

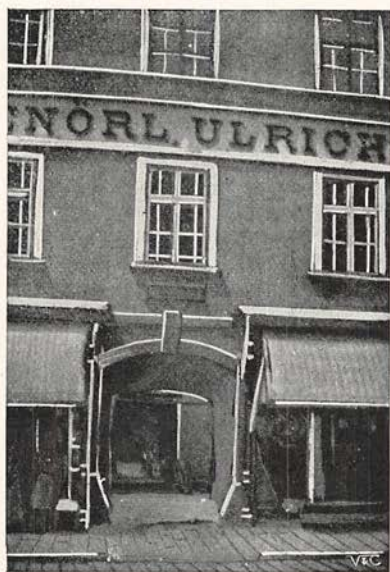
ODD CORNERS OF MUSICAL VIENNA.

BY T. BOUGHTON-WILBY.

THE eighteenth century had reached its zenith ere Vienna saw the dawn of that musical greatness whose memories were to be eternal. The first shafts of light broke upon the world when Christoph Willibald Gluck, reformer of the lyric drama, set foot in the gay Kaiserstadt for the second time in 1746. The twilight of that long, bright day of genius has almost been reached. Now that Brahms and Strauss are no more, it seems as if the last glimmer of the golden radiance behind the hills will ere long precede the final sunset of a glorious era. What is now left of the atmosphere of Gluck, and Weber, of Haydn, the divine Mozart, the majestic Beethoven?

The modern Vandal, the builder, has not

musicians who lived and died in the Austrian capital, replete as they are with the tragedy of life, are honoured by the Austrians in the breach and not the observance. I remember the present tenant of the room where Beethoven died telling me of her astonishment at two American ladies who, when they



ARCHWAY THROUGH WHICH MARIE ANTOINETTE MUST OFTEN HAVE PASSED TO HER SINGING-MASTER, GLUCK.



HAYDN'S HOUSE, BOUGHT BY HIS WIFE'S WISH FOR HER WIDOWHOOD.

left us overmuch of this Great Past. But far from the din and bustle of the beaten track sacred to Baedeker, we shall still come across quaint nooks and byways redolent of those historic days. I believe that most of them are unknown to the Viennese themselves—in fact, these memories of the great

saw the historical corner, burst into tears. She could not understand their emotion!

What most saliently strikes one in "doing" the round of the great musicians' dwellings is the barren comfort in which they must have lived. They all lodged in flats and vegetated in narrow, dingy thoroughfares that had not even the attraction of mellowed, old-world associations. Musicians like Haydn composed and taught in musty attics, or sat out long convivial evenings in the fetid atmosphere of shabby old taverns, as did the modest, retiring Schubert. Beethoven alone—the irascible, sensitive, vitriolic Beethoven—sought his inspiration in the open fields, and upon the bosky mountain slopes. As they were born, so they as a rule died.

Let me describe one of these houses, as typical of the rest. A dull, grey coating of plaster gives a dingy, uninviting tone to the exterior. The entrance is through the doors



BOOK KEPT BY HAYDN IN LONDON IN WHICH TO ENTER THE NAMES OF THE SUBSCRIBERS TO THE "CREATION." HIS PENCIL AND ITS CASE ARE ALSO SHOWN.

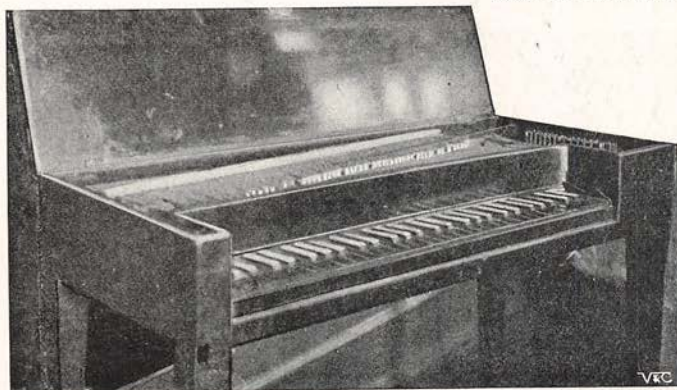
of a broad archway in the centre. Behind is the courtyard flanked by the smaller flats at the back. Here is also a small patch of green, and the common, evil-smelling stone staircase leading up to the open landings of the remaining storeys. Each house is distinguished by a name, sounding droll to our modern ears. There is Gluck's "Silver Lion," Mozart's "God's Eye," Schubert's "Red Hedgehog," Beethoven's "Black Spaniards." The ubiquitous porter, as distinct a type of Vienna as a costermonger is of London life, tenants a few square feet at the bottom of

the staircase, and lives in comparative opulence from the tips which are the tenants' form of compulsory gratitude for admittance after 10 p.m. On the ground floor is a small smoke-stained tavern, or a modest coffee-house, or it might be the unpretentious emporium of some haggling Jew. Sometimes courtyard succeeds courtyard in a veritable labyrinth. Beethoven died in a house where nearly a hundred families must now find shelter.

