true, active friendship. I will not, therefore, longer conceal what, as I confess, your manly soul had the right to demand of me sooner. I am entirely without sensibility for your music; it contradicts everything upon which my powers have been nourished since early youth from the spirits of our great ones. If it were conceivable that I could ever be robbed, that I must renounce what I have learned to love and reverence in their works, what I feel as music, your tones would be no help to me in the vast, annihilating desert. How, then, could I associate myself with the object of those who, under the banner of your name and in the belief (I speak of the conscientious among them) that they are bound to make themselves responsible for contemporary justice towards artistic achievement, make it the aim of life to spread the acceptance of your works by every means at their command? . . .'

These lines were written when Joachim was twenty-six. That they were wrung from him by the strength of his artistic convictions is clear, and it is certain that they were entirely characteristic of the writer at the time. It is probable that Brahms, if he had been called upon to compose the letter, would have expressed himself differently; but then, he would not, under similar circumstances, have felt the same amount of pain. An element in his great influence over his friends, and one which he encouraged through life by deliberate training, was to accept the inevitable with philosophy, and to look on the bright side of things; and his natural elasticity of temperament would have enabled him, had circumstances demanded of him the sacrifice of a friendship, to yield it with little outward flinching. It is difficult for the present generation, for whom the artistic party questions of half a century ago have little beyond historic interest, to judge of the position of those for whom they were a burning personal topic; but it is certain that Joachim's letter to Liszt added fuel to a fire which raged violently through the next succeeding years, and which occasioned the issue of a mass of controversial pamphlets and articles almost unreadable at the present day.

Liszt himself accepted the young musician's confession with generous dignity, and never allowed a disrespectful word to be uttered about Joachim in his presence. His first and only reply to the letter of 1857 was not made until nearly thirty years later. Joachim, arriving one year early in the eighties at Budapest to perform his great Variations for violin and orchestra, called on Liszt, who happened to be staying in the same hotel with himself. The two artists had not met for many years, and the pleasure felt by each at the accidental rencontre reminded them of the tie of affection that had formerly united them. It turned out that Liszt had already made himself acquainted with the variations, and he proposed now to attend the rehearsal in order to hear the composer's performance of them, saying: 'As you do not like my music, dear Joachim, I feel that I must admire yours in double measure.'

By the end of September Brahms found himself once more in Detmold. The terms of his engagement, which extended through the three last months of the year, included free rooms and living, and he was lodged in the hotel Stadt Frankfurt, a comfortable inn, since enlarged and modernized, exactly opposite the castle enclosure—close, therefore, to the scene of his duties. The difficulty of procuring a piano in the little town was got over by the loan of an old 'grand' belonging to the Frau Hofmarschall that had been superseded in her drawing-room by one of later construction; and Brahms, relieved at having succeeded in obtaining something that had at least been good in its day, rewarded Charles for his suggestion that the instrument should be sent to the Stadt Frankfurt by promising him right of entrance to all practices and performances that he might hold in his room with Bargheer, Schmidt, and others.

The daily life of our musician during the next three months was one very much after his own heart. His mornings were sacred to work. Bargheer joined him at the Stadt Frankfurt for early dinner, and the afternoons were generally passed in exercise in the crisp autumn air of the Teutoberger forest. There were games with Carl and his younger brother Hermann; trials of strength with Bargheer, in which Brahms was invariably defeated; Sunday excursions with Bargheer, Carl, and others, which occupied the whole day and included an al-fresco luncheon carried from Detmold, to which Brahms was proud to be able sometimes to contribute an excellent bottle of Malvoisier. This he procured by dispensing with the half-bottle of ordinary wine daily provided with his dinner until he had covered the cost of the superior vintage to be shared with his friends. 'He was as happy as a king at these times, he loved beautiful nature so much,' says Julius Schmidt, who was occasionally one of the party.

His post as conductor of the choral society was at first particularly welcome, not only as giving him experience in a branch of musical activity which he had not practised since he stood, a boy of fifteen, at the head of his little society of teachers at Winsen, but as affording opportunity for the practical application and test of the studies to which he had been devoting special attention. He began his duties as conductor with the practice of short works by early and modern masters, and arranged some of his favourite folk-songs expressly for the use of the society, deriving from each rehearsal fresh insight into the art of writing for voices. There were frequent informal musical soirées at Court, which provided occasion for choral performances in the intervals between the instrumental works that formed the bulk of the programmes. These were played by Brahms, Bargheer, Schulze, Schmidt, and the splendid hornist August Cordes, whose rich, mellow tone drew from Brahms enthusiastic expressions of admiration. Almost the entire répertoire of classical chamber music seems to have been gone through during this and succeeding seasons; all the duet sonatas and pianoforte trios and quartets, etc., of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and Schumann, were played in turn. Brahms' Trio was performed several times, and it gave the young musician particular pleasure to execute, not only Beethoven's Horn Sonata with Cordes, but Mozart's and Beethoven's quintets for pianoforte and wind with the soloists of the orchestra, who were one and all artists. The powers of the flutist are said to have been hardly less remarkable than those of Cordes.

The court violoncellist, Julius Schmidt, who in 1857 was a man in the early prime of life, has described to the author Brahms' appearance, on his coming to Detmold, as so delicate and refined as to be almost girlish; and this impression was strengthened by his voice, which was still of the high quality that has been frequently mentioned. Impatient of the remarks elicited by the peculiarity, he began at this time to practise a series of vocal gymnastics for the purpose of forcing his voice down, and was eventually successful in this aim.

When engaged in the performance of his duties, he was always quiet and serious, and would stand, before the commencement of a choir practice or a court concert, at the extreme end of the long room in which the functions took place, speaking to no one, perhaps looking through a piece of music or a letter. His duties in connection with the orchestral concerts were to play from time to time, and to conduct now and then. In the course of the successive autumns passed by him at Detmold, his performances included several of Mozart's and Beethoven's concertos, which were heard with especial delight; Schumann's Concerto; Mendelssohn's D minor Concerto and B minor Caprice; Moscheles' G minor Concerto; and, with Bargheer and Schmidt, Beethoven's triple Concerto. Occasionally, as time went on, the Princess Friederike played a concerto, and on the occasion of a performance of Beethoven's Choral Fantasia the Frau Hofmarschall von Meysenbug undertook the pianoforte solo, whilst Brahms acted as conductor.

The young musician soon became a favourite at Court, not only on account of his musical genius, but also because of the general culture of his mind He invariably seemed at home on a topic of real interest, and able to contribute something worth hearing to its discussion. 'Whoever wishes to play well must not only practise a great deal, but read a great many books,' was one of his favourite sayings, and the excellent public library of Detmold afforded him good opportunity for indulging his literary tastes. On the evenings that were free from duties, some of the musicians often dropped into Brahms' room to play, and the performances generally went on until late into the night.

> 'And how Brahms loved the great masters! how he played Haydn and Mozart! with what beauty of interpretation and delicate shading of tone! And then his transposing!'

He would play a new composition by one or other of his Detmold friends at sight in a transposed key without a mistake, taking it at any interval suggested, and thinking nothing of the feat. He even liked to play tricks on Court Concertmeister Bargheer, and to lead off Mozart's duet sonatas, which Prince Leopold was fond of hearing in private, in transposed keys, in which Bargheer was obliged, and luckily able, to follow.

> 'His score playing, too, was marvellous. Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, all seemed to flow naturally under his fingers, and each point to come out, as it were, of itself.

Then, he was of such a noble character, such a good, kind nature, and so loved children. . . .'

It must be added, however, that Schmidt, like most of the Detmold musicians, whilst enthusiastically admiring Brahms' gifts as an executant, regarded his compositions with scepticism. The B major Trio was by no means a favourite with himself or his colleagues—Bargheer always excepted—and he thought the 'cello part most ungratefully written for the instrument.

Enough has been said to make it evident that Brahms' sojourn at Detmold was an unmitigated success, and before his departure his re-engagement the following season had come to be regarded as a matter of course. The Christmas festival, passed by him in the midst of the Hofmarschall's family party, was as bright and happy as can be imagined. Johannes became for the evening a child of the house, entering eagerly with the boys into the mystery of the hour preceding the great presentation of Christmas gifts, and ready to laugh heartily at the practical jokes of which he and others were made victims later in the evening. A few words written in an album given to Hermann are still treasured by their owner: 'This was written in hearty friendship by your Johannes.'

Two signs, contrasted one with the other, but both prophetic of things to come, are to be noted in January newspaper issues of 1858. One, which points to the swelling bitterness of feeling with which the Weimarites contemplated the compact phalanx of friends who may conveniently be termed the Schumann party, is contained in a reference to Rubinstein as composer, penned by Bülow in the *Neue Berliner Musikzeitung* of January 27:

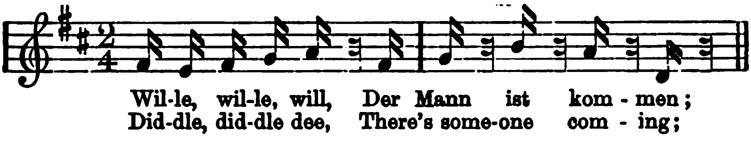
'He [Rubinstein] knows his powers; he has tested his arms, and has therefore attained to a higher stage than the brooding Brahms.'

The other is the record, in a paragraph of the *Signale*, of what was probably the début of Brahms' name in Italy. The distinguished pianist Alfred Jaell had included one of his compositions in the programmes of a lately-ended concert-tour through that country.

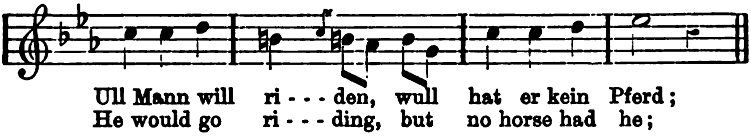
On leaving Detmold, Johannes proceeded to Hamburg, where he remained about half the year, occupied with his studies, compositions and pupils. He paid a visit to Berlin towards the end of March to compensate himself for the loss of Frau Schumann's society at Christmas, and passed much of his time with her stepbrother, the composer Woldemar Bargiel, but returned after a few weeks to his parents' house to stay till the middle of July. The family moved again this year to a more commodious dwelling at 74, Fuhlentwiethe, still in the old quarter of Hamburg, but with good-sized rooms, which were always kept in beautiful order. The parlour was comfortably though plainly furnished, and decorated with ivy after the custom of the time. It had a large open fireplace with old-fashioned hobs on either side, which occasionally served in the summer as a refuge for cake-eating child-visitors, to the preservation of Fräulein Elise's spotless floor. The room set apart for Johannes, who, now as always, was responsible for a large share of the family expenses, afforded ample space for a sleeping sofa, washing-stand, piano, writing-table, and large bookcase, on the top of which stood a bust of Beethoven. Two or three small prints from good pictures decorated the walls, one of them being a representation of Leonardo da Vinci's 'Last Supper.' There was sufficient space in the dwelling for the accommodation of one or two boarders—a means of income to which Jakob and his wife had had recourse, as we have seen, in the early part of their married life.

When Brahms quitted Hamburg in July, it was understood that his absence would be a long one. He would not, at any rate, return before the beginning of the next year, after the close of his Detmold season, and there was great uncertainty as to what his future plans might be. It was a sad time for Fräulein Friedchen Wagner, who had been his regular pupil during all the months of his stay, and at her last lesson she begged her master for some little souvenir, desiring that it should be of a serious character to correspond with her mood. She was not at home when he called to say good-bye, however, and he left Hamburg apparently without a sign. Too melancholy for some days to feel that she could open her piano, her delight was the greater when at length, resolving to go to work again, she found under the lid of the instrument a manuscript in Brahms' hand, which bore the inscription : 'To Fräulein Fr. Wagner, in kind remembrance. July, 1858.' It was the organ prelude to the chorale, 'O Traurigkeit, O Herzeleid,' which was published with a fugue, in 1881, in a supplement of a number of the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*.*

Brahms passed nearly all the remainder of the summer at Göttingen. Frau Schumann, after drinking the waters at Wiesbaden, took up her residence with some of her children in the Grimms' house ; Johannes found a lodging close by, and some memorable weeks were passed by the circle in work and play that were almost equally delightful. Grimm and his wife were inexpressibly touched by the beautiful and rare relation in which Johannes stood to Frau Schumann. 'He was to her as a careful friend, a loving and protecting son.' She was, indeed, the centre of the party, and the chief thought of all the younger musicians gathered about her. Johannes was a famous playfellow for her little ones, proposing all sorts of romping games for them, in which the elders willingly joined. As for music, they had their own share in that, too. One can imagine them cowering quiet in their hiding-places as they heard the approaching voice of the seeker :


Wil-le, wil-le, will, Der Mann ist kom - men;
Did-dle, did-dle dee, There's some-one com - ing;

the demands of the four-year-old Felix for another ride on somebody's knee, in spite of the answer :


Ull Mann will ri - - - den, wull hat er kein Pferd;
He would go ri - - - ding, but no horse had he;

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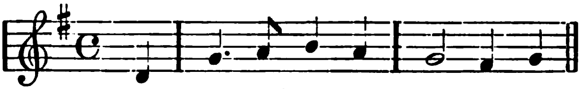
* 'Brahms in Hamburg,' by Professor Walter Hübbe.

the efforts of the small Eugénie to keep the dust out of her eyes just a little longer, though


Die Blü-me-lein sie schla-fen schon,
The flow-er-ets are sleep-ing,

These and other songs which were sung by Johannes with and to Frau Schumann's children at Göttingen this summer were published anonymously by Rieter-Biedermann at the end of the year as 'Children's Folk-songs, with added accompaniment, dedicated to the children of Robert and Clara Schumann.'

The Pianoforte Concerto in D minor was not the only large composition with which Brahms had been busy. Until a comparatively late period of his career, his method of working in some respects resembled that of Beethoven. We have seen that he was in the habit, as a boy, of putting his thoughts down as they occurred to him. Later on he was accustomed to keep several large compositions on hand at once, allowing his ideas to expand gradually ; and he sometimes had a work by him for years before completing it in its final shape. The cases of the D minor Concerto, the C minor Pianoforte Quartet, and the C minor Symphony are well-established instances in point, though Brahms took care that the process by which his works were developed should not after his death become public property, by destroying the vast majority of his sketches.* This year, besides completing the concerto, he had composed the work known as the Serenade in D for large orchestra. Not, however, in its present form. Inspired by the delight with which he had listened to the 'cassation music,' the serenades and divertimenti of Mozart, as performed by the soloists of the Detmold orchestra, he had set about writing something in the same style in the form of an octet, bearing particularly in mind the exceptional qualifications of the wind performers of Prince Leopold's band. This was completed before being shown to Joachim, whose extraordinary English successes kept him in this country from April until the autumn of the year; and it was not until the Göttingen party had broken up—Frau Schumann proceeding on a visit to Düsseldorf, and Johannes returning to his engagement at Detmold—that our composer had an opportunity of talking over his newly-finished manuscripts with his best friend.

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* The few sketches Brahms allowed to survive him are preserved in the library of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde at Vienna.

Joachim had reserved a day or two for Johannes on his way back to Hanover, where he was due on October 1, and turned up unannounced one day in the last week of September, to find that Brahms had gone for a day's walk with his companions, and would not be back till evening. He had to get through the hours as well as he could, and the pedestrians did not find him in his happiest mood on their return. The best had to be made of a bad matter, however, and there was wonderful music in Brahms' room on that and the following evening. The two friends played, amongst other things, all Bach's sonatas for clavier and violin, and, more memorable still, the first performance took place of Joachim's Hungarian Concerto. He had completed it in England, and wished to show it to Johannes, who insisted on having out the manuscript and going through it immediately, to the great satisfaction of the few listeners present. Brahms was frequently wont to express his regret that Joachim allowed so much of his time and energy to be swallowed up in concert-journeys, and particularly disapproved of his long absences in England. Regarding him as a tone-poet whose creative gifts contained possibilities of exceptional fruition, he would have liked to see his friend settle down into a life similar to his own, in which the first object should be the development of his talent as a composer. We have already referred to some of the reasons that militated against the fulfilment of this desire. Brahms was captivated by the new concerto, and his admiration of the splendid finale seems to have awakened in him the desire to use some of his favourite Hungarian melodies in a developed movement in sociable emulation of Joachim. With what result will presently appear.

Plans were now made for an immediate private rehearsal at Hanover of Brahms' new compositions. In Joachim's words to the author, 'We were naturally anxious to hear how they sounded, and I had the band at my disposal.' Frau Schumann was invited to hear the trial of the two new works, and perhaps her account of them may have been responsible for the following paragraph, which appeared in the *Signale* in the course of October :

> 'We hear that since the arrival of J. Brahms in Detmold a few weeks ago there has been an animated musical life there, of which the young artist is the centre. Brahms will remain in Detmold until the end of the year, and it is hoped that some of his new compositions may be brought to a hearing. He has completed, amongst other things, a pianoforte concerto, the great beauties of which have been reported to us.'

The same journal notices a concert given by Frau Schumann in Düsseldorf, at which she played arrangements by Brahms for two hands on the pianoforte, of a selection of Hungarian Dances, 'that called forth a veritable storm of applause.' This unanswerable statement should effectually dispose of the fable which still obtains considerable credence amongst the musical laity, that the 'Hungarian Dance' arrangements were the outcome of impressions derived during Brahms' residence in Vienna. As has been shown in an earlier chapter, he owed his first acquaintance with the melodies to the playing of Reményi.

The hope expressed in the *Signale*, that the new works might be performed at Detmold, was only partially fulfilled. As we have seen, Brahms was not seriously accepted as a composer by the musicians there—one of them only excepted—and Capellmeister Kiel regarded his compositions with peculiar jealousy and mistrust. So far as can be ascertained, the D minor Concerto was not even tried at Detmold. The result of the rehearsal at Hanover was, however, that Joachim, in spite of some official opposition, carried through his wish that it should be put down for a first performance at one of the Hanover subscription court concerts, choosing for date January 22, 1859, when Johannes would be free from duties; and that through the influence of Court Concertmeister David arrangements were made for its second performance a few days later at the Leipzig Gewandhaus concert of January 27.

As regards the serenade, Joachim formed the opinion that it should be scored for orchestra, and Johannes, following his friend's advice, presently effected the alteration. It was heard at one or more of the Detmold court concerts.

Carl von Meysenbug was not long able this season to enjoy the pleasures of the evening music at the Stadt Frankfurt, which was more than ever of an institution. He departed at the end of October to enter upon the life of a University student at Göttingen, where he soon found himself at home in the midst of the congenial musical friends of Grimm's circle. 'You will see,' Johannes said to him as they parted, 'how surprised you will be, after your admiration of the stiff court ladies here, when you become acquainted with the pretty, fresh, lively daughters of the professors.'

These words were significant. The age of twenty-five is suitable to romance, and Brahms was at this time in love. That he had passed through the earliest years of manhood without any *affaire de cœur* is to be explained by the circumstances in which he had been placed. The prosecution of a noble ambition which involved unremitting application to work occupied one half of his energies, whilst his affections had been absorbed by family ties, by a dear companionship, and by his love for two people to whom he looked up with unbounded reverence. A calmer period had succeeded the exciting course of past events, and he now had leisure to think of himself. His intercourse with the charming young people who frequented the Grimms' house, and the contemplation of his friend's great happiness in his wedded life, had awakened in him a feeling of loneliness, and he thought much of Fräulein Agathe, daughter of Professor

S—— of Göttingen, and one of Frau Philippine's most intimate friends. Agathe was handsome, cultivated, and very musical, and she sang Brahms' songs with especial sympathy, particularly when he played the accompaniments. The very confident rumour of an impending or even of an accomplished betrothal between the pair, however, proved to be a tale without an ending. Johannes seems, after a while, to have suddenly faced the fact that he was bound to take a decided course one way or the other, and no one who has grasped the key to his character and aims can feel surprised that his decision led him away from marriage. Now and afterwards he liked the society of charming girls, and perhaps thought it no harm to enjoy the pleasure of a special friendship without going beyond the consideration of the hour; but it may safely be assumed that he would not, at the outset of his career, have risked the sacrifice of his artistic aims by accepting binding responsibilities, even had his worldly prospects been much more certain than they were. He resolutely put away the visions of happiness with which he had dallied for a time, and turned cheerfully to confront the future in undivided allegiance to the Art that was to maintain supreme sway over his affections to the end of his life. That the remembrance of Agathe remained treasured somewhere in a corner of his heart as the years rolled onward will seem certain to those who have had opportunity of appreciating the tenacity of his memory for old friendships.

