

RICHARD WAGNER.

BY E. P. EVANS.

[CONCLUDED.]

WE spoke, at the conclusion of our former article, of Wagner's early cosmopolitanism and Gallomania, and of his conversion, on the appearance of the "Flying Dutchman," to an ardent and emotional patriotism.

In order to appreciate Wagner's subsequent course it must be remembered that this sudden fit of patriotic fervor had a purely personal origin and was only an individual application of the general maxim: *Ubi bene, ibi patria*. In Paris not one of the projects which he had so confidently entertained had been realised and he felt deeply humiliated and depressed as an artist and a man by the neglect and destitution he suffered during his sojourn in the French metropolis. In Dresden, on the contrary, the representation of his "Rienzi" had met with remarkable success, filling him with happy hopes and the inspiring thought that he had "now regained his Fatherland." It was with great joy, as he confesses, that he accepted at a small salary (1200 thalers) the position of musical director in the Royal Theatre of that city, since it opened to him the very field of activity he had so long desired. "On this occasion," he says, "I had within me the firm consciousness of the ability and power to accomplish whatever I might earnestly wish." But this strong conviction was of short endurance. The failure of the public to understand "The Flying Dutchman" and the sharp and somewhat invidious criticism to which he was subjected in the local press both as a conductor and a composer, and which he has satirised in "The Master-Singers of Nuremberg," thoroughly undeceived him and showed his vision to have been a mere *Fata Morgana*, in which he had seen everything magnified and inverted at a distance through the refracting medium of an excited and exalted imagination. Once when Jean Paul Richter and Goethe were to-

gether and fell into conversation concerning the scandalous gossip that was being circulated to their injury, the former remarked that he should pay no attention to it or at least should wait until he was accused of stealing silver spoons; whereupon Goethe replied that he should give no heed to it even then. Wagner refers to



RICHARD WAGNER AND SIGFRIED WAGNER.

From a photograph, 1880; in the possession of Frau C. Wagner.

this incident in a letter to a friend and adds, "Although I would not compare myself to Goethe, I am determined to act as he did;" but unfortunately his temper got the better of his judgment and overbore his resolution, and he began a conflict with those who

refused to recognise his claims, that was waged at first with extreme virulence and really ceased only with his life; but before he fell, victory had perched upon the standard he had raised and defended, and every year since his death has consolidated and extended his triumphs.

"In the midst of this bitterness against the existing condition of things," writes Wagner in an autobiographical sketch, "I found myself moved by the revolutionary spirit which was growing stronger and stronger all around me and which now enlisted my zealous sympathy." He believed that the degradation of art was due to the general and inveterate debasement of the social and political institutions of the time, and that the reformation which he had been vainly endeavoring to accomplish could be effected only by a radical change in the constitution of society and the state. The attempt made by Mr. William Ashton Ellis in his so-



WAGNER'S DOG *Marke*.

called "Vindication" to show that Wagner did not participate in the Saxon uprising of 1849, but that it was a journeyman baker of the same name who shouldered his musket and shouted sedition on the barricades is as foolish as it is futile. It is one of the penalties of his success and celebrity that the eminent composer now numbers among his adherents many persons of aristocratic tastes and severely conservative tendencies, who hold religiously to the doctrine of the divine rights of kings and regard all rebellion against the authority of the Lord's anointed as extremely wicked and, what is still worse, exceedingly vulgar. Wagner's biographers have uniformly passed over this characteristic and most instructive episode of his life in significant silence or with only the very slightest allusions to it. Glasenapp treats it as a mistake, not on the part of Wagner, but on the part of the Saxon government, whose issue of warrants for the capture of the fugitive was wholly un-

warrantable. Tappert has even the face to declare that "Wagner was never a revolutionist"; and, while admitting that he welcomed the movement because he hoped it would produce changes favorable to German art, adds: "Nowhere do I find any proofs of his participation in the insurrection, and all assertions of this kind bear the stamp of falsity." If Tappert had examined the records of the criminal court of Dresden instead of confining his investigations to the archives of the Royal Theatre, he would have found conclusive evidence of the truth of the statements which he so positively denies. There he would have discovered among other official documents bearing on the question the "Acts against the ex-musical conductor Richard Wagner, of this place, on account of participation in the insurrection of May 1849."¹ Doubtless some things done by other Wagners were naturally enough ascribed to the most famous man of this name. Thus Count Von Beust in

S t e c k b r i e f.

