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THE MUSICAL TIMES

AND SINGING-CLASS CIRCULAR.

JANUARY 1, 1886.

THE FAUST LEGEND, AND ITS MUSICAL TREATMENT BY COMPOSERS.

By F. CORDER.

SUPERSTITION is the inevitable accompaniment of ignorance. The primitive man, the untutored savage in all ages, and the London ragamuffin of to-day have this much in common, that knowing nothing they are prepared to believe anything. Knowledge is such a mysterious attribute in the minds of the ignorant that they are ready to accept its possessor as a superior being—a god or a devil. Rather the latter than the former, however, for it is the curious property of the human mind to be far readier in acknowledging evil than good influences. So throughout the history of the world every man who has succeeded in piercing the dense mists of ignorance and religious dogma has always been considered to have allied himself with the powers of evil, and every savage tribe has its conjuror or devil-man who is looked on with mingled feelings of reverence and repugnance. It was of course natural for the priests of every age to endeavour to keep the monopoly of knowledge, and this is the reason why the traditions of sorcery and ill-gotten wisdom lasted as long as the supremacy of the Church. The Middle Ages gave birth to numerous legends of this kind, and by a mere chance one of the victims of this undeserved reprobation became immortalised in both poetry and prose.

It was in 1587 that an unknown partisan of the Reformed Church produced a highly interesting and moral work of fictitious biography in which we can discern three separate aims, first to instruct and edify the general public, secondly to rebuke the impious seekers after knowledge, and thirdly to administer a slap in the face to the Romanists. He succeeded admirably in accomplishing all of his objects. This book was a collection of mediæval legends of sorcery compiled (for in those days authors rarely invented their material) in the form of a biography. The author took as his hero a real personage of the time, about whom very little was known save that he was generally regarded, from his unusual powers of mind, as having been a sorcerer. This person was one John Faust, a doctor of theology, and who from the similarity of the names was afterwards wrongly confounded with John Fust, one of the inventors of printing. The following is a literal translation of the title of this very celebrated book:

The History of Dr. Johann Faust, the far-famed Magician and Necromancer. How he bound himself to belong to the Devil at a certain time, and what marvellous Adventures he made and went through in the meanwhile until he at last received his well-deserved Reward. Mostly compiled from his own Writings and published for an awful Instance, a fearful Example and, an earnest Warning to all arrogant, light-minded and godless Men. James III. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the Devil and he will flee from you. *Cum gratia et Privilegio*, imprinted at Frankfort-on-the-Main by Johann Speig. 1587.

The best proof of the extraordinary popularity which this book obtained is the fact that it was immediately translated into English, Dutch, French, and Flemish, and soon followed by a sequel, known as the “Wagner-buch” which gave further accounts of the doings of *Faust* and his servant *Wagner*. The English translation, entitled “The History of the Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Doctor John Faustus,” is of course now a rare book, but it has been reprinted in Thoms’ “Early English Prose Romances” along with other Faust literature of exceeding interest.

John Faust, or Faustus, it appears, was educated for the Church, which accounts for his being a man of learning, but “being of a naughty mind and otherwise addicted” he began to search into forbidden lore until finally he discovered how to invoke evil spirits. Accordingly he repaired to the legitimate spot for his undertaking, a “cross-road” (a conformation which, one would think, ought rather to be holy than evil), and so vigorously used his spells and incantations that a “fiery globe” appeared before him. Stimulated by success, *Faust* renewed his conjurations till at length this globe “suddenly opened and sprung up in the height of a man, so burning a time in the end it converted to the shape of a fiery man. This pleasant beast ran about the circle a great while and lastly appeared in the manner of a Grey Fryar, asking Faustus what was his request.” A meeting being arranged at *Faust’s* house the magician returned home well pleased with the success of his labours. “He thought the Devil was not so black as they use to paint him, nor hell so hot as the people say.”