CHAPTER IX

1859

First public performances of the Pianoforte Concerto in Hanover, Leipzig, and Hamburg—Brahms, Joachim, and Stockhausen appear together in Hamburg—First public performance of the Serenade in D major—Ladies' Choir—Fräulein Friedchen Wagner—Compositions for women's chorus.

It is not difficult to realize something of the mingled feelings of hope and anxiety that must have filled the mind of Johannes on his arrival in Hanover in January, 1859. If the first chapter of his career had closed in triumphant fashion with the extraordinary series of events that followed his first little concert-journey, the second chapter can only be regarded as an intermezzo which was spent in quiet preparation for what was to succeed it. The prelude of his artistic life had been successfully completed in 1853; the main action was to begin with the performances in Hanover and Leipzig in the opening month of 1859. Brahms was almost extravagantly self-critical, but he must have felt encouraged when he remembered the substantial success of his début as a composer at Leipzig immediately after the appearance of Schumann's famous article, and he knew that he had now attained a much more advanced stage of capacity. Such considerations, combined with the enthusiasm of his best friends, may well have raised his hopes high.

The concerto was heard at Hanover on January 22 under the most favourable conditions. Joachim conducted the orchestra, Johannes played the solo, and it would be hard to say which of the two young musicians was the more interested in the occasion, but the result of the performance was that the public was wearied and the musicians puzzled.

'The work had no great success with the public,' reported the Hanover correspondent of the *Signale* ten days later, 'but'—and we seem to read the promptings of a Joachim in the following words—'it aroused the decided respect and sympathy of the best musicians for the gifted artist.'

'The work, with all its serious striving, its rejection of triviality, its skilled instrumentation, seemed difficult to understand, even dry, and in parts eminently fatiguing,' said another critic;* 'nevertheless Brahms gave the impression of being a really sterling musician, and it was conceded without reservation that he is not merely a virtuoso, but a great artist of pianoforte-playing.'

Johannes had to leave immediately for Leipzig, and he started from Hanover without knowing more about the impression produced there by his concerto than could be gathered from the reserve of the audience and the enthusiasm of his friend, but that his frame of mind was not despondent may be inferred from a paragraph which appeared in the *Signale* immediately after his arrival.

'Herr Johannes Brahms is here, and will play his Concerto at the Gewandhaus concert of the 27th. He thinks of remaining the rest of the winter at Leipzig.'

It is necessary to remind the reader what kind of audience it was for whose acceptance our young composer was now about to submit his work. Leipzig still occupied the position of musical capital of Europe to which it had been raised by the genius of Mendelssohn. By the most influential of its artistic circles, the premature death of this fascinating master (1809-1847) was still deplored as an almost recent event. Most of his old friends were living, and, in virtue of their former personal association with him, looked upon themselves as competent judges of all later aspirants to fame. It is matter of daily experience that the uninformed satellites of a man of genius are arrogant in proportion to their ignorance, and that even professional adepts of sincerity are apt to allow their horizon to be limited by their hero-worship. Musicians and amateurs, alike, of the Gewandhaus circle associated the idea of a concerto with the clear melody of Mozart and Beethoven, still, perhaps, regarding Beethoven as a little difficult to understand, with the attractive sparkle of Mendelssohn and with the opportunity for a display of the soloist's virtuosity afforded more or less by the works of all three masters. If asked to listen to a novelty, they expected that it should not be too unlike what they had heard before to be difficult to follow. Bernsdorf, newly appointed to succeed Brahms' friendly critic, Louis Köhler, on the staff of the conservative *Signale*, was himself a conservative of the most obstinate type, in some respects resembling the English J. W. Davison of the *Times* and the *Musical World*, who was honestly convinced that the series of great masters had closed with Mendelssohn.

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* Dr. Georg Fischer's 'Opern und Concerte im Hoftheater zu Hannover bis 1866.'

On the other hand, the New-Germans had by this time made considerable conquests in Leipzig, where they had established an important party organization, and had, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, even been admitted on trial to the platform of the Gewandhaus. The *Neue Zeitschrift* was their organ, but they had supporters also amongst the journalists of the daily press, Ferdinand Gleich, of the *Leipziger Tagblatt*, being one of the principal. They were on the look-out for champions who would rally to their cause, and welcomed the unusual as such, though reserving their heartiest approval for the piquant, sounding, sensational, or even revolutionary.

To these two bodies of extremists our Johannes, with his inexperience, his ideal aims, his genius, and his dislike of the sensational, was now to appeal. Had he been compelled at the moment to declare for either party, he certainly would not have chosen the side of revolution. But he was gifted with an imagination at once profound, original, and romantic. This sealed his fate with the men who considered themselves the modern representatives of classic art. The day after the concert he wrote to Joachim to announce—'a brilliant and decided failure.'

'In the first place,' he says, 'it really went very well; I played much better than in Hanover, and the orchestra capitally. The first rehearsal aroused no feeling whatever, either in the musicians or hearers. No hearers came, however, to the second, and not a muscle moved on the countenance of either of the musicians. In the evening Cherubini's Elisa overture was given, and then an Ave Maria of his uninterestingly sung, so I hoped Pfund's (the drummer's) roll would come at the right time.* The first movement and the second were heard without a sign. At the end three hands attempted to fall slowly one upon the other, upon which a quite audible hissing from all sides forbade such demonstrations. There is nothing else to write about the event, for no one has yet said a syllable to me about the work, David excepted, who was very kind. . . .

'This failure has made no impression at all upon me, and the slight feeling of disappointment and flatness disappeared when I heard Haydn's C minor Symphony and the Ruins of Athens. In spite of all this, the concerto will please some day when I have improved its construction, and a second shall sound different.

'I believe it is the best thing that could happen to me; it makes one pull one's thoughts together and raises one's spirit. . . . But the hissing was too much? . . .

'The faces here looked dreadfully insipid when I came from Hanover, and was accustomed to seeing yours. Monday (January 31) I am going to Hamburg. There is interesting church music here on Sunday, and in the evening Faust at Frau Frege's.'†

The grimness of the young composer's disappointment may be read between these Spartan lines. But perhaps he has exaggerated his failure. Let us see what Bernsdorf has to say.

'It is sad, but true; new works do not succeed in Leipzig. Again at the fourteenth Gewandhaus concert was a composition borne to the grave. This work, however, cannot give pleasure. Save its serious intention, it has nothing to offer but waste, barren dreariness truly disconsolate. Its invention is neither attractive nor agreeable. . . . And for more than three-quarters of an hour must one endure this rooting and rummaging, this dragging and drawing, this tearing and patching of phrases and flourishes! Not only must one take in this fermenting mass; one must also swallow a dessert of the shrillest dissonances and most unpleasant sounds. With deliberate intention, Herr Brahms has made the pianoforte part of his concerto as uninteresting as possible; it contains no effective treatment of the instrument, no new and ingenious passages, and wherever something appears which gives promise of effect, it is immediately crushed and suffocated by a thick crust of orchestral accompaniment. It must be observed, finally, that Herr Brahms' pianoforte technique does not satisfy the demands we have a right to make of a concert-player of the present day.'

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* The concerto opens with a long-continued roll of drums.

† From a letter first published in Max Kalbeck's 'Johannes Brahms,' vol. i., p. 356.

Nothing could be more representative than these lines, of the conscientious bigotry which almost always opposes what is really original, though it is expressed by Bernsdorf with exceptional coarseness. The narrowly orthodox antagonists of Brahms' art resembled those who had levelled their shafts against Beethoven and Schumann each in their day. The young composer fared differently at the hands of the progressists. The *Neue Zeitschrift* wrote:

'The appearance of Johannes Brahms with a new concerto was bound to attract our especial attention. In the first place, on account of the hopes entertained of an artist who had been introduced in a most exceptional manner, even before his first appearance, by the enthusiastic words of a revered master; and secondly, from the rarity of his subsequent public announcements and the retirement in which he has lived.

'Notwithstanding its undeniable want of outward effect, we regard the poetic contents of the concerto as an unmistakable sign of significant and original creative power; and, in face of the belittling criticisms of a certain portion of the public and press, we consider it our duty to insist on the admirable sides of the work, and to protest against the not very estimable manner in which judgment has been passed upon it.'

Ferdinand Gleich writes:

'Who would or could ignore in this new work the tokens of an eminent creative endowment! We least of all who regard it as our duty to encourage young talent. Many doubts, however, suggested themselves as we listened to this concert-piece in large form. This work again suggests a condition of indefiniteness and fermentation, a wrestling for a method of expression commensurate with the ideas of the composer, which has indeed broken through the form of tradition, but has not yet constructed another sufficiently definite and rounded to satisfy the demands of the æsthetics of art. . . . The first movement, especially, gives us the impression of monstrosity; this was less the case with the two others, although even there we were not able, in spite of the beauties they contain, to feel real artistic enjoyment. Brahms places the orchestra, as far as is possible in a concert-piece, by the side of the obligato instrument, and by so doing establishes himself as an artist who understands the requirements of the new era. The treatment of the orchestra shows a blooming fancy and the most vivid feeling for new and beautiful tone effects, although the composer has not yet sufficient command over his means to do justice to his intentions. The work was received calmly, not to say coldly, by the public; we, however, must acknowledge the eminent talent of the composer, of whom, though he is still too much absorbed in his *Sturm und Drang* period, it is not difficult to predict the accomplishment of something great.'

Whether or not these two reviews were penned with a deliberate purpose—and a desire on the part of the supporters of the New-German school to identify Brahms with their cause can hardly be regarded as either remarkable or dishonourable—no trace is to be found in either of the insincerity attributed by Kalbeck, in his Life of Brahms, to the journalistic partisans of the Weimarites, and especially to Brendel, editor of the *Zeitschrift* and friend of Liszt. Their honesty of purpose, as well as their liberality of view, has been vindicated by the fate which for many years attended the published concerto, and again we may place the remarks of Hanslick, the avowed champion of classical art and the enthusiastic admirer of the mature Brahms, beside those published in the *Zeitschrift* of the fifties. Writing in 1888, he says:*

'Brahms began, like Schumann, in *Sturm und Drang*, but he was much more daring and wild, more emancipated in respect to form and modulation. The fermentation period of his genius, which is generally supposed to have closed with his Op. 10 (Ballades for pianoforte), should, perhaps, be extended . . . does it not include the D minor Concerto, with its wild genius ?'

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* 'Musikalisches und Literarisches': 'Neuer Brahms Katalog.'

It has, indeed, taken nearly half a century to establish the concerto in a secure position of public acceptance, and the day, though now probably not far distant, has not even yet arrived when it can be said to rank as a prime favourite amongst compositions of its class with the large body of music-lovers.

Conceived as part of a symphony, the first movement of the work is symphonic in character, though, as Spitta has pointed out, not in form. The desire attributed to the composer by Ferdinand Gleich and by many others since, to create a new form, to compose a symphonic work with a pianoforte obligato, did not exist. Brahms simply wished to use what he had already written, and did not feel that the time had come when he could successfully complete a symphony. He rewrote his first two movements, therefore, as we have noted, making room in them for a pianoforte solo, put away the third movement, and composed a new finale. How successfully he accomplished his task is to-day apparent to accustomed ears, for which the first movement, though it contains slight deviations from traditional concerto form, has no moment of obscurity. The imagination of this portion of the work is colossal. It has something Miltonic in its character, and seems to suggest to the mind issues more tremendous and universal than the tragedy of Schumann's fate, with which it must be associated. No one will assert that it contains what are termed 'brilliant pianoforte passages,' the very existence of which is unthinkable in a movement of such exalted poetic grandeur; but that its performance brings due reward to capable interpreters has been proved by the enthusiasm of many a latter-day audience. After all that has been said, the reader will have no difficulty in understanding the fervent intensity of mood which impelled the composition of the slow movement, or in realizing something of the emotions which suggested the motto, *Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini*, written above it in the original manuscript (in Joachim's possession) by Brahms. In the finale, the difficult task of creating something which should relieve the tension of feeling induced by the preceding movements, without impairing the unity of the concerto as a whole, has been well achieved. If it is somewhat more sombre in colour than the usually accepted finale in rondo form, it is abundant in vigour and impulse, whilst, on the other hand, though written with a view to the concert-room, it never descends towards the trivialities of mere outward glitter.

Much more might be said in explanation of the dubious position so long occupied in the world of art by this great work of genius. We may not, however, linger longer over such interesting matters. It is enough to say that the purpose expressed by Brahms in his letter to Joachim, of 'pulling his thoughts together,' was literally carried out, and that his development proceeded in the direction it had already taken, which was the very opposite of that pursued by the adherents of the New-German school. It consisted in the still closer concentration of his powers within the forms of tradition, and the rapidity with which he attained to complete and free mastery over musical structure is marked by the production—soon to be recorded—of the first of the great series of chefs-d'œuvre of chamber music which have set his name, in this particular domain of art, as high as that of Beethoven himself.

Unrecognised by the public and misunderstood by the academics of Leipzig, whose sympathies he seems particularly, though for many years vainly, to have desired to gain, our young musician had now no choice but to return to his home and pupils at Hamburg. If, however, he himself felt at all despondent at the failure of his hopes, his friends were determined about the future of his work. Prompted and backed up by Joachim, Avé Lallement, who was a member of the Philharmonic committee, persuaded the directors to engage composer and concerto for their concert of March 24. Joachim had written to Avé:

'DEAR FRIEND,

'Nearer acquaintance with Brahms' concerto inspires me with increasing love and respect. The most intelligent people amongst the public and the orchestra (of Leipzig) with whom I have spoken express a high opinion of Brahms as a musician, and even those who do not like the concerto are at one as to his eminent playing. I have never expected anything else than that prejudice on the one hand, and, on the other, astonishment at an individuality which surrenders itself so unreservedly to the ideal as that of our friend, should present some impediment to the brilliancy of his success. A few places in the composition which, though good in themselves, are too much spun out may also here and there disturb one's enjoyment. Nevertheless, one may say that the concerto has had a success honourable alike to artist and public; the same in Hanover. Now let fault-finders and malicious detractors gossip as they please—I don't mind; we have done right. . . . Now do as you like in Hamburg, but if you give the concerto at the Philharmonic I will come and conduct. That has long been settled.'*

The concert was made into a musical event of unusual importance by the engagement of Joachim and of Stockhausen — his first appearance in Hamburg; and public interest was increased by the advertisement of a concert in the joint names of Brahms, Joachim, and Stockhausen to take place on the 28th, which was to be signalized by the first public performance of the newly composed Serenade in D major. That Johannes had taken heart again after his disappointments, and was looking forward with pleasure to the visits of his friends, is evident from a letter written by him a few days beforehand to the lady in waiting on the Princess Friederike of Lippe-Detmold.

'VERY ESTEEMED, GRACIOUS FRÄULEIN,

'In the first place I beg you to express my most humble thanks to Her Serene Highness the Princess Friederike for the despatch of the new Bach work.

'How often this present will remind me in the most agreeable manner of Her Highness's kindness. You know how I love the divine master, and may imagine that his tones (so dreaded by you) will often be heard here.

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* Moser's 'Life of Joachim.'

'I am glad that Her Serene Highness continues to work so industriously at her music, and only wish I could help her in some way.

'In the trio mentioned by you* the most simple way is that the left hand (which ceases playing) should help the poor right. For what embarrassment the mischievous arrogance of the composer is responsible!

'The day after to-morrow I play my pianoforte concerto here, and a few days later introduce other works at a concert of my own. Joachim and Stockhausen, who are coming for it, will make the days into real musical festivals.

In spite of the great diversity of opinions expressed about my works, I have reason to be quite satisfied with my first attempts for orchestra, and I confidently hope that they will find friendly hearers in Detmold also.

'And I may venture to hope, above all, for later ripening and better swelling fruits. . . .'†

The Philharmonic committee had no reason to regret their arrangements. The attraction of the two great names filled their concert-room to suffocation. Every seat and every standing-place was occupied, and crowds were turned from the doors. Those who have witnessed similar scenes during—how many decades! can picture the excited expectancy that followed the performance of a Cherubini overture, the thunder of welcome at the first glimpse of Joachim, the never-ending applause and recalls at the conclusion of his first solo, Spohr's 'Gesang-Scena,' the sensation of Stockhausen's first appearance, the magnificent success of his performance of a great aria from his oratorio répertoire. Then a lull, the disappearance of Capellmeister Grund, the opening of the piano, the reappearance of Joachim, this time to take his stand at the conductor's desk, and the entrance of the slight, blonde young Hamburger, pale and nervous, but calm and self-controlled, almost happy in the support of his two friends.

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* Brahms' Trio in B major.

† First published in Reimann's 'Johannes Brahms.' One of the Princess Friederike's Christmas presents to Brahms whilst he was her teacher consisted of the five volumes (1851-1855 inclusive) of the Leipzig Society's edition of Bach's works issued before he became a subscriber, and it would appear from the opening of the above-quoted letter that she made herself responsible for his subscription during the consecutive seasons of his visits to Detmold. It is interesting to read the traces of his movements furnished by the subscription list placed at the commencement of each volume. In 1856 his name appears as belonging to Düsseldorf; 1857-1864 inclusive, to Hamburg; and from 1865 onwards, to Vienna.

On such an evening of enthusiasm, what public could have refused its tribute to the young fellow-citizen who came before them as a composer practically for the first time, with two heroes at his side to champion his cause? Johannes was really successful. 'The concerto created an impression, and excited applause far beyond that of a mere *succès d'estime*,' and the critic of the *Nachrichten* records the fact with the more satisfaction from its contrast with the result of the performance at the Leipzig Gewandhaus.

It would appear from the wording of the letter to Detmold quoted on a foregoing page that the concert of the 28th, advertised in the three names, had been arranged for Brahms' benefit. Ten years had elapsed since his performance of the Variations on a favourite waltz had passed unrecorded save in Marxsen's paper. Since that time he had given no concert in Hamburg, and the change in his prospects is well measured by the different circumstances of the occasions of 1849 and 1859. True that at the age of twenty-six he had achieved no popular success, that his concerto had effectually alienated from him the sympathies of the Leipzigers, and that the Weimarites, whilst encouraging his efforts, partially misunderstood his aims. Thorough-going belief in his art and its promise was more firmly established than ever as a leading principle of the inner Schumann circle, and this was itself gradually spreading. We give the full programme of March 28, which is interesting for many reasons:

1. Bach:	Sonata for Clavier and Violin.
2. Handel:	Aria from 'The Messiah.'
3. Tartini:	'Trillo del Diavolo.'
4. Schubert:	Song, 'Der Erlkönig.'

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5. Brahms :	Serenade for Strings and Wind.
6. Boieldieu :	Cavatina, 'Fete du Village Voisin.'
7. Schubert :	Rondeau Brilliant for Pianoforte and Violin.
8. Schubert, Schumann, etc. :	Songs (including 'Der Nussbaum,' 'Mondnacht,' 'Widmung').

There was good reason to be delighted with the material result of the undertaking. The large Wörmer hall was thronged. Brahms' artistic success was also assured in regard to his playing of the duet sonata and rondo with Joachim, and many of the musicians present appreciated his wonderful accompaniment of Stockhausen's songs. The serenade, however, now instrumented for small orchestra, and conducted by Joachim, was not received with any decided favour, and the *Nachrichten* expressed the general sentiment of the time in the concluding sentence of its review :

> 'If Brahms will learn to say what is in his heart plainly and straightforwardly, and not go out of his way to cut strange capers, the public will endorse Schumann's hopes, and the laity be able to understand what it is that professional musicians prize so highly in his works.'

Such contemporary criticism might well pass unnoticed if it were not that, in spite of the wealth of beautiful material and the fine workmanship contained in the serenade, only one or two of its movements are occasionally heard in the concert-rooms of the present day, whilst the composer's later and more difficult orchestral works grow every year in the favour of the public. The circumstance is to be chiefly explained by considerations similar to those we have already applied to the first concerto. When Brahms wrote the work he had not quite passed from his apprenticeship. Though within sight of mastery, he had not achieved it. The Serenade in D is a serenade in the character of its ideas, but not entirely so in the structure of its movements. The instrumental 'serenata' (fair weather), a form which flourished vigorously during the latter half of the eighteenth century, and was exhibited in its greatest perfection by Mozart, was especially cultivated in an age when music was dependent on the patron—the prince or nobleman who kept his private band, and who delighted himself and his friends by open-air performances in his park on fine summer nights. It consisted of a longer or shorter series of movements—a march, an allegro, rondo, one or two andantes, a couple of minuets, none of them developed to any great length, and was composed for more or less solo instruments according to circumstances. Brahms, fascinated by the performances of the Detmold wind players, probably began his work with the intention of composing a serenade *pur et simple;* but his interest in the art of thematic development outran his discretion, and, by over-elaborating one of its movements, he injured the balance of his composition and introduced into it a character of complexity foreign to the nature of its form. The Serenade in D consists of an allegro molto, scherzo, adagio non troppo, minuets 1 and 2, scherzo, rondo. Some of the six movements, irresistible from their grace, daintiness, or romance, delight the public when performed as separate numbers, but the length of the opening movement and the somewhat mechanical development of its middle section may perhaps prove in the future, as they have done in the past, obstacles to the frequent performance of the entire work. Traces of the young musician's studies are to be found in the well-known reminiscences of Beethoven and Haydn in the second scherzo.

