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Handel's Orchestration (Continued)

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good voices, and, generally speaking, did its work well, but the sopranos were weak and of poor quality, the contraltos, as usual in France, coming last of all. With regard to the orchestra, the only critical remark invited touches the thinness and weakness of the violins. Those instruments were in number sufficient, but they lacked sonority, and their delivery of M. Gounod's extended melodies in the higher parts of the scale wanted the brilliant *timbre* to which we are accustomed in England. As for the soloists, I need say nothing about Madame Albani, whose singing in "For His love as a Father" electrified the audience. Madame Rosine Bloch did well, and with experience, would become an oratorio artist of the right kind. Her delivery of "While my watch I am keeping" was chaste in style and full of expression. M. Ketten, as the tenor reciter, appeared too self-conscious, and more bent upon effect than became the task he undertook. Nevertheless, his declamation was often good, as was that of M. Fournet, about whom, I suspect, the world will soon hear more. There remains to speak of M. Faure, and to do so in terms of highest praise. Grave, dignified, and employing a style perfect in its propriety, M. Faure was not only an ideal reciter, but an ideal interpreter of the Divine words, which he delivered with a simplicity and tenderness never excelled. This was the most conspicuous feature in the entire performance, and the one by which the *début* of "The Redemption" in Paris will most readily be remembered. And now what was the result upon the audience? I am bound to say, in reply, that M. Gounod's music held them fast. Three hours were consumed in getting through the work, but at the end of that long strain the hall contained almost as many people as at the beginning. Applause was frequent—much too frequent for noise that breaks in upon music—and it conveyed, no doubt, a high compliment, but the best tribute rendered to the composer took the form of sustained interest and even rapt attention. It is true that the critics, who listened professionally, went away and—many of them—wrote in doubtful language about their novel experience. The public took a different line. Under no obligation to find in "The Redemption" material for epigrams, they heard frankly and frankly approved. M. Gounod's "Trilogy" should now go the round of France to represent a distinctive achievement by one of her most gifted sons.

On the evening of the day which witnessed the production of "The Redemption," M. Massenet's "Manon" was played at the historic theatre in the Rue Favart. The character of this very successful opera is not unknown to my readers, since, a little while ago, I had the honour to lay before them a sketch of the story and some remarks concerning the music. After witnessing a representation of "Manon," I think higher of the work than ever. It is musicianly and something more—that is to say, dramatic, while preserving the forms and sustaining the ascendancy of the composer's art. Certain features in the libretto may, perhaps, invest the production of "Manon" in our country with risk. It would shock many minds, for example, to show them an ecclesiastic sharing a passionate love-duet in the vestibule of his church, while organ strains prelude an act of worship. But much of this could be softened down without injury to the opera as a whole, and the game would certainly pay for the candle. "Manon" is too good not to be worth taking some trouble with. The performance went on with admirable smoothness, the orchestra, in particular, giving M. Massenet's music in splendid style. Of the artists on the stage two deserve special mention—our old London acquaintance, Mdlle.

Heilbron (*Manon*) and M. Talazac (*Des Grieux*). These, as representing the lovers, were well matched and satisfied the most exigent requirements. M. Talazac should be heard in London as soon as possible. He can sing and he can act—a rather rare combination among stage tenors at the present time. M. Taskin, as *Lescaut*, played with the rough force befitting that *garde du corps*, and M. Cobalet, as the "heavy father" of the drama, left really nothing to desire. All these details are, however, of secondary interest with English readers, the question for them being whether "Manon," suitably modified, will be given in this country. What does Mr. Gye say? He was present.

HANDEL'S ORCHESTRATION

By EBENEZER PROUT.

(Continued from page 196.)

