

GOUNOD IN ITALY AND GERMANY.

REMINISCENCES OF A PENSIONNAIRE OF THE ACADEMY OF FRANCE.

BY CHARLES FRANÇOIS GOUNOD.



IN 1839 I won the Grand Prix for musical composition at the Institute of France. As a consequence, it was my privilege to occupy chambers for the ensuing two years in the palace of the Villa Medici at Rome. I was at that time twenty-one years of age. Fate gave me as fellow-prizemen in other departments the painter Hébert, the architect Lefuel, the sculptor Gruyère, and the medalist engraver Vauthier. At eight o'clock in the evening of the 5th of December, Lefuel, Vauthier, and I entered the mail-coach in the court of the old Paris Hôtel-des-Postes, in the Rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Our first stopping-place was Lyons; thence we descended the Rhone via Avignon and Arles to Marseilles. At this point we took a vettura, which was to convey us to the end of our journey.

What memories that word "vettura" suggests to my mind! Poor old, broken-down trap, now crowded out of existence by the puffing of the steam-engine and the giddy dash of iron wheels! How it allowed you to stop, admire, and gaze at your ease on all those views through which or under which the screaming locomotive now transports you as a mere piece of luggage, projecting you through space with all the fury of a mortar-shell! The vettura bore you along tenderly, step by step, as it were, from one charming landscape to another; while this mortar-shell on rails picks you up fast asleep under the gray sky of Paris, and shoots you forth, waking, into the atmosphere of the Orient, without mental transition or change of temperature; roughly, like a bale of merchandise, or an invoice of fish sent by express, with the idea only that it should get to market fresh.

If Progress, that pitiless conqueror, would at least spare the life of the vanquished! But no, the vettura is no more! I bless it for having existed, for it allowed me to enjoy in every detail that admirable Corniche Road, which prepares the traveler so thoroughly for the climate and picturesque beauties of Italy, by unfolding to his gaze a series of enchanting sights — Monaco, Mentone, Sestri, Genoa, Spezia, leading up to Pisa, Lucca, Siena, Perugia, and Flor-

ence — that progressive and ever-varying exposition of nature which explains the masters, masters who themselves in turn show you how to study nature. For nearly two months we were tasting and enjoying all this at our ease, and on the 27th of January, 1840, we made our entry into Rome, which was to become our residence, our school, and the scene of our initiation into the grand and stern beauties of nature and of art.

M. Ingres, whom my father had known when he was young, was at that time the director of the French Conservatory at Rome. On entering his salon, we found that he had been informed of our arrival, and was there to give us a cordial welcome. As soon as he saw me, he exclaimed: "You are Gounod, I am sure! How very like your father!" and he talked of my father, of his talent as a draftsman, his character, the charm of his wit and conversation, in terms that made me proud, coming from the lips of an artist of his high repute, and that furnished the most genial welcome to a new-comer. We were installed at once in our chambers, and at dinner-time were made acquainted with all our colleagues gathered at the common board in that famous hall, which was hung with portraits of all the pensionnaires that had preceded us since the foundation of the Academy.

I must confess that Rome did not at first correspond to the dreams my fancy had conceived. I was still too young in years, and especially in character, to lay hold of and to take in at first glance the deep signification of that great and austere city, which struck me as cold, dry, cheerless, and gloomy, and which speaks with a voice so low that it can be heard only by ears trained to silence and solemn contemplation. Rome is itself so many things, and those things are wrapped in such profound calm, in such quiet and serene majesty, that it is impossible at once even to suspect its marvelous whole, and the inexhaustible store of its many-sided wealth. Its past like its present, its present like its future destiny make it the capital, not of a country, but of humanity. Any one who has lived there long knows this well; and whatever nation claims our loyalty, or whatever tongue is ours, Rome speaks a language so universal that it is impossible to turn our back upon it with-

out feeling that we are turning away from our native land.

That first impression of austerity threw me into a profound melancholy, and a very slight occasion would have been sufficient to put me back on the road to France and to my mother's fireside. However, little by little, every day contributed its sedative effect. I set to work, and among the musical ideas which marked the début of my existence as a pensionnaire I count two songs that have long remained unknown—the "Vallon" and the "Soir." Both of them were composed on verses by Lamartine, and the dreamy and contemplative accent of the music was in perfect accord with my feelings at the time. I wrote them a few days apart and soon after my arrival at the Villa Medici.

Some six weeks elapsed before my sadness took its flight, and I grew accustomed to the town, which had impressed me like a desert. Its very silence now began to charm me, to be in itself a blessing, and I found peculiar pleasure in visiting the Forum, the ruins on the Palatine, the Colosseum, and all those other remains of greatness and power now gone, over which has been extended for ages the august and peaceful crook of the Shepherd of Nations.