Mephistopheles visited *Faust* according to promise and a covenant was entered into, the devil agreeing to serve the magician for twenty-four years and afterwards to take possession of him; this agreement was afterwards put into writing and duly signed. “A pitiful case, Christian reader, for certainly this letter or obligation was found in his house after his most lamentable end . . . wherefore I wish all Christians to take example by this wicked doctor, and to be comforted in Christ,” &c. The author comments gravely in this style after each incident in the book, the more absurd the incident the more seriously does he moralise. We are then given a specimen of the manner in which *Mephistopheles* entertained his victim.

“Dr. Faustus sitting pensive, having but one only boy with him, suddenly there appeared his spirit *Mephistophiles* in likeness of a very man, from whom issued most horrible fiery flames, insomuch that the boy was afraid, but being hardened by his master, he bid him stand still and he should have no harm; this spirit began to bleat as in a singing manner. This pretty sport pleased Dr. Faustus well; but he would not call his spirit into his counting house until he had seen more. Anon was heard a rushing of armed men and trampling of horses, this ceasing, came a kennel of hounds, and they chased a great hart into the hall and there the hart was slain. Faustus took heart, came forth and looked upon the hart, but presently before him there was a lion and a dragon together, fighting so fiercely that Faustus thought they would have thrown down the house; but the dragon overcame the lion and so they vanished. . . . Afterward followed a great old ape; this ape offered Faustus the hand, but he refused, so the ape ran out of the hall again. . . . Lastly was heard by Faustus all manner of instruments of musick, as organs, clarigolds, lutes, viols, citterns, waits, hornpipes, flutes, anomes, harps, and all manner of other instruments, which so ravished his mind that he thought he had been in another world, forgot both body and soul, insomuch that he was minded never to change his opinion concerning that which he had done. Hereat came *Mephistophiles* into the hall to Faustus in apparel like unto a fryar, to whom Faustus spake, thou hast done me a wonderful pleasure in shewing me this pastime; if thou continue as thou hast begun thou shalt win my heart and soul, yea and have it.” The worthy magician seems to have had singular ideas of pleasure, though certainly later on his taste became somewhat more refined. The text of the famous agreement is next given and further details of its signature. *Faust* “set his Blood in a Saucer on warm ashes and wrote” a very

lawyer-like covenant, and "thus the spirit and Faustus were agreed and dwelt together; no doubt," concludes the author with quiet irony, "there was a virtuous housekeeping."

Faust kept a boy with him, "an unhappy wag called Christopher Wagner," and this servant becomes the hero of several "second parts" of *Faust*. These two, aided by *Mephistopheles*, stole whatever they took a fancy to and played all manner of silly pranks. "Besides that Faustus was become so cunning that when he opened his window what fowl soever he wished for it came presently flying into the house, were it never so dainty. . . All their maintenance was but stolen and borrowed ware; and thus they lived an odious life in the sight of God." Soon after this *Faust* took it into his head to wish for a wife, at which the devil took terrible umbrage, and visited him with grotesque horrors until he was brought to a more sensible frame of mind. It then occurred to *Faust* to enquire into the condition of the domain which he was to inhabit after death, and we are treated to an interesting detailed description of the infernal regions. *Faust* learned, too, all the secrets of nature and made and published almanacs with predictions of the weather, which predictions we are assured could be relied upon, so that Zadkiel, Old Moore, and Raphael are put to the blush. One day he fell into a despondency at thinking over the bargain he had made, and which he had certainly not yet turned to much profit; so there appeared to him—presumably to cheer his spirits—a rout of devils, of whom a number are named and their personal appearance described. As thus—"Lucifer himself sate in a manner of a man all hairy, but of a brown colour like a squirrel curled and his tail turning upwards on his back as the squirrels use; I think he could crack nuts too, like a squirrel . . . after him came Dithican; he was a short thief in form of a large bird with shining feathers and four feet; his neck was green and body red and his feet black . . . the rest of the devils were in form of unreasonable beasts, as swine, harts, bears, wolfs, &c."