THE score of "Alexander's Feast" (1736), the next work which in chronological order comes under our notice, though by no means deficient in variety of colour, contains but few effects which have not already been met with in previous works. The long opening symphony to "Bacchus' blessings are a treasure," for wind instruments only, is in extent almost unique in Handel's works. But that which chiefly distinguishes "Alexander's Feast" from most other compositions of the old master is the importance of the bassoon parts. In few other of Handel's scores do we find so large a proportion of movements which have independent parts for two bassoons. We have seen ripieno bassoon parts in "Deborah," but in that work the principal bassoons in such cases played in unison with the basses. Handel's general practice, even where the bassoons have separate parts, is to let them all play in unison; but in this comparatively short score we find at least four movements with obligato parts for two bassoons. In the chorus "Behold Darius, great and good," a charming effect is produced by these instruments doubling the first and second violins in the octave; while at the commencement of "The many rend the skies" two bassoons fill up the harmony of the strings with independent parts. But the most striking use of these instruments in this work is in the accompaniment to the second part of the song "Revenge, Timotheus cries." For the passage "Behold a ghastly band," Handel, with true musical insight, gets a sepulchral tone from his orchestra by the combination of two bassoons in unison with divided violas, a third bassoon playing in unison with the violoncelli *ripieni*, while the other violoncellos and double-basses, reinforced by the organ, *tasto solo*, sustain the bass of the harmony. The combination here is so perfect that Mozart, when he wrote his additional accompaniments to "Alexander's Feast," added nothing to it. We shall see shortly that two years later, in "Saul," Handel used the bassoons in a somewhat similar way for a special dramatic effect. We must not pass over without mention the unusual combination of two flutes and viola in the recitative "Thus long ago"—Handel had already tried the same experiment in "Scipione," though there for a few bars only.

As the Funeral Anthem, written in 1737, for the death of Queen Caroline, contains nothing on which it is needful to dwell, we next come to one of the most interesting of all the Handelian scores, that of "Saul," composed in 1738. Here for the first time we find parts for three trombones. It is a singular thing that, with the exception of "Saul," "Israel in Egypt," and one movement in "Samson," Handel never appears to have made use of the trombones at all. Why, after showing so thorough a knowledge of their proper employment as is to be found in these scores, Handel

should have discarded the instruments throughout the rest of his life is a question which it is probably impossible to answer. But a suggestion has occurred to me, which I throw out merely as a hint. In "Samson" we find trombones in unison with the violins in the Dead March, but they are to be seen nowhere else in the score of the oratorio. We know that Bach, writing at the same period, frequently uses trombones to play in unison with the alto, tenor, and bass voices in his choruses. We find the same thing half a century later in some of Mozart's masses. It is just possible, though I do not assert it in the absence of evidence on the subject, that Handel used the trombones in the same manner, and that he only wrote out the parts in full when they were *obbligato*, or different from the voice parts. Such a hypothesis is at least not inconsistent with the composer's practice, as we have seen from his treatment of the bassoons; and, as we know that trombones were employed in "Samson," it appears scarcely probable that the instruments should have nothing to do all through the oratorio except to play a few bars in the Dead March. Is it likely that, after discovering such fine effects for the instruments as are to be found in the scores I have named, Handel, who throughout his whole career aimed at richness and fullness in his orchestra, would have abandoned their use? On the other hand, as he generally conducted the performances of his oratorios himself, nothing would have been easier than for him to furnish each of the trombone players with a copy of a chorus part, alto, tenor, or bass, and to tell them in which movements to play and in which to be silent. There is yet another hypothesis. Both in "Saul" and "Israel in Egypt" the trombones are not written in the score with the other instruments, but noted on separate sheets at the end of the volume. It is quite possible that other oratorios had trombone parts noted in the same way; and that, being on loose sheets, only those of "Saul" and "Israel" happen to have been preserved. This, of course, is mere conjecture; but I confess that to myself it seems at least as probable as that Handel should have used trombones nowhere except in the works I have named.

To come back to the score of "Saul," it is worth noticing that here, and also in "Israel," the low C is frequently written in the bass trombone part. There must therefore in Handel's time have been a bass trombone in F, as the note in question is not to be obtained from the ordinary trombone in G. The trombone in F is now very seldom used, though I believe that one of our best orchestral players, Mr. Samuel Millar, has one. Gluck in his "Alceste" and Weber in the overture to "Der Freischütz" have used the low C; and in general when the latter work is performed the note is transposed an octave higher.