The serenade, written as an octet and afterwards scored for small orchestra, was probably rearranged for large orchestra, the form in which it has become known to the world, in consequence of experience obtained on this occasion of the first public performance of the work at Hamburg.

The few years immediately succeeding Brahms' second return from Detmold must be regarded as forming another turning-point in his career. They witnessed the close of his *Sturm und Drang* period and his complete transformation into a master. They are remarkable not only on account of the appearance of a number of short choral works which, perfect in themselves, lead directly to the splendid achievements of later years in the same domain, to the German Requiem, the Schicksalslied, the Triumphlied, but they form a period of actual magnificent fruition. To them is to be referred the inauguration of those chamber-music works of Brahms which stand in the forefront of the finest compositions of their kind, and the appearance of a classic for pianoforte unsurpassed by any other of its form, the Variations and Fugue on a theme by Handel. This portion of our composer's life belongs especially to his native city. More than one consideration may have induced him, at the time, seriously to contemplate the idea of settling permanently in Hamburg, and not the least potent will have been furnished by his strong patriotic sentiment and his deeply-rooted family affections. That he was not at once accepted as a great composer by his fellow-citizens should not be matter of surprise. It has too often been forgotten by Brahms' partisans that his development as a creator was not precocious. The list of Mendelssohn's compositions when he was a boy of sixteen is bewildering in its length and variety; at the same age the most important of Johannes' achievements was presumably the set of Variations on a favourite waltz. Schubert's career was cut short in his thirty-second year; Mozart died at thirty-five. Brahms at the age of twenty-six had not completed any large work which can be regarded as entirely representative of his mature powers, and had introduced but few compositions either to the public or his friends. There were, however, those among the musicians of Hamburg who, belonging to the increasing circle of his personal acquaintances, believed in his creative genius with the enthusiasm of absolute conviction, and as a pianist, though not regarded as a phenomenal performer, he was generally accepted as an artist of first rank.

Brahms' regard for his pupil, Fräulein Friedchen Wagner, had led to his becoming intimate at her father's house, and here he frequently had opportunity of hearing some of the compositions and arrangements for voices which engaged much of his attention. Fräulein Friedchen, her sister Thusnelda, and the charming Fräulein Bertha Porubszky, from Vienna, who arrived in Hamburg to stay for a year with her aunt, Frau Auguste Brandt, were delighted to practise short works in two and three parts under his direction. Probably he hoped gradually to obtain a larger number of recruits for his purpose. Before long, however, accident led to his becoming the conductor of a quite considerable ladies' choir.

On May 19 the wedding of Pastor Sengelmann and Fräulein Jenny von Ahsen took place at St. Michael's Church. There was a large gathering of friends to witness the ceremony. Grädener, already mentioned as a friend of Brahms, who was an accomplished composer and the director of a singing school, conducted his pupils in the performance of a motet for female voices which he had written for the occasion, and Johannes, a very old acquaintance of the bride, accompanied on the organ. Pleased with the effect of Grädener's composition, Brahms expressed a wish to hear his own 'Ave Maria' for female voices with accompaniment for organ, composed during his second visit to Detmold, under similar conditions of performance, and with the assistance of Fräulein Friedchen, who exerted herself to procure the requisite number of voices, a rehearsal was arranged. On Monday, June 6, twenty-eight ladies assembled at the Wagners' house, and tried, not only the 'Ave Maria,' afterwards published as Op. 12, but the 'O bone Jesu' and 'Adoramus,' now known as Op. 37, Nos. 1 and 2. Brahms was seized with a fit of nervousness whilst conducting, and Grädener, who was present amongst a few listeners, stepped forward to the rescue; but a second rehearsal on the following day went well, and the third trial in church with organ accompaniment was in every respect highly successful. The practices had been so enjoyable that, with the concurrence of Grädener, it was arranged that the ladies, most of whom were pupils of the singing school, should assemble every Monday morning to practise with Brahms; and the little society thus founded became a source of delight to all who were associated with it. The meetings were held during the first season at the Wagners' house in the Pastorenstrasse; later on they took place at several members' houses in turn. Each young lady used to sing from a small oblong manuscript book, into which she copied her parts, and several of these volumes are still in existence. After the business of the morning was over, the conductor usually played to his young disciples and admirers, who soon learned to look upon his performances as not the least memorable part of the weekly programme. Writing in the course of the summer to Fräulein von Meysenbug, Brahms says:

> '. . . I am here, and shall probably remain until I go to Detmold. Some very pleasant pupils detain me, and, strangely enough, a ladies' society that sings under my direction; till now only what I compose for it. The clear silver tones please me exceedingly, and in the church with the organ the ladies' voices sound quite charming.'*

The season closed on September 19 with a performance at St. Peter's Church before an invited audience. Some of the 'Marienlieder' (afterwards Op. 22) and the 13th Psalm (Op. 27) were included in the programme. The members of the choir appeared attired in black to denote their grief at the approaching departure of their conductor, and sent him, afterwards, a silver inkstand buried beneath flowers as a mark of their appreciation of his labours. This Brahms acknowledged from Detmold in the following official letter to Fräulein Friedchen, his energetic helper in the founding of the choir:

> 'DETMOLD, *end of Sept.*, 1859.
>
> 'ESTEEMED FRÄULEIN,
>
> 'Nothing more agreeable than to be so pleasantly obliged to write a letter as I am now.
>
> 'I think constantly of the glad surprise with which I perceived the inkstand, the remembrance from the ladies' choir, under its charming covering of flowers.
>
> 'I have done so little to deserve it that I should be ashamed were it not that I hope to write much more for you; and I shall certainly hear finer tones sounding around me as

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* 'Aus Johannes Brahms' Jugendtagen,' by Hermann Freiherr von Meysenbug (*Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, May, 1901).

I look at the valued and beautiful present on my writing-table. Pray express to all whom you can reach my hearty greeting and thanks.

'I have seldom had a more agreeable pleasure, and our meetings will remain one of my most welcome and favourite recollections.

'But not, I hope, till later years!

'With best greetings to you and yours,

'Your
'heartily sincere
'JOHS. BRAHMS.'*

That the composer did not forget his maidens during his season at Detmold appears from another letter to Fräulein Wagner written a couple of months later:

'*Dec.*, 1859.

'ESTEEMED FRÄULEIN,

'Here are some new songs for your little singing republic. I hope they may assist in keeping it together. If I can help towards this end pray command me.

'Kindest greetings to you and yours.

'Most sincerely,
'JOHS. BRAHMS.'*

Acquaintance with the charming circumstances which stimulated Brahms to the writing of most of his published choruses for women's voices gives an additional interest to the study of these beautiful compositions, which undoubtedly take their place amongst the most fascinating works of their class. Those with sacred texts, all evident fruits of the composer's studies in the strict style of part-writing, show, nevertheless, considerable variety of character. The 'Ave Maria,' with accompaniment for orchestra or organ, Op. 12, first sung by, though not composed for, the ladies' choir, is animated by a gentle, childlike, devotional spirit appropriate to a prayer addressed by a group of tender girls to the Virgin Mother of Christ. The 13th Psalm, with accompaniment for organ or pianoforte, Op. 27, strikes at once a more solemn note, with its three opening cries to the Lord; and the mourning plaint of the writer is reproduced in tones whose fervent pleading is not impaired by the clear simplicity of style in which the music is conceived. The Three Sacred Choruses, without accompaniment, Op. 37, are alike beautiful, whilst varying in character. The 'Adoramus' and 'Regina Cœli' (Nos. 2 and 3), written throughout in canon, are fine examples of learned facility; and the last-named, the bright 'Regina Cœli,' for soprano and alto soli and four-part women's chorus, is an entirely captivating composition.

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* First published, with an account of the Ladies' Choir, in Hübbe's 'Brahms in Hamburg.'

The secular pieces—the Songs with accompaniment for horns and harp, Op. 17, and the Songs and Romances to be sung *a capella*, Op. 44—though fairly well known, should be heard oftener than they are. The dainty charm of such little works as the 'Minnelied' and the 'Barcarole,' to name only two of the most effective from Op. 44, gives welcome refreshment in a miscellaneous choral concert, and never fails to captivate an audience.

In our rapid survey of some of the works which are to be associated with Brahms' Ladies' Choir, we have only taken account of those that were actually published in the form required by the nature of the society. Many settings and arrangements are to be found, in the little oblong manuscript books, of songs which have become known to the world amongst the composer's settings for a single voice or for mixed choir; and there are some there which have never been published. The canons Nos. 1, 2, 8, 10, 11, 12 of Op. 113 were sung at the society's meetings. The 'Regina Cœli,' on the other hand, was not included in the ladies' répertoire.*

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* Hübbe.

CHAPTER X

1859–1861

Third season at Detmold—'Ave Maria' and 'Begräbnissgesang' performed in Hamburg and Göttingen—Second Serenade, first performed in Hamburg—Lower Rhine Festival—Summer at Bonn—Music at Herr Kyllmann's—Variations on an original theme first performed in Leipzig by Frau Schumann—'Marienlieder'—First public performance of Sextet in B flat in Hanover.

BRAHMS found himself more than ever in request amongst the general circle of Detmold society during the autumn of 1859. He had become the fashion. It was the thing to have lessons from him, and his presence gave distinction to a gathering. The very circumstance of his popularity, however, caused some friction between himself and his acquaintances. He disliked to waste his time, as he considered it, in mere society, and, when occasionally induced to attend a party against his will, gave his hosts cause to regret their pertinacity. If not silent the whole evening, he would amuse himself by exercising his talent for caustic speech. Carl von Meysenbug, when at home, jealous for his friend's credit, often called Johannes privately to account for his perversity, but was always silenced by the unanswerable reply, 'Bah! that is all humbug!' (Pimpkram).

The young musician's relations with the princely family remained unclouded, and his musical gifts were, on the whole, fairly appreciated by the entire court circle, though he was not regarded personally with unanimous favour by those who did not know him well. Carl's mother, the Frau Hofmarschall, took a few lessons from him to please her friends at the castle, and once accepted his offer to play duets with her; but no subsequent invitation could induce her to repeat this performance. 'The good fellow should not have behaved as he did that once; I cannot put up with it,' she wrote to Carl. Something in Brahms' manner—independence, artistic self-consciousness, or whatever else it may be called—repelled her; and, in view of the fact that she was not the first person whom he had offended in a similar way, since the time when he had visited as a youth at the Japhas' house in Hamburg, it may fairly be assumed that Her Excellency had justifiable grounds for the reserved attitude she maintained towards him.

It is, indeed, certain that Brahms, during his third season at Detmold, began to grow impatient of his position there. His lessons to the Princess, who was really musical and made rapid progress, continued to give him genuine pleasure, but he chafed at the constant demands on his time arising from his fixed duties, and the rigid etiquette observed at the Court of a very small capital gave him a distaste for his work as conductor of the choral society. The circle of Serene Highnesses, Excellencies, and their friends, did not furnish sufficient voices for the adequate rendering of two or three oratorios and cantatas by Handel and Bach which he selected for practice during his second and third seasons; and, with Prince Leopold's permission, he supplemented them by persuading some of the towns-people to become members. His sense of the ridiculous was strongly excited by the rules of conduct prescribed for these not very willing assistants, who were not even permitted to make an obeisance to the Serenities, and scarcely ventured to lift their eyes from the music whilst in their august presence. There were some good performances of great works, however, and Bach's cantata 'Ich hatte viel Bekümmerniss' was given four times; but the difficulty of procuring tenors continued serious, and the entire circumstances of the meetings made Brahms feel increasing desire to be relieved from the necessity of attending them.

To this season is to be referred the first private performance of one of those of Brahms' great works which have made his name not only famous, but popular. The Quartet in G minor for pianoforte and strings, destined to become one of the most familiar of the master's achievements, was tried by the composer, Bargheer, Schulze, and Schmidt, though not altogether as it now appears. The complaint made by the young composer's colleagues at Detmold, that his string passages were often ungrateful and sometimes unplayable, was not unfounded. Brahms, like everyone else, had to buy exact technical knowledge with experience, and the quartet was considerably altered before its final completion. Essentially, however, the work dates from the Detmold period, and the conception of the finale is to be associated with the sudden visit of Joachim, with his Hungarian Concerto, in the autumn of 1858. Of this movement, the magnificent 'Rondo alla Zingarese,' Joachim declared in generous triumph, comparing it with the last movement of his own composition, that Brahms had beaten him on his own ground. It is not the business of our pages either to endorse or contradict this statement, but it may be permissible once again to remind the reader that the increasing perfection of Brahms' instrumental works of the period was in no small degree furthered by the invaluable criticism and self-forgetting sympathy of his friend.

The programmes of the court concerts of the season included the D major Serenade; the 'Ave Maria,' sung by the ladies of the choral society; and the Begräbnissgesang, for mixed chorus and wind instruments (Op. 13).

It is strange that this fine work, composed to a sixteenth-century text by Michael Weisse, the editor of the earliest German church hymn-book, is not more generally known. Like all Brahms' sacred compositions of the time, it gives evidence of the strong impression he had derived from his exhaustive study of the medieval church composers; and the music, austere in its simplicity, is characterized by uncompromising fidelity to the almost grimly severe spirit of the words. Too grave to be in place in an ordinary miscellaneous programme, it is well adapted for performance at a Good Friday concert or as a church anthem in Passion

Week. It was performed together with the 'Ave Maria,' both for the first time in public, at Grädener's Academy concert of December 2, and Brahms, who obtained leave to go to Hamburg for the occasion, appeared the same evening with Schumann's Pianoforte Concerto.

The manuscripts were sent immediately afterwards to Göttingen for practice by Grimm's choral society, of which Carl von Meysenbug was an enthusiastic member.

> 'As Grimm was distributing the parts of the "Ave Maria" and the "Begräbnissgesang" at one of the practices,' says the Freiherr von Meysenbug, 'my neighbour, a glib University student with the experience of several terms behind him, said to me in a surprised tone: "Brahms! who is that?" "Oh, some old ecclesiastic of Palestrina's time," I replied—a piece of information which he accepted and passed on.'

The compositions were given under Grimm's direction at the society's concert of January 19, 1860. There is little doubt that Philipp Spitta, author of the exhaustive biography of Sebastian Bach, whose essay 'Zur Musik' should be read by all earnest students of Brahms' music, took part in the performance of the Begräbnissgesang. His friendship with our composer dates from this period when he was a student of the Göttingen University and one of the intimates of Grimm's circle.

It will be convenient to add here that the invitation to revisit Detmold on the same terms as before was finally refused by Brahms in a letter to the Hofmarschall dated from Hamburg, August, 1860:

> 'After renewed consideration, I must beg to express to His Serene Highness the Prince my regret that I shall not be able to visit Detmold in the winter. I have to add to the causes of this decision which I have already had the honour to communicate, that I shall be much occupied this autumn with the publication of my works, with revising the proofs of some, and preparing others for the engraver. On this account alone, therefore, I must decide to stay here during the winter. I particularly desire to express my regret to the

Princess Friederike that I shall be unable to enjoy her progress in playing and her great sympathy for music. . . .'*

The post of conductor to the court orchestra, which became vacant on Kiel's retirement with a pension in 1864, and which might probably under other circumstances have been offered for the acceptance or refusal of Brahms, passed to Bargheer, who retained it until 1876, when Prince Leopold's death put an end to the musical activity of Detmold.

Brahms' interest in the orchestra had been by no means even temporarily satisfied by the writing of the works of which we have recorded the performances. The first serenade was not completed before he had sketched a second, the finished manuscript of which he carried with him on his departure from Detmold early in January, 1860. Separated longer than ever from Joachim, whose successes in England, Scotland, and Ireland detained him until nearly the end of the year 1859, Johannes now went to see his dearest friend, and during his stay at Hanover heard a private trial of the new Serenade for small Orchestra (wind, violas, 'celli, and basses). The work was performed for the first time in public at the Hamburg Philharmonic concert of February 10. On the same occasion Joachim transported the audience by his performances of Beethoven's Concerto and Tartini's 'Trillo del Diavolo,' and Johannes had a great success as pianist with Schumann's Concerto.

The second serenade was considered easier to understand than its elder sister, and was received with comparative favour, though not with enthusiasm. To the ears of the present generation the work appears limpidly clear, and it is difficult to realize that it was ever accounted otherwise. In it we have a chef-d'œuvre which displays our musician passed finally from his transition stage and standing out clearly as a master in definite possession both of aim and method. Unmistakably he has taken his footing on the basis of tradition, and creates with the freedom of self-control within the forms consecrated by the works of

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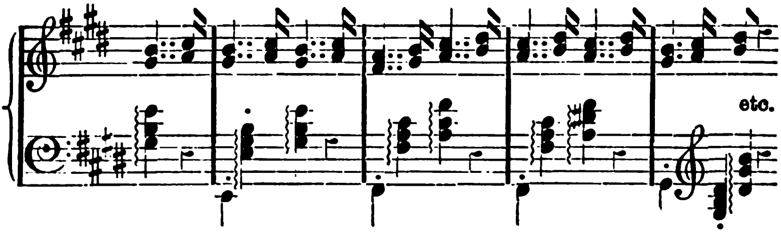
* 'Aus Brahms' Jugendtagen.' See footnote on p. 205.

Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, no longer betrayed by immaturity into anything that could be misconstrued as the intentional discursiveness of rhapsody. The work is impregnated with a breath as fragrant as the spirit of Schubert's muse, and, though perhaps not fully representative of the very powerful individuality now associated with the name of Brahms, bears the distinct impress of his mind, and could have been written by no other composer. Each of the five movements is a gem of the first water. Each has a character of its own, which yet combines with every other to make the serenade a perfect example of a developed form of garden music, night music. Graceful romance, tender playfulness, lively frolic, just the stirring of the deeper emotions, all the gentler phases of poetic sentiment, are suggested in turn by its lovely melodies.



Why is this masterpiece so seldom heard ?

Appropriately called a serenade from the character of its ideas, and even from the structure of its movements, which, whilst fully developed, are all quite clear, balanced and symmetrical each in itself and as part of a whole, and indicate the composer's perfect fulfilment of his intention, the length of the work again approaches that of a symphony. It must be borne in mind that to a general audience the name 'serenade' as applied to instrumental music does not now suggest any particular class of composition, the times and customs which produced this form having long since passed away; whilst it is customary to associate with the word 'symphony' a suggestion of the more strenuous emotions of human existence. Thus, the ordinary concertgoer who listens to Brahms' work is puzzled as to what he ought to expect, and his uncertainty interferes with his enjoyment.

Another drawback, under modern concert conditions, to the general appreciation of the beautiful Serenade in A major is the absence of violins from the score. It hardly needs pointing out that the, so to say, muted tone of the combination of instruments employed by the composer would be ideal in the surroundings proper to the performance of the 'serenade' as originally so called—palpitating summer heat, deep-blue, starlit sky, flitting to and fro of gallant and graceful forms—but in the prosaic atmosphere of a modern concert-room the bright tone of the violins cannot, perhaps, be safely dispensed with throughout the length of so long a work. It consists of an allegro moderato, scherzo, quasi minuetto with trio, rondo. It may still be hoped, however, that the serenade may be revived, and may take its place in the répertoire of our concert societies.

We have lingered so long over the two serenades that a bare mention must suffice of the performance of the first in D major—the first performance in the second and final rearrangement of the score—at the Hanover subscription concert of March 3 under Joachim's direction, nor need we dwell upon the fact that it was received with indifference by audience and critics. It is time to glance again at the party conflicts of the day, and especially to note the activity of the disciples of Weimar, whose partisanship, as the reader may remember, had been stimulated to violence by the candid admissions of Joachim's letter to Liszt quoted on p. 212.

