JEAN-BAPTISTE FAURE

By HENRI DE CURZON

THE events which have set all Europe aflame during many months have caused numerous deaths to be passed over without notice which, at other times, would have created considerable commotion.

One such is that of Jean-Baptiste Faure, the illustrious French lyric artist; he had, however, withdrawn from the world many years ago, never making his appearance anywhere, and was over eighty-four years of age when he passed away peacefully on November the 9th, 1914.

To-day it is difficult to realize what an exceptional position he occupied in the world of art at the end of the Empire, and even after the war of 1870, when all the life-forces of France were infused with new energy in every branch of her multifarious activities. His world-wide celebrity, the deference paid him on every hand, his entire personality even, were almost without precedent at the theatre; and he had won this extraordinary esteem as much by the dignity of his life as by his reverence for art—as much by his determination and conscientiousness in work as by the marvellous harmony of his faculties.

On approaching him one felt, in very truth, the fine unity of his lifework; one admired the proud independence of his character. From childhood he had vowed to become the foremost promoter, above and beyond any one else, of the study of that art for which he was gifted; to spare no effort to attain the highest place; and when his aim was achieved, when no one ventured to claim equality with him, and his possible rivals, on the contrary, bowed down before him, he still spared no pains to satisfy a severer judge than all these—himself. Nor did he weary in working to attain the perfection which, from the outset, had been his goal, and whose imperious demands still controlled his whole life.

Besides, he was not content with the rôle of an interpreter; he composed; and so there are scores of melodies and lofty religious songs, consecrated by unanimous approval, which have long borne witness to his admirable musicianship.

Moreover, his taste as a collector, as an amateur of painting, which had been in the ascendant since early youth, and which

he was finally enabled to gratify to the full, brought to the front an expertness of judgment gradually acquired, and gave him a standing among the keenest of connoisseurs.

Add to all this exalted friendships, familiar intercourse with most of the masters—artists or writers—of his time, and, in his own personality, a cachet of natural distinction united with the deportment of a perfect gentleman, and there will be no difficulty in comprehending that Faure then occupied, in Paris, a position wholly unique.

Finally, every one knew that he had attained that position by his own unaided efforts, and step by step; that he was, in very truth, "the child of his own works."

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He was born at Moulins (Allier) on January the 15th, 1830, his father being a humble chorister in the church. The latter, shortly after his son's birth, sought to better his condition in Paris; but his premature decease set this project at naught, and at the end he left his wife and four children in complete destitution.

How could our little Jean-Baptiste—he was but seven years old at the time—make head against such a calamity? Yet the child undertook the task, supported by the moral energy of his mother, whose spirit of initiative and of perseverance in effort were, throughout his life, the object of a veritable cult on his part. While receiving elementary instruction from her, he resolved to follow his father's career as early as possible, and make profitable use of his youthful voice.

In the meantime he began by acting as "blower" of the organ at the cathedral of Notre-Dame; this was his first gainful occupation. It was the organist who, taking an interest in his fortunes, had procured for him this paid employment, and who, moreover, gave him lessons in solfeggio which speedily enabled him to apply for, and receive, admission to the choristers' school of the church of St.-Nicolas de Chardonnet.

This first period of his life, which extended over some ten years, was of real importance for the development of his artistic individuality, and in his old age he still would recur to it with grateful enjoyment. The fact is, that a genuine passion for learning made everything easy for him: "I was in love with my art (he would say, reminiscently), tremendously in love! And before true love, every obstacle is levelled at last."

After all, there is no better school for forming a singer *as a musician*, than a *maîtrise* (choristers' school). This proposition Faure maintained as long as he lived. However, that did not suffice him. At this same time (in 1843) he attended the Conservatoire, entering the solfeggio-classes for children; and as his teacher, Tariot, was also chorus-master at the Théâtre Italien, he obtained his permission to join the sopranos in the rehearsals. In those years Mario, Lablanche and Tamburini were the reigning powers, with Mesdames Grisi, Persiani, Brambilla. Faure used to tell how he had then, more than once, held Mario's hat while the latter, after the traditionary manner of tenors, had negligently cast it off before singing.