My stay was begun under most favorable auspices. M. Ingres had taken a fancy to me. He was passionately fond of music, of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven; Gluck especially, by the nobility and the pathos of his style, seemed to him a Greek, a descendant of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. M. Ingres played on the violin. He was not a great proficient, still less a virtuoso; but he had in his youth belonged to the orchestra in the theater of Montauban, his native town, where he had taken part in the performance of Gluck's operas. I had read and studied the works of Gluck; as for Mozart's "Don Juan," I knew it by heart, and although I was not a pianist, I made a respectable enough show to be able to please M. Ingres with the remembrance of that score, which he adored. I knew likewise from memory the symphonies of Beethoven, greatly admired by him. We often spent together a portion of the night in this familiar association with the great masters, and in a short time I was wholly secure in his friendship. That was a genuine piece of good fortune for me. I owe more than I could ever express to the contact with such a solid mind, inflexible as he was in his fervent conception of the beautiful, simple and naïf as a child, and so wrongly and narrowly judged by those who did not know him well, although he was so transparent and easy to know. He was persuasive in his faith, because he allowed himself to be carried away by it even to enthusiasm and eloquence; sincerely

humble and small in the presence of masters, but dignified and proud in the presence of self-assertion and the arrogance of fools; paternal to all the pensionnaires, whom he looked on as his children, and whose rank he maintained with jealous affection in the midst of the visitors of whatever category who were admitted to his drawing-rooms. Such was the great and noble artist by whose precious and fruitful instruction I was to have the good fortune to profit.

One must have associated freely with men of superior genius to comprehend how their conversation influences the development of our peculiar capacities by the lessons of their experience and the light shed by their general conclusions. M. Ingres let fall in my presence words, precepts, observations, aphorisms, which have given direction to my whole life. In giving me to understand what art is, he taught me more of my own art than numberless purely technical artists ever could have done; his ideas constantly revealed in him and awoke in his hearer the perception of the conditions and laws of beauty in art. It has been said, and many have mechanically repeated it, that he was exclusive; nothing is more false. I never saw any one admire more things than he, for the very reason that he saw better than any one where and why a thing is worthy of admiration. It is true that he was discreet. He understood how far enthusiasm lures young men to infatuation for certain personal traits of this or that master, without discernment or method; that those peculiarities which are the proper and distinctive characteristic of masters, their individual physiognomy, by which they are recognized, as men recognize one another, are precisely the incommunicable properties of their nature; that, as a consequence, to be inclined to imitate them is but little short of plagiarism; and that, furthermore, such imitation tends to a fatal exaggeration of qualities which the imitator fashions into so many defects. That is M. Ingres's view, and the origin of the most unreasonable accusation against him on the score of exclusiveness and intolerance.

To show how sincere he was in modifying a first and superficial impression of prejudice, the following anecdote will suffice. I had just sung for him, for the first time, that admirable scene of *Charon* and the *Shades* in the "Alcestis," not by Gluck, but by Lulli. The first performance had produced in him an impression of stiffness, harshness, and uncouth roughness so painful that he exclaimed: "That is frightful! That is not music; it is iron." Being but a youth, I took good care not to oppose the impetuosity of a man for whom I entertained so high a regard; I waited for the tempest to pass by. Some time after, M. Ingres recurred to the impression made on him by that piece.

The impression seemed to me somewhat softened now, as he said: "Pray let us hear that scene by Lulli—*Charon* and the *Shades*. I should be glad to hear that again." I sang it anew, and this time, better acquainted, doubtless, with the primitive and rough style of this startling picture, he was struck with the irony and satire of *Charon's* language, and the power expressed by the lamentation of the wandering *Shades*, rejected from the Stygian bark because they were unprovided with the passage-money. Gradually he became so attached to the character of the scene that it came to be one of his favorite pieces, and he was constantly requesting me to repeat it. But his prevailing passion was Mozart's "*Don Juan*," over which we lingered occasionally till two o'clock in the morning, when Madame Ingres, tired out from loss of sleep, would feel obliged to close the piano to separate us, and pack us off to our respective beds.

My stay at Rome, which was my permanent and regular residence, was supplemented by authorized excursions to other parts of Italy. I shall never forget the impression produced on me by Naples at my first visit. The charming climate, which anticipates and suggests the sky of Greece; that bay, blue as sapphire, set in a circle of mountains and islands, whose slopes and peaks assume at sunset the ever-changing scale of magic hues which would defy the richest velvet or the most brilliant gems—all this produced the effect of a dream or a fairy tale. The environment of this wonderful scene—Vesuvius, Portici, Herculaneum, Pompeii, Castel-a-Mare, Sorrento, the islands of Capri and Ischia, Posilippo, and, farther off, Amalfi, Salerno, and, last of all, Pæstum, with its marvelous Doric temples bathed aforetime by the azure waves of the Mediterranean—all this seemed to me a vision indeed. It was the absolute reverse of Rome; I was at once in ecstasy. If to such seduction be added all the interest that attaches to a visit to the Museum of Naples, a unique storehouse of masterpieces of antique art, the greater part of which have been brought to light by the excavations of Pompeii and Herculaneum, the attractions that such a city must afford, and especially the pleasures that await the artist in such an environment as this, will be easily understood.