Der unten etwas näher bezeichnete Königl. Kapellmeister
Richard Wagner von hier

ist wegen wesentlicher Theilnahme an der in hiesiger Stadt stattgefundenen aufrührerischen Bewegung zur Untersuchung zu ziehen, zur Zeit aber nicht zu erlangen gewesen. Es werden daher alle Polizeibehörden auf denselben aufmerksam gemacht und ersucht, Wagnern im Betretungsfalle zu verhaften und davon uns schleunigst Nachricht zu ertheilen.

Dresden, den 16. Mai 1849.

Die Stadt-Polizei-Deputation.
von Dypell.

Wagner ist 37 bis 38 Jahre alt, mittler Statur, hat braunes Haar und trägt eine Brille.

REDUCED FACSIMILE OF THE WARRANT OF ARREST ISSUED AGAINST WAGNER AND
PUBLISHED IN THE *Dresdener Journal*. From Dresden Municipal Library.

his reminiscences entitled "Aus drei Viertel-Jahrhunderten" accuses Wagner of having set fire to the "Prince's Palace" and states that there is among the acts of accusation in the possession of the government a letter written by Wagner himself, in which he boasts of the deed. "Whether he sang: '*Frisch, Feuerflamme, fröhlich und furchtbar,*' as an accompaniment to this performance, I am unable to say." Von Beust's mistake arose from the fact that there was among the revolutionists a low and disreputable fellow named Woldemar Wagner, a confectioner, who by order of Bakunin did attempt to burn the palace and sent to the provisional government a written report on the subject signed "Wagner." As the confectioner was an utterly obscure person, the discovery of this paper would inevitably implicate the distinguished composer.

¹ Akta wider den vormaligen Kapellmeister Richard Wagner, hier, wegen Bethheiligung am hiesigen Mai-Aufstande im Jahre 1849.

It was unquestionably this brutal and blood-thirsty maker of com-fits who shot Lieutenant von Krug in front of the arsenal on the third of May, and who had to answer also to the charge of pillaging private dwellings.

According to a popular belief once widely spread and still lurking as a tradition in the minds of some credulous people, the destruction of the old Dresden opera house by fire on the sixth of May, 1849, was due to a conspiracy on the part of Richard Wagner and the eminent architect, Gottfried Semper. The origin of this story deserves mention as a striking illustration of the rise and growth of such quasi-historical fables. It was in the earliest stages of the revolutionary movement that Wagner one day met Semper on the street and referring to the projected representation of "Lohengrin," complained of the stage as not deep enough for an effective arrangement of the scenic decorations. The conversation was about the new opera house built by Semper, who somewhat irritated by this stricture on an edifice of which he was justly proud, replied sarcastically: "Yes, indeed, I should like to burn down the old booth at once." This remark uttered half testily and half jestingly was overheard by Wagner's envious colleague Reissiger and by the singer Chiarelli, who chanced to be in Meser's music store near the door of which the earnest colloquy took place. Rumors of this dreadful plot were whispered abroad, and when a short time afterwards the old opera house was actually devoured by flames, there could be no difficulty in determining who were the incendiaries.

There was also a third Wagner, a member of the municipal council of Schneeberg and delegate to the Saxon Diet, who took part in the insurrection and was finally forced to flee from Germany; and it is possible that public opinion may have held the already celebrated musician to some extent responsible for the words and actions of this comparatively unknown politician, which, however, appear to have been of an inconspicuous and rather harmless character.