Thus, from morning until evening, he was wholly absorbed in his art. But it was more especially when he had been admitted to the *maîtrise* of the church of La Madeleine, that his training began in good earnest. The musical director (*maître de chapelle*), Trévaux, who took a very special interest in him, and for whom he entertained throughout life a feeling of the deepest gratitude, considering him his only real teacher, lost no time in forming him into a genuine musician—into an artist, even then.

At this time the youthful Faure was the possessor of a wonderful soprano voice, pure, full, and sonorous, which (thanks to the masses for the dead, which are numerous attended by devotees of all classes) had gained him an unquestionable reputation in Paris. His services were in special request; dying persons expressed their wish that he should sing at their obsequies. Once a bequest was made him with the object "that he should meditate on what he was singing."

He was so fortunate as to preserve this soul-stirring voice for a long term; at 16, he still displayed it to the surprised and delighted Spontini. Better still, he preserved it, up to a certain point, all his life—without vocational use, of course! I have heard Faure, already advanced in years—when conversing about his art, and, for the better illustration of the possible persistence of this child's voice athwart the voice of the man, practically exemplifying it—sing an entire aria for soprano with the words! Actually, one had to see him in order not to be persuaded that a woman was singing!

The inevitable mutation took its course in the young man after a fashion commensurable with his voice as it was and his voice to be. It was violent, and his budding career was stopped short; all seemed lost! Undismayed, Faure rented a double-bass, learned its technic with all speed, and straightway sought a

position in an orchestra. At first he had to content himself with a suburban dance-hall; but some of his comrades promptly introduced him at the Odéon Theatre, and there he found himself when his voice finally came back—the deep, resonant voice of a *basso cantante*. An unknown world was now revealed to him, which called for immediate exploration.

This he instantly undertook with zeal, reëntering, to begin with, the chorus of the Théâtre Italien, but this time among the basses. It provided means of subsistence, thus permitting him leisure to study his new resources, and soon to ask admission to the Conservatoire.

This was in 1850; he was twenty years of age. For most of the pupils, their entrance means a beginning of study, for they have everything to learn; for him it was like a consummation—one final effort, and the palm was in his grasp. Having entered Ponchard's class in singing, and then the class of Moreau-Sainti in comedy-opera, he left it in his second year with the first prize for singing and the first prize in comedy-opera, unanimously awarded! And a few months later he made his début on the stage of the Opéra-Comique in such a manner as to exhibit from the outset an artistic temperament of the rarest and most individualistic sort.

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It was fitting (so it seemed to me) to dwell in some detail on the preliminary steps of this magnificent career, in order that its normal upbuilding might be understood and its intelligent perseverance appreciated. We shall now proceed more rapidly in following its swift evolution. It will suffice, in the main, to insist on the vast variety of its manifestations and their perfect unity of direction. We have to do with an artist who always knew where he was going, what his aim was, and what he was able to accomplish; an artist who satisfied all his aspirations, because he had none save those which he knew he could satisfy.

From the day on which he presented himself for the first time to the public until the time of his definitive leavetaking, four periods may be traced in his career: The one passed at the Opéra-Comique (1852–1860), that of his reign over the Opéra (1861–1876), his Italian seasons at London (1860–1877), and, finally, the long years which followed his premature retirement in 1876, during which he appeared solely at his own pleasure, and chiefly in concerts.

In order to give a clearer idea of the development of these periods I shall set down for each of them, before commenting upon them, a list of the works interpreted—the artist's "certificate of service."

Faure, at the Opéra-Comique, appeared in the following rôles:

- 1852. *Galathée*, by V. Massé (rôle of Pygmalion)
Le Caïd, by A. Thomas (Michel)
- 1853. *La Tonelli*, by A. Thomas (Masselli)
Haydée, by Auber (Malipieri)
Mario Spada, by Auber (Borromée)
Le Chalet, by Adam (Max)
- 1854. *Le Songe d'une nuit d'été*, by A. Thomas (Falstaff)
Mario Spada (Torrida)
L'Étoile du Nord, by Meyerbeer (Peters)
- 1855. *Le Chien du jardinier*, by Grisar (Justin)
Jenny Bell, by Auber (Greenwich)
- 1856. *Manon Lescaut*, by Auber (d'Hérigny)
Le Sylphe, by Clapisson (Valbreuse)
- 1857. *Joconde*, by Nicolo (Joconde)
- 1858. *Quentin Durward*, by Gevaert (Crêvecœur)
- 1859. *Le Pardon de Ploërmel*, by Meyerbeer (Hoël)