During my residence in Rome I had the good fortune to visit Naples on three distinct occasions, and among the most vivid and profound impressions which I bore away with me I give the first place to that wondrous island of Capri, all the more wild and charming by the contrast of its steep crags and its green slopes. I first visited Capri in summer; the sun shone brightly, diffusing a torrid warmth. During the day one was forced to shut himself

up in a room or to plunge into the sea—an alternative which I often chose with delight. But what is difficult to portray is the glory of the nights in such a climate, and at such a season of the year. The heavens seemed literally palpitating with stars—a counterpart, as it were, of the sea, with waves of light vibrating along the infinite vault above. During the fortnight of my stay I often listened to the living silence of those phosphorescent evenings. I sat for hours on the top of some steep crag, scanning the horizon, occasionally watching large stones that I would start rolling down the almost perpendicular mountain, enjoying their crashing bounds to the sea, into which they would disappear with a cloud of spray and foam. From time to time a solitary bird passed over, uttering a plaintive note, leading my thoughts back to those fancied gulfs whose impression of terror has been so marvelously rendered by the genius of Weber in his immortal scene of "The Casting of the Bullets" in the opera of "*Der Freyschütz*."

It was on one of those nocturnal excursions that I had the first conception of the *Walpurgisnacht* in Goethe's "*Faust*." I had read that work at the age of twenty, and it never had left my mind. I bore it with me everywhere I went, and jotted down in scattered notes the different ideas which I imagined might serve me when the time should come to try this subject as an opera—an event not realized till seventeen years later.

But at length I was obliged to return to Rome and the Academy. However delightful and seductive a residence at Naples is, I have never lived there without feeling after a certain interval the need of going back to Rome. Something like homesickness now came over me, and without sorrow I withdrew from those scenes where I confess I had spent delicious hours. The fact is that Naples, with all its brilliancy and reputation, must be set down as a loud, vulgar, bustling, high-keyed town. From morning till night crowds push, scuffle, and quarrel on its wharves, where neither rest nor silence is known. Its normal state is one of contention. You are besieged, importuned, and beset on all sides by the untiring solicitations of porters, traffickers, hackmen, and boatmen, who would take violent possession of you if they could, competing with one another in cutting down their prices and fares.

Once more in Rome, I went to work. It was now the autumn of 1840. At this period it was customary for the musicians of the Conservatory to direct, each year by turn, the performance of a mass with orchestra specially composed for the fête of King Louis Philippe, to be celebrated on the 1st of May in the church of San Luigi de' Francesi. It fell to my lot to

write the mass to be performed in May, 1841. I composed and directed personally the performance of the piece, which gained for me the title for life of Honorary Maître de Chapelle. The more I prolonged my stay in Rome the more deeply I loved its mysterious charm, its incomparable peace. After the serrated, volcanic, and swelling lines of the Neapolitan crater, the placid, solemn, noiseless lines of the Roman Campagna, encircled with the Alban hills, the mountains of Latium and the Sabine district, the majestic Mons Januarius, Soracte, the hills of Viterbo, Monte Mario and the Janiculum, all impressed me with the calm, sweet air of an open cloister. One of my favorite positions in the environs of Rome was the village of Nemi, with its lake visible to the eye at the bottom of a vast crater surrounded with woods in admirable foliage. One of the most beautiful walks imaginable is around the lake by the upper road; a beautiful day, ending with such a sunset as I have witnessed there,—with a glimpse of the sea from the heights of Genzano,—leaves an enchanting and ineffaceable remembrance. Indeed, the environs of Rome abound in wonderful spots, which furnish the traveler and the tourist with an inexhaustible variety of impressions; such as Tivoli, Subiaco, Frascati, Albano, and a thousand other places so often explored by landscape-painters, not to speak of the Tiber, whose banks exhibit such noble and majestic outlines.

