extraordinarily temperamental disputation with all those who would prescribe definite laws for the French novel. It condemns all authors (Proust for one) who do not guide themselves accordingly. As against these, Haedens defends the rights of creative personality and shows (partly very directly, partly obliquely) the great possibilities of the French novel. In terms of its proper theme, the brochure is an interesting and essentially sympathetic contribution to the actual discussions of the strong and the weak in contemporary French literature.

WILLIAM FINLEY (Chicago, Ill.).

Newman, Ernest, *The Life of Richard Wagner, 1859-1866*. Alfred A. Knopf. New York 1941. (xxxvi and 569 pp.; $5.00)

The third volume of Mr. Newman's extensive biography of Wagner confines itself to the seven years from 1859 to 1866. These, however, are the critical years of Wagner's life, the years of the Tannhäuser scandal in Paris, of Wagner's financial breakdown in the Spring of 1864, his rescue through King Ludwig, the Tristan première, the expulsion from Munich and the union with Cosima. It is the period upon which literature about Wagner has always concentrated its interest. Further light has been thrown on this period today through the publication of Wagner's correspondence with the King of Bavaria. Thus, the problem put to Newman this time was not, as was the case with Wagner's political-revolutionary phase, to work out biographical connections that have been unknown or obscured, but the problem of insight into details often of the most subtle kind. Such details may sometimes assume a quite disproportionate weight in rounding out our knowledge of years whose every event means so eminently much for the development of German music and German ideology.

The musicological contributions Newman has to make, such as the analysis of certain inconsistencies in the second act of the Mastersingers and also of the genesis of the Prize Song, are striking testimonies of both philological acuity and historical instinct. It may not be unfair to summarize the result as follows: Even in the period when Wagner's idea of the *Musikdrama* was fully developed, his music maintains a weight of its own throughout the process of production and this historically justifies its supremacy over the drama which today, since we have gained a greater distance from Wagner, is esthetically manifest anyhow. Newman's inquiries relative to the history of the Siegfried Idyll and its relationship to the third act of the opera move in the same direction. Yet, one must not necessarily endorse Newman's interpretation of the style break in the musical texture of the third act in the passages where the older themes of the idyll are used. At any rate, the reviewer is of the opinion that there were urgent reasons within the composition itself which compelled Wagner, then at the summit of his power, to suspend the *Leitmotiv*-mechanism at decisive spots. Wagner appears to have realized the profound necessity of allowing the musicdrama to "stop," to breathe and to reflect upon itself, as it were. Only in his latest works this has again been more or less forgotten.

Newman's rectifications of detail pertain to strictly biographical facts as well. He destroys with truly epical enjoyment the legend of King Ludwig's

madness. The passages in which he does justice to the eccentricities of the King belong to the most beautiful parts of the book. They fall within a tradition which can call no lesser witnesses than Verlaine and George against the stupidity of common sense. "He had a strong distaste for the pompous ceremonial of Courts, and suffered agonies of boredom at the official dinners and other functions he was sometimes compelled to attend. He preferred the talk of men of culture to the chatter of women, and had no use for the fripperies of the sex-comedy. He had no liking for the conventional royal mountebankery of playing at soldiering. He suffered scheming priests and politicians and other knaves and fools anything but gladly. He had not only the intellectual but the physical *pudeur* of the sensitive solitary, so that he enjoyed the theatre in general, and Wagner's works in particular, most fully when he could listen to the performance either quite alone or in the company merely of a few choice spirits built more or less on his own model, who would not break in upon his dream with the customary gabble of theatre-going humanity. In short, he exhibited so many signs of exceptional sanity that it was a foregone conclusion that the world would some day declare him to be mad; for the majority of men always find it difficult to believe in the sanity of anyone who is not only markedly different from themselves but betrays no great desire for their company, and shows the most uncompromising contempt for their standards of value. His "madness" has accordingly become a legend; yet there is no proof, and there never was any proof, that he was insane in either the strict medical or the strict legal sense of the term." (215) The prudence of Wagner and Cosima contrasts most unfavorably against such reason within the royal madness. They violate the bourgeois moral code while incessantly striving to comply with it. Throughout his work Newman defends Wagner against all kinds of philistine objections. But he takes sides against Wagner with unfailing instinct as soon as the latter deserts to the existing norms and identifies himself with the type of moralism that Nietzsche so thoroughly analyzed.

Another detail of some relevance is the proof that Bülow from the very beginning knew of Wagner's relationship with Cosima and that he aided in keeping it secret. To the same sphere belongs the discovery that Brahms had his hands in the affair of the *Putzmacherin* letters. The realm of purity, chastity and master-like asceticism, which is so significant for the German music of the second part of the 19th century, appears to be inseparably bound up with blackmail, marital scandals and illegitimate birth. The element of plush-culture in Wagner's work, which becomes evident only gradually, is open at hand in the biography. The skeleton in the closet is part of the Wagnerian furniture and Cosima ought to have known very well why she hated Ibsen.

The chapter devoted to her is probably the most outstanding achievement of the whole book. The image of the governess-like Egeria, the power politician of art, would be worthy of a great novel, though it is hardly accidental that such images no longer find their place in novels today, but in works of scientific character. The type of woman to whom life dissolves itself into a sequence of situations which she has to manipulate administratively is of a societal impressiveness which far transcends the psychological case: "The way most likely in the end to achieve her own purposes was to see every difficult situation calmly as a problem that could be 'managed' in terms of an understanding of the personalities involved in it." (282) This analysis is matched

by the description of her intellectual makeup: "In spite of her wide reading and her inexhaustible interest, almost to the end of her long life, in the pageant of the world, hers was a onetrack mind; whatever entered it took on instantaneously the shape and colour of it, and was accepted or rejected according as it squared or failed to square with her own immovably fixed prepossessions and prejudices. She was astonishingly like Wagner in her way of referring everything to the touchstones of a few convenient formulae of her own; she complacently simplified every problem, however complicated, in history, in politics, in literature, in art, in life, by submitting it to the test of conformity or nonconformity with a few principles that were as fixed for her as the constitution of matter or the courses of the stars." (284) In one passage Newman distinguishes Wagner from "the opera composer turning out operas in order to live and competing in the open market with opera composers for the public's money." (233) If Wagner is actually characterized by this aloofness from the market, Cosima has truly developed for him the technique and practice of a monopolist. These as well as the apodictical judgments on matters about which one knows nothing, superseding rational decisions, as it were, by power and authority, have later become fully absorbed into the behavior of National Socialism. Hitler is the heir of Wahnfried not only with regard to racism. The attitude of the sublimely barbarian hangman is already visible throughout the literary judgment of this woman who from her early youth remained faithful to one maxim, to corroborate every existing prejudice through despotism based on success, as if it had been created by herself. Her sentences are both death-sentences and trivialities.

It is she, the daughter of an Hungarian pianist and a French Countess, who has added the mercilessly terroristic touch to the Wagnerian anti-Semitism (Cf. 286f). This fits into Newman's argument which leaves practically no doubt of Geyer's paternity and therewith of Wagner's partially Jewish descent. It rounds out the picture of a revolutionary who after he had become the most intimate friend of the King, refused to intervene for a man condemned to death (324).

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