Remarkable talents, and a surprisingly early maturity, were requisite for a successful début, at the age of twenty-two, in rôles so strongly contrasted as the poetic Pygmalion and the clownish drum-major Michel. Applause was bestowed on both (from the vocal point of view) for a timbre at once resonant and mellow, velvety, full of charm, a tone perfectly equalized throughout the entire range, the purity of style of a true musician, a vocal suppleness and agility already consummate; and (from the histrionic standpoint), with a residue of inexperience, a buoyant, intelligent style of acting, full of good taste and moderation, coupled with elegance of gesture and an attractive physiognomy.

These characteristics, continuously developed by practical experience, assumed thenceforward, day by day, greater distinction and authority, and greater variety as well. One could wish for time to analyze each of the rôles interpreted by Faure during these eight years; none bears resemblance to the one preceding or following it. With the eagerness of an explorer, with the delight of a dilettante arrived at full mastery of his art, he took pleasure in widening his vocal resources, in seeking after novel modes of expression, in devising unlooked-for effects, which, however, always bore the cachet of distinction and naturalness.

In *La Tonelli* one admired his boldness and gracefulness in the vocalises wherewith his rôle was bestrewn. In *l'Étoile du*

Nord, which he had studied with Meyerbeer himself as an understudy to the creator of the part of Tsar Peter, the admirable Battaille, he aroused amazement by his sovereign authority. In the somewhat rustic rôle of the Peasant in *le Chien du jardinier* his depiction of repressed emotion was exquisite; and as the Marquis in *Manon Lescaut* he discovered the rarest taste in the elegance and nobility of his bearing. In *Jenny Bell* the mere tone of his voice, ineffably sweet, brought tears to the eyes; and in *Le Sylphe* he executed the *tour de force* of playing (as it were) a double rôle;—a baritone on the stage, he became a tenor behind the scenes, and this with equal sonority and equal *brio*. "He shades, he colors, he has command of style and expression. And he never shouts! Is he not a rare man?"—so writes a contemporary critic.

That same year an official approbation came to emphasize his early mastership. Ponchard (whose pupil, as we have seen, he had been) having retired, Faure was appointed to take his place as professor of singing in the Conservatoire. He was only twenty-six years of age!

His response (so to speak) to this mark of confidence was given in the revival of *Joconde*, which was one of the most brilliant of his successes, both in the wonderful charm of his acting and in the elasticity and evenness of his voice in the celebrated rôle of Martin, where the notes of the tenor alternate continually with those of the bass.

Let us further, and finally, mention the distinction and the nobility of bearing which won him a triumph in the difficult rôle of Quentin Durward, and, more especially, his sensational creation of the character of Hoël in *Le Pardon de Ploërmel*, a part so well adapted to display all his qualities of power and tenderness, of histrionic fervor and art in the grand style; from a study of the score it would seem that no other part better reveals the variety of resources which the actor has at command on the stage.

Two months later, his marriage took place. He espoused his associate, Caroline Lefebvre, equally exquisite as a singer, as an actress, and as a woman, who has left an abiding memory of grace and *esprit* in connection with the representations of *l'Épreuve villageoise*, *Psyché*, *Le Songe d'une nuit d'été*, *Miss Fauvette*, *Fra Diavolo*, *Joconde*, *Mireille*—but who did not hesitate to abandon the theatre that she might devote herself exclusively to domestic life and the education of her son.

