

I was sent to stay with him, and he married there during the time. I was only about ten years old when I went, and my school life and musical education went on side by side. Double work of that kind is hard upon a boy, but I had fine times. My teacher was a burly Prussian who had been kicked out of his country after the disturbances of '48. When I came home, I went to the City of London School for a couple of years. Then to Stuttgart where I studied under Lebert. Besides taking theory under Eduard Tod, my subjects were 'cello and pianoforte. Goltermann was my 'cello teacher."

"Do you reckon that your German training was a great advantage?"

"The Swiss life was useful. In Switzerland you learn German and French side by side, and don't forget I was a cadet for three years. I have a Swiss brother-in-law who is equally good in English, German, French, and Italian."

"You must have been at Zürich when Wagner was there."

"Yes. I saw a deal of him. I was of course a small boy. I used to take off my hat as we passed, and say, 'Guten Tag, Herr Wagner,' and he would reply, 'Guten Tag, kleiner Engländer.' I saw him also in the artists' room in the old theatre. I remember a little incident there. A young friend was an ardent autograph collector, and, like many of his kind, not scrupulously honest about the way in which he acquired his treasures. The horn player was about to give his annual benefit concert. Wagner had something to do with it; he wrote a message to the librarian about some parts, and left it on the table in the artists' room. Seeing the signature, my friend pocketed the paper. It never reached the librarian, who was peremptorily sent for, for not supplying the parts required. Wagner stamped and fumed, and shook the poor man. Fearing serious consequences, my friend went forward and said, 'Pardon me, Herr Wagner, I am an autograph collector, and I put your letter in my pocket.' Wagner turned and stormed at him. 'Give up that paper,' he said, 'now don't do that sort of thing again. Come round to my house to-morrow, and I will give you something worth having. You see what trouble you have caused here.' My friend went next day, and Wagner gave him the original score of the 1st Act of *Tristan*. It is of course valuable to-day. Zürich was a musical centre at that time. Robert Franz, Carl Tausig, and Hermann Goetz were there, as well as other men who became noted."

"Has not your firm been established a long time?"

"It was begun by my grand-parents, as nearly as I can ascertain, about 1808. At first they were music printers in the city. They printed and published for Clementi, and my uncle, in fact, was a pupil of Clementi. Those were the days of the old hand press. Their premises were in Fountain Court, Cheapside. About thirty years later, the little place 'under the tree' in Cheapside was taken. My grandfather, however, had died long before that, at about thirty years of age. His widow was careful and very business-like, and kept the business going, at the same time that she educated her children thoroughly. My father, Joseph Williams, was of course a mere baby at the time. When he was old enough my grandmother left the business to him. My uncle, Benjamin Williams, being of an independent disposition, started music publishing himself. He was an excellent pianist, and had a pure, pearly touch, excelling in Mozartian interpretation. The firm of Clementi, Longman & Green began with music publishing, I fancy,

Clementi being prime mover of the business as well as composer and teacher. The book publishing of the firm was a later development. We have some of their engraved plates, and the excellent metal is valuable, even in cases where the music is not worth reprinting. We removed the wholesale department of the business to No. 6 Milk Street, then to No. 11 Holborn Bars. For thirty years we were at No. 24 Berners Street (now the publishing office of your *Musical Herald*), and for the past six years we have occupied No. 32 Great Portland Street."

"Times are changed, are they not? Music publishing has moved West, and the city is given over to finance, shipping, insurance, and general merchants. You must have seen many changes."

"Yes. Times have changed, as you and I know well. It's a far cry from the day when Balfe produced his operas, and the London music-seller went clamouring at the publisher's doors for copies the day after the first performance, to the present time of King Gramophone and the noble music pirate."

"Is there not a larger demand for school music?"

"For classical, possibly; for music in general, I think not to the extent of a few years ago. It is said 'that girls cannot possibly devote the time they did to music.' Then, again, you must not forget the hockey and cricket—seemingly necessary adjuncts to a modern young lady's school training."

"But do not girls in boarding schools play better music than their predecessors?"

"They may play better music, but they do not play so much. After a girl marries she has not much time for pianoforte practice, or if she has, she seems to prefer golf and the bicycle. Before that event, she learns a certain number of stock pieces, and as long as she lives she is an advertisement for the publisher, but if she ceases practice early, fewer pieces become known."

"You must remember some curious incidents in publishing?"

"One incident comes at once to mind. Wellington Guernsey used to act as agent for George Barker, the composer of 'The White Squall.' He came into Cheapside one day, and, in his frank, familiar way, threw a MS. down, saying 'Here you are, Williams, here is Barker's last song. I am tired out. I won't cart it round any more. Give me what you like for it.' The song was 'Mary Blane,' and it soon became the song of the day."

"Do not you receive many MSS. which are worthless?"

"That must be the case with every publisher. One of my early experiences in that matter was when I was associated with Clark Russell in a paper called *Mayfair*. Prizes were offered for original compositions sent in by readers. I had the trouble of wading through the MSS. sent in. It was indeed a sad task. Nowadays the music which one receives is of a much better tone, shows better taste, and is altogether more clever and correct."

"Do not young composers show great lack of judgment as to where they send their MSS.?"

"Sometimes, yes. It is of no use to send comic songs to a sacred music house. They must recognise that each publisher has some special line."

"Now that your sons are in business, your firm represents four generations of music publishing. I do not think any other music publishers can match that."

"Well, if the present state of affairs continues, it may be easy to maintain that record, for a great many publishers are likely to go out of the business."

"Do you think the pirates can be stopped?"