Among the wonders of art found only at Rome, it would be impossible in these reminiscences of my youth to pass over that work of indescribable beauty which shares with the Sistine Chapel the interest and glory of the Vatican. I mean those immortal paintings of Raphael grouped under the common designations of the Loggia and the Stanze. Two masterpieces, among so many others, due to the pencil of that unique artist, those inimitable works the "School of Athens" and the "Dispute of the Holy Sacrament," have carried so high the note of beauty that it would seem impossible ever to surpass them. And yet,—such is the irresistible privilege of genius,—that the man who never had his equal, whose name the centuries have placed on the summit of glory, was disturbed at the apparition of Michelangelo! He suffered the grasp of that Titan, he bowed under the crushing weight of that Colossus, and his last works bear traces of the homage he offered to the grandiose inspiration of that powerful genius, which exceeded human proportions. Raphael is the first, Michelangelo the only. In Raphael strength dilates and expands into grace; in Michelangelo grace, on the contrary, seems to discipline and conquer strength. Raphael charms you and allures you; Michelangelo fascinates you and overwhelms

you. The one is the painter of the earthly paradise, the other seems to penetrate with an eagle's eye, like the prisoner of Patmos, into the very flaming dwelling-place of the seraphim and the archangels. One would say that those two evangelists of art had been put there beside each other in the fullness of esthetic time to the end that he who had received the gift of calm and perfect beauty should be a salutary protection against the dazzling splendors revealed to the singer of the Apocalypse.

In the month of April, 1841, M. Ingres left the Academy. His term as director had expired. He was replaced by M. Schnetz, a celebrated painter, who chiefly owed his success and his popularity to qualities of sentiment and expression. Under an easy and almost rustic exterior M. Schnetz veiled a refined and intelligent nature. He was very tall, of a dark, swarthy complexion, with black hair like an Italian's. His smile was very sweet, and his character had a charming gaiety. He was an excellent man. I spent my second and last year at Rome under his direction. M. Schnetz had a special fondness for Rome which was peculiarly favored by circumstances. He was for many years director of the Academy, and left there the very best impressions.

My stay was about to expire with the year 1841; but I felt unable to go away, and I continued there with the consent of the Director until my resources were exhausted and I was obliged to proceed to Germany to discharge the obligations of my third year, in order to draw the salary which I needed for my support. I shall not try to describe my sorrow when I was compelled to say farewell to the Academy, to my beloved companions, and to that Rome which had become a second home to me.

My companions bore me company as far as Ponte Molle (Pons Milvius), and after having embraced them, I got into the vettura which was to tear me away—yes, that is the word—from those dear years of the Promised Land. If I had been going direct to my poor mother and my excellent brother, the departure would have been less painful to me; but I was to live alone in a country where I knew no one, and of the language of which I was ignorant, and this prospect seemed to me cold and dark. As long as the highroad permitted, I kept my eyes fixed on the dome of St. Peter's—that "high place" of Rome, and center of the world; then the hills caught it away wholly from my sight and I surrendered myself, weeping bitterly, to my sad reflections.

On leaving Rome to proceed to Germany my route naturally led through Florence and the north of Italy, trending to the right by

Ferrara, Padua, Venice, and Trieste. I made a stop at Florence, but I will not undertake to present the inventory of its treasures. Florence, as well as Rome, throwing out of the account all attempt at comparison, is inexhaustible in works of art. The Uffizi, with its admirable Tribune, a true shrine of the beautiful, the Pitti, the Academy, the churches, the convents, are crowded with masterpieces. But there, too, in that delightful city of Florence, the scepter is in the grasp of Michelangelo, who dominates everything from the vantage-ground of that marvelous and striking Chapel of the Medici. There, as at Rome, his genius has left unique, sovereign, incomparable traces. Everybody knows this chapel by the admirable statues it contains, and which have been for years made common by copies or by photography. Wherever Michelangelo is found, he compels meditation. When he speaks, you feel that all must be silence; and that supreme authority of silence he has perhaps exercised nowhere with more power than in the terrible crypt of the Medici Chapel. What a prodigious conception is that of the "Pensiero," mute sentinel who seems to be watching over death and waiting motionless for the trumpet of Judgment! What repose and flexibility in that figure of "Night," or rather of Peace in Sleep, which forms the counterpart of that robust figure of "Day," lying there apparently chained until the dawn of the final Day of Days! By this profound feeling, and by the ideal, and at the same time natural, attitude, Michelangelo everywhere rises to that intensity of expression which is the peculiar mark of his powerful individuality. The amplitude of his style is as the channel wrought by the majestic river of his thought, and for this reason every imitation of his mere exterior is at once condemned as pompous and bombastic; he alone could fill and give life to the form peculiar to his own genius.

But I am on my way to Germany, whither time and money are urging me. I must slip rapidly over Florence and the noble associations that it leaves on my memory; I hasten through the waste of Ferrara; I stop at Padua a day or two to visit the beautiful frescos of Giotto and of Mantegna, and at last reach Venice.