But after making all due allowance for misapprehensions arising from the existence of these inconvenient and in part discreditable doubles, it is impossible for even the most subtle and sophisticated apologist to explain away stubborn facts and to reduce Wagner's rôle as a revolutionist to a mere "Comedy of errors." The long speech which he delivered in the *Vaterlandsverein*, June 14, 1848, and his contributions to the extremely radical sheet, Röckel's *Volksblätter*, which he has not seen fit to include in the

collected edition of his works, but which Dinger has printed in full, prove conclusively his ardent zeal for the cause and show clearly his conception of the aims and purposes of the revolutionary movement. "First of all," he says in his fiery and somewhat fantastic speech, "we must extinguish the last flicker of aristocracy." True, he adds, our nobles are no longer feudal lords, privileged to oppress and flay us according to their good pleasure; but in order to remove every cause of offence, they ought now to renounce all lingerings of class distinction and to lay aside betimes that robe of rank which on a hot day may easily become a shirt of Nessus and burn them to the bones. If ancestral pride and piety keep them from this renunciation of hereditary prerogatives, let them remember that the people too have forefathers, whose deeds are not recorded in family archives, but whose sufferings under all sorts of servitude are written with bloody ink in the history of the past thousand years. The abolition of the nobility would logically involve the abolition of the court with all its superfluous and expensive pomp and pageantry. Royalty was to be retained, the function of the sovereign being merely that of the chief public servant and first citizen of the state; while a disciplined militia, in the place of a standing army, provided for the national defense. It was also a part of his programme to eliminate the aristocratic element from the legislative body, which was to consist of a single homogeneous assembly of the representatives of the people elected by universal suffrage. There was to be no recognition of different estates of the realm and consequently no division of the parliament into an upper and a lower house.

Wagner's political ideal was a democratic and socialistic state, the head of which was to be an hereditary executive to be called king or president as the people might determine. On this point he was by no means strenuous, his own preference for a monarchy being due in a great measure to his personal love and esteem for Frederic Augustus, the king of Saxony. All talk of his deep ingratitude to this monarch is the sheerest nonsense. The one point, however, upon which he most earnestly insisted, was socialistic reform and the improvement of the condition of the working classes. In his eyes the worst of all tyrannies is a plutocracy, the tyranny of capital, the subjection of man to the soulless and heartless domination of "the pale metal." He wished to do away with an order of things which makes millions the slaves of a few, and these few the slaves of their own wealth, which causes labor to be a burden and enjoyment to be a vice, and renders one man wretched



FAFNER.

From the "Nibelung-Ring." (After a painting by Hermann Hendrich.)

through want and another wretched through superfluity. The curse attached to the treasure of the Nibelungen and the calamities it entailed upon its possessors even to the destruction of the gods symbolised to him the misery wrought among men by the inordinate greed of gold. The money power he declares to be the source of all discord and violence on earth, as the ring forged from the hoard of the Rhine was fatal to the peace and happiness of Valhalla and introduced hatred and contention into the abode of the immortals. In his speech he protests against any misinterpretation of his views: "Be not so foolish or malicious as to regard the necessary redemption of the human race from the coarsest and most demoralising servitude to filthy lucre as identical with the endeavor to carry out the silliest and absurdest of doctrines, namely that of communism." At the same time he prophecies that unless a serious effort shall be made to apply the principles of socialism, in the proper sense of the term, for the rectification of centuries of wrong, derided and despairing human nature will rise up in fierce conflict and with the wild battle-cry of communism succeed perhaps in overthrowing and obliterating all the highest achievements of civilisation for the last two thousand years. "This is not a threat," he adds, "but a warning."

