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## NEUCHÂTEL.

The authorities of the community of La Chaux-de-Fonds, have informed the Cantonal Bank of Neuchâtel that they are unable to pay any further interest due on the last loan, owing to heavy commitments in connection with unemployment relief.

## VALAIS.

Lieutenant-Colonel Leopold Imesch has died at Siders, the deceased took a great interest in the political and economic life of the canton of Valais. M. Imesch was well-known all over Switzerland as a Wine Merchant.

## ST. GALLEN.

M. Zaruski, since 1906 Manager of the Municipal Electricity Power Station and the Municipal Tramway Co., has celebrated his 40th service Jubilee.

## FRIBOURG.

Dr Eugen Dévaud, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Fribourg, has been asked by the University of Madrid to give a cycle of lectures.

## TICINO.

Monsignore Angelo Jelmini, the new Bishop of Lugano was consecrated in Lugano on Sunday last, in the presence of the Papal Nuntius in Berne, Monsignore Bernardini, the Bishops of Chur and Sitten, and a great number of the population.

## MINISTER GEORGES WAGNIERE.

Rom, im Januar.

Es ist in Zeiten materieller Bedrängnis und geistiger Zerküftung unter der europäischen Himmelsglocke besonders erfreulich, wenn die Schweizer im Ausland zäher als je am eidgenössischen Sinne festhalten und sich und den Nachbarn ein unverfälschtes Bild brüderlicher Einigkeit geben. So geschah es bei der Abschiedsfeier für unsern scheidenden Gesandten aus Rom, die einer nicht immer zu umgehenden Banalität eines Festbankettes sich völlig zu entschlagen wusste, dafür aber zu einer seit Jahren nicht mehr so stark erlebten patriotischen Weilstunde erhoben wurde. Es fehlte dem grandios aufgezogenen Festmahl nichts an äusserem Glanz; aber nicht dies verhalf ihm zu seinem gediegenen Goldgehalt. Ein um sein Vaterland hochverdienter, gescheiter und gütiger Eidgenosse, den das hohe Alter wohl geädelt aber nicht ermüdet hat, nahm Abschied von der ihm liebenden und verehrenden Landsgemeinde der Volksgenossen in Italien.

## WAGNER IN EXILE:

The Story of the first Five Years in Switzerland. As told by Max Fehr in "Richard Wagner's Schweizer Zeit" (Erste Band: 1849-1855). (Aarau und Leipzig: Verlag H. R. Sauerländer & Co.)

(Musical Opinion, January, 1936).

(Continued).

Wagner's greater activities in Zürich were orchestral, and we find him conducting overtures by Weber and Gluck to open a concert and taking in the second part a symphony, which on one occasion was the "Jupiter" of Mozart, and on all others the symphonies of Beethoven. Zürich could not then have known much about Beethoven, for the symphonies were announced in the concert programmes as "mit verstärktes Orchester," the said augmentation bringing up the players to a total of fifty! However, the genius of Wagner as a conductor through his introduction of the Beethoven symphonies was soon recognised, and as guest conductor he was a great "draw," increasing the box-office takings threefold. Then came on the scene Hans von Bülow, a young man escaping from the study of the law rather than its clutches, and with him, as the law-reports say, Alexander Ritter, son of Wagner's friend and patron and a clever young musician. The operas conducted by Wagner included "Don Giovanni," "Magic Flute" and "Figaro" (Mozart), "Fidelio" (Beethoven), and "La Dame Blanche" of Boieldieu, of which latter he gave a number of performances. Opera brought success equal to that of symphony, and a climax was reached with the production of "The Flying Dutchman," which came on the good people of the town like a bolt from the blue, opening out before them a new world.