Venice! Ah, that enchantress! She is the country of resplendent masters. Venice has thrown a sunny light over painting. She charms one's senses; and as a consequence her attraction is instantaneous. She intoxicates, but the intoxication that she excites is mingled (at least it has been so in my case) with an inexplicable melancholy, something like the sentiment of captivity. Is it the memory of those dark tragedies of which she has been the theater, and to which her very situation seems to have pre-

destined her? It is perhaps so; although a long stay in that kind of amphibious necropolis does not seem to me possible without at last experiencing something of a smothered feeling, or falling into a state of mental depression. The sleeping waters whose gloomy silence bathes the feet of all the old palaces, that mournful shadow from the depths of which you seem to hear the groans of some illustrious victim, make Venice a kind of capital of Fear; she has preserved a sinister impression. And yet on a fair day what magic in that Grand Canal! How those lagoons flash as the waters seem transformed into life! What brilliancy in those remains of an antique splendor which seem to rival the beauty of their skies and to implore their aid against the gulf into which they are sinking farther and farther every day, to disappear at last forever!

If Rome possesses the Vatican and Florence the Chapel of the Medici, Venice has also her peerless treasure in the Church of St. Mark. Such a marvel cannot be described, it must have been seen to form an idea of it. The magnificence of those mosaics and of that gold whose dark iridescence streams down from the height of the cupola to the base is something absolutely unique in the world. I do not know anything to be compared with it in vigor of tone and power of effect. But I must bid farewell to Venice, and leave Italy at last. Shall I again see it some day? I hope so, God knows.

The steam-packet conveyed me to Trieste, where I at once took my seat in the diligence for Grätz. On the way I visited the curious and superb grottoes of stalactites at Adelberg, genuine subterranean cathedrals. I crossed the mountains of Carinthia, whose serrated outlines I perceived as we rode on. I arrived at Grätz, then went on to Olmütz, whence the railway transported me to Vienna, my first station in that Germany which I only expected to pass through in the greatest haste to shorten the exile which separated me from my mother's home.

Vienna is a stirring town. The people there seem almost more French than German, on account of the vivacity of their character. It is a spirited, easy-going, lively city. I knew nobody at Vienna, but a traveling companion had advised me to take board, if I could, in a private family. The occasion to carry out this advice soon presented itself. I went provisionally to a hotel, and one of the first things I did was to attend the theater, where I heard "The Magic Flute" of Mozart. The orchestra was directed by Otto Nicolai; I got permission to be presented to him. He gave me a very cordial reception, and at once put me into relations with the artists of the theater and the

orchestra. That was the first time that I had ever listened to that adorable score of "The Magic Flute." I was in raptures. The execution was superior, the part of the *Queen of Night* was admirably rendered by a cantatrice of very great talent, Mme. Hasselt-Barth; that of the High Priest, *Sarastro*, was sung by Staudigl, an artist of great reputation, with an admirable voice, which he controlled with great method and style. The other parts were all rendered with great pains, and I remember still the charming voices of the three lads who took the parts of the three geni.

Thanks to the acquaintance which I had just made with Nicolai, I felt no longer isolated at Vienna, and recovered my good spirits. Nicolai presented me to several artists of the orchestra; among others to a cornetist whose name was Lévy, the father of Richard Lévy, who was then a child of fourteen years, and who since then has held at the Vienna Opera the position of his father. Lévy made me promise to come to see him, and I received a most cordial welcome from the whole family. There were in the house three other children: the eldest, Carl Lévy, was a pianist of a good deal of talent and a distinguished composer; the second, Gustave, is to-day a publisher of music in Vienna; and the daughter, Mélanie, a charming person, is married to the harpist Parish Alwars.

After some weeks of residence I became acquainted with Count Stockhammer, President of the Philharmonic Society of Vienna, who gave me the opportunity of bringing out in the Church of St. Charles the mass that I had directed at Rome the year before on the occasion of the fête of King Louis Philippe. This execution was well received, and Count Stockhammer immediately proposed to me the composition of a requiem mass to be performed on All Souls' Day, in the same Church of St. Charles. Although it was then the 14th of September, and there were only six weeks to the 2d of November, I accepted resolutely, and went to work. I worked day and night, and was ready at the appointed moment. A single rehearsal was sufficient—thanks to the generality of musical education which is found in Germany only, and which is very agreeable to meet. I was especially astonished at the facility with which the boys of the schools read music at sight; they all read it as fluently as if it had been their mother tongue. As a consequence the execution of the choruses was perfect. I had among the soloists a superb basso Draxler by name, who was then quite young and shared with Staudigl the position of first basso at the theater. Since then Staudigl has died insane, they say; and Draxler, who replaced him, was still at the theater twenty-five years afterward, in 1868, when I returned

to Vienna to bring out my opera of "Romeo and Juliet."