From these slight samples the reader will perceive the amusing simplicity of this famous old romance; to follow the story in detail to the end would be beyond the present scope. The principal incidents, such as the wine-cellar illusion (performed in our own times by every mesmerist), the invocation of "Helen of Troy," and the struggle between the rival Powers for *Faust's* soul, re-appear in most modern versions; the minor incidents are simply plagiarised from every available source. Baron Reichlin-Meldegg wrote an elaborate work, analysing the *Faust*-book, and giving the various incidents, side by side, with their multifarious originals. Four whole volumes of Scheible's series, "Das Kloster," are devoted to "Faust" legends of various kinds, and indeed it would be beyond the powers of any bibliographer to compile a full list of the "Faust" literature up to the present time. We have here only to do with absolute versions of the legend itself. To finish our account of the original story, however, a glance at some of the remaining contents is necessary. *Faust* makes a tour of the world in eight days, flying through the air. The geography, pretty correct so far as the author's own travels on the Continent extend, is "considerably mixed" when more distant regions are spoken of. Of course there are numerous love adventures, of which respect for the "British matron" (whose blushes seem to have superseded those of the proverbial "young person") will not allow us to speak. The "Helen of Troy" incident, however, is very imaginative, and might have been turned to better account by the poets. Being requested, as a specimen of his powers, to call up the shade of that

celebrated beauty, *Faust* does so, and falls violently in love with the fair ghost, so much so that he remains devoted to her all the rest of his days. After his death, however, she and the son she has borne him vanish like a dream. *Faust's* time having elapsed, he falls into great terror and remorse, and here the moralising of the author, put into the mouth of the hero, is really fine. He takes a solemn farewell of his numerous pupils and student friends, and retires to a little country inn; frightful sounds are heard in the night, and the next morning the magician's body is found torn to pieces. Before his death he leaves his magical books to his friend and servant, *Wagner*, at whose wish he also bequeaths him the services of a familiar spirit called *Aberccock* (*Auerhahn* in the German original).

The speedy popularity attained by this book is proved by the fact that in the very year of its publication Christopher Marlowe dramatised it, and the Bishop of London licensed a metrical version of the story, entitled "A Ballad of the Life and Death of Faustus, the great Congerer." Marlowe is supposed to have obtained it through a company of English players, who were about that time in the service of the Duke of Saxony. His tragedy is very crude and simple, being cast in the mould of the old moralities of the period; the most childish incidents of the story, such as *Faust's* pranks at Rome, where he boxes the Pope's ears, eats his dinner and lights squibs under the table, and his tricks upon the horse-dealer and others are all introduced, the only really dignified portion being the last Act, in which *Faust's* remorse and death are depicted in language of great power and beauty, as is indeed also the case in the original prose romance. The final speech of the chorus, beginning—

Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
And burned is Apollo's laurel bough
That sometime grew within this learned man,

is, perhaps, the only part of the tragedy familiar to the general reader through frequent quotation, but the whole of the last scene is of a very high order of poetry. This play has never, I believe, inspired any musician to write even an overture to it.

The ballad alluded to above is no longer extant, but various imitations of later date survive, among them being a chap-ballad, entitled "The Just Judgement of God show'd upon Dr. Faustus. *To the tune of Fortune my Foe.*" One of the last verses may be quoted as a specimen. The hero tells the whole sad tale, even of his death:—

Then, presently, they came into the hall
Whereas my brains were cast against the wall,
Both arms and legs in pieces they did see,
My bowels gone, there was an end of me.