'In the *Grenzboten*,' says Moser,* 'Otto Jahn, the biographer of Mozart, led the cause of the conservative party and of those musicians whose creative art was rooted in classical tradition. In the opposite camp, Brendel, with a staff of like-minded colleagues, represented in the *Neue Zeitschrift* the principles of radical progress, and extolled Liszt as the Mozart of his time, in whose works were united the efforts and results of all art epochs from the day of Palestrina. Liszt's cause and the Wagner question were treated as almost inseparable, and from this time dates the unfortunate influence of the "Wagnerians," who, in Raff's words, damaged rather than helped their master's cause.'

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* 'Joseph Joachim,' p. 154.

To put the matter, so far as our narrative is concerned with it, as shortly as possible, Brahms, who had been longing to enter the fray as an active combatant, now induced Joachim to join him in drawing up a manifesto for signature by musicians of their way of thinking, and subsequent publication. An obstacle to the fulfilment of the plan presented itself in the impossibility of obtaining unanimity of opinion as to the suitable wording of the document, and part of the difficulty seems to have arisen from Brahms' desire to differentiate between the works of Berlioz and Wagner on the one hand, and Liszt's 'productions' on the other. Before these preliminaries had been satisfactorily arranged, however, accident settled the matter. By a mischance that has never been explained, a version of the manifesto which was presumably going round for signature found its way, with only four names attached, into the *Echo*, a journal of Berlin. It ran as follows :

'The undersigned have long followed with regret the proceedings of a certain party whose organ is Brendel's *Zeitschrift für Musik*. The said *Zeitschrift* unceasingly promulgates the theory that the most prominent striving musicians are in accord with the aims represented in its pages, that they recognise in the compositions of the leaders of the new school works of artistic value, and that the contention for and against the so-called Music of the Future has been finally fought out, especially in North Germany, and decided in its favour. The undersigned regard it as their duty to protest against such a distortion of fact, and declare, at least for their own part, that they do not acknowledge the principles avowed by the *Zeitschrift*, and that they can only lament and condemn the productions of the leaders and pupils of the so-called New-German school, which on the one hand apply those principles practically, and on the other necessitate the constant setting up of new and unheard-of theories which are contrary to the very nature of music.

'JOHANNES BRAHMS.
'JULIUS OTTO GRIMM.
'JOSEPH JOACHIM.
'BERNHARD SCHOLZ.'

A few days later the answer appeared in the *Zeitschrift* of May 4, in the shape of a parody written, not in a very formidable style of wit, by C. T. Weitzmann:

'DREAD MR. EDITOR,

'All is *out!* — — I learn that a political coup has been carried *out*, the entire new world rooted *out* stump and branch, and Weimar and Leipzig, especially, struck *out* of the musical map of the world. To compass this end, a widely *out*reaching letter was thought *out* and sent *out* to the chosen-*out* faithful of all lands, in which strongly *out*-spoken protest was made against the increasing epidemic of the Music of the Future. Amongst the select of the *out*-worthies [paragons] are to be reckoned several *out*siders whose names, however, the modern historian of art has not been able to find *out*. Nevertheless, should the avalanche of signatures widen *out* sufficiently, the storm will break *out* suddenly. Although the strictest secrecy has been enjoined upon the chosen-*out* by the hatchers-*out* of this musico-tragic *out*-and-*out*er, I have succeeded in obtaining sight of the original, and I am glad, dread Mr. Editor, to be able to communicate to you, in what follows, the contents of this aptly conceived state paper—I remain, yours most truly,

'CROSSING-SWEEPER.'

'PUBLIC PROTEST.

'The undersigned desire to play first fiddle for once, and therefore protest against everything which stands in the way of their coming aloft, including, especially, the increasing influence of the musical tendency described by Dr. Brendel as the New-German school, and in short against the whole spirit of the new music. After the annihilation of these, to them very unpleasant things, they offer to all who are of their own mind the immediate prospect of a brotherly association for the advancement of monotonous and tiresome music.

'(Signed) J. FIDDLER. HANS NEWPATH. SLIPPERMAN.
'PACKE. DICK TOM AND HARRY.

'Office of the Music of the Future.'

Bülow, writing from Berlin to Dräseke, says:

> 'The manifesto of the Hanoverians has not made the least sensation here. They have not even sufficient wit mixed with their malice to have done the thing in good style, and to have launched it at a well-chosen time, such as the beginning or end of the season.'

It must be said here that Brendel was sincere in his views, whether or not they commend themselves to us, and that he had an exceptional power of appreciating the ideas put forth by the leaders of the new school. Equally certain is it that the antipathy felt by Joachim and Brahms for Liszt's compositions proceeded from no feeling of malice or personal animosity, but from the most sincere conviction. Joachim's confession to Liszt had been wrung from him by the necessity of escape from a false position. The extraordinary importance attached by the musical parties of the day to his alliance is well illustrated by Wagner's bitter words:

> 'With the defection of a hitherto warm friend, a great violinist, the violent agitation broke out against the generous Franz Liszt that prepared for him, at length, the disappointment and embitterment which caused him to abandon his endeavours to establish Weimar as a town devoted to the furtherance of music.'*

The baselessness, and even folly, of such a statement is self-evident.

With regard to Brahms particularly, though such works as Liszt's Symphonic Poems and Dante Symphony were abominations to him, he always cherished a profound respect for the music of Wagner, even though the principles underlying its composition were not those of his own artistic faith. His allegiance, like that of Joachim, was wholly given to the masters of classical art, to whom he had paid homage from childhood, and it was one of the ironies of fate that he should have been widely supposed, during many years, to belong to the New-German party, and that he was handled more tenderly by the *Zeitschrift* than the *Signale*. By Brendel himself, indeed, who from the year 1859 6nwards worked earnestly to effect a reconciliation between the contending musical parties, Schumann's young hero was treated fairly, and even generously, and a steady Brahms propaganda was practised in years to come by the fraternity of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein, a society founded by Brendel in 1861 for the furtherance of his pacific aim.

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* Reprint of Wagner's pamphlet 'Das Judenthum in der Musik.'

Our composer, who had been betrayed into polemic partly by loyalty to his convictions and partly by his exuberant vitality, was not by temperament a party man any more than his friend, and was to be removed before very long from the immediate scene of party strife. For the future he took the wiser course of holding himself aloof from the contentions of the day, issuing no other manifestoes than such as were constituted by his works, and never allowing himself to be tempted into answering the many printed attacks that were levelled at him. Henceforth he lived his life, and wrote his works, and followed his faith, leaving the question of the false or the true to the decision of time. Who shall yet say what will be the final judgment of this supreme arbiter of all such matters ?

Johannes was again settled in his parents' home during the spring of 1860, but his thoughts were busy with many plans for the future. He longed to extend his travels, and the desire to see Vienna was stirring forcibly within him. He played his Concerto and some numbers of Schumann's Kreisleriana at Otten's concert of April 20 ; but the concerto was very badly accompanied, and once more proved a complete failure. The critic of the *Nachrichten* confesses his inability to understand the work, 'which is recognised so warmly by the musicians of the newest tendency,' and elects to say nothing about it.

The young musician's greatest pleasure was derived from his singing society of girls, who resumed with ardour their practices under his direction. He placed it this season on a more formal footing by drawing up a set of rules, signature to which was made a condition of membership. The document, headed 'Avertimento,' is playfully worded in a bygone style of formality, and after a short prelude, in which is set forth, amongst other things, that the practices are to be held only during spring and summer, five laws are laid down, the first two of which enjoin punctual attendance.

'Pro primo, it is to be remarked that the members of the Ladies' Choir must be *there*.

'By which is to be understood that they must oblige themselves to be *there*.

'Pro secundo, it is to be observed that the members of the Ladies' Choir must be there.

'By which is meant, they must be there precisely at the appointed time. . . .'

Absentees and late-comers were to be fined in various amounts, according to various degrees of delinquency, and the money collected given to 'begging people,' 'and it is to be desired that it may surfeit no one.'

The fourth rule relates to the careful preservation of the music entrusted to the care of the 'virtuous and honourable ladies,' which was not to be used outside the society, and the fifth, to the admission of listeners under conditions. The whole concludes :

'I remain in deepest devotion
and veneration of the Ladies' Choir their most assiduous
ready-writer and steady time-beater
'JOHANNES KREISLER JUN.
(*alias* BRAHMS).

'Given on Monday,
'The 30th of the month of April,
A.D. 1860.'

The signatures, or most of them, must have been added after this date, for amongst them is that of Frau Schumann, who paid a visit to Hamburg at about this time certainly, but not in April. She arrived on May 6 with Fräulein Marie Schumann, who was from an early age her mother's constant and devoted travelling companion, and, residing at the Hôtel Petersburg, attended the practices of the choir during her nearly three weeks' stay. We shall have occasion to mention the name of the great artist more than once again in interesting connexion with the sisterhood of singers, who were not a little proud of the right given them, by her signature, to claim her as an honorary colleague.*

Notwithstanding the stringent rules as to punctuality of attendance inserted in this formal document, the meetings were seriously interrupted during the season, and by the absence of no less a person than the director himself. Johannes could in no case, especially in his present restless mood, have remained away from the Rhine Festival of the year (Düsseldorf, May 27-29). Schumann's B flat Symphony was to be performed, Hiller to conduct, Joachim to play the Hungarian Concerto and a Beethoven Romance, and Stockhausen to sing selections by Boieldieu, Schubert, Schumann, and Hiller. Frau Schumann was to attend the concerts, and expected to meet many intimate friends at Düsseldorf, amongst them being Dietrich and his bride, a lady long known to the circle as Clara Sohn, daughter of the painter and professor at the Art Academy. Brahms therefore accompanied Frau Schumann and her daughter when they left Hamburg for Düsseldorf on May 24, and the occasion of the festival proved no less enjoyable than those similar ones which have been referred to in our pages. A new feature at one or more of the private reunions that took place in the intervals of the concerts was the singing of quartets, under Brahms' direction, by four members of the Ladies' Choir who had come to the Festival: the sisters Fräulein Betty and Fräulein Marie Völckers, Fräulein Laura Garbe, and—Frau Schumann herself. She, indeed, it was who proposed to her hostess, Fräulein Leser, that the Dietrichs, Joachim, Stockhausen, and a few others, should be invited to listen to what proved a delightful performance.

Under the circumstances, it cannot be regarded as surprising that Brahms did not immediately return to Hamburg after the festival, but made one of a party that proceeded to Bonn, where he remained with his companions till towards the middle of July.

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* The rules, first published by Professor Walter Hübbe in his 'Brahms in Hamburg,' are given entire in the original German in Appendix No. III.

'The spring had set in gloriously,' says Dietrich, who, as the reader will remember, had been settled for some years in the city. 'There is something enchanting in such a spring on the Rhine. The pink blossoming woods of fruit-trees, the numerous whitethorn hedges on the banks of the river, the voices of nightingales in the light, warm nights, the fine outlines of the Siebengebirge in the distance; what excursions we were induced to make! It was a happy, sunny time, rich also in artistic enjoyment.

'For Brahms, after six years' long silence, had brought with him a number of splendid compositions. There were the two serenades, the Ave Maria, the Begräbnissgesang, Songs and Romances, and the Concerto in D minor.

'He had employed his retirement in the most earnest studies; he had composed, amongst other things, a Mass in canon form, which, however, has not been printed.

'We met frequently at the Kyllmanns' hospitable and artistic house for performances of chamber music and the enjoyment of Stockhausen's splendid singing.

'The artists came also often and gladly to our young home, and before we parted they were present with us at the baptism of our first child. Brahms, Joachim, and Heinrich von Sahr were the sponsors.'*

Herr Kyllmann's house in Coblenzstrasse, with its beautiful garden situated on the Rhine bank and commanding a view of the Siebengebirge, was the scene of many noteworthy reunions that gave equal pleasure to the famous guests and the art-loving, art-appreciating family, who were proud to entertain them. One party which took place early in June, during the week that Frau Schumann was able to remain amongst her friends, must be recorded in detail, for the musical performances included a string quartet played by Joachim, David, Otto von Königslow (for many years concertmeister of the Gürzenich subscription concerts, Cologne), and the excellent 'cellist Christian Reimers; Schumann's Quintet, by the same artists, with Frau Schumann as pianist; and songs sung by Stockhausen to Frau Schumann's accompaniment—amongst them 'Mondnacht' and 'Frühlingsnacht.' Otto Jahn, who was, of course, present to enjoy the music, brought with him his friend Dr. Becker, just arrived from England on his resignation of his post of private secretary to the Prince Consort, and Brahms must be counted with them amongst the listeners. He retired to the sofa of an inner drawing-room, and was not to be induced to perform, though Frau Schumann herself came to request him to do so, and Joachim followed with his persuasive 'Oh, Johannes, do play!' Johannes, as is abundantly evident, was no diplomatist. He often felt it easier to know himself misunderstood than to overcome his nervous shrinking from the ordeal of sitting down to play before a mixed party of listeners.

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* This pleasant description is given entire, as containing a substantially accurate account of Brahms' artistic progress, though Dietrich, writing after the lapse of many years, has overlooked the fact that the works referred to had already been performed in public from the manuscripts.

The nearly two months passed at Bonn, during which Johannes and Joachim lodged respectively at 29 and 27, Meckenheimerstrasse, proved of importance in Brahms' career. It was at this time that he made the acquaintance of Herr Fritz Simrock, a young man about his own age, junior partner in the well-known publishing house of N. Simrock at Bonn, and destined, as the later head of the firm after the removal to Berlin, to usher into the world the great majority of the composer's works. Between Fritz Simrock and Brahms a cordial understanding gradually established itself; the publisher's dealings with the musician were from the first considerate and generous, and when Brahms' fortunes became flourishing, it was Simrock who was his confidant and adviser in business matters. As an earnest of the future, the Serenade in A, Op. 16, was published by the firm before the close of the year, the Serenade in D, Op. 11, being issued in the autumn by Breitkopf and Härtel. The Pianoforte Concerto, refused by this firm, was accepted by Rieter-Biedermann, together with the 'Ave Maria,' Begräbnissgesang, and the Lieder und Romanzen (Op. 14), all of which were published the following year.*

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* A revised edition of the second serenade was published by Simrock in 1875.

'I am very glad to see Johannes' things in print before me at last,' wrote Joachim to Avé Lallement. 'Now the *Signale* and other superficial papers may abuse them as they please. We have done right. They will continue to smile on with their beautiful motifs long after the clumsy fault-finders have been silenced.'

The meetings of the ladies' choral society were recommenced on Brahms' return to Hamburg in July. Fräulein Porubszky, with whom he had been on terms of lively friendship during her year of membership, which had seen him a frequent visitor at her aunt's house in the Bockmannstrasse, had now returned to Vienna, where the reader will presently renew her acquaintance as Frau Faber. The members of the choir were, however, one and all thorough-going admirers of their conductor, and amongst the houses open for the holding of the practices, two at which he became intimate, must be particularly mentioned—those of Herr Völckers and his two daughters at Hamm, and of the Hallier family at Eppendorf, both at that time almost in the country.

The large Eppendorf garden was the scene of many a pleasant gathering of the singers; now and again they performed there before an invited audience of friends. Hübbe tells of an open-air evening party, with an illumination, vocal contributions by the choir, which were conducted by the director from the branch of a tree, and fireworks in the intervals. The Halliers lived in town during the winter, and Brahms often dropped in to their informal Wednesday evenings, which were attended by the artists and art-lovers of Hamburg. He was good-natured about playing in this familiar, sociable circle, and would perform one thing after another, unless particularly interested in conversation, when no entreaty could get him to the piano. As his Detmold friends had found out, he formed definite opinions on most current topics of interest, and did not hesitate to avow them, or to confess the unorthodoxy of his religious views. He went constantly also to Avé Lallement's house, where a few men used to meet regularly to read Shakespeare and other authors, and found time to attend lectures on art history and to study Latin under Dr. Emil Hallier, and history under Professor Ægidi of the Academic Gymnasium.

The autumn of this year was signalized by the appearance of a new and very great work—the String Sextet in B flat—the first of Brahms' important compositions to attain general popularity. Joachim was its sponsor, producing it at his Quartet concert at Hanover of October 20; and it was partly owing to his enthusiastic appreciation that the composition was so quickly and widely received into public favour.

It would be beside the mark to discuss, in a narrative which has no technical aim, the musical characteristics of a work that has become so entirely familiar as this one, which has long since taken its place among the few classics that attract an audience on their own merits, apart from the consideration of whether a public favourite is to lead their performance. It may, however, be remarked that the String Sextet in B flat is a work to which neither 'if' nor 'but' can be attached. Both in beauty and variety of idea and in spontaneous clearness of development, it is without flaw, and these qualities combine with the fineness of its proportions, perfectly conceived and perfectly wrought out, to place it with few rivals amongst the greatest examples of chamber music. Fresh, happy, and ingenuous, the mastery it displays over the art which conceals art may be compared with that of Mozart himself. With it opens the great series of works of its class which reveals the powerful individuality of Brahms in all its moods, and includes the first and second Pianoforte Quartets, the Pianoforte Quintet, the second String Sextet, and the Horn Trio—works which, in the author's opinion, were not surpassed even during later periods of the composer's magnificent activity in this domain.

Frau Schumann, Joachim, and Johannes met in November at Leipzig, the two last-named artists to assist actively on the 26th of the month at the annual Pension-Fund concert of the Gewandhaus, which was given under the direction of Carl Reinecke, the lately appointed successor to Julius Rietz. Both Johannes and Joachim appeared as composers—

Brahms with the second Serenade, Joachim with the Hungarian Concerto—and each conducted the other's work. Their own artistic conscience, with each other's and Frau Schumann's approval, and perhaps that of a few other friends, was their best reward. The audience was cold; the daily press left the concert unmentioned; the *Zeitschrift* dismissed it with a few dubious sentences—perhaps not ungenerous treatment under the circumstances—and the *Signale*, candid as ever, declared the serenade to be a terribly monotonous work which showed the composer's poverty of invention, together with his despairing attempts to appear learned. Joachim's concerto was pronounced decidedly richer in invention than his friend's work, but rather monotonous also, and certainly very much too long.

Frau Schumann, nothing dismayed by these remarks, introduced at her concert of December 8, given in the small hall of the Gewandhaus, the very beautiful Variations on an original theme, which, though hardly suitable for general concert performance, should be much better known than they are. They show the composer in one of his Bach-Beethoven-Brahms moods, by which is here meant his learned and profoundly serious vein touched with exquisite tenderness. The theme, in three-four time, has about it, nevertheless, something of the pace of a grave march, and the opening variations are tender reflections on a solemn idea. In the eighth and ninth we have the imposing tramp of pomp, whilst the eleventh and last breathes forth tones of mysterious spirituality which subdue the mind of the listener as to some passing divine influence.

These Variations together with the earlier set on a Hungarian melody, and the three Duets for Soprano and Contralto, Op. 20, were published by Simrock in 1861.

The fact that Brahms' sextet was placed in the programme of the Hafner-Lee concert announced for January 4 affords evidence that the composer was gradually penetrating with his works to the heart of musical life in his native city, though he may not have enjoyed the particular favour of its public. The Quartet-Entertainments of these artists were among the regularly recurring artistic events of Hamburg, and enjoyed unfailing support. Hafner, a Viennese by birth and a Schubert enthusiast, had found a second home in the northern city, and was accounted its first violinist; and in the 'cellist Lee he had a sympathetic colleague. He was not, however, destined to lead the sextet. His sudden illness caused the postponement of the concert, and his death followed. The work was played in Hamburg from the manuscript by his successor in the enterprise, John Böie, with Honroth, Breyther, Kayser, Wiemann, and Lee, and with immediate success. The impression made was so great that the work was repeated three times within the following few weeks by the same concert-party.