The leading spirit of the Dresden insurrection was the Russian anarchist and nihilist, Michael Bakunin, who won Wagner's heart by declaring that in the coming cataclysm all existing institutions would be swept away and "everything perish except the Ninth Symphony." There is no reason to suppose that Bakunin felt any peculiar tenderness for this creation of Beethoven's genius or believed that it was endowed with imperishable qualities above many other musical masterpieces; but he had a keen eye for the crotchets and enthusiasms of those whom he wished to captivate, was quick to detect each individual's hobby-horse and had a charming way of praising it and gently patting it on the shoulder. He was without doubt a very strong and extremely fascinating character and possessed a rare gift of eloquence and almost irresistible powers of persuasion. Wagner was completely under his influence and firmly convinced that the realisation of his ideas would result not only in a most desirable political reconstruction of Europe, but also in the moral and social regeneration of mankind, which would of course bring with it as an inevitable sequence a marvellous revival and consummate evolution of art. It was to the coming of this golden age of superior enlightenment and culture that he looked forward with intense eagerness, regarding all other ac-

quisitions as mere means to this supreme end. In his subsequent utterances Bakunin spoke rather depreciatingly of Wagner, whom he regarded as a visionary. Nevertheless, as he admits, they often discussed political questions together and their intercourse remained cordial and intimate to the very last. Wagner was a regular attendant at the secret meetings held at Bakunin's rooms in the *Menageriegarten*, at which all the revolutionary plans were laid and arrangements made for the preparation of hand grenades, shrapnel shells, and other deadly explosives for insurrectionary uses. He also took an uncommonly lively interest in procuring these materials, which were stored on Bakunin's premises. Indeed, as we are informed by Röckel, at least one conference on this subject was held in Wagner's garden. After the movement had failed and Wagner was asked by his brother-in-law Wolfram at Chemnitz whether he had taken an active part in it, he replied: "No, only as a curious spectator!" A curious, in the sense of a queer sort of spectator, he certainly was.

Frau Minna Wagner recognised the great ability and energy of Bakunin, but feared him as the evil genius of her husband, whom she endeavored to keep out of the sphere of his influence, and, in fact, so far as possible out of the vortex of the revolution, predicting that it would end in public disaster and personal distress to themselves. It is difficult to determine to what extent Wagner was engaged in actual combat on the streets and behind the barricades. It is probable, however, that his valorous deeds of this kind were quite insignificant, and he once expressed to his wife his regret that he could not carry a gun,—a remark which, unless intended merely to deceive and pacify her, would imply that he did not bear arms during those stormy days of May. Perhaps he wished that she, too, should infer that he had nothing to do with the affair except as "a curious spectator." We have pretty conclusive evidence that the principal post of honor occupied by him at that turbulent time was a very high one, namely, the top of the tower of the Kreuzkirche, where he watched the progress of events and noted down his observations on slips of paper, which he wrapped in stones and threw to the soldiers below, who forwarded them to the head-quarters of the insurgents. From this lofty and responsible station he dispatched, on the morning of May 7, a messenger to his wife for a box of snuff and two bottles of wine. Somewhat distrustful she inquired whether her husband were alone, and on learning that Bakunin and a few other ultraists were with him, sent instead of the snuff and wine a brief and per-

empty note bidding him return home at once, or she would leave the house. He obeyed and did not get out again until the next day, Frau Minna having promptly locked the doors and purposely mislaid the keys. The uniformly sound judgment of this lady in all practical matters and the prudence and decision shown by her in effecting her husband's escape shortly after this quasi-comical incident indicate a person of unusual discernment and force of character, and not the mere goody portrayed by Wagner's ardent apologists. It was chiefly due to her timely and efficient intervention that Wagner was permitted to work out his musical theories and complete his musical dramas in his quiet retreat on Lake Zurich instead of spending the most fruitful years of his life gloomily meditating on the past in the penitentiary at Waldheim or in the fortress of Königstein.