Six years later, in 1593, appeared in Germany a sequel to the *Faust*-book. Its full title occupies several pages, so it is generally called "The Wagnerbuch" for short. It gives some more accounts of the doings of *Faust*, and then relates the career of his successor, *Wagner*. It is more soberly and cleverly written than the first book, but scarcely so interesting. It was imitated, not translated exactly, in English, under the title of "A Second Report of Dr. Faustus and His Familiar, Wagner," with a long preface by the author, who styles himself a student of Wittenburg, but who is evidently an English country gentleman. It begins thus:—

"It is plaine that many things in the first book are meere lies, for prooffe marke this, it is said to be translated and where it is word for word. But I have talked with the man that first wrote them, having them from Wagner's very friend, wherein he saith that many things are corrupted, some added *de novo*, some cancelled and taken awaie, and many were augmented. As for addition to the copy is

there where Mephistophiles disputeth of the number of Hells and some other disputations. And let a man marke them duly he shall find them I will not say childish, but certainly very superficial, not like the talk of Divills wherewith foldings of words they doe use to dilate at large and more subtell by farre. But as for his obligation and the most part it is certain they are most credible and out of all question."

He then gives several conclusive proofs of *Faust's* existence, declaring that he has seen with his own eyes the house where he lived, and the tree beneath which he used to teach his pupils, "which I think is sufficient testimony to any reasonable eare." This book is now of extreme rarity. The only reprint is that of Mr. Thoms, also scarce. The 18th century brought a higher development of the legend. The great poet Lessing attempted a drama on the subject, of which only one scene was written, but the main idea, on the testimony of friends, was to have run thus:—

In an ancient dome at midnight the devil has assembled all the spirits of hell to a carnival, at which each relates his individual achievements; one declares "I have done nothing; I have only conceived a thought more devilish than the deeds of others: I will rob God of His favourite, a youth devoted to the pursuit of truth, and for its sake renouncing every other passion." Satan exults in anticipation over the accomplishment of his design. Then a voice proclaims from on high—"Ye shall not prevail!"

It remained for Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the poet, philosopher, alchemist, journalist, art-critic, botanist, savant, theatre director, and heaven knows what—the man whose knowledge and sympathies were almost as extensive and all-embracing as Shakespeare's—to supplement these materials with scenes and ideas suggested by, if not directly springing from, his own romantic career, and to weld the whole into two immortal art-works, of which the first is the fiery outpouring of a young and ardent human genius who looks on the world from within, and the second the cold and mystic utterance of the venerable sage who looks upon the world from without, and little heeding the real, contemplates with wrapt and serene delight those ideal worlds which are his familiar haunts. In other words the first part of Goethe's "*Faust*" is a poetic drama, and the second a dramatic poem—fantastic, allegorical, and profoundly obscure. Every educated Englishman is supposed to know Goethe's "*Faust*" almost as well as he is supposed to know his Shakespeare, but there are, as a matter of fact, considerable numbers of people who have but the vaguest acquaintance with either. As most of the musical settings of "*Faust*" are more or less directly inspired by Goethe's poem, and as the English reader can obtain through the best of translations only an imperfect idea of that poem—indeed, no idea at all of the second part—a plain and simple analysis of its general scope seems here advisable.

During the 17th century the "*Faust*" legend had sunk into the form of a play for the puppet-show, never written down, but familiar to the world as our own Punch and Judy. A toy puppet-show first introduced the boy Goethe to the immortal story, which, as he says, "murmured with many voices in his soul." This grotesque play has been given a local habitation in print by Carl Simrock, but needs no further notice, as it is very similar in its scope to Marlowe's tragedy. Containing the principal incidents of the legend it was sufficient to impress the imagination of such an ardent thinker as Goethe.