"Gluck's Wohnhaus," according to the tablet which now ornaments the front of the house where the singing-master of poor Marie Antoinette ended his days, was outside the old



ROOM IN WHICH HAYDN BREATHED HIS LAST.



HAYDN'S SPINETT, WHICH EMITS AT THE MOST, FAINT, TINKLING SOUNDS, PRESERVED IN VIENNA SIDE BY SIDE WITH HIS SKULL.

city ramparts. It is the centre of noise and bustle to-day, but it must have offered him many restful moments for his old age. The man who was reproached with having no melody occupied the flat on the first floor, which is now tenanted by a family which, if it has any veneration for the genius of Gluck, certainly objects to sharing it with any would-be visitor. Here, through this broad archway must have passed the hapless



MOZART'S FLAT IN VIENNA, WHERE HAYDN DECLARED HIM TO BE THE GREATEST COMPOSER HE KNEW.

when comparative prosperity had come to him, marrying, like Mozart, the sister of his first love. She is a veritable Xantippe, a heartless nag and extravagant shrew. From Vienna she writes to the composer in London that she has found a house which would make an excellent dwelling for her as a widow, and begs him to send the money for its purchase!

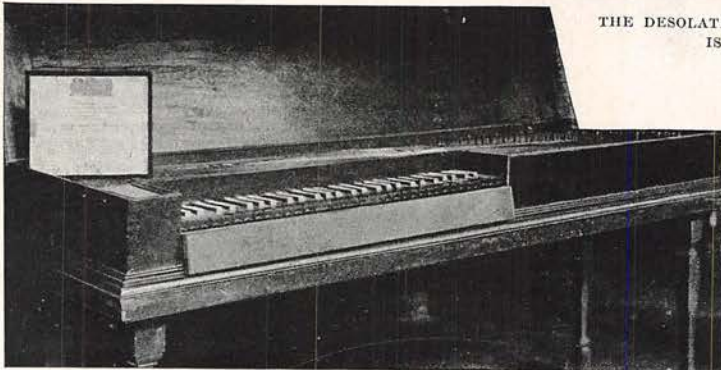
This is the historical house now known as "Zum Haydn," or No. 19, Haydn Street. At

Queen to her beloved master. Those were happy, joyous days of irresponsible maidenhood, ere the shadows of dreaded fate had begun to darken the threshold of her chequered life. What a world of history, to be sure, is this souvenir of Gluck!

Haydn drifted, like his gifted compeers, to Vienna in search of that fame and fortune which he was destined to win in the more congenial atmosphere of London. Poor Haydn! There are many odd corners sacred to his memory here, from that moment when the "weak, sweet voice" of the Imperial chorister had cracked, to become, as homely Maria Theresa put it, like the crowing of a cock. We can see him climbing the scaffolding of Schönbrunn Palace, and hear the motherly, matter-of-fact Empress directing the Court composer to give that "fair-haired blockhead a good thrashing." We can see him in a lofty attic of No. 10, Kohlmarkt, giving lessons on his spinnet for less than four shillings a month—think of it!—and then



THE DESOLATE SPOT WHERE MOZART'S BODY IS SUPPOSED TO LIE.



MOZART'S PRIMITIVE CLAVIER, BEARING HIS WIDOW'S CERTIFICATE OF ITS GENUINENESS.

the time when Haydn purchased it and added a storey, it was remote from the madding crowd. The spreading city has long since caught up to it and destroyed every rural charm which it may then have possessed. Thanks to the irony of fate, Frau Haydn's wish was not to

attain fulfilment. She was the first to succumb.

Haydn let the house out in flats and contented himself with two or three contemptibly little rooms at the back. Such parsimony, such ignoring of the common comforts of life, is almost unaccountable. Perhaps, however, he desired the restful influences of the garden and the distant hills. He was there from 1797 until his death in 1809. Here Mozart and Beethoven brought sunlight and shadow to him.

What a pathos surrounds the death of Haydn, to be sure! In the narrow compass of an insignificant room, now used as a Haydn museum, he must have lain while the screech of the French shells and the rumble of Napoleon's cannon struck terror into those around him. One of the French invaders has come just to shake hands with the illustrious man. The visitor's voice rings out with the magnificent tones of "In

not unlike me!" He counsels his attendants not to be afraid—"nothing can happen to you when I am nigh." His last wish is to be carried to the spinnet. An almost supernatural inspiration seizes him as the sonorous strains of the "Hymn to the Emperor" are heard. Three times he plays it. And then



ON THE SPOT WHERE THE DIVAN STANDS, SCHUBERT BREATHED HIS LAST.