In no other country is the individual course of life so completely and consciously governed and directed by strictly philosophical principles as in Germany. The key to every man's actions is his *Weltanschauung* or the peculiar color and curvature of the spherical lenses through which he contemplates the world. Conduct that cannot be brought into some definite correlation to the cosmic system is condemned as random and erratic; but no eccentricity is so extreme as not to be entitled to consideration and to command respect, provided it can answer the question: *Dic cur hic* by appealing to the nature of things and proving that it has reached its standpoint in obedience to the general laws and in harmony with the essential constitution of the universe.

While Hegel was still living his disciples were divided into three distinct sections, representing respectively supernaturalism, rationalism, and a sort of rationalistic mysticism, which claimed to have affinities with both the opposites and sought to mediate between them. If political terms may be used to express philosophical distinctions, these parties may be called the right, the left, and the centre of Hegelianism. The most radical and aggressive of these factions was known as the *Junghegelianer* or Neo-Hegelians, of whom Ludwig Feuerbach, Arnold Ruge, Daumer, and Echtermeyer were perhaps the most eminent and influential. Wagner belonged to this extreme left wing; and, indeed, the whole revolutionary movement of 1848 had its origin in Neo-Hegelianism and derived its inspiration and theoretical justification from this source. Notwithstanding the paternal care taken by the Emperor Nicholas to preserve his dear children from spiritual contamination through contact with the culture of Western Europe, the writings of this

advanced school were smuggled into Russia by Pavlov and Stan-kovitch, and Moscow soon became a seat of contagion for the entire empire. It was in this sacred city of the Muscovites that Granovski, Belinski, and Bakunin became first infected with this philosophy, from which they deduced the necessity of an European revolution and a Panslavonic confederation as the next stage in the evolution of human civilisation.

In his *Phenomenology of Mind* Hegel remarks that our age is clearly an age of transition to a new period; and this passage was evidently in Feuerbach's mind when he wrote, "our present time is the key-stone of a great epoch in the history of mankind, and therefore the starting-point of a new life." The postulation of a dawning era of radical reform and universal transformation was common to the whole school of Neo-Hegelians, who were eagerly looking forward to it and earnestly laboring to realise it each in his own sphere. Like speculators on the stock-exchange they all dealt in "futures." Friedrich Feuerbach and Daumer were interested in the religion of the future, Ludwig Feuerbach in the philosophy and ethics of the future, Ruge and Echtermeyer in the science of the future, Bakunin, Proudhon, and Röckel in the political, social, and industrial organisation of the future, while Wagner devoted all his powers to the development of the music of the future. During the latter half of the nineteenth century rapid progress has been made towards the realisation of these ideals at least in modified forms, except in cases where the advance of intelligence has set them aside as hopelessly Utopian; religion, philosophy, ethics, and science have passed through wonderful stages of evolution; the problem of the political and social constitution of the future is still a burning question constantly threatening to become incendiary; only in the province of art, which Wagner made it his mission to cultivate, has faith been turned into vision, and the goal of his aspirations actually attained both in the creation of the musical drama according to his conception of it and, what was perhaps still more difficult, in the growth of a national and international public capable of comprehending and appreciating it. It was for an ideal society of the future that he composed his works, which were to be rendered by dramatic singers existing as yet only in his mind's eye; and it is doubtful whether he ever expected to live to see them properly represented before sympathetic and enthusiastic audiences.

According to Dinger's tabulation of Wagner's views as a Neo-Hegelian, his philosophy was evolutionary materialism and sensual-