The tragedy of "*Faust*," then, consists of two separate portions, the first of which was very slowly composed, some isolated fragments having been penned as early as 1774, Goethe then being twenty-

five years of age. It was a life-work in more than one sense, for it was the reflection of his inner self and portrayed the whole growth of his own great soul from its first wild youthful cravings for truth and happiness to the reposeful and dignified philosophy of maturity. The first part completed in 1797, Goethe re-wrote the whole during the succeeding four years, remodelling it, adding the Prologues and the Walpurgis Night scene (which certainly show themselves to be excrescences) and published it in its present form in 1806. Its principal incidents are familiar enough, though in a vulgarised and distorted form, to the modern musician, through the versions of MM. Barbier and Carré, Berlioz and Boïto. The exquisite lyrics which abound in it have been seized upon by every composer, but the drama as a whole is too complicated and subtle to afford a satisfactory basis for a musical work without alterations which rob it of much of its beauty.

The opening prologue in the theatre is a dialogue on popular taste between the manager, the poet, and the clown (or low-comedian), which, though a keen piece of satire enough, has no connection with anything that follows. The prologue to the drama itself takes place in Heaven, and is really an adaptation of the oldest of all existing dramatic prologues, the opening of the Book of Job. The importance and depth of meaning which this idea gives to the tragedy cannot be over-estimated. We hear the songs of the archangels and heavenly hosts, and *Mephistophiles*, on a visit to the higher spheres, holds a conversation with God which the unpoetic may deem irreverent at the least, though it is no more so than the original. *Faust* being held out to us as the noblest specimen of a human soul, earnestly seeking after truth, though self-willed and ill-regulated, the devil obtains permission to tempt this struggler in any way he pleases—

Till baffled and in shame thou dost admit
A good man, clouded though his senses be
By error, is no willing slave to it.

We are then introduced to *Faust* in his study, the same opening as Marlowe's play. The man, or more than man, who has ransacked Nature's store house of secrets only finds that he has wasted his life. Aged and dispirited he vainly raises spirits which have no sympathy for him, vainly instructs his disciple *Wagner* in the knowledge whose hollowness he so bitterly feels; in an access of life-weariness he is about to drink poison and hurl himself into a better world, or into nothingness, when Easter Day dawns and in the chiming bells he hears the voices of angels proclaiming "Christ is risen." Moved, not to the soul by piety, but to the heart by reminiscences of childhood's days, he is melted to tears and abandons his purpose. Scene ii. gives us a picture of burgher and peasant life, to illustrate which various groups of characters are momentarily introduced, interspersed with the song of a beggar at the town gate, a soldier's chorus, a dance and song of peasants under the linden trees, &c. Goethe seems here hardly to have caught the spirit of low life gaiety as our Elizabethan dramatists used so exquisitely to do. *Faust* wanders gloomily with *Wagner* through the merry scenes, unsoftened by the love and homage paid him by those whom he has healed; he still utters his vain repinings, till on expressing a wish for a spirit who will assist and relieve him a black poodle dog appears, and after weird circlings and gambollings adopts him for master. Scene iii. returns to *Faust's* study. Recognising the dog as a spirit in disguise the magician after much fantastic conjuration succeeds in making *Mephistophiles* present himself in more imposing form, not a ridiculous figure in flaming scarlet as we see him on the operatic stage, but as a sober travelling student.

Describing himself finely as the spirit "which evermore denies" he holds a fantastic conversation with his invoker, ending by offering, as a specimen of his powers, to give the wearied philosopher an hour's unalloyed pleasure. Here follows the chorus of sylphs, singing *Faust* to dreamy slumbers, which Berlioz has treated so exquisitely. Another scene laid in the same place shows how *Mephistopheles* pays his second visit, and makes the celebrated compact. After much metaphysical discussion *Faust*, in a burst of despair, curses life and all that it contains. A noble chorus of invisible spirits, "Woe, woe! thou hast destroyed it! This beautiful world!" reproves his folly, and *Mephisto* persuades him to mix once more with the world under happier auspices ere he renounces it. As the compact which he makes with his tempter is of a much more refined nature to that in any other version of the story, and as it is not often clearly understood, it may be as well to quote it at length, for it is, of course, the key to the whole poem:—

Faust. Comfort and quiet?—no, no! none of these
For me—I ask them not—I seek them not. . . .
Canst thou by falsehood or by flattery
Delude me into self-complacent smiles,
Cheat me into tranquility—come then
And welcome life's last day—be this our wager. . . .
If ever time should flow so calmly on,
Soothing my spirit into such oblivion,
That in the pleasant trance I would arrest
And hail the happy moment in its course,
Bidding it linger with me—"O how fair
Art thou, delicious moment—fly not yet." . . .
Or words like these—then throw me into fetters;
Then willingly do I consent to perish;
Then is thy service at an end—and then
The clock may cease to strike—the hand to move—
For me be time then passed away for ever.