Some time before the performance of my requiem, Nicolai had put me in relations with an eminent composer named Becker, who devoted himself exclusively to chamber-concert music. At his house every week a quartet gathered, one of whom, the first violinist, Holz by name, had known Beethoven intimately, a circumstance which, aside from his talent, rendered his acquaintance very interesting. In addition, Becker was perhaps the most popular musical critic at this time in all Germany. He came to hear my requiem, and he made a very favorable report of it, which was encouraging to a young man of my age. He said, among other things, that this work, while it was that of a young artist who was still seeking his path and his style, revealed a breadth of conception that had become very rare in his day. This great labor that I had accomplished in a few weeks had exhausted me to such a degree that I fell ill with a very serious inflammation of the lungs and abscess in the throat. I did not wish to inform my mother of my state, fearing to alarm her, but I acquainted one of my friends in Paris with my situation. This friend, Alexandre Desgoffe, a landscape-painter of noble and severe style, was the pupil and friend of M. Ingres. I had met him on my first arrival in Rome, at the French Conservatory, where with his wife and daughter he occupied an apartment placed at his disposal by M. Ingres. I was not long in finding in this excellent family such cordiality as made me feel at once at home, and a lasting friendship was the result. Desgoffe was a man of rare nature, deep-hearted, devoted in his attachments, simple and transparent as a child, faithful and generous to the last degree. As soon as he learned that I was ill in Vienna, without a moment's hesitation he left his wife and daughter, laid aside the paintings he was preparing for the Salon, and set out to take his place by my side. At that period it required some five or six days to go from Paris to Vienna. It was the month of December, and the journey, naturally disagreeable at that season, was made far more so by a serious illness that attacked my poor friend on the way. As a consequence, he reached Vienna in a situation demanding a doctor's care for himself. Notwithstanding, he spent twenty-two days with me, sleeping on the floor on a mattress, with one eye open, watching with the solicitude of a mother my every motion, and refused to leave me to return to Paris until the physician had assured him of my complete convalescence. Such friendship is not often met with, and in this respect Providence has crowned my life, as I shall often have occasion to acknowledge.

Nevertheless the success of my requiem had modified all my plans, deciding me to prolong my stay at Vienna. Count Stockhammer gave me a new order in the name of the Philharmonic Society. The proposition was to write a vocal mass, without accompaniment, designed to be performed during Lent, in the same Church of St. Charles, my patron saint. I took good care not to let slip this fresh opportunity, first of keeping myself in training, and also of hearing my own pieces rendered—a thing of such rare importance to me at the outset of my career. It was my second and final work at Vienna, whence I set out soon after for Berlin, making but a short stop in Prague and Dresden. I was, however, unwilling to leave Dresden without having visited the admirable museum, in which, among other masterpieces, are found the celebrated "Madonna" by Holbein and the marvelous "Madonna di San Sisto" of Raphael.

On my arrival at Berlin, my first call was on a person I had become acquainted with in Rome. This was Mme. Hensel, sister of the illustrious composer Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, and wife of M. Hensel, at that time painter to the King of Prussia. Mme. Hensel was an extraordinary musician, a remarkable pianist, a woman of superior ability, slender in form, petite in stature, but possessed of an energy which could be seen in her penetrating glance and the flash of her eye. She was, furthermore, endowed with rare faculties as a composer, and to her are due several of the "Songs without Words" which are found published in a work on the piano under her brother's name. Mme. Hensel had resided in Rome with her husband during the winter of 1841, and often came to the soirées of the Academy, where I frequently had the opportunity and the pleasure of hearing her. She knew by heart the music of the masters, and, thanks to her prodigious memory, it was an advantage as well as a treat to listen to her interpretation of Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and her brother—Mendelssohn.

I therefore lost no time in calling on her, as in fact she had made me promise to do; but some three weeks subsequently I again fell ill, at the very moment I had written my mother that I was preparing to return home, after a separation of three years and a half. Mme. Hensel at once sent me her physician, and to him I addressed the following ultimatum:

"Sir: My mother in Paris is expecting my return, and is at this instant counting the hours. If she knows I am detained by illness, she will start for Berlin, and may go mad on the way. She is advanced in years. I must give her a reason for my delay; but it must be brief. I give you a fortnight to put me into the ground or on my feet again."

"Well," said the doctor, "if you are resolved to follow my prescriptions, you will be off in a fortnight."

And he kept his word; the fourteenth day I was *hors d'affaire*, and forty-eight hours later I found myself on the road to Leipsic, where Mendelssohn resided, to whom I had a letter of introduction from his sister.