ism, his religion atheism, his ethics optimism and eudemonism, and his politics anarchism: a summary of isms sufficient to chill the marrow and curdle the blood of many a devout Wagnerite of to-day. The works, which derived their inspiration and took a more or less distinct tinge from these tenets, are the projected musical dramas, to which the text was written, but the music never composed: "Siegfried's Death" (afterwards embodied in the third part of the tetralogy), "Wieland the Smith," "Jesus of Nazareth," and the subsequently completed "Ring of the Nibelungen," although in this last-mentioned tragedy of the gods he has thrown a veil of symbolism over his ideas and presented them in a more artistic and therefore less aggressive form. His strong and cheerful optimism as to the glorious prospects of mankind here prevented him from looking beyond and seeking consolation in the magnified looming of human hopes on the bright sky of the hereafter. The expression of this feeling comes out very forcibly in his essays and especially in his personal correspondence. "The future generation," he writes, "will have no longer any need of God and immortality, since this life will satisfy all our hopes, so that we shall not have to direct our thoughts beyond the earth to an imaginary heaven." He characterises all such "religious presumptions" as "anthropomorphistic speculations, which are injurious and immoral, because they place the final purpose of man outside of himself," whereas he is only the supreme and crowning product of cosmic evolution and can "serve no other purposes than those of nature, which has produced him conformable to certain conditions of necessity." His spiritual superiority does not exempt him from the operation of the laws of development and dissolution which govern all other organisms.

In a volume entitled *The Destiny of Man* Mr. John Fiske endeavors to show the unreasonableness of supposing that "Man as the goal of Nature's creative work" should be only one of the many perishable forms of matter and destined to disappear with the rest, and asks: "Has all this work been done for nothing? Is it all ephemeral, all a bubble that bursts, a vision that fades?" To these indignant interrogatories Wagner would have replied: "No, indeed; man's immortality and eternal beatitude consists in the persistence and perfection of the spiritual element, not in the individual, but in the race; and there is no reason why the contemplation of this slow but unceasing process of evolution and its glorious consummation in the highest possible elevation of humanity, even though it be completed with the present life upon the

earth, should put any logical thinker to intellectual confusion." It is interesting to note how easily, in regions of speculation lying out of the range of scientific demonstration, diametrically opposite conclusions may be deduced from precisely the same premises. Liszt was greatly exercised at his friend's utter lack of faith and in his letters seeks to show him the error of his ways, quoting with a slight and suitable variation the exhortation in Elsa's song :

"Lass zu dem Glauben Dich neu bekehren :
Es giebt ein Glück,"

and beseeching him not to turn away contemptuously from this "only true and eternal bliss."

Wagner, however, was too much of a eudemonist, too thoroughly given up to the gratification of what he called his *Glückseligkeitstrieb*, to be greatly influenced by such admonitions. Ethically his philosophy of life might be summed up in Pope's exclamation.

"O happiness, our being's end and aim."

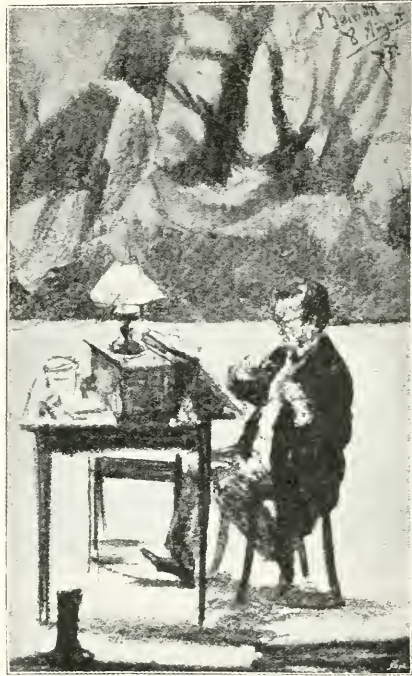
His bitter hostility to Christianity arose chiefly from its ascetic teachings, which put a barrier between man and the full exercise and enjoyment of the powers and passions with which nature has so lavishly endowed him and which are essential to his welfare and conservation. In "Jesus of Nazareth" he infers from the statement that "God is love," that love is supreme and absolute and knows no limitations. Indeed, the whole didactic purpose of the drama is to glorify love as the primal and universal law of the race in opposition to the restrictions imposed upon its manifestations by human enactments. In the crucible of this consuming and refining passion individual egotism is transformed into the altruism of domestic and social relations, thus fulfilling in the province of the emotions the alchemist's dream of transmuting base metals into gold. It endues Siegfried's sword with a magic power that shatters Wotan's spear, "the shaft of sovereignty" and symbol of conventional moral order, and urges the youthful hero onward through a sea of fire to the rescue and redemption of Brünnhilde.