In all other versions of the legend the compact is perfectly irrational, for if *Faust* signs away his soul, what need is there for the Devil to tempt him to wickedness afterwards? But here is a noble poetical conception of the strife between the rival Powers for possession of the human soul. So long as *Faust* aspires to raise his soul above its present condition he cannot be on the road to perdition, but should the "divine discontent" cease to torment him he becomes the subject of *Mephistopheles*. Unfortunately the poet seems to have lost sight of his own idea, for during the remainder of the first part there is no further allusion to the compact, and no signs of its bearing on the drama.

Faust and his companion now set out on their travels. They behold first a party of vulgar sots revelling in some "shades" at Leipzig, and *Mephisto* plays on them the traditional jests of drawing wine from the table and then casting a glamour over the drinkers so that they believe themselves in a lovely vineyard and tweak each other's noses in the attempt to pluck imaginary grapes. The songs of the Rat and the Flea in this scene, which Berlioz has made so much of, are characteristically vulgar, but their humour is very German—in other words, very feeble to English ideas. The travellers next are seen in a witch's kitchen, whither they have repaired to obtain a potion which will restore *Faust* his youth. Here Goethe's acquaintance with all appertaining to the Black Art stands him in good stead. The grotesque scene between *Mephisto* and the cat-apes, the old witch's familiars, forms a fine contrast to the serious interest. *Faust* beholds in a magic mirror a lovely female image, and in the hope of beholding its living original conquers his repugnance to the puerile mummery of witchcraft and accepts the potion. In the next scene he meets *Gretchen* in the street, and his rejuvenated blood fires within him. Seeking the aid of his friend to win this maiden, *Mephisto* artfully inflames his passion by restraining him, and finally

agrees to show *Faust* her dwelling and to place in her room some tempting present. The scene of *Gretchen's* chamber, which follows, gives rise to a most beautiful soliloquy for *Faust*, the prototype of "Salve dimora," and the corresponding solo in Berlioz's work; but, needless to say, that in neither of these is the poetry of Goethe even to be faintly discerned. *Faust's* better nature reasserts itself and he renounces his evil designs, though, alas! too late. The jewels are hidden in *Margaret's* cupboard, where anon the maiden finds them. She is persuaded, however, that they came there by enchantment, and her mother makes her give them up to the priest. *Mephisto* then repairs to the house to repeat the offering, and ingratiates himself with *Margaret's* friend, *Martha*. Then follows the scene in the garden, too familiar to need dwelling upon. The lovers confess their passion, *Faust* vainly flies to the solitude of rocks and forests and strives to overcome temptation; he yields, and the old, old story is told again. The remainder of the drama is almost exactly followed in Gounod's opera, the girls at the fountain, *Gretchen* praying before the shrine of the Mater Dolorosa, *Faust's* encounter with the soldier-brother *Valentine*, whom he slays, and who dies cursing his lost sister; *Margaret's* agonised scene in the church, where the solemn sounds of the requiem mass combine with the whispered goadings of the evil spirit to drive her to utter despair; the scene on the Brocken, whither *Mephisto* takes *Faust*, in order to distract his thoughts and make him forget *Gretchen*. How he is only partially successful, and how on learning that *Gretchen* is in prison for causing the death of her mother by the sleeping-draught given that the lovers might meet undisturbed, *Faust's* better nature again asserts itself, and he insists on going to her aid; how the prison doors are opened and the guilty man vainly strives to undo his work in part, for the poor distraught girl is unable to recognise him, and dies in her misery—all this is a too familiar tale to every one. A few words on the later scenes are all that is here necessary. The Walpurgis Night scene, one of the later additions to the play, is long and, to the general reader, obscure. Various fantastic characters are introduced into it, and it ends with an Interlude, or play within a play, called "Walpurgis Night's Dream," or the "Golden Wedding of Oberon and Titania," which is simply a long series of four-line epigrams, spoken by numerous different phantoms, and which seem to serve no purpose but the doubtful one of taking one's thoughts away for a time from the main story. The prison scene, and consequently the whole drama, ends in a way which concludes nothing:—