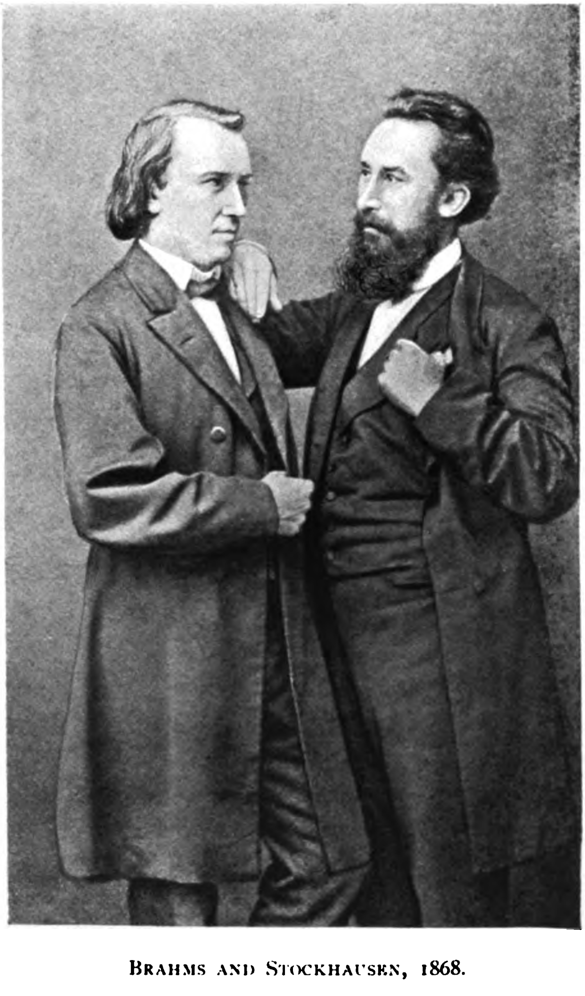
CHAPTER XI

1861–1862

Concert season in Hamburg—Frau Denninghoff-Giesemann—Brahms at Hamm—Herr Völckers and his daughters—Dietrich's visit to Brahms—Music at the Halliers' and Wagners'—First public performance of the G minor Quartet—Brahms at Oldenburg—Second Serenade performed in New York—The first and second Pianoforte Quartets—'Magelone Romances'—First public performances of the Handel Variations and Fugue in Hamburg and Leipzig by Frau Schumann—Brahms' departure for Vienna.

Frau Schumann, Joachim, and Stockhausen visited Hamburg repeatedly during the year 1861, and all made much of Johannes. Both Joachim and Brahms assisted at Frau Schumann's concert of January 15. Brahms took part in the performance of Schumann's beautiful Andante and Variations for two pianofortes, and conducted the Ladies' Choir, to the great delight of the members, in their singing of several of his part-songs. The first part of the programme included 'Es tönt ein voller Harfenklang,' 'Komm herbei Tod,' and 'Der Gärtner,' from the set with horns and harp accompaniment, Op. 17; the second part the 'Minnelied' and 'Der Bräutigam' (from Op. 44) and 'Song from Fingal' (from Op. 17)—all performed from manuscript. On the 22nd of the month Frau Schumann and Brahms appeared together at a concert in the Logensaal Valentinskamp, with Bach's C major Concerto and Mozart's Sonata, both for two pianofortes.

Frau Schumann and her daughter Marie were, during this somewhat prolonged visit, the guests of the Halliers, who understood the necessities involved by the strain of the great



BRAHMS AND STOCKHAUSEN, 1868.

artist's arduous life, and allowed her perfect freedom of action. Johannes visited his old friend every day, dining privately with her and her daughter at an hour that suited their convenience; and on a few free evenings there was glorious music in the Halliers' drawing-room before a few intimate acquaintances.

On March 8 Brahms played Beethoven's triple Concerto with David and Davidoff at the Philharmonic concert, and a few weeks later the Begräbnissgesang was performed under his direction at a Hafner memorial concert arranged by Grädener, and made a profound impression.

'The composer has realized the solemn spirit of mourning with extraordinary insight. As part of a funeral ceremony, the effect of the work would be quite overpowering,' wrote one of the critics.

Joachim and Stockhausen came in April for the Philharmonic concert of the 16th, and the brilliant season closed with Stockhausen's and Brahms' soirées on the 19th, 27th, and 30th of the month. At the first two concerts, at Hamburg and Altona respectively, the entire series of Schubert's 'Schöne Müllerin' was given; and at the last—who can imagine a more enthralling feast of sound than the performance of Beethoven's melting love-songs, 'To the Distant Beloved,' the very thought of which brings tears to the eyes, sung by Stockhausen to the accompaniment of Brahms, followed by our composer's lovely second Serenade, and this by Schumann's 'Poet's Love-Songs'? Happy Hamburgers, happy Stockhausen, happy Brahms, to have shared such delights together! Will their like ever come again? Strangely enough, they lead in the course of our story, as by natural transition, to the record of a visit paid to Brahms in the second week of July by a very early friend of his and of the reader. Lischen Giesemann had not met her old playmate since she had bidden him God-speed at the commencement of his concert-journey with Rémenyi early in 1853. During the years immediately following what proved to be his final departure from Winsen, she had occasionally visited her dear 'aunt' Brahms, but, never finding Johannes at home, had been obliged to content herself by rejoicing with his mother over the letters he constantly sent to his parents from Düsseldorf, Hanover, etc. She was now a happy newly-married wife, but the memory of the old child-life remained like the warmth of sunshine in her heart, and having ascertained that her now celebrated hero was living at home again, she determined to go with her husband to see him. As ill-luck would have it, Johannes had gone out for the day when Herr and Frau Denninghoff made their call in the Fuhlentwiethe, but his mother, overjoyed to see her young friend again after a long separation, offered such consolation as was in her power by showing her his room. How many remembrances crowded upon Lischen's mind as she entered it! The practices with Reményi, the teacher's choral society, the dances at Hoopte, the story of the beautiful Magelone and her knight Peter. Lischen found herself standing near the piano—and what did she see there? Some manuscript songs, apparently newly composed, stood on the music-desk, which bore the name of the beautiful Magelone herself in Brahms' handwriting! It almost seemed like a waking dream to the young wife, and the manuscript appeared to her as a link by which the past would be carried into the future. Nor was she mistaken. Brahms' 'Magelone Romances' have become world-famous, and wherever they are heard the delight which stirred the heart of the youthful Johannes as he and Lischen sat together in the pleasant Winsen fields eagerly devouring the old story from Aaron Löwenherz's purloined volume lives also. Lischen was not again to meet her old friend, but she never forgot either him or his music, and he, too, kept a faithful memory for the old pleasant time. Writing to her twenty years later, when at the height of his fame, he said:

> 'The remembrance of your parents' house is one of the dearest that I possess; all the kindness and love that were shown me, all the youthful pleasure and happiness that I enjoyed there, live secure in my heart with the image of your good father and the glad, grateful memory of you all.'

Lischen's daughter inherited her mother's voice, and was endowed with fine musical gifts ; and when Agnes came to the right age, Frau Denninghoff sent her to be trained as a singer at the Royal Music School of Berlin, of which, as everyone knows, Joachim has been director since its foundation. Joachim invited Agnes to his house one evening to meet Brahms, who, coming forward to greet her, said it was as though her mother were again standing before him. He sent her a selection of his songs, and in due time she became a distinguished singer, appearing in public under a pseudonym, and the wife of a famous musician.

Lischen saw only the first four numbers of the 'Magelone' song-cycle, which had, by a strange coincidence, just been completed at the time of her visit ; the fifth and sixth were not composed until May, 1862.* These six songs were published by Rieter-Biedermann in 1865, with the title 'Romanzen aus L. Tieck's Magelone' and a dedication to Stockhausen ; and there can be no doubt that the immediate incitement to their composition is to be traced to our composer's association with this great singer in the performance of the song-cycles of Beethoven, Schubert, and Schumann. The remaining nine songs of Brahms' series were not published until 1868, and the exact date of their composition has not been ascertained.

> 'I am living most delightfully in the country, half an hour from town,' wrote Brahms, pressing Dietrich to pay him a visit ; 'you would be surprised to find how pleasantly one can live here. Perhaps I can take you in, and at any rate my room at my parents' in Hamburg is quite at your service. In short, I hope you will be comfortable.'

He was established for the summer at Hamm in the pleasant country house of Frau Dr. Rösing, aunt of the two girls, the Fräulein Betty and Marie Völckers, already mentioned as members of the choir. Here a large airy room with a balcony, on the first floor, had been allotted him, that had been the billiard-room of the house when it was inhabited by Herr Völckers and his family. This gentleman now lived next door with his two daughters in a charming old-fashioned habitation built, cottage-wise, with a thatched roof and but two floors, and possessing a spacious apartment on the ground-floor that was particularly well adapted for the choir practices. Both houses had pleasant gardens separated only by a green hedge, and close by, the spreading branches of fine old trees provided shelter for the many nightingales that built their nests in the quiet spot. Brahms' room was cheerful for a considerable part of the day, with the sunlight that shone through the outside greenery and the tinted panes of the open windows, and in it he could enjoy his favourite early morning hours of work with the added relish of feeling that they were but the prelude to days of quiet refreshment. He was intimate with all the branches of his hostess's family, from Herr Völckers, who had been a good public singer of his day, down to his gifted little granddaughter Minna (now Mrs. Edward Stone), one of the young composer's very favourite and most devoted pianoforte pupils; and that he passed a considerable portion of his time this summer in the society of the two girls next door—Betty and Marie Völckers—will astonish none of our readers. He went in and out their house as he liked, and frequently joined them as they sat in their garden with work or books, or chatting with their friends Fräulein Reuter and Fräulein Laura Garbe, whom they often invited. Johannes would stroll in with his cigar or cigarette, and take a seat near the group, silent or talkative according to his inclination. By-and-by he would sing a note or two of a well-known melody, begin to beat time, and the garden would be glad with the sound of four fresh young voices swelling and dying together in the charming harmonies of a favourite part-song. He often spent the evening with the young ladies and their father, gladly accepting their informal hospitality, and would play to them after supper until late into the night, sometimes performing duets with Fräulein Marie, who was his pupil on the pianoforte.

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* Max Kalbeck, p. 458.

'I may say with pride that he was happy in our little house,' said Frau Professor Böie (Fräulein Marie Völckers) to the author; 'his playing was a great delight to our old father. His behaviour to old people was touchingly thoughtful and kind.'

Dietrich, who had lately accepted the post of court capellmeister to the Grand-Duke of Oldenburg, and was now quite a near neighbour, paid his promised visit to Hamburg in September, and found Johannes engaged on the A major Pianoforte Quartet. 'He played me the sketches which convinced me that the work would be surpassingly fine.'

> 'I occupied his very interesting room [at Hamburg], and was astonished at his comprehensive library, which he had gradually collected since early youth; it contained some remarkable old works.
>
> 'After breakfast in the morning I used to sit cosily with his dear old mother, who united true heart-culture with her plainness and simplicity; her Johannes was the inexhaustible subject of our lively conversations. The father generally left home early to follow his calling of bassist and music-teacher. I used to remain a little while with the dear people, and spent the rest of the day with Brahms in his charming country quarters, where we occupied ourselves with the detailed examination of his newest works.'

Several indications suggest that Brahms' thoughts were still turned longingly in the direction of Vienna; not as a permanent place of residence—at no time in his life, probably, did he so seriously contemplate settling in Hamburg as at the present—but he wished to see the city that had been the home of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert; and the enthusiastic sympathy accorded to Frau Schumann on each of her visits to the Austrian capital confirmed him in a desire to try his luck with its music-loving public. He knew his way had been prepared for him, and a good opportunity seemed likely to occur for his appearance there. Joachim was meditating another Austrian tour, and would have rejoiced to have Johannes with him. Matters went no further, however, than they had done previously. As in a former year, paragraphs appeared in the *Signale* announcing that Brahms and Joachim were about to visit Vienna, but in the end Brahms remained at home—partly, no doubt, from motives of policy.

It was generally understood that Wilhelm Grund, who had for many years conducted the Philharmonic concerts and the Singakademie connected with them, must soon retire. He had done good work in his day, but his day was over. Musical conditions had changed; he was too old to alter with them, and the Philharmonic performances had long ceased to satisfy modern requirements. It was hoped by Brahms' friends that the young genius of Hamburg would succeed to the post, and Johannes himself may have thought it wise to remain on the spot with such an important issue imminent. The disappointment he felt at giving up the desired journey was partially consoled by the knowledge that Frau Schumann would be much in Hamburg during the autumn months.

He began his concert-season on October 19 at Altona, and appeared at one of the Böie-Lee concerts later in the month, playing the Schumann Variations for two pianofortes with Frau Clara. On the 30th there was a music-party at the Halliers', which is charmingly described in a letter written a few days afterwards by Fräulein Julie Hallier:

> 'The guests were late in coming; it was half-past eight when they had all arrived; and who comes with Frau Schumann?—Our dear friend from Hanover, with his beaming face and delightful friendliness; the glorious Joachim. Everyone was taken by surprise, Frau Schumann and Brahms in the morning, we in the evening. Avé: "My boy! where have you come from?" After the first excitement was over, Edward showed his Italian photographs. Brahms literally devoured them; he was very nice the whole evening, especially with Edward. He teased me about my punch, which I altered three times, he following it with anxious looks as the bowl disappeared through the door. Frau Schumann and Brahms played beautifully beyond imagination; three rondos by Schubert and two marches. The violin of course had not come; Joachim only arrived yesterday and is already gone again. At first Avé turned over, but he did it badly, so Brahms called Joachim. Avé: "My dreadful cold; I cannot see properly." He now stood

behind and began to beat time. During the music the table was laid in the small room. It was rather narrow, but comfortable. All went well. We separated at half-past eleven.'

A few days afterwards there was a similar gathering at the Wagners', when Frau Schumann performed with Brahms his duet arrangement of the second serenade.

'The best of all was a set of variations by Brahms on a theme by Handel,' continues the letter—'another magnificent work! splendidly long—the stream of ideas flowing inexhaustibly! And the work was splendidly played, too, by himself. It seemed like a miracle; one could not take one's eyes from him. The composition is so difficult that none but great artists could attempt it.'*

These words give some measure of the progress effected during the last half-century in the technique of pianoforte-playing, partly, indeed, through the demands made upon pianists by the compositions of Brahms himself. Lovers of his art who have learnt his particular technique, which demands of the player certain qualities of endurance and grip, do not find the performance of his works unduly fatiguing. The twenty-five variations, with the fugue that succeeds them, are now in the fingers of most good players, and would undoubtedly be often heard in the concert-room if it were not for the great length of the work. They show a melodious fertility and power of invention which is practically inexhaustible. Each variation or pair of variations presents some fresh idea, some striking change of fancy, figuration, rhythm, mood, to hold the listener's attention, whilst the entire long work is essentially based upon the simple harmonic progression of Handel's theme (to be found in the second collection of Harpsichord Pieces). The changes of key in Brahms' variations are restricted to the tonic minor (Nos. 5, 6, 13) and the relative minor (No. 21). The finale, the great free fugue which invariably 'brings down' a house, is, with its grand and brilliant climax, to which extraordinary effect is imparted by an original employment of the dominant pedal point, a unique example of its kind.

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* First published in Hübbe's 'Brahms in Hamburg,' pp. 42-44.

If there ever were a young composer who had reason to be made happy from the outset of his career by the appreciation of the most eminent of his colleagues—appreciation sweeter than any other to the soul of the true artist—Brahms was he. At each of Frau Schumann's three appearances in Hamburg during this autumn, she performed a great work of his composition, two being introduced for the first time to the public. At her first concert, on November 16, she played the G minor Pianoforte Quartet, only now finally revised and completed, with Böie, Breyther, and Lee, and on the same evening several of the composer's part-songs were sung under his direction by the Ladies' Choir; on December 3 she appeared as the champion of the unpopular Concerto, choosing it for her chief solo at the Philharmonic concert of that date; and on the 7th of the same month she brought forward the Handel Variations and Fugue at her second concert. These she repeated a week later at the Gewandhaus soirée of the 14th in Leipzig.

Not even the magnetic personality of Frau Schumann availed to awaken any show of enthusiasm for the concerto. The new works were more favourably received both in Hamburg and Leipzig, and the *Signale* itself bestowed a mild word or two upon some of the variations. It is easy, however, to read between the lines of the press notices that such encouragement as was awarded to the composer was mainly due to the personality of the performer. The B flat Sextet was given with fair success at the Gewandhaus Quartet concert of January 4 by David, Röntgen, Hermann, Hunger, Davidoff, and Krummholtz.

Brahms passed the first two months of the new year in Joachim's society, making his headquarters at Hanover, and undertaking frequent short journeys with his friend. The two artists appeared together on January 20 at one of the Münster subscription concerts, of which Grimm, who had been called to Münster in 1860, was now the conductor; and on February 14 they gave a concert in Celle, a locality which the reader will remember as the scene of Johannes' transposition feat during the Reményi *tournée* of 1853. The A major Pianoforte Quartet was now finished, and was, with its companion in G minor, much appreciated in the private circles of Hanover, where both works were frequently played by Brahms with Joachim and his colleagues.

Brahms, answering an invitation from Dietrich received on the eve of his departure, says:

'HANOVER, 1862.

'DEAR FRIEND,

'I have been here for some time, and have your letter forwarded from Hamburg. I go back to-morrow, and write a few words in haste.

'I should much like to visit you and to make the acquaintance of those whom I know pleasantly by name, otherwise I would say no. I will come and see how long I can afford to be idle.

'What shall I play? Beethoven or Mozart? C minor, A major, or G major? Advise!

'And for the second—Schumann, Bach, or may I venture upon some new variations of my own?

'You, of course, will conduct my serenade. We have been playing my quartets a great deal here; I shall bring them with me and shall be glad if you and others approve of them.

'*À propos!* I must have an honorarium of 15 Louis-d'ors [about £14], with the stipulation that if I should play at Court I receive extra remuneration. I much need the money; pro sec. my time is valuable to me, and I do not willingly take concert engagements; if, however, this must be, then the other must also.'*

Dietrich had already had the pleasure of welcoming Frau Schumann and Joachim to Oldenburg during this his first season of activity there, and had worked well to prepare the way for Brahms, so that the evening of March 14, the date fixed for the composer's personal introduction to the concert-going public, was awaited with keen interest. Arriving at Dietrich's house a few days previously, Brahms found himself surrounded by new friends, and had won the favour of the musical élite of the town before his public appearance, by playing several of his works in private circles. The members of the orchestra, who assembled *en masse* on the evening of the 13th, were excited to enthusiasm by his performance of the new Handel Variations and Fugue, and every condition that could insure a sympathetic reception for the hero of the 14th was fulfilled.

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* Dietrich.

The concert opened with the D major Serenade (Op. 11), conducted by Dietrich, who had the delight of finding that he had secured an adequate reception for his friend's orchestral work.

> 'The whole made the most satisfactory impression, and carried the hearers away more and more, especially from the fourth movement onwards, and at the close the applause reached a pitch of enthusiasm not hitherto experienced here. The members of the orchestra, who had been studying the serenade for some time, showed their concurrence in the general approval by a lively flourish' (*Oldenburger Zeitung*).

No less satisfactory was the verdict of the audience on the performances of Beethoven's G major Concerto and Bach's Chromatic Fantasia, with which our composer came forward as pianist. His success was repeated at the chamber music concert of the 19th, when the sextet was performed by Court Concertmeister Engel and his colleagues. Both in public and private Brahms left endearing memories behind him.

> 'He was the most agreeable guest,' says Dietrich, 'always pleased, always good-humoured and satisfied, like a child with the children.
>
> 'He took the greatest pleasure in our happiness. He thought our modest lot enviable, and had his position then allowed him to establish a home of his own, perhaps this might have been the right moment, for he was attracted by a young girl who was often with us. One evening, when she and other guests had left, he said with quiet decision: "She pleases me; I should like to marry her; such a girl would make me, too, happy." He met many people at our house, and in small and large circles outside it, and everyone liked his earnest nature and his short and often humorous remarks.'

It is pleasant to have to record here that a few weeks before the events now described, New York, distinguished, as we have seen, by Mason's timely performance of the B major Trio in 1855, led the way a second time in connection with Brahms' career. In February, 1862, the first performance after publication of the second serenade took place there at a Philharmonic concert, and the occasion is doubly memorable as marking the earliest introduction of an orchestral work of Brahms to a public audience outside the cities of Hamburg, Hanover, and Leipzig. This early appreciation of the composer's genius in America has proved to have been neither accidental nor transitory. It grew steadily year by year with the general growth of interest in musical art, and his works, great and small, were welcomed as they appeared, and performed—often, it must be said, from pirated editions in the earlier days—with ever-increasing success. It has been impossible to ascertain the exact dates of first American performances. New York, the earliest centre in the United States for the cultivation of Brahms' music, was emulated later on, especially by Boston; and the famous Symphony Orchestra of this city has, since its foundation in 1881, performed each of the four symphonies, in Boston and in the course of numerous concert tours, at an average of forty concerts; whilst the two overtures, the concertos, and other large works, have been given with corresponding frequency.