In the overture, or rather Sinfonia, to "Saul," which is in four movements, we find much richness of orchestral effect. The first movement abounds in contrasts of wind (oboes and bassoons) and strings; in the following larghetto we have not only similar contrasts, but duet passages for solo violin and solo oboe, accompanied by the organ, cembalo, and teorba. The third movement is a regular organ concerto, with the organ part written out on two staves. The opening chorus, "How excellent Thy name," is brilliantly scored for the full orchestra. Here, besides the usual contrasts of strings and reeds, we find full harmony for the brass alone (p. 23, &c.), the combination of oboes and trombones (p. 26), the chorus accompanied by all the wood, three trombones, and organ (p. 29), and other effects too numerous to mention. Of the treatment of the organ I shall speak

presently. The chorus "Welcome, welcome, mighty King," and the symphony which precedes it, are remarkable for the employment of the "Carillons," the instrument now known as the "Glockenspiel," which Mozart has employed in "Die Zauberflöte." Excepting in a late version of the chorus "Happy we" of "Acis and Galatea," which is printed in the appendix to the German Handel Society's edition of that work, I have not found this instrument in any other of Handel's scores. I have been unable to find in any work to which I have referred details as to the compass, &c., of the carillons. I must therefore content myself with noting the curious fact that both here and in "Acis" Handel has written the part a fourth higher than the notes intended to be sounded, the carillons being in F while the key of the piece is C. The air "Sin not, O King," must be noticed for the beauty of its bassoon parts; the instruments here (as in "O beautiful Queen" from "Esther," noticed in my last article) doubling the violins with charming effect. A novel combination will be seen in the solo "As great Jehovah lives." Here, while the violins have independent moving parts, the melody for the bass voice is doubled in the unison by the bassoons, and in the octave above by the violas—so far as my memory serves me, quite a new effect. The Sinfonia on p. 151 must be mentioned for the fullness of the harmony in the opening, which is scored for three violins (the first and second being doubled by the oboes), violas, two bassoons (the first *obbligato* and the second doubling the basses), three trombones, violoncellos and basses, and organ; the harmony is mostly in eight real parts. The second movement of the same symphony is another organ concerto, and is remarkable for the indication at the commencement "senza organo ii.," which proves that here, as in other cases already seen, two organs were used. We find "organi" in the plural again in the Dead March.

In the scene between Saul and the Witch of Endor, which opens the third part of the oratorio, some very dramatic effects of instrumentation are to be found. The Witch's air, "Infernal spirits," is quite modern in its orchestration. Here will be seen sustained harmony in three parts for oboes and bassoons against staccato passages, mostly in unison, for the strings. At the close of the air, to the words "Let the prophet Samuel rise," a striking effect is obtained by the doubling of the voice part in unison and octaves by all the oboes and bassoons, while the harmony is given to the strings. I mentioned, in speaking of "Alexander's Feast," the use of the bassoons in "Behold a ghastly band." The same instruments are employed in this scene (here without the violas) to depict the rising of the ghost of Samuel, just as Meyerbeer, nearly a century later, used them in the scene of the resurrection of the nuns in "Robert le Diable." The short symphony (p. 200 of the score) representing the battle on Mount Gilboa, not only gives us the alternation of the three orchestral masses, strings, reeds, and brass, but it furnishes the only example I have found in Handel of complete phrases of full harmony for trumpets and trombones alone.

There is still another respect in which the score of "Saul" is of especial importance in its relation to our subject; it is the only one from which we can obtain definite information as to Handel's manner of treating the organ in his oratorios. It was not his custom to indicate in his manuscripts the employment of the instrument excepting in important passages or solos. He generally himself presided at the organ at the performances of his works, and it was therefore unnecessary for him to write directions for his own guidance. But, fortunately for us, the copy of "Saul" from which he conducted contains

in pencil full indications as to the organ part throughout the whole. Dr. Chrysander, who in the first volume of his "Jahrbücher für Musikalische Wissenschaft" has devoted a long article to an analysis of this organ part, considers that the pencil notes were hurriedly written by the composer for use at a performance when he was unexpectedly absent. If this be so, and it appears highly probable, it may be further inferred that Handel's method of treating the organ differed from that usually adopted; because the filling up of the harmonies on the organ or harpsichord from a score or a figured bass was so generally practised that otherwise any competent musician would have required no special directions. Be this as it may, we have in this work minute instructions as to the way in which Handel intended the organ to be used. It would occupy far too much space to enter into details; for these I must refer my readers to Dr. Chrysander's very interesting article; all I can do here is to summarise the results.