Highly significant, too, is Wagner's enthusiasm for Hâfiz and Shelley. The former he declares to be not only "the most gifted poet," but also "the greatest and sublimest philosopher that ever lived." What attracted him so strongly to the Dîvân (known to him only in Daumer's fragmentary and rather imperfect translation) was the glowing sensuality that pervades all the ghazals, the warm erotic hues that color even the religious poems, and the unceasing denunciation of priestcraft and pietism. The motto of

Hâfiz: "Strive always after ready bliss," and his expressed preference of the tulip-cheeked beauties of Shîrâz to the promised houris of Paradise would commend themselves to Wagner as the quintessence of wisdom. As for Shelley, his admiration and also his knowledge of the English poet appear to have been confined to "Queen Mab," which charmed him by reason of its radically revolutionary spirit and atheistic tendencies.

About the year 1854 Wagner's *Weltanschauung* or mental attitude towards the universe underwent a rapid and fundamental change under the influence of Schopenhauer. It is reported of Professor Huxley that he once defined his philosophical position as that of "a materialist before dinner and an idealist afterward." Quite as sudden and extreme as this hypothetical transformation and originating in equally extraneous and accidental causes was Wagner's transition from the Neo-Hegelianism of Ludwig Feuerbach to the Post-Kantianism of Schopenhauer. So long as he was absorbed in setting forth his theories in literary essays and embodying them in musical compositions, he felt perfectly happy in dreams of future triumphs; but when he presented

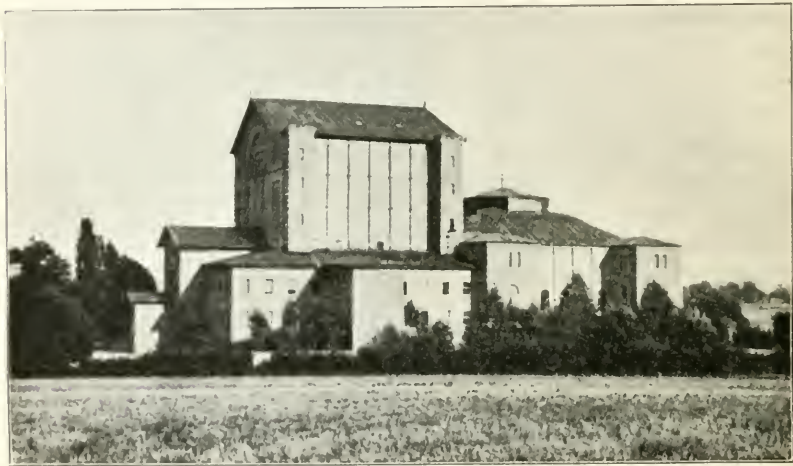
these achievements to the world and saw them treated with coldness by the public and contempt by the critics, he began to despair. As the beautiful vision vanished, his serene optimism was superseded by a sullen pessimism; in this despondent state of mind he heard the censorious voice of the misanthropic sage of Frankfort exclaiming: "Vain man, do you think your fate is exceptional? Solitude and disparagement are the penalties of genius; suffering is the universal lot of man; pessimism is not a transient mood, but



RICHARD WAGNER AT THE REHEARSAL.

Sketch by Adolph Menzel.

a deep-seated principle, rooted and grounded in the very nature of things, and the only true philosophy of life." Wagner listened to this voice, which seemed to come from heaven, and received its glad tidings with unspeakable joy. "This man," he writes in a letter to Liszt, "was to me in my loneliness a gift from on high. He is the greatest philosopher since Kant, whose ideas he has thought out to their logical conclusion. German professors have prudently ignored him for the last forty years, but recently, to the disgrace of Germany, he was discovered by an English critic. What charlatans all the Hegels are in comparison with him!" The world is all vanity and vexation, despicable and delusive, "bad, bad, thoroughly bad," and to renounce it is the highest



THE FESTIVAL PLAYHOUSE AT BAYREUTH.