Marg.—Father of heaven, have mercy on thy child!
Ye angels, holy hosts, keep watch around me.
Henry, I am afraid to look at thee. [She dies.
Meph.—Come, she is judged!
Voice (from above). Is saved!
Meph. (to Faust). Hither to me!
[Disappears with Faust.
Voice (from within, dying away).—Henry! Henry!
The end.

One must not imagine that the Devil seizes upon *Faust* and takes him down below, but feeling that anything after the death of *Margaret* would be an anticlimax, the author simply abstains from continuing the story. Poets so rarely keep firm hold of an idea when they get one, and are so apt to let their thoughts wander off into other trains. How many of Byron's strongest poems fade off towards the end, or remain unfinished! Here Goethe has forgotten all about the compact between *Faust* and *Mephistopheles*, or has allowed the interest of the *Gretchen* episode to make him alter his first design. Of course after this a second part, embodying some kind of a

conclusion, was a necessity, but circumstances conspired to delay it so long that it had better, perhaps, have been never written at all, at least as regards the unity of the work.

THE GREAT COMPOSERS

By JOSEPH BENNETT.

No. XVIII.—SCHUBERT.*

UNLESS the stranger in Vienna have some special reason, he is not likely to wander into the district called Lichtenthal. It is a common-place part of the city now, and must have been equally common-place ninety years back, although, at that time, one of the streets was called the "Gate of Heaven"—a fine name given, probably, by some authority with a sense of humour in his composition. It may be that the inhabitants, at some period or other since, resented the comparison thus invited. Anyhow, the street is now known as "Säulengasse," which architectural designation may or may not be deserved, but certainly makes pretensions more modest than the "Gate of Heaven." Within the ninety years, the houses in the street have been renumbered, and an enquiry into the antecedents of the present No. 54 shows that it was once No. 72. No. 54 is now—or was recently—a milk shop, under the sign of the "Red Crab." It has over the entrance door a marble tablet, whereon may be read the legend, "Franz Schuberts Geburtshaus" ("Franz Schubert's birthplace"). There is, also, the quite superfluous representation of a lyre, to indicate that Franz Schubert was musical, and a laurel wreath to declare that Vienna regards him as worthy of (*post-mortem*) honour. Should any one call for documentary proof that the "Red Crab" is really what its marble adornment pretends, such proof may be found (assuming that No. 54 was once No. 72) in the parish register, where the curious can read: "Franz Schubert, the lawfully begotten son of Franz Schubert, schoolmaster, and his wife, Elisabeth, both of the Catholic religion, was born at Himmelpfortgrund, No. 72, and baptised as a Catholic in this church on February 1, 1797, by the Co-operator Johann Wanzka, in the presence of Herr Carl Schubert, acting as sponsor." Carl Schubert, it may be added, was the infant's uncle—elder brother of his father, and a respectable man who carried on a school in the Leopoldstadt.