The chamber music has been a special feature in the programmes of several concert-parties resident in various parts of the United States. Of these, special mention should be made of the Kneisel String Quartet of Boston, whose performances, familiar not only to American, but also to some of the circles of European music-lovers, were warmly appreciated by Brahms himself.

In the spring of 1862, an artistic tour undertaken in France by Frau Schumann laid the foundation of Brahms' reputation in Paris, which, little to be noted during many years, has of late been rapidly increasing. That the great pianist, when introducing her husband's works, which were almost unknown to French audiences, had to confront the inevitable prejudice against what is new, explains the fact that Brahms' name did not appear in the programmes of her concerts at the Salle Erard. The efforts she made in the cause of his art, however, amongst the inmost musical circle of her acquaintance created an impression that was not entirely fleeting.

The two first Pianoforte Quartets, now finally completed, and performed, as we have seen, during the winter of 1861-62 —the earlier one in public, and both frequently in private— add two glorious works of chamber music to the series so brilliantly inaugurated by the Sextet in B flat. In their broadly-flowing themes, their magnificent wealth of original and contrasted melody, their consummate workmanship, their fresh, vigorous vitality, their enchanting romance, one seems to hear the bounding gladness of the artist-spirit which has attained freedom through submission to law, and revels in its emancipation. They are so rich in beauty, so transcendent in power, that the attempt to point out this or that particular detail for admiration results in bewilderment. The romantic intermezzo, the riotously brilliant Hungarian rondo, of the first; the graceful scherzo with its bold trio, of the second, and the adagio, with its atmosphere of mystery, lit up twice by the outbreak of passion that subsides again to the hushed expressiveness of the beginning and end ; the opening allegro of either work—all are original, great, beautiful ; but so is every portion of every movement of both quartets, and each movement proclaims—from Bach to Brahms. That Brahms' course of development proceeded ever further in the direction of concentration of thought and conciseness of structure cannot affect the value of the splendid achievements of his earlier period of maturity, and of these the two quartets stand amongst the greatest.

The sincerity of Brendel's efforts to conciliate the contending musical parties, and his desire to do justice to each, is strikingly proved by the appearance in his journal, in the course of several months of the year 1862, of a series of articles signed 'D. A. S.,' by Dr. Schübring, a distinguished musician and critic of the Schumann school. The first few numbers are devoted to sympathetic reviews of the works of Theodor Kirchner, Woldemar Bargiel, and others; and following these are five articles in which the whole of Brahms' published works are examined in detail. The composer's genius, his progress, his moods and his methods, are discussed with the skill of a scientific musician, the impartiality of a sound critic, and the affection of a personal and artistic friend. They are too technical for quotation here, but the last sentence of the concluding number may be given in well-deserved tribute to Brendel, who must have known what he was doing when he arranged for Dr. Schübring's contributions.

> 'The foregoing words may sound inflated, but stopped horns are of no use when it is desired to arouse the great public, which does not yet seem to comprehend in the least what a colossal genius, one quite of equal birth with Bach, Beethoven, and Schumann, is ripening in the young master of Hamburg.'

The mediator's task is seldom a grateful one, and it appears probable that Dr. Brendel was reproached for his large-mindedness by some of the New-German party, with whom he had been so long intimately connected, as a half-apologetic explanation of his reasons for desiring the publication of the 'Schumanniana,' as the articles were entitled, appeared in a later number of the *Zeitschrift*.

It would be unsatisfactory to omit all mention of the first performance of a 'Magelone Romance,' though there is but little to record save the fact that Stockhausen sang the opening one, the 'Keinem hat es noch gereut,' from the manuscript, at the Philharmonic concert of April 4, as one of a group of songs by Brahms. It produced no impression whatever on the Hamburgers, who were only mystified. How many persons in the audience had read Tieck's poems? How many had ever heard anything about the adventures of Magelone and Peter? Without such knowledge, the first and second numbers of the cycle cannot be really appreciated. To those who are aware that the first is the song of a minstrel who incites a valiant young hero to journey to distant lands in quest of adventure, and the second the exultant shout of the joyful aspirant as he rides forth from his parents' home, resolved on doughty deeds, the music becomes living, and seems to breathe forth the very spirit of chivalry. The third, fourth, and some other of the songs, notably the ninth—the ravishing 'Ruhe Süssliebchen'—are capable of telling a tale of their own, and give rich delight apart from their place in Tieck's version of the story; but the enjoyment even of these favourite and familiar songs is much heightened by an acquaintance with the incidents of the romance. Tieck's 'Beautiful Magelone' is contained in his 'Phantasus,' a collection of tales published between 1812 and 1816, some of which have been made familiar to English readers by the translations of Hare, Froude, and Carlyle. The 'Magelone' story of the book is a modernized version of an old romance of chivalry, and, by introducing into it a number of songs, Tieck furnished the opportunity seized upon more than forty years later by Brahms, to which the world is indebted for some of the composer's most perfect inspirations.

To provide in this place the much-needed clue to their connexion with the events of the tale would cause too serious an interruption to our narrative. The author has therefore added, in Appendix II., an account of the romance and the incidence of Tieck's songs, which it is hoped may interest the reader and increase his love for the compositions.

Brahms continued to make Frau Dr. Rösing's house his headquarters, and remained there during most of the spring and summer of 1862. Before going to Oldenburg in March, he had written to Dietrich: 'It is delightful here in Hamm, and unless I look out of window at the bare trees I fancy summer is come, the sunlight plays in the room so gaily.' Later it was: 'It is blooming splendidly, and the trees are blossoming in Hamm, so that it is a joy.' He occupied his leisure in similar agreeable pursuits to those of the preceding year, and now in the springtime a double choir of maidens and nightingales might often be heard by the passer-by, carolling together as if in mutual emulation of the others' song. He begged, later on, for photographs of his girls' quartet and of the two houses, and said that he neither remembered nor saw before him a happier time than that he had passed in Hamm. The sisters met their fate in due time. Each married a distinguished violinist, and Concertmeister Otto von Königslow of Cologne and Professor John Böie of Altona were amongst the most active admirers of Brahms' art. The composer remained on terms of intimacy with the entire Völckers family, and never failed, when occasionally staying at Hamburg during the later years of his career, to visit both the Böies and the Stones.

Avé Lallement, who would gladly have seen Johannes settled in Hamburg as conductor of the Philharmonic, says, in a letter written in the early spring of the year to Dr. Löwe of Zürich :

> 'We had the "Matthew Passion" here under Grund; Brahms also was delighted, in spite of the defective performance. He thinks of going to Vienna in the autumn; then I shall be quite alone, but thank God I have learnt to know the man so well. I have come a good piece forward through him.'

The pianoforte quartets finished, the composer was now busy with the great work which we know as a quintet for pianoforte and strings. It was finished in its first form—a string quintet with two violoncelli—by the end of the summer. When tried a year later by Joachim and his colleagues, the effect of the work was found insufficiently sonorous for its great material, and Brahms arranged it as a sonata for two pianofortes, and subsequently as a quintet for pianoforte and strings. We shall have occasion later on to make particular mention of the first public, and of an early private, performance of the sonata version.

Brahms and Dietrich met at the Rhine Festival given this year at Cologne (June 8-10), where they made the artistic and personal acquaintance of Frau Louise Dustmann, court chamber singer, and of the court opera, Vienna, whom Brahms knew well in later years. From Cologne they proceeded to Münster-am-Stein, taking lodgings together near Frau Schumann, who was staying there with her family. From Münster Dietrich wrote to his wife :

> ' The longer I am with Brahms, the more my affection and esteem for him increase. His nature is equally lovable, cheerful, and deep. He often teases the ladies, certainly, by making jokes with a serious air which are frequently taken in earnest, especially by Frau Schumann. This leads to comical and frequently dangerous arguments, in which I usually act as mediator, for Brahms is fond of strengthening such misunderstandings, in order to have the laugh on his side in the end. This to me attractive humorous trait is, I think, the reason why he is so often misunderstood. He can, however, be very quiet and serious if necessary.'

Brahms and Dietrich composed industriously in the mornings ; the afternoons and evenings were occupied with excursions or music, and at this time Brahms showed his friend an early version of the first movement of his C minor Symphony, not completed until fourteen years later. The six ' Magelone Romances ' were pronounced by Dietrich to be amongst the finest works yet produced by their composer.

The Sextet in B flat, the Handel Variations, and the horns and harp Songs for women's Chorus, were published this year by Simrock. Two works in the hands of Rieter-Biedermann —the Marienlieder for mixed Chorus and the Variations for Pianoforte Duet Op. 23—appeared at the end of 1862 or the beginning of 1863.*

The Marienlieder, seven in number, to be sung *a capella*, are not sacred compositions. They are settings of old texts founded upon some of the medieval legends that grew up around the history of the Virgin, and are delightfully fresh examples of the pure style of part-writing of which Brahms had made himself a master. In spite of the restricted means at the disposal of the composer who elects to forego, for the nonce, all but the few diatonic harmonies alone available in this style, there is a something about these attractive little pieces which allows Brahms' individuality to be distinctly felt. If, as is inevitable, they carry back the mind of the listener to the choral music of the sixteenth century, they recall the style of the early German, rather than of either of the Italian, schools. Perhaps the most fascinating of the set is No. 2, entitled 'Mary's Church-going.' Mary, on her way to church, comes to a deep lake, and, finding a young boatman standing ready, requests him to ferry her over, promising him whatever he may like best in return. The boatman answers that he will do what she asks provided she will become his housewife; but Mary, replying that she will swim across rather than consent to the suggestion, jumps into the water. When she is half-way to the other side, the church bells suddenly begin to ring, loudly, softly, all together. Mary, on her safe arrival, kneels on a stone in prayer, and the boatman's heart breaks. The first five verses are composed strophically (each like the other) for two sopranos, contralto, and tenor, in E flat minor, and are marked *piano*. The bass enters with the sixth verse, composed in E flat major, and, whilst the whole choir bursts into a jubilant *forte*, keeps up a movement in concert, first with the tenor and then with the soprano, suggestive of bell-ringing. The concluding words return to the setting of the first five verses, and by this means the little composition is rounded into definite shape.

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* The Variations are dated 1866 in the published catalogue.

The Variations are amongst the most beautiful of Brahms' many fine achievements in this particular domain, and present for admiration conspicuous qualities of their own arising from the opportunities offered by their composition in duet form. The theme on which they are founded is that supposed by Schumann to have been brought to him in the night three weeks before his malady reached its crisis. The work is dedicated to Fräulein Julie Schumann, the master's third daughter.

And now, in a few weeks, the period of Brahms' career which is to be especially associated with Hamburg was to close. He would gladly have strengthened his ties with the city to which he was so proud to belong, but, as we shall see, his compatriots would have none of him. Twice in the coming years they passed him by, and when the time at length arrived in which they would willingly have proclaimed the world-famous composer as their own special prophet, his interests and affections had become too deeply rooted within the city that he made his second home to be capable of a second transplantation.

Brahms quitted Hamburg for his first visit to Vienna on September 8. That he expected to return speedily is evident from the lines sent by him to Dietrich on the eve of his departure :

'DEAR FRIEND,

'I am leaving on Monday *for Vienna!* I look forward to it like a child.

'Of course I do not know how long I shall stay; we will leave it open, and I hope we may meet some time during the winter.

'The C minor Symphony is not ready ; on the other hand, a string quintet (2 v.celli) in F minor is finished. I should like to send it you and hear what you have to say about it, and yet I prefer to take it with me.

'Herewith my Handel Variations; the Marienlieder are not yet here.

'Greet all the Oldenburg friends.

'Pray do not leave me quite without letters. You might address for the present to Haslinger, or to Wessely and Büsing.

'Heartiest farewell meanwhile, dear Albert, to you and your wife.

'Your JOHANNES.'

'Father,' said Brahms, looking slyly at his father as he said good-bye, 'if things should be going badly with you, music is always the best consolation ; go and study my old "Saul" —you will find comfort there.'

He had thickly interlarded the volume with bank-notes.*

It is highly interesting to possess a clear conception of Brahms' achievements as a composer, and, therewith, of his exact title to consideration at this important moment of his career. This will be best obtained by a glance at the list of the chief completed works with which he was to present himself in the city associated with the most hallowed memories of his art. His departure for Vienna is by no means to be regarded as coincident with the close of any one period of his creative activity, though it emphatically marks the end, not only of a chapter, but of the first book of his life.

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* Max Kalbeck, p. 497. The reader must be reminded that at this period German bank-notes frequently represented but small sums.

List of Brahms' Chief Completed Works on his Departure for Vienna.

- Pianoforte Solos :
  - Three Sonatas.
  - Scherzo.
  - Variations on Schumann's theme in F sharp minor.
  - Variations on an original theme.
  - Variations on a Hungarian song.
  - Variations and Fugue on Handel's theme.
- Pianoforte Duet : Variations on a theme by Schumann.
- Pianoforte with Orchestra : Concerto in D minor.
- Orchestral : Two Serenades.
- Chamber music :
  - Sextet in B flat for Strings.
  - Trio in B major for Pianoforte and Strings.
  - Quartet in G minor „ „ „ „
  - Quartet in A major „ „ „ „
- Songs :
  - Five books (thirty songs).
  - 'Magelone Romances' (first six).
- Vocal Duets : two books.
- Three Vocal Quartets.
- Women's Chorus :
  - 'Ave Maria.'
  - Part-songs.
- Mixed Chorus :
  - Begräbnissgesang.
  - Marienlieder.
  - The 13th Psalm.
  - Motets.
  - Sacred Song.

The newly-finished String Quintet is not included in the list, as the work was not published in this its first form. The Hungarian Dances, as being arrangements, are also omitted.

APPENDICES

I.

MUSICAL FORM—ABSOLUTE MUSIC—PROGRAMME-MUSIC—BERLIOZ AND WAGNER

THE word Form, as applied to instrumental music, is synonymous with Design. A movement is built up on a certain ground-plan, the outlines of which are constructed according to some given arrangement of keys, or melodies, or both, which secures symmetry for the work and facilitates its presentment as a whole to the intelligence of the hearer. A chief element in musical form is recurrence, the simplest illustration of which—three sections of which the third repeats the first (A, B, A)—is to be found in a vast number of folk-melodies.

The main source to which the instrumental music of classical art owes its primitive origin is the Folk-melody, whether of dance or of song. This Folk-melody was entirely naïve, and as free from the imitative or pictorial, as from the reflective, element. The dance-melody was conditioned by the rhythm of the dance. The song-melody, also rhythmical as distinct from declamatory, more or less reflected the sentiment of the text; verses of a joyous character naturally suggested joyous tunes, those of a plaintive character, plaintive tunes; but the ideas constituting the melody were essentially musical thoughts, and contained no attempt at pictorial illustration of the subject of the words; the melody formed from them was Absolute music.

In process of time these melodies came to be treated apart from their text or their dance, and new ones were invented whose primary object was not the dance or the song, but the gratification of the ear and intelligence by the pleasing succession of musical phrases. Instrumental movements were constructed, and these bore unmistakable impress of their descent, since the ideas and series of ideas forming them were rhythmical and symmetrical.

It is obviously impossible in the short space at our disposal even to touch upon the history of the process by which early instrumental pieces of a few bars have gradually developed into the elaborate movements of classical art, but, by sketching as slightly as possible two of the forms, one or other of which underlies the vast majority of the instrumental works of modern classical music, we hope to enable all our readers to follow the allusions to Form in our text, which must be understood to include other forms than these, but such as have in common with them the essential element of design or symmetry.

The Rondo-form has been used by composers of almost all periods, and has, in modern times, developed into two large varieties. The idea from which it originated is best realized by reference to the old rondeau dance-song, the design of which is simplicity itself. A short melody sung several times in chorus was alternated with others contributed by solo voices, which were sometimes called 'couplets,' and which are now generally termed 'episodes.' The form required two, and permitted any number, of episodes, each of which was bound to furnish a new melody. The performance terminated as it began, with the chorus. The form, therefore, may be thus represented: A, B, A, C, A, *ad libitum*.

The reader will find many examples of the early eighteenth-century instrumental Rondo in Couperin's 'Pièces de Clavecin,' published in Paris in 1713, and edited for republication by Brahms (Chrysander's 'Denkmäler der Tonkunst'). With these he may compare the great rondo-movement of Beethoven's Sonata in C major, Op. 53.

The so-called Sonata-form underlies the immense majority of the first movements composed by the great masters of the last century and a half—the first movements, not only of those works for pianoforte solo or pianoforte and another instrument which are called by the name sonata, but of trios, quartets, and so forth, and of symphonies, which are, in fact, sonatas for orchestra.

A movement in Sonata-form consists of three essential parts—the Statement or Exposition of themes, the 'thematic material'; their Development; their Repetition. To these was formerly appended a short Coda, which has gradually developed, and now frequently extends to the dimensions of a fourth part.

The first part, the Statement, is itself divided into two sections, not necessarily or even generally of equal duration, marked by difference of tonality. The first is dominated by the tonic key of the movement. It contains the First Subject, which may be either short and concise, of sixteen or even eight bars only, or of several different paragraphs; a principal idea and subordinate themes. The second section is dominated by some other key; formerly, in a major movement by that of the dominant, in a minor movement by that of the relative major or dominant minor. It contains the Second Subject, a new melody followed or not by subordinate themes. These two sections are connected by a modulatory 'bridge passage,' which leads the ear from the first to the second principal key of the Statement, and which used generally to come to a pause on the dominant harmony of the new key in preparation for the entry of the Second Subject. The Statement closes, with or without a Codetta, in the key of the Second Subject. Formerly it was invariably played twice, its termination being followed by a double bar with repetition marks.

The second part of the movement, the Development, sometimes called the Free Fantasia or the Working-out, is what its name implies. It is constructed from the material of the Statement, which the composer works or develops according to his fancy, using either or both of his subjects, his bridge passage, his codetta, entire or in part, alone or combined, with much or little modulation to near or distant keys, just as he pleases. The Development part of the movement is not visibly and mechanically cut off from what follows it by a double bar like the Statement, nor does it end with a final cadence, but usually closes with some sort of half-cadence—formerly it was the typical one, a pause on the dominant—which leads to the third part of the movement, the Repetition.

In this the Statement is repeated, modified by the circumstance that both its sections are dominated by the tonic key of the movement, in which the Second Subject as well as the First is heard, such modulations as may have occurred in the Statement being represented in the Repetition with the changes required by this fact.

The Coda is more often than not retrospective, but its character and arrangement are at the discretion of the composer, provided that it gives sufficient emphasis to the original key to leave the mind of the hearer impressed with the tonality of the movement.

We have not troubled the reader in this short sketch with the varieties or exceptions to be found in the works of the great composers of the period indicated above. Their movements in this form, whether we examine those of the simple sonatina or of the complex symphony, will be found, broadly speaking, to conform to our description. A very clear illustration of the outlines of Sonata-form may be studied in the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata in G major, Op. 14, No. 2.

The developed instrumental movements of classical art, capable of stirring the highest aspirations of which the spirit of man is capable, are, like the short pieces from which they have sprung, constructed from 'musical ideas'—ideas, that is to say, which act upon the nerves, emotions, intellect of the listener, directly through the sense of sound, and are not dependent for their effect upon intermediate mental translation into images perceptible to the mind's eye, the vision of imagination. This does not mean that a composer of pure music never is and never may be pictorial, but the cases in which he is so are, as it were, accidental, and the pictorial element in a given work is not of the essence of his art, but is something added to it, something, moreover, which does not affect the value of the composition as a work of art. A composer of Absolute music may indeed, and often does, stimulate his imagination by recalling a poem, a legend, a scene of nature or life; and either of these may leave a more or less definite impress on his music; whilst a title or a motto placed above a short pianoforte piece, an orchestral overture, or, in very few cases, a symphony, may sometimes stimulate the hearer's appreciation; but the music is not in such a case to be taken as 'meaning' this or that in detail. The composer aims at making his movement a work of art complete in itself, and relies for his effects upon his musical thoughts and their treatment as such, though he may be willing to let his hearers know that his fancy was encouraged by extraneous aid.

The listener may, on the other hand, if it assist his enjoyment, attach his own 'meaning' to what he hears, but he must understand that this is relative to himself only. No one can assure him that his 'meaning' is right or wrong. The music as such should stand high above such interpretations, and, if it is to fulfil its supreme destiny, must speak directly to the soul in its own infinite language of sound, infinite just because it is capable of transcending the defined objects of sight.

Vocal forms have always necessarily been to a great extent dependent on the text chosen for musical treatment. Nevertheless, certain vocal forms have been developed—the aria, the ballad, the lied, the ensemble—which, though freer than those of instrumental music, have the common characteristics of symmetry more or less, and of rhythmic melody as distinct from the mere accentuation of the recitative.