Photograph by Anna Chamberlain.

wisdom. He even prizes Christian asceticism as an anodyne and "quietive of the will," and has ceased to regard religion either as priestly fraud and fanaticism or as a supernatural revelation, but recognises its necessity and validity as a natural product of the human mind. Its sublimest existing forms are "Brahmanism with its offshoot, Buddhism and Christianity," in which the doctrine is taught that the way to life is through the negation of the will, whereas the Hebrew and Hellenic religions inculcate the affirmation of the will as the only road to happiness. For this reason he thinks Christianity has been perverted and discredited by being interpreted as a continuation and completion of Judaism,

since the two systems are wholly antagonistic in spirit. "Every attempt to unite these opposing elements has been fatal to Christianity and demoralising to society. What has the imperious and irascible tribal god, Jehovah, in common with the all-loving and all-suffering meek and lowly Jesus?" His ideal of humanity is no longer the Grecian Apollo, the type of physical strength and beauty, but the Oriental bikshu; and he expresses the highest veneration for Francis of Assisi. The fact, too, that the *Glückseligkeitstrieb* or instinctive seeking after happiness is never fully gratified here justly demands that there should be an hereafter.

Wagner's philosophy is now idealistic transcendentalism, and his politics what he calls "ideal conservatism" with strong leanings to aristocracy. The nobility, which in 1848 was the special object of his abhorrence, he esteems the most important factor and chief pillar of the state and of society, and thinks it ought to be firmly established and strengthened. He is heartily ashamed of his former rabid democracy and would gladly erase all records of it, declaring that he can explain his aberrations only on the assumption that he was then "in an utterly abnormal condition." Indeed, the violence of his intellectual revolt seems at first to have stunned him and to have paralysed for a time his creative powers. He informs Liszt that "out of love to the youthful Siegfried, the most beautiful dream of my life, I shall probably go on and finish the Nibelungen," but evidently his heart is not in it. He then adds: "I have in my head the project of a Tristan and Isolde, the simplest and yet the most full-blooded musical conception; with the black flag that waves at the end I will cover myself as with a shroud and die." The red flag, which a few years before he would fain follow to liberty or death, has now been lowered and permanently furled. Instead of the joyous and triumphant tones of Siegfried's horn we hear the melancholy and plaintive pipings of the shepherd's reed in the final scenes of Tristan and Isolde, both of whom, like genuine disciples of Schopenhauer, find their highest bliss in drowning their sorrows in the fathomless sea of oblivion:

"In des Welt-Athem's
wehendem All—
ertrinken—
versinken—
unbewusst—
höchste Lust!"

"Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg," written soon after Wagner's return from exile when the future again seemed bright to

him, is pervaded by a correspondingly cheerful spirit. It is a quasi-historical comedy with a distinctly polemical purpose, in which the Minnesinger Walther von Stolzing and the Mastersinger



TOWER OF THE MAGICIAN KLINGSOR.

From "Parzifal." (After a painting by Ferdinand Knab.)

Sixtus Beckmesser are opposed to each other as types of creative genius and dead traditionalism in art. In a satire of this sort, bearing a decidedly *pro domo* stamp, small scope could be given to

the illustration of philosophical principles lying beyond the immediate object in view; even the painful duty of renunciation is mitigated in the person of Hans Sachs by the humor of the general situation. In "Parsifal," on the other hand, the influence of Schopenhauer is plainly perceptible in the conception and execution of the drama, and his ideas would have doubtless found still fuller embodiment and expression in "Nirvâna," had Wagner lived to complete this projected work.