It is here—and in order to give a connected description—that allusion should be made to Faure's Italian engagements at

London, for the stage of Covent Garden. They really commenced in 1860. At the same time, he gave up his position at the Opéra-Comique and his class at the Conservatoire. The season, however, claimed him for only a few months in each year; but he was also preparing to enter the Opéra, an event which took place the year following. Furthermore, a comparison of the list given below with the one provided somewhat later, for the Opéra, will show that he was frequently studying some rôle in Italian which he was to interpret subsequently in French at Paris. These summer engagements regularly occupied his vacation-time at the Opéra from 1860 to 1866, and again from 1870 to 1877. These are the rôles sung in London during the two periods just mentioned:

- 1860. *Dinorah* [*Le Pardon de Ploërmel*] (rôle of Hoël)
La Favorita, by Donizetti (Alphonso)
La Gazza ladra, by Rossini (Fernando)
Gli Ugonotti, by Meyerbeer (St.-Bris)
- 1861. *Guglielmo Tell*, by Rossini (Guglielmo)
Don Giovanni, by Mozart (Don Giovanni)
- 1863. *Masaniello* [*La Muette de Portici*], by Auber (Pietro)
Faust, by Gounod (Mefistofele)
I Puritani, by Bellini (Riccardo)
- 1864. *La Sonnambula*, by Bellini (Rodolfo)
L'Elisir d'Amore, by Donizetti (Dulcamara)
Le Stella del Nord [*l'Etoile du Nord*] (Pietro)
- 1866. *Le Nozze di Figaro*, by Mozart (Figaro)
- 1870. *Otello*, by Rossini (Iago)
Mignon, by Ambroise Thomas (Lotario)
- 1871. *Amleto*, by Ambroise Thomas (Amleto)
- 1872. *Der Freischütz*, by Weber (Gaspard)
Il Guarany, by Gomez (The Cacique)
- 1875. *Semiramide*, by Rossini (Assur)
- 1876. *Gli Ugonotti*, by Meyerbeer (de Nevers)
Lucrezia Borgia, by Donizetti (Il Duca)

What memories must have been awakened in Faure by this Italian repertory, the ambition of his childhood! What a realization of his dream—what a contrast between the boy-chorister and the artist, now in the foremost rank, again meeting Mario and the Grisi, but as their competitor for the approval of the public! For the rest, he took good care not to waste this new opportunity for study, and the perfection of his singing owed an even greater lustre to it. This was noticed immediately in Paris; never had his exuberant voice possessed such evenness, so beautiful a sonority.

Among the works cited above, which he interpreted almost every year, were some which were heard the world over—*La*

Favorite, *Les Huguenots*, *Guillaume Tell*, *Don Juan*—and in which he was to remain incomparable; *Faust*, one of his most popular successes; *l'Étoile du Nord*, *Hamlet*, his magnificent Parisian creation. Some others were heard only in London, like *Les Noces de Figaro* (in which his sprightly and piquant Figaro earned him a triumph), and *Otello* (his Iago was a most impressive impersonation). The beautiful Italian language, sung by him, lent itself in marvellous fashion to the poignancy or the gracefulness of his diction, the amplitude of his voice.

It was after his second season in London that he made his début at the Opéra in Paris. He appeared in a second-class work; but it was a revival, and provided him with an interesting rôle—*Pierre de Médicis*, by Prince Poniatowski. The enthusiasm of the audience was unbounded—all the greater, perhaps, because certain amateurs had rashly apprehended that he might force his fine voice in this novel environment; whereas, on the contrary, this voice, ever alert to adapt itself to the auditorium in which it was to be heard, seemed to have gained not only in breadth, power, and authority, but even in mellowness, limpidity, and delicacy. It was in *Guillaume Tell*, above all, that this impression was awakened. This admirable rôle, so lofty in expression, was—as Rossini himself wrote—of a truth “created” by Faure.