IN THIS CORNER BEETHOVEN RAISED HIS FIST IN DEFIANCE OF THE THUNDER-PEALS AND FELL BACK DEAD.

Native Worth" and Haydn feebly expresses his thanks. We seem to see the dying man penning with a trembling hand:

"Fled is my strength,
Old and weak am I,"

for the opening bars of "Der Greis," and hear him sigh: "Ah! it is my last child, and

he is carried back. He is resigned, though he fain would finish the work scarce begun. Slowly he turns his head to the wall, and—the *finale* has been written.

One cannot recall the spoliation of Haydn's grave soon after his death, and the ruthless carrying off of his skull by a Vienna doctor, without thinking of the still more pathetic tragedy of Mozart's end. He was deserted at his grave, after being the butt of sorry intrigues during his life, and even posterity has failed to revive his memory as his genius deserved. Mozart occupied many houses in Vienna; all have disappeared save one, in Schuler Strasse, the Fleet Street of the Austrian capital. His flat on the first floor of this narrow house cost him a pretty sum, for those were his optimistic

days, when the semi-dandy was in hopes of patronage and pupils, and had ended that existence of a beaten cur under the ægis of a brutal and arrogant prince of the Church. There is nothing so quaint in all Vienna, and the courtyard, more like the shaft of a factory chimney than anything else, is a curiosity. To stand in one of those rooms, however, is to recall most hallowed memories, for here it was that Haydn and Beethoven came, and here it was that after that concert of musical giants, Haydn, in an aside to Mozart's father, declared: "Pon my honour, your son is the greatest composer I know."

We all know the story of his funeral, but none but those who have stood there on that spot, where, amid the bones of the forgotten and unknown of Vienna pauperdom, his sorrowing widow in vain searched for his remains, can imagine the utter desolation of the scene. Mozart's body had been thrown into some hole of St. Marx Cemetery, some distance outside the cemetery, with none but the gravediggers as witnesses, and a fortnight was sufficient to obliterate all traces of his whereabouts. Apparently the rude coffin bore no mark or sign by which

gravediggers did not even trouble to level the ground, which is one vast stretch of undulating pitfalls for the unwary as far as the eye can reach, varied only by the thick undergrowth of shrub. A tiny bush surrounded by a protecting wire-work, a geometrically shaped stone stump, against



THE BED IN WHICH BRAHMS DIED.

Old-fashioned to the last, he used these two candles on the day of his death, even with the electric light in reach.



DESK AT WHICH BRAHMS WAS WONT TO STAND AND COMPOSE.

to identify it. Now, when scores of years have fled since the perpetration of that tragedy, long, rank grass mercifully mitigates the barren melancholy of the Pauper's Acre. We can still see traces, however, of the unceremonious way in which the bodies were thrown into their last resting-place. The

which leans a small slab with the almost illegible name of the composer scratched upon it, marks the vicinity where Mozart probably lies. Oh, the bitter irony of it all! Even some pauper woman's grave has been robbed to provide the slab!

Beethoven — deaf, irascible, sensitive Beethoven, the Doctor Swift of Austria, fulminating against the nobility, his friends, the object of caricature, endearing us to him by that redeeming, forgiving love for his worthless nephew—died as he had lived. He set very Death at defiance in the moment of dissolution. The last dwelling of the Republican who scratched out the name of Napoleon from the dedicatory title-page of his "Eroica," because he had become Emperor, is in the Schwarzspsainer Street, a vast building formerly the monastery of the Black Spanish monks. His bedroom was at the back, and small—apparently too small for him to die in; so they removed him to a corner of the spacious *salon* facing the street and containing his piano. Here in this historical corner, close to the spot where his Broadwood instrument stood, Beethoven, terrible and aggressive to the last, raised his

clenched fist in defiance of the thunder-peals which had roused him from his torpor, and fell back dead.