We find that Handel in his choruses used the organ in full harmony with the voices, excepting in fugal passages, where he directs that the voice parts are to be played as they stand in the score. The obvious inference is that in other places, where "organo pieno" is marked, full chords were to be taken; for, if bare four-part harmony was employed throughout, there would have been no occasion to specify it in the fugued movements. But even in the choruses Handel does not always use the organ in harmony continuously. In "Along the monster atheist strode" and "The youth inspired," the organ simply doubles the bass part in the unison and octave, "tasto solo." In "Envy, eldest-born of hell," the organ plays the ground-bass in octaves throughout the first part, the effect of full chords on the instrument being held in reserve till the great burst at "Hide thee in the blackest night." From the resumption of the ground-bass to the end of the number we see again "tasto solo e l'ottava, forte." In the symphonies of the choruses, again (e.g., in "How excellent Thy name" and "Gird on thy sword"), the organ simply doubles the bass part, full chords not being used till the voices enter.

With regard to the accompaniment of the solos, we learn from this score a most important fact. In not one single song throughout the whole oratorio is the organ used to fill up the harmony. In some cases the bass ("tasto solo") reinforces the violoncellos and double-basses; but the large majority of the airs are expressly marked by the composer "senza organo." Nay, further, in the chorus "O fatal day," the use of the organ is directed; but though the instrument is already in use, as soon as the incidental solos which occur in the number commence we find on each occasion "senza organo." That Handel exceptionally used the organ in his songs we have already seen; but this score makes it abundantly evident that the harmonies (which nobody supposes were left empty) were to be filled up on the harpsichord, and not on the organ. Those who maintain, as some persist in doing, that Handel generally accompanied his songs on the organ must prove, to establish their point, that "Saul" was in this respect differently treated from all the other of the composer's oratorios; and of this there is not a particle of evidence.

"Israel in Egypt," the oratorio which immediately followed "Saul" in the date of its composition, also presents many features of interest in its scoring. Some of these are similar in character to those already noticed in speaking of other works; I shall therefore content myself with noting a few of the most striking. One of these is the highly dramatic employment of the roll of the drums in "But the waters

overwhelmed their enemies," to which I incidentally referred in speaking of the storm music in "Riccardo." Another unusual point in the scoring is the giving the two upper parts of the accompaniment to two oboes throughout the song "Thou didst blow with thy wind." Did Handel intend a kind of musical pun here, in thus illustrating the words? The lower part in this number is given to violas, violoncellos, and bassoons in unison, reinforced by the organ—evidently "tasto solo" as we find it in the score of "Saul"—while the double-basses in the opening symphony have a simplification of the semiquaver figure of the violoncellos. It must also be noted that in "He spake the word" two organs are indicated, one to accompany each choir in the double chorus. But the most important point in the orchestration of this oratorio is the use of the trombones. It is very singular that the trombone parts were published for the first time in the German Handel Society's edition in 1863. In this work they are used even more freely than in "Saul." We find them not only in the choruses accompanied by the full orchestra—such as "He gave them hailstones," "Moses and the children of Israel," "I will sing unto the Lord," and "Thy right hand, O Lord"—but in "He spake the word," "He smote all the first-born," and in several of the fugues—"Egypt was glad," "And I will exalt him," "Thou sentest forth thy wrath," and "The earth swallowed them." In "I will sing unto the Lord" the *canto fermo* with which the chorus commences is accompanied by the trombones in unison, the same instruments reinforcing the theme on each subsequent re-appearance. In "He spake the word," which, it will be remembered, is in the key of B flat, the trombone parts, curiously enough, are written without any key-signature, and the flats noted as accidentals throughout. A fine effect is obtained in "He smote all the first-born" by staccato chords for the trombones, both at the commencement with the strings and at the well-known passage, near the close, of detached chords for the chorus "He smote the chief of all their strength." In the fugues the first and second trombones usually play in unison with the alto and tenor voices, the third trombone either with the bass voice or (not infrequently) in the octave below. It is worth noting that in no case are the trombones used in the first exposition of a fugue; they are always held in reserve for the later developments.