The Art-song of the classical masters, whether for one or more voices, mirrors, like its parent the Folk-song, the sentiment of the text, but is not pictorial. Its instrumental accompaniment may, and at times does, reflect or emphasize the suggestion of the words, but it does not attempt to imitate or illustrate in detail the images which they represent; or only in an insignificant number of instances, which may be classed with the cases to which we have referred in our remarks upon instrumental music.

A good deal of confusion prevailed in the mind of the general musical public of the middle of the nineteenth century as to the views held by the musicians of the New-German party, and it has not been cleared away even at the present day. This has resulted chiefly from the fact that, like many another body of radical reformers, they were by no means at one as to the positive articles of their faith.

It is far from the desire of the present writer to enter into a lengthy discussion of vexed controversies which time alone can settle. The object of this appendix is simply to assist the general reader to follow certain allusions and incidents in the text of the narrative, and especially to make clear how it was that Brahms, an uncompromising champion of musical tradition, whose very existence as an artist was staked on the vitality of Absolute music, could deeply respect the art of Wagner. With these ends only in view, it is proposed to limit the few words to be said here to the attempt to show what the fundamental difference was which separated the methods of Berlioz and Wagner, the two giants of the Weimar party, in their efforts to establish a basis for the Music of the Future so far as they conceived this could be achieved by the closer union of the arts of instrumental music and poetry.

Berlioz (1803–1869) has been accepted as the typical champion of what is called Programme-music. The question as to what is to be understood by this term, however, has become very difficult to answer, because nowadays anything may become a programme or supply a label. A poem, a romance, or a commonplace situation of everyday life; an emotion, a series of emotions, or the individuality of a man or woman; or, again, the emotion or mental action which a certain personality may excite in another. If, however, we restrict the question and examine only what meaning attaches to the term Programme-music as applied to Berlioz's instrumental works, the answer is that the composer is so intent on conveying, as an essential part of his movements, definite and detailed ideas outside the art of sound *per se*, which he finds in certain poems or plays or narratives, that he not only places verbal headings above them, but in many cases prefaces his works with an explanation minutely describing the scenes which they are intended to represent point by point, or the emotions that he desires to excite at successive steps of their progress. Such detailed labels and expositions are what is commonly termed the Programme.

However the purpose be described which Berlioz thus set himself to fulfil, whether it be said that the music was to absorb or to clothe the poem, to translate or reflect it, it is obvious that, if words have any real meaning, its ultimate *raison d'être* was to be either imitative or, at best, illustrative. Instrumental music necessarily becomes one or the other the moment that material outside the domain of sound is accepted as of its essence, and it is thereby debased from the level of the fine art of sound. If it be said that the object of the programme is to be a sort of guide-post to the emotions or sentiments to which the music is addressed, the position becomes worse, for the incapacity of the musician as such stands confessed. The union of poetry and music in the sense of the instrumental Programme composer is, from the point of view of the creator of Absolute music, fatal, not only to the dignity, but to the vital force, of both arts. The poem becomes a phantom, the music a conundrum; the listener wastes his time and fancy in trying to fit them together, and is without means of knowing how far he has been successful, and the product of these processes is a something which, in the words of Wagner, is neither fish nor fowl.

Whatever may be the ultimate fate of Berlioz's works, his immense capacity, the extraordinary sensitiveness and force of his imagination of tone-colour, and his phenomenal mastery of the resources of the orchestra, have insured the survival of his name. If on no other account, it will live as that of the creator of the complex art of instrumentation in its modern sense, which was assimilated by Wagner and developed by him in his dramas with vitalizing energy.

Very far removed from Berlioz's position was that of Wagner (1813–1883), who not only implied his disbelief in Programme-music by his practice, but expressly recorded it by direct avowal, and illustrated his remarks by references to Berlioz's works.* If,

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* 'Music may accompany action, but can never become its substitute.'

'In the case even of the best and most ideal examples [of Programme-music] it always happened that I so completely lost the thread that no effort enabled me to recover it,' etc.

Wagner, at a certain period of his career, professed himself a partial convert to Programme-music—*i.e.*, as it is exemplified in the works of Liszt; but it is scarcely possible to read his remarks at this point without feeling that they were as may be the case, he received his first impulse as a reformer from Berlioz, he clearly saw the fallacies in which the theories of the French musician were involved, and avoided them in a sufficiently convincing manner. He perceived, firstly, that the rejection of a future for Absolute music was the same thing as the rejection of a future independent art of sound; secondly, that a union of instrumental music with poetry in Berlioz's sense meant that the function of music must be illustrative; thirdly, that the subject to be illustrated by musical sound must be presented to the perception of the audience in as real and indubitable a manner as the illustration; that, as the musical illustration was to be heard, so the subject illustrated must be seen.

Having boldly faced his premises, a splendid vision dawned upon his imagination, and he shrank from no consequences which they involved.

Rejecting the future existence not only of music, but also of poetry, as a separate art, he predicted for both a future, as co-ordinate elements with action and scenic effect, of a larger art, the drama, the object of which he explained to be dramatic truth. Concentrating his immense energies upon a reform of the stage, he adopted as his fundamental principle that of a return, in the modern sense, to the practice of Greek Tragedy. He substituted musical declamation of a very highly-developed order for the rhythmic melody and symmetrical movements of opera. Relinquishing the aria, the scena, the regularly-constructed ensemble linked by *recitativo secco*, which he conceived to be contradictory and obstructive to dramatic truth, his method was to set his poem to a glorified species of recitative, called by him the Melos, and to support and give it additional force and vividness by a gorgeous illustrative orchestral accompaniment, its other self. An important feature in his scheme, which is to be regarded as his substitute for the Subject of traditional form, was the adoption and development of the Leitmotif, a device employed to some extent by Weber in 'Der Freischütz,' and by Berlioz. By it the successive appearances on the stage of each prominent person of the drama, and often the anticipation and remembrance as well as the occurrence of an important situation, are signalized by a special harmonic progres-

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wrested from him by his conception of the obligations of friendship, and the circumstances of the time. Confessing that he finds it extremely difficult to explain himself, he says that he leaves to others the task of developing his meaning, and returns repeatedly to the expression of his general dislike of Programme-music.

sion or a particular rhythmic figure. These became in the case of Wagner, who was his own poet, something more than mere labels or mottoes. Growing up in his mind with the progress of his poem, his series of Leitmotive became for him, as it were, his musical dramatis personæ. He felt them as an inseparable part of his persons and events, and they became with these the framework on which his works were constructed.

It must be clear to all unprejudiced minds that the principles which guided the creator of the great music dramas were perfectly logical and coherent, and that Wagner acted on them throughout the course of his career, properly so called, with entire consistency and with magnificent success. His error, and the error of his disciples, lay in their arrogant and senseless propaganda of the Wagnerian articles of faith, as expressions of the ultimate and universal principles of art. Wagner went so far as to claim that Beethoven, recognising that instrumental music had reached its natural term of existence, had given practical expression to such a belief by setting Schiller's 'Ode to Joy' in the finale of his ninth symphony. The assumption is controverted by the facts that Beethoven composed the works known as the posthumous string quartets, and sketched a purely instrumental tenth symphony after the completion of the ninth.

The rejection of a future for Absolute music is, of course, purely arbitrary. Wagner's achievements for the stage were transcendent, but it is even conceivable that the progress of time may sooner or later produce a composer able successfully to champion, in a manner of his own, the cause of rhythmic melody, of traditional form, on Wagner's own arena, on the stage itself.

If we examine the pretensions of the so-called larger art, the musical Drama, versus the capacities of the several arts of poetry, of music, of dramatic action, by the testimony of Wagner's own works, is it possible to contend that these make for, and not against, the wholly superfluous proposition from which he started as a reformer? One of the reproaches frequently levelled by the New-Germans against ante-Wagnerian opera was that its form hardly rose above the level of an entertainment; that entertainment was its *raison d'être.* What, however, is the ultimate result of the musical Dramas? Is it not also entertainment—entertainment of a highly complex and luxurious form, conceived and accomplished, certainly, in the most perfect and perfectly consistent manner? The famous Dramas are gorgeous stage poems; but are they so exceptionally and extraordinarily elevating to the mind? They address the senses with exceptional power. Could either of them replace amongst our highest possessions a really great play, a great poem, a great symphony? The art of sound, the art of music, is and remains the special art divine because it is capable of reaching beyond the limited impressions of which words are the symbols, and of suggesting the infinite.

Let us be grateful for the splendid gifts which the genius of Wagner has bestowed on the world. May the supreme art of music, however, be always recognised as such. May a musical prophet again arise in due time, capable of speaking with authority in its language—the language of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, of Schubert, Mendelssohn, and Schumann, the language of Bach and of Brahms.

II.

THE MAGELONE ROMANCES

THE story of the Count Peter of Provence and the beautiful Magelone, Princess of Naples, which is associated with a well-known ruin on the south coast of France, is said by Raynouard to have formed the subject of a poem written towards the close of the twelfth century by Bernhard de Trèves, Canon of Magelonne in Languedoc. It was adapted as a prose romance not later than the middle of the twelfth, and printed in at least five different editions before the end of the fifteenth, century. Of these, rare copies are to be found in some of the famous libraries of England and the Continent. Two editions, copies of which are in the British Museum, were issued by Maître Guillaume Le Roy. With slight differences of spelling they begin:

'Au nom de notre seigneur ihesucrist, cy commēce listoyre du vaillant chevalier pierre filz du cōte de provēce et de la belle maguelonne fille du roy de naples.'

The romance is constructed from the familiar elements of medieval fiction—chivalry, religion and love—and has been translated at various dates into almost every European language, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Norse, etc. It has been republished in German many times through the centuries since it was first done into that language (probably in 1483), and was included by G. O. Marbach in 1838 in his popular series of tales (Volksbücher). That it was this version of the story that found its way into Frau

Löwenherz's library and was read by Johannes and Lischen is proved beyond doubt by its title, which is identical with that noted down by the present writer from the lips of Frau Denninghoff, the 'Lischen' of our biography—'Geschichte der schönen Magelone und dem Ritter Peter mit den silbernen Schlüsseln'—and it seems probable that Marbach obtained his tale from an edition published in 1661 at Nürnburg: 'Historia der schönen Magelona, eines Königs Tochter von Neaples, und einem Ritter, genannt Peter mit den silbernen Schlüsseln, eines Grafen Sohn aus Provincia.' Of the many editions, fifteenth and up to the nineteenth century, to which the author has had access, no other contains in its title any mention of the silver keys.

Marbach's version is a fine one. Whilst he has modernized the old romance in certain respects, he has kept, not only to the main incidents of the tale, but to the quaint old dialogues which naïvely portray the characters of the manly-hearted but rather weak-minded Peter and the high-spirited, self-willed, yet tender Magelone.

Tieck's version, published in 1812 in the first volume of the 'Phantasus,' differs considerably, especially in its particulars of the beginning and end of the romance, from the original details of the story. In making his alterations, the poet seems to have been chiefly concerned to eliminate the religious element from his narrative as far as possible, and to provide opportunity for the introduction of seventeen songs of which Brahms composed fifteen. The tale has suffered considerably in his hands. The general atmosphere of French medieval fiction, with its characteristic setting of sunrise and sunset, flowers and birds, and, in parts, the wording of the old romance, have, however, been preserved, and we may be grateful to Tieck for the poems which have placed us in possession of Brahms' beautiful song-cycle.

We propose to give an abridgment of his narrative up to a certain point and to summarize ensuing details, which become prolix and involved in all the versions. We shall insert only the first few lines of each song.

HOW A STRANGE SINGER CAME TO THE COURT OF PROVENCE.

A long time ago, a Count reigned in Provence whose beautiful and noble son grew up the joy of his parents. He was big and strong and his shining fair hair flowed round his neck and shaded his tender, youthful face. Then he was well proved in arms; no one in or beyond the land managed the lance and sword as he, so that he was admired by great and small, young and old, noble and simple. He was often absent-minded as though meditating on some secret desire, and many experienced people concluded that he must be in love, but none of them would awaken him from his thoughts, for they knew that love is like the vision of a dream, which is apt, if disturbed, to vanish and return to its dwelling in the ether and the golden mists of morning.

His father gave a great tournament to which many knights were invited. It was a wonder to see how the tender youth hove the best and strongest from their saddles. He was lauded by everyone, but no praise made him proud; indeed he sometimes felt ashamed at overcoming such great and worthy knights. Amongst the guests was a singer who had seen many lands; he was no knight, but he surpassed many nobles in insight and experience. He made friends with Peter and praised him uncommonly, but concluded his talk with these words: Sir Knight, if I might advise you, you should not remain here, but should see other places and other men, to improve your ideas and learn to associate the strange with the familiar. He took his lute and sang,

No one yet hath rued the day
  When on charger mounting
Youthful-strong he sped away,
  Pain nor peril counting, etc.

The youth listened to the song: when it was at an end, he remained awhile sunk in thought; then said: Yes, now I know what I want; many variegated pictures pass through my mind. No greater joy for a young knight than to ride through valley and over field. Here in the morning sunshine stands a stately castle, there over the meadow sounds the shepherd's shawm; a noble maiden flies by on a white palfrey. Oh, I wish I were already on my good horse. Heated by these new thoughts, he went at once to his mother's chamber where he found his father also. Peter immediately sank on one knee and made his request that his parents would allow him to travel and seek adventures: for, thus he concluded his speech, he who only stays at home keeps a narrow mind during his whole life, but by travel, one learns to associate the strange with the familiar; therefore do not refuse me your consent.

The old Count said: My son, your request appears to me unsuitable, for you are my only heir; if I should die in your absence, what would become of my land? But Peter kept to his request, whereat his mother began to weep and said to him: Dear, only son, you have never tasted trouble, and see only your beautiful hopes before you, but remember that if you depart, a thousand difficulties may confront you; you may be miserable and wish yourself back with us.

Peter remained humbly on his knees and answered: Beloved parents, I cannot help it. My only wish is to travel into the wide world, to experience pleasure and sorrow there and to return a known and honoured man. For this you travelled in your youth, my father, and brought home my mother from a strange land. Let me seek a like fortune, I beg for this with tears.

He took the lute and sang the song which he had heard from the minstrel, and at the end he wept bitterly. The parents were moved, especially the mother; she said: Well, I, for my part, will give you my blessing, dear son, for what you have said is true. The father also rose and blessed him, and Peter was glad from his heart that he had received his parents' consent.

Orders were given to prepare everything for his departure, and his mother sent for him to come to her privately. She gave him three precious rings and said: See, my son, I have kept these three precious rings carefully from my youth. Take them with you and treasure them, and if you find a maiden whom you love, and who is inclined towards you, you may give them to her. He gratefully kissed her hand, and the morning came on which he took leave.

How the Knight Peter departed from his Parents.

When Peter was ready to mount his horse, his father blessed him again and said: My son, may good fortune ever accompany you so that we may see you back again healthy and strong; think constantly of the precepts I have impressed upon your tender youth; seek good, and avoid evil, company; honour the laws of knighthood and never forget them, for they are the noblest thoughts of the noblest men in their best hours; always be loyal even though you may be deceived, for the touchstone of the brave is that though he may seldom meet honourable men, he remain true to himself. Farewell!

Peter rode away without attendance, for, like many young knights, he wished to remain unknown. The sun had risen gloriously, and the fresh dew sparkled on the meadows. Peter was in cheerful spirits and spurred on his good horse so that it sprang boldly forward. An old song rang in his head and he sang it out loud:

Yes! arrow on bow
   Shall swiftly be laid
To humble the foe,
   The helpless to aid, etc.

He arrived, after many days' journey, at the famous city of Naples. He had heard much talk on his way of the King and his surpassingly beautiful daughter Magelone, so that he was very anxious to see her face to face. He dismounted at an inn to ask for news, and heard from the host that a distinguished knight, Sir Henry of Carpone, had come and that a splendid tournament was to be held in his honour. He learned, also, that entrance would be allowed to strangers who appeared equipped according to the laws of tourney. Peter at once resolved to be present to try his dexterity and strength.

PETER SEES THE BEAUTIFUL MAGELONE.

When the day of the tournament arrived, Peter put on his armour and betook himself to the lists. He had had two beautiful silver keys of uncommonly fine workmanship placed upon his helmet, and had caused his shield and the cover of his horse to be likewise ornamented with keys. This he did for the sake of his name and in honour of the Apostle Peter, whom he greatly loved. He had recommended himself to his care and protection from his youth and therefore chose this token, as he wished to remain unknown.

A herald rode forward and with sound of trumpet proclaimed the tournament that was opened to the honour of the beautiful Magelone. She herself sat on an elevated balcony and looked down on the assemblage of knights. Peter looked up but could not see her distinctly as she was too far off. . . .

. . . Peter opposed the knight in the lists and soon threw him from his horse, so that everyone marvelled at his strength; he did more, for in a short time he had emptied every saddle so that none remained to tilt against him. Then everyone desired to know the name of the strange knight, and the King of Naples himself sent his herald to learn it, but Peter humbly begged leave to remain unknown until he should have become worthy by his deeds to name himself, and this answer pleased the King.

It was not long before another tournament was held, and the beautiful Magelone secretly hoped that the knight with the silver keys might again be visible, for she loved him, but had as yet confided this to no one, since first love is despondent and holds itself a traitor. She grew red as Peter again entered the lists in his conspicuous armour. She gazed at him steadily, and he was victor in every contest; at length she felt no more surprise, for it seemed to her as though it could not be otherwise. At last the tournament was over. Peter had again won great praise and honour.

The King sent to invite him to his table; he sat opposite the Princess and was amazed at her beauty. She constantly looked kindly at him, which caused him the greatest confusion. His talk pleased the King, and his noble and strong appearance astonished the attendants. In the hall he found opportunity to speak alone with the Princess, and she invited him to come again often, upon which he took leave; she sent him away at length with another very kind glance.

Peter went through the streets as if intoxicated. He hurried into a beautiful garden and walked up and down with folded arms, now slowly, now quickly, without being able to understand how the hours passed. He heard nothing around him, for music within him drowned the whispering of the trees and the rippling murmur of the fountains. A thousand times he spoke the name Magelone and then was suddenly afraid that he had called it loudly through the garden. Towards evening a sweet music sounded, and now he sat down on the grass behind a bush and wept. It seemed to him as though heaven had for the first time displayed its beauty, and yet this feeling made him unhappy. He saw the grace of the Princess floating on the silver waves; she appeared like sunrise in the darkening night, and the stars stood still, trees were quiet, and the winds hushed. Now the last accents of the music sounded, the trees rustled again and the fountains grew louder. Peter roused himself and softly sang the following song:

Is it gladness that is ringing,
  Is it sorrow, in my heart?
Now a thousand flow'rs are springing
  And all former joys depart, etc.

He was somewhat comforted and swore to win his love or to die. Late at night he returned to the inn, sat down in his room, and repeated every word the Princess had said to him. Now he thought he had reason to rejoice, then he was again troubled and in doubt. He wished to write to his father, but could only address Magelone, and then he reproached himself for his absence of mind in venturing to write to her whom he did not know. At length he lay down; slumber overcame him, and wonderful visions of love and flight, solitary forests and storms at sea, visited his chamber and covered the bare walls as with beautiful variegated hangings.

HOW THE KNIGHT SENT MAGELONE A MESSAGE.

During the night Magelone was as restless as her unknown knight. She went often to the window and looked down thoughtfully into the garden. She listened to the rustling trees, looked at the stars mirrored in the sea, reproached the stranger because he was not standing before her window, then wept because she thought it impossible. When she closed her eyes she saw the tournament and the beloved unknown looking up with longing hope. Now she fed on these fancies, now she scolded herself. Towards morning she fell into a light slumber.

At last she resolved to confess her inclination to her beloved nurse. In a confidential evening hour she said to her: Dear nurse, something has for a long time been weighing upon me which almost crushes my heart; I must, at length, tell it you and you must help me with your motherly counsel, for I do not know any longer how to advise myself. The nurse answered: Confide in me, dear child; it is for this that I am older, and love you as a mother, that I may assist you to good purpose, for youth never knows how to help itself.

When the Princess heard these words she became more courageous and confidential and said: Oh, Gertrude have you observed the unknown knight with the silver keys? But of course you have, for he is the only one worth notice; all the others serve but to glorify him, to circle his head with the sunshine of fame. He is the one man, the most beautiful youth, the bravest hero. Since I saw him my eyes have become useless, for they now see only my thoughts in which he dwells in all his glory. If I only knew that he were of high race I would place all my hopes on him; but he cannot come from an unworthy house, who then could be called noble? Oh, answer, comfort me, dear nurse, and give me counsel.