For completeness sake we append a list of the rôles sung by our great artist on this stage, the third scene of his exploits:

- 1861. *Pierre de Médicis*, by Prince Poniatowski (Julien de Médicis)
Guillaume Tell (Guillaume)
- 1862. *La Favorite* (Alphonse)
- 1863. *La Mule de Pedro*, by V. Massé (Pedro)
Les Huguenots (de Nevers)
La Muette de Portici (Pietro)
Moïse, by Rossini (Pharaon)
- 1865. *l'Africaine*, by Meyerbeer (Nélusko)
- 1866. *Don Juan* (Don Juan)
- 1867. *Don Carlos*, by Verdi (Rodrigue)
La Fiancée de Corinthe, by Duprato (Polus)
- 1868. *Hamlet*, by Ambroise Thomas (Hamlet)
- 1869. *Faust* (Méphistophélès)
- 1873. *La Coupe du roi de Thulé*, by Diaz (Paddock)
- 1876. *Jeanne d'Arc*, by Mermet (Charles VII)

Several of these rôles, as already remarked, were preceded in Paris by the reputation which they had acquired in London. They came hither to receive supreme approval—and it was enthusiastic. For example, take *La Favorite*, in which the part of King Alphonse had never been impersonated with so great

distinction, tact, and concentrated passion (in most curious contrast to the exuberance of Mme. Pauline Viardot, who then sang, for the first time on that stage, the rôle of Léonore). And, in later years, *Don Juan*, which seemed a real revelation, and remained thenceforward the type of his artistic personality, moulded of elegance and conceptive imagination. Or *Faust*, where the sarcastic Mephisto revealed himself as a fallen and infernal Don Juan, of a wholly original fatuity.

In the *Huguenots*, wherein he had been, at London, an impressionable Saint-Bris, he assumed, at Paris, the more seductive rôle of de Nevers, immediately enrolling it among the "favorites" of his repertory, until his retirement. *La Muette*, and *Moïse*, so utterly contrasted in style, redounded no less to his honor; like *Don Carlos*, in which his Marquis de Posa has left an indelible memory of haughty and graceful bearing. With regard to his two celebrated creations of Nélusko (*l'Africaine*) and Hamlet, their renown was such that it is wellnigh superfluous to dwell upon it. In Nélusko we admired his wild, proud pathos and incisive diction; in Hamlet, the most penetrating melancholy blended with a wonderful delicacy of expression; and always that sovereign distinction of manner which became more and more characteristic of his acting; always, too, that eloquence of vocalization which produced the effect of the maximum of energy and power with a minimum of expenditure—effortless, tireless, never clamorous.

A complete Study in Technique might be written on Faure's method of singing, and more particularly on the intelligent way in which he used his voice; he could "send" it the precise distance required, while the imposing organ of some fellow-artist could scarcely penetrate beyond the footlights. And how many professional anecdotes might be told about it! How many artists, envious of this facility, sought to outdo him, and merely made themselves ridiculous! This was because he possessed, among other acquired qualities, a fairly incredible breath-control. When far advanced in age, he still frequently amused himself by giving the following little demonstration of "the art of breathing":—In the midst of some conversational phrase, in the middle of a word, all of a sudden and quite without taking breath, he would start a vocalise, keeping on and on—At last you would take out your watch to time him!

Faure's last grand rôle at the Opéra—for that of Charles VII, in *Jeanne d'Arc*, was really a trifling affair—was that of the buffoon Paddock in *La Coupe du roi de Thulé*. Made to measure,

this part naturally lends itself to the effects created by the artist, either through the flexibility of his voice, or its color and expression, or the variety of his acting. But this period, following so closely on the events of 1870, was devoid of great works, and that was one of the reasons which brought on his retirement from a stage where he was confined to a continual repetition of the same repertory. Nevertheless, it was only by a narrow margin that he escaped participation in the representation of the masterpieces of Richard Wagner. It would be superfluous to dwell on what such an artist as he lost thereby—and we, too. We may judge from certain fragments of *Tannhäuser* (which, at the outbreak of the war, was about to be re-staged) that we were permitted to hear him sing in various concerts from 1868 until as late as 1888.

Throughout his career, Faure had revealed himself as an unrivalled concert-singer—a fact beyond cavil. In his “Art du Chant,” which is a masterly work, he called attention to the point that neither the same voice nor the same style is suitable for both concert-hall and theatre, for the church or the *salon*. We know only too well how rarely one hears a singer from the theatre who has assimilated this rule of taste and proportion. Those in a position to follow Faure during this period still bear witness that they heard four artists in a single person. And thus it came that, during the many years succeeding his retirement from the stage, he found no difficulty in achieving such flattering and well-merited successes.