Mendelssohn received me admirably. I use this word purposely to characterize the condescension with which a man of his powers welcomed the child who in his eyes could be but a school-boy. During the four days I spent at Leipsic, I may indeed say that Mendelssohn gave me his whole time. He questioned me about my studies and my works with the deepest and most sincere interest. He expressed a desire to hear on the piano my latest effort, and I received from him precious words of approval and encouragement. I shall mention but one, which has made me too proud ever to forget it. I had just rendered the "Dies Ira" of my Vienna requiem. He placed his hand on a part consisting of five solo voices, without accompaniment, saying, "*Mon ami*, that might be signed Cherubini!" Such words are genuine decorations, coming from such a master, and are worn with greater pride than many a ribbon.

Mendelssohn was the director of the Gewandhaus. The orchestra did not meet at that time, the concert season having expired. He had the thoughtfulness to call it together for me, and allowed me to hear his beautiful Scotch symphony in A minor. He made me a present of the score, with a friendly word of dedication written with his own hand. Alas! the untimely death of that noble genius was soon to transform the souvenir he had left me into a precious relic. His death was followed, six months later, by that of the charming sister to whom I owed the honor of this acquaintance.

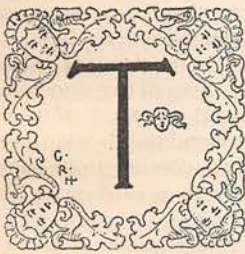
Mendelssohn did not limit his polite attentions to that convocation of the Gewandhaus orchestra. He was an organist of the first order, and wished to make me acquainted with several of the admirable compositions written by the great Sebastian Bach for the instrument over which he reigned supreme. To this end he had examined and put in order the old St. Thomas organ, on which Bach himself had played, and for more than two hours he revealed marvels of which I had never dreamed; then, to crown all, he presented me with a collection of motets by Bach, for whom he felt a religious veneration, in whose school he had been educated from childhood, and whose grand oratorio of "The Passion according to St. Matthew" he had directed and accompanied, from memory, at the age of fourteen!

Such was the extraordinary kindness I received from this delightful man, this great artist, this astonishing musician, taken away in the flower of his life—at thirty-eight—from the center of admiration which he had won, and from the masterpieces which he would have written had his life been prolonged. But strange destiny of genius—even the most attractive! These exquisite works, now the delight of those who attend the Conservatory, required the death of the composer to give them favor in the ears of those who once rejected them.

After my visit to Mendelssohn, I had but one thought, and that was to get back to Paris as soon as possible. I left Leipzig the 18th of May, 1843. I changed carriages seventeen times on the way, and out of six nights I spent four traveling, and finally, on May 25, I reached Paris, where a new life was about to open to me. My brother met me on the arrival of the diligence, and we both bent our footsteps at once in the direction of that dear house where I was to find again, and to which I was to bring back, so much joy.

Charles François Gounod.

THE JEWISH QUESTION.