The room in which Franz Schubert was born—or rather *probably* born, for no one knows in which apartment of the house in Nussdorfer Street the composer of the "Erlkönig" first saw the light—has an air of sumptuousness, in spite of the comparative poverty against which schoolmaster Schubert had to struggle. Schubert landmarks, like those of Beethoven, abound in Vienna, though we have nothing left of the taverns where the bibulous Schubert used to sit with his boon companions—nothing of that quaint inn and popular resort near the Habsburg Church of the Capucines where Schubert gave the toast of "the next to follow Beethoven," with perhaps some intuitive inkling that he was drinking to himself. Schubert died in the Kettenbrücken Street, in a flat on the second floor, which must have been the very incarnation of cheerlessness. The entrance was through a sorry-looking kitchen, next to which was a dark, windowless room which

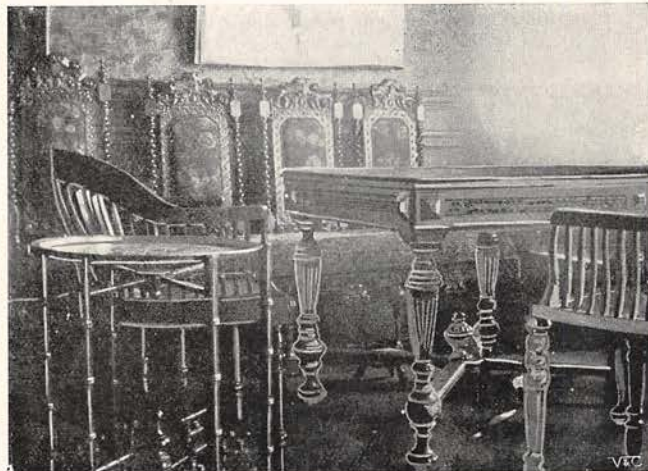
end of the tenderest and most unassuming of souls, lovingly tended by his brother, thinking and dreaming to the last of the great one who had preceded him, it is indeed



ROOM IN WHICH THE WALTZ KING DIED.

hard to tear oneself away and return to the noise and movement of the street again.

Between Schubert and Brahms—what a gap! But yet Brahms, whom change of fortune never changed, who had but to stretch out his hand to grasp comparative luxury, led the same simple, unostentatious life as his immortal predecessors, beside whom his remains now lie in that Ring of the Immortals in the Central Cemetery. He and Strauss, the Waltz King, were boon companions—so alike and yet so different. For thirty years Brahms lived as a lodger in a cheerless house in Karls Street, and was blessed with more landladies than worldly goods. Strauss built himself a mansion and occupied it exclusively. Brahms composed at a simple standing desk which would not have fetched more than two shillings at an auction as the utmost of its intrinsic worth. Strauss had a composing desk of glittering elegance, illumined by the rays of an exquisite electric shade. He lived in lavish comfort, surrounded by friends, with his own billiard-room and magnificent reception-rooms. Brahms, loving association, stuck



A CORNER OF THE WALTZ KING'S BILLIARD-ROOM.
Showing the famous card-table where he was wont to play with his boon companions.

received its light through the glass doors of the front room. It was probably Schubert's bedroom, but he died in the other chamber. Standing on this spot and recalling the

preferably to an old worthless chair for a music-stool. Strauss died in a bed of ebony inlaid with mother-of-pearl — in a *salon* rather than a bedroom. Brahms's death-bed was the usual German wooden, coffin-like affair, in a plain, unpretentious room. Old-fashioned to the last, he used two candles on the day of his death, even with the electric light in reach. There they all are as the gruff but kindly hearted Brahms left them—candles, piano, lamps, cigar-stumps, cigarettes, clothes, pens and pencils, even his coffee-cup. For though, like Strauss, he left the bulk of his fortune to the Muse from which he had derived it, his will was unsigned and in law is invalid. But if Brahms was a simple, honest soul, his friend, the Waltz King, was a real chip of that old, fast-fading Vienna whose proudest boast is its jovial good nature, its frank amiability,

and its pure love of life's honest pleasures. He lived amid and loved luxury, but never seemed actually of it.

It may be that the souvenirs of the Great Ones of the past have only a fascination for the few. But the rest will ever consider them



"THE RING OF THE IMMORTALS": SACRED TO BEETHOVEN, SCHUBERT, GLUCK, MOZART, SUPPÉ, STRAUSS, AND BRAHMS.

and their loving preservation as an unavoidable duty to posterity. As such, one cannot but regret that their keeping should be left to the city or country on which the obligation happens to fall. Circumstances, local conditions, or a blind indifference, often prevent the fulfilment of these obligations, and we and posterity are the sufferers.

Why, then, in view of that, should it not be feasible, if not advisable, to form some international society which could undertake the control of these things? It ought to be a labour of love for which mankind in general would be abidingly grateful.

WHITE BIRCHES.

MAIDENS that glimmer through the dusky wood,
 Finger on lip, demure, alluring;
 In silent loveliness, as when ye stood
 On Latmos' side, and Pan, all sorrow curing,
 Played sylvan airs on his sweet, mystic reed,
 While little Dryads crept in fearful stealth
 To give the strange, compelling music heed
 That flooded all the glade with golden wealth.
 Fair Vestal Virgins, so ye stand to-day;
 But Pan is vanished with his pipe away!

ROSALIE ARTHUR.