Meanwhile Wagner, in his home, was occupied with the project of his "Nibelungen Ring," the while beset with nerve and other bodily ills, to alleviate which he had to submit to a diet of milk and water. However, he seems at times to have had enough strength to climb in the locality of Schiller's William Tell, tramping by the side of his friends Uhlig and Ritter, with the "Young Siegfried" and "Siegfried's Death" simmering in his head. From its conception and writing out (1850-1852), the change of titles from Sieg-

Auch wer nicht Einblicke hatte in die Arbeitsfälle unseres Gesandten während der 18 Jahre seiner Tätigkeit in Rom, konnte es an dem Dauerzustande der ausgezeichneten Beziehungen der Schweiz zu Italien ablesen, dass unsere diplomatische Vertretung keinen bessern Händen anvertraut sein konnte. Die Zeiten sind vorbei, wie Consul Biaggi aus Genua zutreffend ausführte, als die Diplomatie sich in gesellschaftlichen Aeusserlichkeiten erschöpfte und einer Sinekure gleichkam. Dr. Wagnière wurde von seiner leitenden Stellung am "Journal de Genève" während des Weltkrieges nach Rom geschickt. Es waren Zeitläufte, in denen unvermeidlich auch manchem Schweizer in Italien mehr als ein Haar gekrümmt wurde. Nicht besser wurde es während der darauffolgenden Spanne des bolschewisierenden Liebbäugels der Massen und im ersten Ansturm der fascistischen Revolution. Unser Minister kannte kein Wanken und kein Zaudern und sah schon wenige Jahre nach seinem Amtsantritt im Abschluss eines vorbildlichen Freundschaftsvertrages zwischen Italien und der Schweiz den Niederschlag seiner diplomatischen Bemühungen. Ihm zur Seite stand der geistig ebenbürtige, heute leider nicht mehr unter den Lebenden weidende Legationsrat Dr. Th. von Sonnenberg, dem in Dr. Broy seit fünf Jahren ein würdiger Nachfolger erstanden ist.

Neben der augenfälligen diplomatischen Grossarbeit galt für Georges Wagnière aber keineswegs der Satz *de minimis non curat praetor*, und gerade diese so wichtige Uebung hat ihm den Dank der Schweizerkolonien in Italien sichergestellt. Diesem Tätigkeitsbezirk nahe liegt die patriotische Fürsorge, die ihren Ausdruck in Tausenden von Vorträgen und Ansprachen in den Schweizervereinen fand. Wir hatten einmal Gelegenheit, Mussolini zu schildern, was für unsere Kolonie der *conférencier* Wagnière bedeutete, der seine Themen aus dem politischen Gegenwartsleben der Schweiz holte und es dabei auch nicht an Betrachtungen über aussenpolitische Ereignisse fehlen liess. Mussolini, bei dem unser Gesandter in hohem Ansehen steht, wurde darüber nachdenklich und äusserte einem anwesenden Minister gegenüber: "Solches erscheint mir als vollwertige praktische Demokratie: *beati i Svizzera!*" Dass unsere grossen und kleinen Interessen im gastlichen Italien bei unserem Gesandten mustergültig aufgehoben waren und wir Schweizer uns zudem in der Wahrnehmung sonnen konnten, dass Dr. Wagnière zu den feinsten Köpfen des diplomatischen Korps gezählt wurde und an Ansehen und Volkstümlichkeit an erster Stelle stand,

fried to Götterdämmerung was not made until 1863.

Things Wagnerian had now begun to move in Germany. In 1852 Liszt announced the fifteenth performance of "Tannhäuser" at Weimar, and presentations of the other operas had become so frequent that Wagner issued a brochure of instructions concerning their production, for the guidance of intendants and conductors. (Alas! ten years later Wagner found a copy still uncut in the office of an intendant at Munich.) Though under forty and vegetating in Switzerland, Wagner and his music was on all tongues, of which fact he seems to have been kept well informed. He condemned in his own polished style the bungled performance of "Tannhäuser" in Berlin, which enables us incidentally to remark that to-day we do not hear "The Flying Dutchman" or "Tannhäuser" as first orchestrated. By this time all the German intelligentsia was running pell-mell after the man at Zürich, one newspaper published there saying that Wagner might well exclaim, "God save me from my friends," and went on to declare that so much homage was not good for any man.