Indeed, throughout his entire career one would seek in vain for one representation or one concert in which the plenitude of his gifts did not find demonstration; for no one could be more scrupulous about appearing before an audience only when fully able to satisfy them. No hit-or-miss for him! People knew him and were sure of him in advance; and this sense of security was not without influence on the enthusiastic receptions which he met with everywhere. Hence, at the dawn of an apprehension that fatigue might steal upon him before the end of a representation, he renounced the theatre without regret.

There was another, and wholly physical, reason which moved him to make this decision. The greater his renown and the loftier and more exceptional his position as an artist became, the more his feeling of responsibility grew, while on the stage, to a source of terror which at times reached an agonizing intensity. It has often been said that real artists, those who properly ought to have the greatest self-confidence, are the ones most

afraid of the public, and suffer from "stage-fright." Probably no one has had to fight harder against stage-fright than Faure. In his case this fight was made manifest by a cold sweat of such abundance as to drip upon the boards he was treading! One evening the souffleur in his den, captivated by the delight of hearing him, neglected to follow the score spread out before him, and Faure recalled him to his duty by flirting at him, with an appropriate gesture, the drops of perspiration coursing down his hand!

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It was in 1876 that he left the Opéra in Paris; but he was still heard on the stage during several tournées in France and abroad. He had never had a liking for moving from place to place; up to that time we find but a few scattered representations at Baden-Baden (in 1867 and 1869) and at Brussels (1870-1873; he had been appointed inspector of vocal study at the Royal Conservatory). During the years following his retirement, he reappeared in a score of towns in France, to begin with, then in Belgium, in Geneva, and more especially in Vienna (1878, when he sang Hamlet in French, *La Favorite*, Faust, Don Juan in Italian), and Monte Carlo (1880, 1882), where the Casino had just been opened. A relation of the triumphs he won would entail useless repetitions. Mention was just made of one impression—so characteristic of the career of this great artist, and so rare in others—that he found favor for never appearing except at his best.

In concerts, he could still be admired as late as 1892; in private, or in church when drawn thither by special solemnities, at least ten years later. Taking note of only the grand lyric interpretations in the concert-hall, in some cases of higher importance than theatrical works, in which he took part after his retirement, I shall mention *La Tempête* and *Sardanapale*, by Alphonse Duvernoy (1880, 1882), *Frithjof*, by Max Bruch (1884), *Mérowig*, by Samuel Rousseau (1892), and above all Gounod's two oratorios *Rédemption* (1884) and *Mors et vita* (1886), in which the sentiment of grandeur and respect evoked by the admirable artist in pronouncing the sacred text clings in my memory among the most thrilling, sublime impressions of my life. Indeed, in these moments of supreme artistic achievement his entire life was, so to speak, epitomized—a lifetime of labor and faith, from his singing as a boy-chorister to the *Pie Jesu* and the *Dies irae*

at the obsequies of his friends, when, in the tones of that wonderful voice, one truly felt a soul that wept in supplication.

He himself wrote several sacred songs fraught with sincerest inspiration. We know, in fact, that from childhood he had striven to make himself a real musician—otherwise, how can a singer become an artist in the fullest sense? But he wanted, besides, to compose; a far rarer faculty, and one bestowed on very few lyric artists—for example, Mme. Pauline Viardot. However, he confined his endeavors to the domain of song, wherein he was more at home than any one else. And so his melodies, of which he published about one hundred, possess the merit—less common than may be imagined—of being perfectly written for the voice. They have other merits; and although not all are equally inspired, many are worthy of a place beside the lyrical productions of the French school of that epoch, both by virtue of depth and sincerity of feeling and through charm of conception or breadth of style. Among those most deserving such praise we note *Les Myrtes sont flétries*, *l'Enfant au jardin*, *Que le jour me dure*, *Bonjour Suzon*, *Le Missel*, *Alleluia d'amour Puisqu'ici-bas toute âme*, *Adieu à un ami*, *Le Voyageur*, *Discretion*, *Valse des feuilles*, *Nous avons passé sans nous voir*, *Mirage*, *Espoir en Dieu*.