Though one of Handel's shortest works, the "Ode for St. Cecilia's Day" (1739) contains more than one point in the orchestration deserving mention. In the recitative following the overture we find not only five string parts—the violoncellos and double-basses being distinct—but independent iterated chords for oboes and bassoons, against moving semiquavers for the strings—quite an anticipation of the modern style of scoring. The once famous song "What passion cannot music raise and quell" contains one of Handel's most beautiful and expressive obbligati for the violoncello. In the air and chorus "The trumpet's loud clangour" we find the drums used as solo instruments—a rare thing with Handel. In the air "The soft complaining flute" will be seen the combination of one flute with all the violins in unison *con sordini*, also duet passages for the flute and lute, and the accompaniment of the voice by the flute, lute, and organ. It is worth noting that when in his oratorios Handel uses the flute, he frequently substitutes the organ for the harpsichord as the accompanying instrument—as, for instance, in "Tears such as tender fathers shed" in "Deborah." No doubt he felt the affinity between the flute tone and that of the flue stops of the organ. In the "Ode for St. Cecilia's Day" we also find a beautiful organ obbligato to the

song "But oh! what art can teach." It is very seldom Handel gives any directions for registering; in the present case he has specially marked "Organ Diapasons."

In the opening recitatives of "L'Allegro" (1740) will be seen a striking instance of Handel's judicious use of orchestral contrasts. The work commences with the setting of the first lines of Milton's "L'Allegro," "Hence, loathed melancholy," &c., which is accompanied throughout by violoncellos in two parts and double-basses, the violoncello parts being doubled by the first and second bassoons. The following recitative, "Hence, vain deluding joys!" (the opening of "Il Penseroso") has also a three-part accompaniment, but Handel uses now the two violins and violas, without any basses or wind instruments. The contrast of tone is as strong as the means employed to produce it are simple. The well-known air "Sweet Bird," which, though by no means one of Handel's best songs, is, from its showy character, still occasionally heard in our concert rooms, has a flute obbligato of an unusually florid character; while the hunting song for bass, "Mirth, admit me of thy crew," has an appropriate horn obbligato, the only other one I have found in Handel's works besides that of "Va tacito e nascosto" in "Giulio Cesare," mentioned in my third article. In the air "Oft on a plat" the violoncellos and double-basses are used *pizzicato*, to imitate the curfew. A very beautiful effect is obtained in the lovely song "Hide me from day's garish eye" by accompanying the voice throughout the greater part of the number only by violins and violas; excepting in a symphony of four bars all the bass instruments are silent till the passage "Then as I wake sweet music breathe." One more point must be noticed in this score. At the beginning of the chorus "There let the pealing organ blow" the bass line is marked "Bassi, Contrafagotto e Organo." This is, I believe, the only instance of the employment of the contrafagotto by Handel. It is known that the instrument at that date was very imperfect; and it appears a probable conjecture that Handel experimented with it here, and, not being satisfied with the result, did not use it again.

It is a very curious thing that Handel's most celebrated work, the "Messiah" (1741), should be one of the least interesting of all his scores from the point of view of the instrumentation. The work is not yet published in the German edition, and I am therefore unable to say whether the conducting score will show any important additions in the orchestra; but I have carefully examined the lithographed fac-simile of the composer's autograph, and find that, with the exception of the trumpet obbligato in "The trumpet shall sound," not a single air in the work contains any indication of parts for wind instruments. Even the oboes, so frequently used in other works, are only to be found in the chorus "Their sound is gone out," which was a later addition. Is it possible that the composer, who, it is known, felt very deeply the solemn character of the words he was setting, purposely abstained from anything like brilliance in his orchestra, in order not to distract his hearers from the sacredness of the subject? Perhaps he may have felt that the utmost simplicity of treatment was here the most appropriate. The only point to notice in the orchestration of the "Messiah" is the treatment of the trumpets. In "Glory to God" they are marked "Da lontano, e un poco piano"—i.e., from a distance, and rather soft—a direction, it may be observed, which is never attended to in performance; while in both the "Hallelujah" and "Worthy is the Lamb" the upper D is written for the first trumpet, a note frequently to be found in Bach's scores, but rare with Handel.