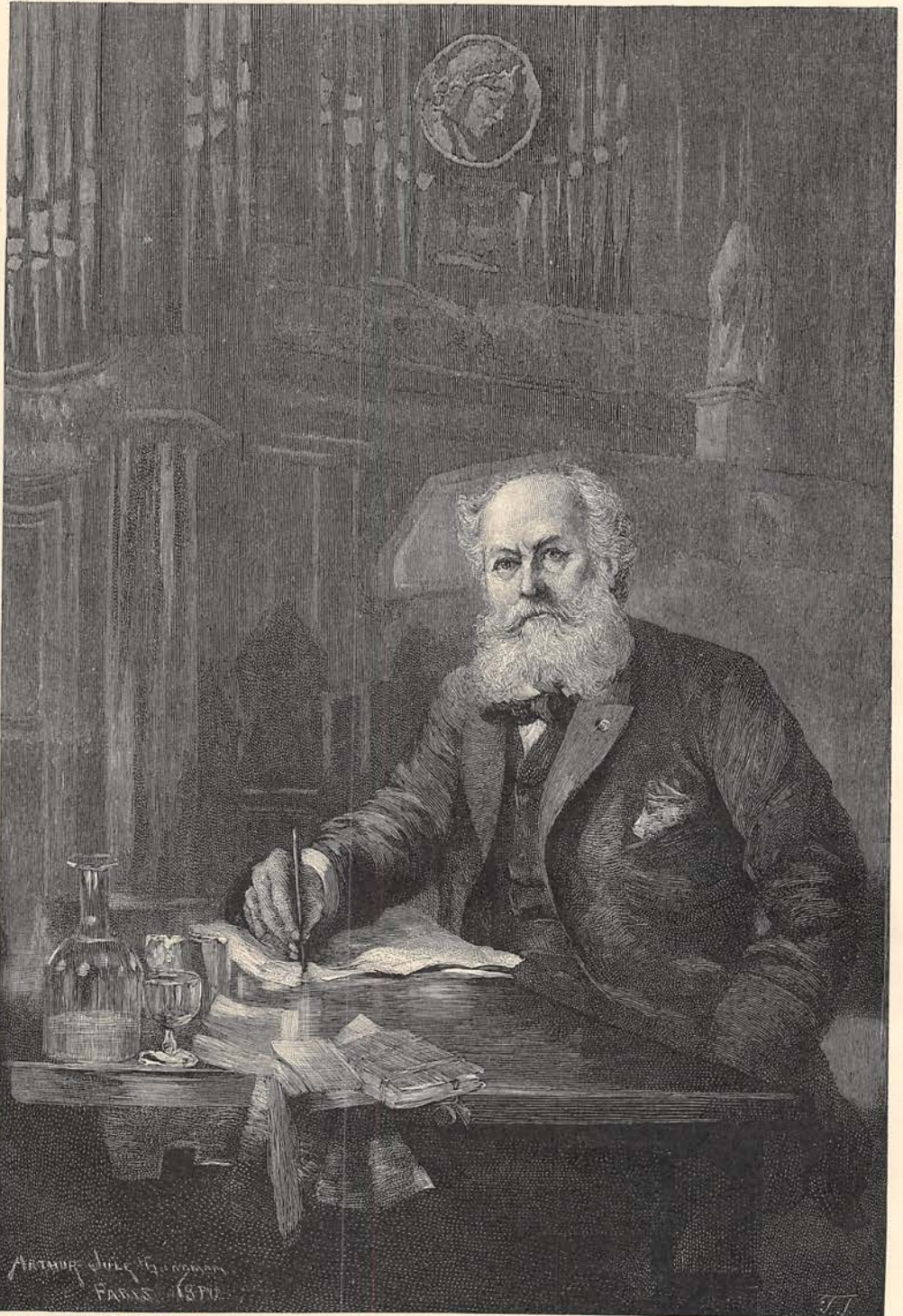


TO approach the Jewish question is to be confronted with every great question of the day—social, political, financial, humanitarian, national, and religious. Each phase should be treated by an expert and specialist, for in each lies a deep, urgent, practical problem which requires the wisest and most skilled handling; but however discussed or dealt with, there is one point of view which should never be lost sight of—namely, the point of view of humanity. All other standpoints must be merged or held in abeyance. First and foremost we must be human if we would raise our voice on so human a theme, involving the lives and destinies of so many unhappy human beings. It is a sorry spectacle that the world presents at the end of our emancipated nineteenth century—hundreds and thousands of our fellow creatures, men, women, and innocent children, driven from their homes, helpless, destitute, and distracted, flying where? whither? No one knows, for in turn each nation threatens to shut them out as outcasts and pariahs. Who, then, are these alien wretches, with speech unlike our own, with ways and customs peculiar to themselves, and what is their crime? we ask. There are those who will tell us that they are usurers, eating the flesh and grinding the faces of the poor; others will say that they are traitors, plotting against their sovereign rulers; others will call them enemies of the Christ; and again others will lay at their door nameless cruel charges of ignorant fanaticism. Their crime is legion, and yet one word sums it up—they are Jews. “Hep! Hep!” It is an old battle-cry, old as Christendom,

but it rings to-day fresh from the nations. Russia leads with brute violence, sweeping them from the soil; Germany follows with lofty phrases, pulpit and paper warfare; even liberal France takes the alarm, and occasionally a small British voice pipes in the chorus: “Christians, beware! The Jew is richer, is sharper, than you. Look to your interest and your purse. Royalty is at his feet, the stock exchange belongs to him, and the press is his organ.”

But in justice to humanity let us hasten to add that there is another side. In all the countries we have named, Russia perhaps alone excepted, all earnest and right-minded Christians, no less than Jews, are aghast at the sinister revelations, and are doing what they can to stem the current and to enter their protest against so barbarous a reaction. But this new outbreak of hatred and antagonism, after centuries of progress and enlightenment, is a phenomenon so startling that it calls for examination more searching, and deeper comprehension, than it generally receives. Whether the tragic history of the Jews redounds more to their glory and martyrdom than to the honor of the Christians is not the point which will throw any special light upon the subject just now, but both Jews and Christians alike—whoever studies with impartiality the annals of the past—must be struck with the ever-recurring features, the mask, of this ugly monster of persecution, grown so familiar through the ages. History seems to move backward or in a circle; here are the same grievances as in the days of the Cæsars, the same jealous mistrust and animosity, the same cruel and exaggerated retribution. The classic writers of pagan antiquity are full of the most scornful and contemptuous references. A fair-minded writer of to-day¹ says of the Jew:

¹ Harold Frederic, in the “Times” of October 12.



DRAWN FROM LIFE BY A. J. GOODMAN.

ENGRAVED BY T. JOHNSON.

CHARLES FRANÇOIS GOUNOD.