So both father and uncle of the new-made Catholic were schoolmasters! The reason was that pedagogism ran in the family. Grandfather Schubert, it is true, escaped it. He was a "peasant cultivator" at Neudorf, in Moravia, and a person prominent enough among his fellows for the honour of some small magisterial position, equivalent, perhaps, to that held by the rural *Maires* of France. But if pedagogism skipped the Neudorf dignity, it descended all the more heavily upon the next generation and the next. Carl, son of Grandfather Schubert, became a teacher in Vienna, as already stated, and to him, as assistant, went his brother Franz, who after two years' probation became parish schoolmaster in the Lichtenthal district; exercising his vocation, and also residing at the house No. 72, in Gate of Heaven Street.

Schoolmaster Franz had precocious tendencies in the direction of marriage. While yet his brother's helper, and not twenty years old, he fell in love with Elisabeth Fitz, a lady three years his senior, whose

personal charms were supplemented by skill as a cook. Franz, we may well suppose, did not fare sumptuously every day in Carl's house, and it is easy to imagine that his beloved Elisabeth had for him incidental, though surreptitious, attractions of a gastronomic nature. Boys of nineteen sometimes possess wonderful appetites. But speculation apart, Franz and his cook consummated their happiness by matrimony, probably in 1783, and when the young husband removed to Gate of Heaven Street, an exceedingly good prospect of domestic provocation to industry helped him to settle down. His income was, of course, very small, but Providence has peculiar notions about the proportion of family to means. The proportion is often an inverse one, and inverse it was in the case of poor Franz. Elisabeth presented him with fourteen children, while, to make matters more incomprehensible, the pain and cost of bringing nine into the world went for nothing, owing to their speedy departure out of it. The five survivors were Ignaz, Ferdinand, Carl, Franz (our young Catholic of February 1, 1797), and Theresa. Of these, all the boys began life as schoolteachers, and the daughter married into the same profession, her husband, Mathias Schneider, becoming father of the Dr. Schneider, in whose famous cupboard Sir George Grove found the "Rosamunde" music. Let us add to these family details that, when Elisabeth Schubert died, in 1812, her husband speedily married again, and five other children came to augment alike his joys and sorrows.

Little Franz Schubert could not have had a very luxurious time during his childish days. There were too many in the family, and there was too little in the family purse for better than the hard life which respectable poverty entails. Happily, Providence had bestowed upon the child a gift which enabled him to create a world of his own—an enchanted world, where all was bright and lovely. He had in him the spirit of music, and circumstances, otherwise so forbidding, favoured its development. Music, like pedagogy, was a family appanage. The father played the violin, so did Ignaz and Ferdinand, the brothers. Ignaz could also play upon the pianoforte, and from him young Franz received his first lessons; the sire, meanwhile, teaching him the violin. But even before entering upon this course of home instruction, such as it was, the boy had found means to indulge his passion. While yet a mere toddler of five or six, he made close friends, as children sometimes will, with a joiner's apprentice—a namesake and a relative. Here was Franz's first hero—a big lad, no doubt, who could handle tools, who had a little money in his pocket sometimes, and knew, oh! so much about many things mysterious to the schoolmaster's little son. Best of all, the joiner's apprentice had the *entrée* of a piano factory, and often would take Franz with him on a visit to the place. Then the boy's soul, we may imagine, was "dissolved in ecstasy." At home there was only a poor old, cracked piano, that had long ago seen its best days, but the new ones in the factory were sonorous and eloquent enough to bring all heaven before the little boy's eyes. Upon them he practised his scales and exercises as best he could without a master, and when, having reached his seventh year, he passed under the regular tuition of his father and brother, there was general wonderment at what he knew and what he could do. In other matters he was quick to learn. His father tells us that, when at school in his sixth year, "he became distinguished invariably as the first of his compeers." At the same time Franz loved healthful play. "From early childhood he delighted in companionship, and was never happier than when at play in a circle of merry

* In THE MUSICAL TIMES for January and February, 1881, two articles dealing with Schubert's letters appeared under the first general title of this series: "The Great Composers, sketched by themselves." These are now to be supplemented by an outline of the master's life.