A novel feature in "Samson," the work which immediately followed the "Messiah," is that the score contains almost throughout the indications "con ripieni" and "senza ripieni" in the string parts. These are probably given on the authority of the conducting score; and we see from an examination of them that the whole mass of the strings was never used in the accompaniment of the solo voice, and only exceptionally even in the symphonies of the songs, as for example in the interludes of "Honour and arms," where Handel, for dramatic purposes, requires unusual force. The larger number of the airs bear the direction "senza ripieni per tutto"—i.e., without the ripieni throughout. The alternations of the whole and partial strength of the strings in the well known overture are worth noticing. It will be remembered that the introduction consists of two parts, each of which is repeated. Curiously enough, Handel does not begin with his whole force; the first part of the introduction is marked to be played the first time without and the second time with the ripieni; on the other hand, the second part, beginning with the dominant, is to be played with the ripieni both times. The short Adagio which follows is "senza ripieni," as also the commencement of the fugue; the ripieni entering when the basses have the subject, and the rest of the fugue being for the whole force. In the Minuet all the *piano* passages are without and all the *forte* with the ripieni. This single example will show how much variety Handel obtained in his treatment even of the stringed orchestra. Similar indications as to the use of the ripieni are to be found in the scores of "Hercules," "Solomon," and "Susanna," and it appears probable that other works were treated in the same way, though the directions may not have been always written down in the scores.

The overture to "Samson" is further interesting from the independance of the wind parts (oboes and horns) in some passages of the fugue. Just before the close, after the two bars *piano*, the subject is given out for the last time by all the strings in unison and octaves, with full harmony above for the wind; while in the final close (Adagio) the first and second oboes double the violins in the lower octave. The horn parts of the minuet, especially in the middle section, also deserve mention.

Like "The Messiah," "Samson" has no indication of oboes being used in any one of the airs, though they are employed in all the choruses without exception. On the other hand, we find important parts for two bassoons in "Glorious hero"; and in "Thus when the sun" the bassoons and violoncellos double the violas in some passages, the bass of the harmony being assigned to the double-basses, strengthened doubtless by the harpsichord. In the air "Ye sons of Israel now lament" a beautiful effect is obtained by the alternation of the strings with the organ solo in the accompaniment.

One of the most valuable features of the German Handel Society's edition of "Samson" is the re-scored version which it contains of the Dead March in "Saul." Handel originally wrote for the oratorio the Dead March in D, which is still usually performed when the work is given, and which, as I have already mentioned, contains parts for trombones; but he subsequently replaced it by the more favourite march from "Saul," which he transposed into D, and rescored, substituting horns in D for the trombones. Dr. Chrysander in the new edition has marked the parts "Corno I." (e Tromba I.) "Corno II." (e Tromba II.). The brackets show that the words are an addition of the editor's; but with the highest respect for his unequalled knowledge of Handel, I cannot but think that he is here in error. The march is intended to be

soft throughout, this we know from "Saul"; and Dr. Chrysander, in his article already referred to, in speaking of that oratorio, has specially mentioned this point, and protested against the caricature of the march by the introduction of a *fortissimo*. But if in the present instance the trumpets double the horns in the octave above, the parts lying throughout in the upper register of the instruments, and twice reaching the high D, the quiet and solemn character of the music is absolutely destroyed. With all deference, therefore, to Dr. Chrysander, I am compelled to differ from him altogether as to the use of the trumpets in this piece.

The contrasts of colour in this later version of the Dead March are worth noting. The first eight bars are given to strings, horns, and drums, without the organ; the next eight to two flutes and organ only, with a single note for the drum on the fourth beat of each bar. The organ part is here written out in full on two staves, instead of there being, as in "Saul," merely a general indication of its employment; moreover, the chords are taken in a different position. At the seventeenth bar we have again strings, horns, and drums: at the twenty-first a *tutti*, the organ and flutes doubling the violins in the upper octave. The flutes and organ are used for four bars at bar twenty-five; and the last four bars are again *tutti*. It would be difficult within the space of thirty-two bars to obtain more contrast with so few instruments.

(To be continued.)

THE GREAT COMPOSERS

By JOSEPH BENNETT.

No. XIV.—MEYERBEER (continued from page 199).