When the nurse heard these words she was frightened and said: Dear child, I have long expected that you would confide to me who it is that you love of the nobles of this or another kingdom, for the highest of the land and even kings desire you. But why have you placed your inclination upon a stranger of whom no one knows whence he came? I tremble lest the King, your father, should observe your love. The Princess became much agitated whilst the nurse was speaking, and when she ceased, vehemently reproached her for calling the knight who was so near her heart a stranger. . . . Oh, go and seek him, Gertrude, and find out his rank and his name.

He will not keep them secret if I ask them, for I would keep no secrets from him.

When the morning came the nurse went to church to pray for guidance and perceived the knight also kneeling in devout prayer. When he rose, he approached and greeted her politely, for he had seen her at Court. She gave him the Princess's message and asked his name and his rank: because it did not become so noble a man to remain hidden.

Peter rejoiced, for he perceived that Magelone loved him. He begged leave to keep his name concealed a little longer, but ended his talk with the nurse by saying: Tell the Princess that I am of noble lineage, and that my ancestors are famed in history books. Meanwhile take this remembrance and let it be a little reward for your welcome message which has brought back hope to me.

He gave the nurse one of his rings and she was glad, because she knew from it that he must be of high descent. He modestly gave her, also, a leaf of parchment, saying he did so in the hope that the Princess would read some words that he had written down in the sentiment of his love.

Love drew near from distant places,
No attendant in her train,
Beckon'd me, nor called in vain,
Held me fast in sweet embraces, etc.

The song touched Magelone deeply; it was like the echo of her own feeling. She persuaded the nurse to give her the ring in exchange for another trinket, and before going to rest at night she hung it by a chain of pearls to her neck. She dreamed of a garden, nightingales, music, love, and of another ring even more precious than the first. In the morning she told her dream to the nurse, who became thoughtful, for she saw that the happiness or unhappiness of the Princess was fixed on the unknown knight.

How the Knight sent Magelone a Ring.

The nurse tried to see Peter again and found him in church. He went to her directly and asked after the Princess. The nurse told him she had kept the ring and had read his words; she also mentioned Magelone's dream. Peter grew red with joy and said: Ah, dear nurse, tell her all I feel and that I must die of longing if I do not speak to her soon; if, however, I may talk with her face to face, I will reveal to her my rank and my name. All my desire is to win her for my wife. Give her this ring also and pray her to keep it as a little token.

The nurse hastened back to Magelone, who ran to meet her and asked for news. See, cried the Princess, this is the ring I dreamed of. A leaf contained this song:

Does pity so tender
Tell love's sweet surrender?
 Oh, am I awake?
The fountains are springing,
The streams softly singing,
 And all for love's sake.

HOW THE KNIGHT RECEIVED ANOTHER MESSAGE FROM THE BEAUTIFUL MAGELONE.

Peter again met the nurse in church. She asked him to swear to her his honourable intentions, and, when he had taken his oath, promised to help him and the Princess. She told Peter to prepare to go, to-morrow afternoon, through the secret garden-gate to her room to see Magelone there, and ended by saying: I will leave you alone, that you may speak out your hearts to each other.

After telling him the hour at which he was to go through the gate, she left. Peter was distracted with joy, and it seemed to him that the time stood still until the evening hours. He sat up late at night without a light, looking at the clouds and stars, his heart beating violently. At length he slept. All the next morning he was unable to calm himself, so at last he took a lute and sang:

Oh, how shall I measure
 The joy of our meeting?
 My spirit's wild beating
Acclaimeth my soul's only treasure.

HOW PETER VISITED THE BEAUTIFUL MAGELONE.

When the nurse brought Peter to her room he trembled and was very frightened, and both he and Magelone were much confused. Magelone could scarcely help rising and going towards him. She controlled herself, however, and remained seated. The nurse left the room and Peter sank on one knee before the Princess. Magelone gave him her beautiful hand and told him to rise and sit near her. Peter told the Princess that all his life was consecrated to her. He gave her the third ring, which was the most precious of all, and in doing so kissed her hand. . . . Then she took a costly gold chain and hung it round his neck, and said: Herewith I take you as mine. Here she took the frightened knight in her arms and kissed him, and he returned the kiss and pressed her to his heart.

When they were obliged to part, Peter hastened at once to his room. He walked up and down with great strides and at length seized his instrument, kissed the strings and wept. Then he sang with great fervour:

Were they thine on which these lips were pressing,
  Thine the frankly-offered, tender kiss?
  Dwells in earthly living so much bliss?
Ha! what light and life were in thy sweet confessing,
All my senses tremble in its blessing! etc.

A TOURNAMENT IN HONOUR OF THE BEAUTIFUL MAGELONE.

The King of Naples much wished his daughter to be soon married to the knight, Henry of Carpone, who had now waited at Naples a long time for this purpose, and he proclaimed another tournament more splendid than any that had gone before it. Many famous knights came from Italy and France, and Peter was victor over all.

When it was over he went to see Magelone; he had now visited her pretty often, and thought he would like to try her, so he said that he should now be obliged to leave her and go and be with his parents. Magelone wept very much, but as Peter persisted she at length gave way, and said: Go, then, I shall die. Peter rejoiced at this and told her he would not leave her.

Magelone, however, became thoughtful, and after she had reflected for a while, said to the knight that her father would soon marry her to Sir Henry of Carpone, and that therefore it would, perhaps, be better for Peter to return to his father and mother and to take her with him. She desired him to have two good horses ready the next night at the garden-gate: But let them be swift and strong, for if we were to be overtaken we should all be miserable.

The youth heard the Princess with joyful surprise. He said it would be best to take her to his parents, and that the horses should be ready. Magelone did not confide their intention even to the nurse for fear lest she should betray them.

Peter took a walk through the town to bid farewell to the places near which he had so often wandered in his intoxication, and which he regarded as witnesses of his love. When he returned to his room he was moved to see his faithful lute on the table. Touched by his fingers, it had often expressed the feelings of his heart. He took it up again for the last time and sang,

Dear strings, we are parting
  This night for evermore,
'Tis time to be starting
  For the far-off blissful shore, etc.

How Magelone went away with the Knight.

When the night came it was very cloudy and the moonlight showed scantily through the darkness. Magelone said farewell to her favourite flowers as she went through the garden. She found Peter before the gate with three horses, one a palfrey with a light and easy step; the third was to carry provisions, so that they need not enter the inns.

The nurse missed the Princess the next morning, and the King sent out many people to search, but all returned after some days without tidings.

Peter chose to ride towards the forests by the sea because they were quiet and lonely. He and Magelone rode on through the night and Magelone was happy. The forest was dark, but whenever they came to an open space she refreshed herself by gazing at Peter. In the morning there was a white mist and by-and-by the sun shone out. The horses neighed, the birds awoke and sang as they hopped from branch to branch, the happy larks flew upwards and sang from above into the red glimmering world.

Peter also sang cheerful songs. The two travellers saw in the glowing sky, in the brightness of the fresh forest, a reflection of their love. The sun mounted higher, and towards noon Magelone felt a great weariness. They dismounted, therefore, at a cool, shady place in the forest where there was a mound thickly covered with moss and tender grass. Here Peter sat down and spread out his mantle, and Magelone placed herself upon it, resting her head on the knight. She told Peter how happy she was, and begged him to sing to her, to mingle his voice with the birds, the trees, the brooks, in order that she might sleep a little: But wake me at the right time in order that we may soon arrive at the home of your dear parents. Peter smiled, watched her beautiful eyes close, and sang,

> Rest thee, sweet love, in the shadow
> Of leafy, glimmering night;
> The grass rustles over the meadow,
> Refreshing and cool is the shadow,
> And love holds thee in sight.
> Sleep, lady mine,
> Hush'd in woodland shrine,
> Ever I am thine, etc.

Peter almost sang himself to sleep also. Then something roused him. He looked round and saw a number of beautiful, tender birds on the mound, and it pleased him that they came so near to Magelone. But a slight noise caused him to turn again, and he was startled to perceive a great black raven perched on the branch of the tree behind him; it seemed to him like a rough, coarse churl amongst noble knights.

He fancied that Magelone breathed with some uneasiness, and unlaced the neck of her dress. There he found a little red silk bag; it was new, and he was curious to know what was in it and turned it out. He was overjoyed to find that it contained his three precious rings, and quickly wrapped them up again and placed them beside him on the grass. But suddenly the raven flew down from the tree and carried away the bag, perhaps taking it for a piece of meat. Peter was frightened. Magelone might awaken and be displeased at losing her rings. He therefore folded his mantle and placed it carefully under her head, and then stood up to look for the raven. It flew away, and Peter followed and threw stones to make it drop the bag, but was unable to hit it. As it flew further and further he went after it, without noticing that he was already some distance from the spot where he had left Magelone sleeping, till presently he came to the sea. There was a pointed crag not far from the shore and the raven perched there, and Peter again threw stones. At last the bird dropped the bag and flew away screaming. Peter saw the bag floating in the sea close by and ran up and down to find something to help him into the water. He found an old weather-beaten boat left behind by fishermen as useless, and jumped into it and tried to steer towards the bag. Suddenly a strong wind blew from the land, the waves rose and, in spite of all Peter could do, the boat was carried past the crag and further and further from the shore. The bag was fast disappearing from sight; now it was only like a red spot in the distance, the land receded. Peter cried and lamented loudly, but without avail. His tones were echoed back mingled with the sound of the waves. He thought of Magelone sleeping in the wood, and wished to drown himself in his despair. Presently the sun shone out, and now he was seized with a terrible thirst which he was unable to quench. At length evening began to fall: Ah, dearest Magelone, he thought, how strangely have we been parted! The moon filled the world with golden twilight; stars appeared in heaven, and the firmament was mirrored in the waving water. All was still and only the waves plashed, and birds fluttered over him from time to time, filling the air with strange tones. At last Peter lay down in the boat and sang loudly,

Foam on then in furious raging,
  Surround me, tempestuous waves,
Relentless thy forces engaging,
  For death is the boon that love craves, etc.

The sequel may be summarized. Magelone, on awakening and finding herself alone, waits vainly for Peter's return, and at length, as night comes on, climbs a tree to be safe from the wild beasts which she fancies she hears in the distance. In the morning she loosens the horses which Peter had tied to a tree and lets them go their own way, and after a little while finds herself on the road to Rome, where she makes an exchange of dress with a passing pilgrim. Making her way first to Rome and thence to Genoa, she takes ship for Provence, where she thinks she may hear something of Peter. She is sheltered on her arrival there by a kind woman who talks to her about the good Count and Countess of Provence and of their great grief. They have heard nothing of their only son since his departure two years ago in quest of adventure. Magelone now knows that some sad mishap has befallen Peter, and that he had not intended to leave her. She resolves to remain unmarried, think of Peter, and dedicate her life to the service of God. The kind woman with whom she is staying tells her of a small island near 'the port of the heathen,' where all merchant-ships and other vessels call in passing and where many poor and sick folk are to be found. Here she resolves to settle. She builds a small church, the altar of which is raised to the honour of St. Peter, and calls it the Church of St. Pierre de Maguelonne. The fame of her strict life and good deeds reaches the ear of the Count and Countess of Provence, who go to see her, and the Countess, not knowing who she is, relates the history of her troubles. Magelone comforts her and inspires her with the hope that Peter will return. Some time afterwards the Count's cook finds a small red bag in the belly of a great fish which he has cut open. He runs with it to the Countess, who finds that it contains her three precious rings. This wonderful event convinces her that she will see her son again.

Tieck's version of Magelone's adventure is that, after untying the horses and wandering alone for some days till she comes to Provence, she finds shelter in a shepherd's hut, where she sings the song No. 11 of Brahms' cycle:

Not long enduring,
  Light goes by;
The morning seeth
  The chaplet dry
That yesterday blossomed
  In splendour bright,
But drooped and withered
  In gloom of night, etc.

Peter's adventures are various. Rousing himself from his despair on the morning after his separation from Magelone, he resolves to bear the anguish as well as the joy of life with manly courage. Soon a big pirate-ship sails towards him. It is full of Moors and heathen who take him on board, and who, struck with his youth and glorious manhood, determine to carry him as a present to the Sultan of Babylon. The Sultan is pleased with Peter and shows him high favour. He puts him in charge of a beautiful garden and lets him wait on him at table.

So far Tieck is faithful to the old story, only introducing the song (No. 12 of Brahms' work) which Peter sings as he walks in the garden thinking sadly of Magelone :

> Are we, then, for ever parted ?
> Was our true love all in vain ?
> Why must we live broken-hearted ?
> Death were surely lesser pain, etc.

From this point the versions differ. In the medieval romance, Peter, who, though beloved by everyone in the Sultan's palace and especially by the Sultan himself, is very unhappy, at length persuades his master to let him go and see his parents, and, after adventures on the way, is recognised by Magelone in one of the beds of her hospital to which he has been brought almost lifeless.

Tieck, who does not localize the Sultan, introduces into the story his beautiful daughter Sulima, who falls violently in love with Peter and has him secretly introduced to her presence by a confidential slave. Peter, greatly surprised and embarrassed, is astonished at her beauty, but his heart holds fast to Magelone. He longs to see his native land again, to be amongst Christians and with his parents. He often sees Sulima, who observes his unhappiness and one day offers to fly with him in a ship that is already standing in the harbour with sails filled. She will give him a sign for a certain evening; when he hears a little song he likes in the garden, he is to come and fetch her. Peter, after considering the proposal, decides to accept it. He believes Magelone to be dead, and thinks that he will thus be enabled to return to a Christian land and to his parents.

On the appointed night he walks up and down the Sultan's garden by the shore. At length he sleeps, and dreams that Magelone is looking at him threateningly. On awaking, he walks up and down again, reproaching himself, and at last resolves to throw himself into a little boat and cast out to sea alone. It is a lovely summer night, a warm breeze is stirring, and Peter gives himself up to chance and the stars. Then he hears the sign. A zither sounds, and a sweet voice sings,

Belovèd, where dwelleth
  Thy footstep this night?
The nightingale telleth
  Its tale of delight, etc.

Peter's heart shrinks within him as he hears the song; it seems to call after him his weakness and vacillation. He rows more swiftly; love urges him backwards, love draws him onward. The music becomes fainter and fainter; now it is quite lost in the distance, and only the murmur of the waves and the stroke of the oar sound through the stillness.

Peter gathers heart when the sound of the song no longer reaches him, and lets the little vessel drift before the wind as he sits down and sings:

Fresh courage on my spirit breaks
  And fading is my sadness;
New life within me reawakes
  Old longing and old gladness, etc.

Tieck preserves the further adventures of the romance, but brings the knight to Magelone as she sits spinning outside the door of the shepherd's hut. The song of their reunion is the fifteenth and last of Brahms' cycle:

Faithful love long time endureth,
  Many an hour it doth survive,
And from sorrow strength secureth,
  And from doubt doth faith derive.

III.

THE HAMBURG LADIES' CHOIR[*]

Avertimento.

Sondern weilen es absolute dem Plaisire förderſam iſt, wenn es fein ordentlich dabei einhergeht, als wird denen curieusen Gemüthern, ſo Mitglieder des ſehr nutz- und lieblichen Frauenchors wünſchen zu werden und zu bleiben jetzund kund und offenbar gethan, daß ſie partoute die Clausuln und Puncti hiefolgenden Geſchreibſels unter zu zeichnen haben ehe ſie ſich obgenannten Tituls erfreuen und an der muſikaliſchen Erluſtigung und Divertirung parte nehmen können.

Ich hätte zwaren ſchon längſt damit unter der Bank herfür wiſchen ſollen, alleine aberſt dennoch, weilen der Frühling erſt lieblich präambuliret und bis der Sommer finiret, geſungen werden dürfte,

---

[*] From 'Brahms in Hamburg,' by Walter Hübbe. See p. 255 of this narrative.

als möchte es noch an der Zeit ſein dieſes Opus an das Tageslicht zu ſtellen.

Pro primo wäre zu remarquiren daß die Mitglieder des Frauenchors da ſein müſſen.

Als wird verſtanden: daß ſie ſich obligiren ſollen, den Stehungen und Singungen der Societät regelmäßig beizuwohnen.

So nun Jemand dieſen Articul nicht gehörig observiret und, wo Gott für ſei, der Fall passirete, daß Jemand wider jedes Decorum ſo fehlete, daß er während eines Exercitiums ganz fehlete:

ſoll geſtraft werden mit einer Buße von 8 Schillingen H. C. [Hamburger Courant].

Pro secundo iſt zu beachten, daß die Mitglieder des Frauenchors da ſein müſſen.

Als iſt zu nehmen, ſie ſollen praecise zur anberaumeten Zeit da ſein.

Wer nun hiewieder alſo ſündiget, daß er das ganze Viertheil einer Stunde zu ſpät der Societät ſeine ſchuldige Reverentz und Aufwartung machet, ſoll um 2 Schillinge H. C. geſtrafet werden.

|: Ihrer großen Meriten um den Frauenchor wegen und in Betracht ihrer vermuthlich höchſt mangelhaften und unglücklichen Complexion, ſoll nun hier für die nicht genug zu favorirende und adorirende Demoiselle Laura Garbe ein Abonnement hergeſtellt werden, wesmaßen ſie nicht jedesmal zu bezahlen braucht, ſondern aber ihro am Schluß des Quartals eine moderirte Rechnung praesentiret wird :|

Pro tertio: Das einkommende Geld mag denen Bettelleuten gegeben werden und wird gewünſcht daß Niemand davon geſättiget werden möge.

Pro quarto iſt zu merken, daß die Musikalien großentheils der Discretion der Dames anvertrauet ſind. Derohalben ſollen ſie wie fremdes Eigenthum von den ehr- und tugendſamen Jungfrauen und Frauen in rechter Lieb und aller Hübſchheit gehalten werden, auch in keinerlei Weiſe außerhalb der Societät benützet werden.

Pro quinto: Was nicht mit ſingen kann, das ſehen wir als ein Neutrum an. Will heißen: Zuhörer werden geduldet indeſſen aber pro ordinario nicht beachtet, was Geſtalt ſonſten die rechte Nutzbarkeit der Exercitia nicht beſchaffet werden möchte.

Obgemeldeter gehörig specifizirter Erlaß wird durch gegenwärtiges General-Rescript anjetzo jeder männiglich public gemacht und ſoll in Würden gehalten werden, bis der Frauenchor ſeine Endſchaft erreichet hat.

Sollteſt du nun nicht nur vor dich ohnverbrüchlich darob halten,

ſondern auch alles Ernſtes daran ſein, daß andere auf keinerlei Weiſe noch Wege darwider thun noch handeln mögen.

An dem beſchiehet Unſere Meinung und erwarte dero gewünſchte und wohlgewogene Approbation.

Der ich verharre in tiefſter Devotion
und Veneration des Frauenchors allzeit dienſtbefliſſener
ſchreibfertiger und taktfeſter

Johannes Kreisler jun.
alias: Brahms.

Geben auf Montag
den 30ten des Monats Aprili.
A. D. 1860

Professor Hübbe adds:

'It must be said in explanation of the jesting note to section 2 that the Demoiselle Garbe mentioned in it was often prevented from being punctual, and that Brahms was unwilling to begin without her. The exception at first taken by her to the note in question was met most kindly by Frau Schumann, who pointed out that the special mention of her name in the highly important document would be the very means of securing its lasting fame.

The 'begging people' of section 3 saw nothing, as I am told, of the money collected by the fines, which was used for other purposes—on one occasion for an excursion to Reinbeck.

One of the ladies' copies still in existence bears the following signatures: Auguste Brandt, Bertha Porubszky, Laura Garbe, Marie Seebohm, Emilie Lentz, Clara Schumann, Julie Hallier, Marie Hallier, Ch. Avé Lallement, Friedchen Wagner, Thusnelde Wagner, M. Reuter, Betty Völckers, Marie Völckers, Henny Gabain, Marie Böhme, Francisca Meier, Camilla Meier, Susanne Schmaltz, Antonie Mertens (Emma Grädener).'

The metal badge which the members had to wear was no doubt adopted at this time (1860). It had the form of a trefoil clover-leaf with a circle in the centre. This displayed a B upon red, and the three surrounding parts of the trefoil, the letters H. F. C. upon blue, ground.

END OF VOL. I.

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