Several songs, whose inspiration is altogether religious, have won, and still maintain, a worldwide reputation. Some of these are *Les Rameaux*, and the admirable *Crucifix*, for two voices. Faure also wrote (more especially for the church and the liturgy) some thirty motets, among them a *Pie Jesu*, an *O Salutaris*, a *Sub tuum praesidium*, an *Ave Maria*, a *Tantum ergo*, and a *Pater noster*—all really remarkable.

The first of these works go back as far as 1860, at least; the last date from 1904.

His vocal method, "l'Art du Chant," has added no less to his renown, and it is studied with respect by the greatest artists. One is at a loss whether to bestow greater praise on the profoundly artistic spirit which controlled the creation of this work, or on the wisdom, the reasonableness, and the good taste which dictated the advice wherewith it is so abundantly stored. Never before had been said so well, and so simply, what one must do to bring one's natural voice to perfection, and to acquire the three following, and no less essential, qualities: Style, taste, feeling.

In a word, a passion for composition shared his leisure with the zeal of an amateur of art; his picture-gallery, in particular, was celebrated, and his way of encouraging artists whose style he appreciated was well known. As noted above, he had, from

childhood, that instinct of a collector which was so well assorted with a keen spirit imbued with a love of the beautiful, and which he bequeathed to his son, a distinguished painter, a man of refined culture and intellectual charm. From this instinct he derived ever-renewed delight, which assuredly smoothed the way for the progressive renunciation of his own art. And so he was never happier than when at home in his apartment on Boulevard Haussmann in Paris, or by the seashore in his villa at Étretat, two museums. I visited him chiefly during the course of this period of his career. Surrounded by his dear ones—his faithful partner, his son, his grandchildren—between his piano and his pictures, a man of honor and conscience, he awaited with serenity the appointed hour.

He did not give lessons—he never had given any, properly speaking; this is a point that should be clearly understood. He may have given advice; but no one has a right to declare himself actually “his pupil”; this he himself formally stated. The reason was, on the one hand, that he found it distasteful to assume responsibility of this sort; on the other, that he disliked above all things any restraint of his freedom. This fact alone proves how little of the mercenary spirit was his. Now and again it has been imputed to him, because, once in a position to demand whatever he pleased for his appearances in the theatre, in concerts, or in society, he considered it due to his dignity as an artist to make and enforce such demands, even beyond those of others. But—apart from the lessons for which he was besieged from every quarter, and which would have made his fortune—consider how unconcernedly he gave up his exceptional position at the Opéra! how many inviting engagements he refused! No; however alluring the offer, he never allowed the temptation of gain to get the better of his independence of spirit and his personal tastes.

Moreover, with advancing age, yet more pronounced became the trait of nobility and lofty dignity which I have praised from the outset of this sketch—that species of introversion which impelled him to turn away from whatsoever might remind him of his past glory and induce melancholy at surviving it. He loved to speak of his art, to throw into relief its charm and esthetic quality, to explain how it should be taught; he did not like to speak of himself. Many another imposes on his environment—and does his utmost to maintain—a sovereignty whose glory has long been on the wane. Faure sought only to withdraw from notice, to be forgotten.

So long as he felt that his voice (which he always kept in training) was worthy of him, he might still be seen and heard at some concert given either for a benevolent purpose, or to pay tribute to the memory of a friend; for example, at the obsequies of Legouvé at the church of Notre Dame des Victoires, on March the 17th, 1903—he was then seventy-three!—On such occasions he sometimes reaped a reward which he no longer expected. At a certain concert in which he thus appeared, in the great hall of the Trocadéro, where the élite of Parisian artists was assembled, they seized the opportunity to give him a spontaneous and enthusiastic ovation, by which he was profoundly moved.

But his last years were greatly saddened, not only by the death of his wife (1905), after which he never seemed to be himself again, but also by a strange kind of deafness that set his ears “out of tune” with one another, and soon robbed him of all musical enjoyment. And so he had lost all pleasure in life long before life itself came to an end, painlessly, like the shadow of supreme peace.

(Translated by Theodore Baker.)