THE production of "Le Prophète" took place, as usual with Meyerbeer's works, only after many delays. Fétis tells us that the opera was several times announced under different names, and the fact is characteristic of Meyerbeer's fastidiousness—a quality which, as it seems to us, sprang from excessive timidity. The master had a perfect horror of adverse criticism, and trembled before the most insignificant scribbler in a public print. Hence the extreme precautions under which his works were brought out. The whole situation had to be surveyed with "anxious polyscopy" lest an open joint somewhere should let in the arrow of censure. It is only right to add that the final cause of delay as regards "Le Prophète" was independent of Meyerbeer, and had more to do with the Paris mob, who, in February, 1848, transformed King Louis Philippe into plain Mr. John Smith and sent him post haste to England. This amounted to an artistic as well as political upset. It disorganised the Opéra especially, and only after a year had passed did the director and composer think it wise or find it convenient to produce the new work at the Théâtre de la Nation, as the erstwhile Académie Royale was then called.

It is interesting, at this distance of time, to read the criticisms which the French and other journals poured forth anent "Le Prophète," and to gather from them, not so much definite impressions concerning the work, as an idea of the light in which Meyerbeer was generally regarded. We are able to see, through a perfect blaze of eulogy, that the composer's method was accepted with a certain amount of reservation, sometimes of openly qualifying remark. The impression made by Meyerbeer's elaborate musical structures and grandiose effects seems to have been much like that of the charge of the Light Brigade upon the French general who exclaimed, looking at the wild ride, "C'est magnifique, mais c'est pas la guerre." Thus, a writer in a journal devoted to Meyerbeer, said: "Greatly as the productions of

this composer must be admired, his followers not possessing his genius will, it is to be feared, rather injure than forward the advancement of pure musical taste. The peculiarities of his style, indeed, are such as will readily be resorted to for reasons far different from those by which he was actuated; for, in finding the possibility of substituting noise for melody, and startling contrast and effect for merely scientific combinations, many a composer who would otherwise have lived unerring may be induced to offer his meagre and trashy productions to the world." The veiled indictment to be detected in the foregoing words may be seen also in the recondite observations of Fétis, who describes "Le Prophète" as the fruit of an alliance between imagination and reason, not imagination and sensibility, from which union sprang the great duet in "Les Huguenots." M. Scudo witnesses to a similar purport in a passage which the reader will thank us for translating:—

"Of a penetrating spirit, full of sagacity and depth, M. Meyerbeer shares neither the advantages nor the infirmities of those spontaneous natures which shine like the light, lavishing, without restriction or thought of the morrow, the perfume of their youth and inheritance. A philosopher and thinker, he elaborates ideas slowly and under the eye of reason, and when he opens to himself the doors of life he is almost sure of making glorious progress. M. Meyerbeer leaves nothing to chance; he foresees all that it is possible to foresee; he learnedly combines all his effects, determining the faintest shades. His scores are full of explanatory remarks and ingenious observations, which show the pre-occupation of his spirit and his profound knowledge of dramatic strategy.

... One might, doubtless, desire a little more variety and spontaneousness in the music of 'Le Prophète'; the changelessly sombre character of the subject sometimes wearying the attention. We find there piquant and ingenious combinations, and mixtures of tone-colours the effect of which appears to us more curious than dramatic. It is a dangerous slope which leads to research for strange harmonies and multiplied modulations; and, when one does not possess the science and profundity of M. Meyerbeer, the method of instrumentation which his example authorises produces the music of M. Verdi, and worse still."

The evidence we have quoted above is that of Meyerbeer's enthusiastic friends. They could neither help seeing, nor refrain from stating, that the master was a kind of musical strategist and tactician, who, like Carnot or Von Moltke, "organised victory" with infinite care and forethought, and by means of the most daring and dazzling combinations. "Le Prophète," more, perhaps, than "Robert" or "Les Huguenots," illustrated this view of Meyerbeer's musical character. Hence the expression of a feeling in critical circles that admiration was not untempered by reservation of entire approval.

M. Scudo tells us that the first performance of "Le Prophète" left a good deal to desire, although Viardot, Castellani, Roger, Levasseur, and Gueymard took part in it. Madame Viardot, however, seems to have satisfied the composer by her *Fides*, which drew from Meyerbeer the subjoined eloquent letter:

"My dear Pauline,—Forgive me if I do not come to-day to express my admiration and gratitude. But I am indisposed, and feel the want of a few hours' rest; besides, what could I say in comparison to that which the tears and the enthusiasm of two thousand persons yesterday proclaimed of your admirable creation. I ceased for an instant to remember that I was the author of the work; you had transformed me into a breathless and excited auditor of your impassioned and truthful accents. Adieu.—MEYERBEER."