The Wesendoncks now come on the scene, and at a performance of "The Flying Dutchman" sent bouquets to the occupants of boxes for presentation to the composer. Wagner's fortieth birthday was celebrated at the Stadt Theater by three concerts and an oration delivered by Niederman, evidently inspired by his "Lohengrin" and the ideals Wagner often expressed. The poem is thought to have been written by Frau Wesendonck: if so, the spiritual quality of the poem honours herself and Wagner; anyhow, soon afterwards he composed the "Album Sonata" for piano, dedicating it to her. This was the first composition he had written for six years! Despite the success of the birthday concert and a proposal to make him a Freiburger of the canton, Wagner was evidently restless. Soon he was asking Liszt to intercede for him with the Royal House of Saxony and the Saxon authorities: Liszt did so, but could convey no hopes of success. The answer of the authorities was swift and sudden: in three days the warrant for arrest was re-issued, and with it went a new photograph and an intimation of present whereabouts.

This decision of the Saxon police seems to have wounded Wagner deeply in his swelling

dessen sind wir uns gerade jetzt wieder bewusst geworden.

Dies ist auch der Schlüssel zum Gelingen der Abschiedsfeier geworden. Ausdruck verliehen dieser Erkenntnis zahlreiche Tafelredner. Geistvoll und diplomatisch sorgfältig gefeiert war das Wort des Legationsrates Dr. Broy, erschöpfend der Aufzählung des verdienten Präsidenten des *Circolo Svizzero* in Rom, Pio Guberti, aufschlussreich die Ausführungen des Präsidenten der schweizerisch-italienischen Handelskammer, Steinmann aus Mailand, brillant der Trinkspruch des Korrespondenten des "Journal de Genève" Theodor Baucher, auf den der Presse stets verbunden gebliebenen ehemaligen Kollegen und ergreifend schliesslich die Dankadresse des 85 jährigen Veteranen der Kolonie, Herrn Emilio Meyer. Dr. Maurice Sandoz sandte einen formvollendeten dichterischen Gruss aus Arosa. Allen antwortete ernst und lammig der Gefeierte selbst mit der ihm eigenen flüssigen Rednergabe. Es war ein von hohem Geiste beschwingtes Wort eines auf das Vaterland stolzen Bürgers und der Dank für treue Mitarbeit an die grosse, siebzehntausendköpfige Schweizerkolonie in Italien. Harmonischer, ergreifender und vor allem schweizerischer konnte die Feier unter dem Absingen der Landeshymne nicht ausklingen.

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pride, for in a letter to his sister he speaks of "your lovely police," and suggested that they might better spend their money than in framing his portrait. However, he could still occupy his mind with the "Ring," while they talked of a special theatre for its performance, at Weimar or Zürich. Probably the rebel in him was weakening as he saw his aspirations as an artist so thwarted. He walked the mountains, he visited Italy twice, and became as nature-sick as a Lake poet.

In October of the year 1853 Wagner was in Paris with Liszt: he lunched with Berlioz; and on the last day of the visit, at a lunch, there were present four women, — Minna Wagner, Cosima Liszt, Mathilde Wesendonck, and Marie Wittgenstein. What combustible material! Back in Zürich, Wagner was soon engrossed in the composition of "Das Rheingold," working direct at the orchestral score in pencil, completing it — on January 14th, 854 — in the amazing time of eleven weeks! As he wrote to his friend Ferdinand Heine, he neither saw nor heard anything until the end of the task was reached.

The circumstances of the Wagner household have long provided both sympathetic and scandalous gossip; however, at this time everything in the home was beautiful, except the parrot, who would chatter, "Richard Wagner is a wicked man." There were a few stalwart friends, the dog Peps, and Minna, who was asked to teach the parrot to say that Richard Wagner was a good man! Then there was the quarterly allowance from Wesendonck paid to Minna through Jakob Sulzer, though the generosity of the transaction had a set-off by some sort of lien on the operas.

We must now be brief over other facts from this entrancing book. There are details of the performance in Zürich of the "Faust" Overture, written in days of poverty in Paris. Von Bülow prepared a piano transcription of the overture, but this Wagner declined, dubbing it "piano jargon." There were other successes in Zürich and not a little jargon about the Future of Art; also there was peace to be sought with Authority in Saxony. Of course, Wagner in his own view had been guilty of nothing very reprehensible, but at the time of the flight into Switzerland and for some time after, Authority as then constituted would have taken his head on a charger to the reigning King.

The End.