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6. Symphony.

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(Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky
and Antonin Dvořák.)

Symphony

6

Rich in qualities and events; endowed with enormous perceptions and powers; burdened with problems and unfulfilled aspirations; dismal and brilliant; earthbound, yet rich in daring speculations; brutal, yet rich in ethical sensibility; dipping with ill-informed ingenuity into the future; rich in contradictions, defeats and triumphs; rich in mental-moral impulses, and repulsive in its avarice, materialism, pseudo-morality and hypocritical hollowness; courageous in self-criticism; the physiognomy of mankind and the surface of the globe fantastically changed - thus the great Nineteenth Century takes its place in ~~the~~ history.

The century bestowed fame lavishly. Its prizes were showered extravagantly on a host of its children: history records the names of those whose triumphs gave unity to the epoch. The century exhibited itself in all its fine qualities and most ambitious claims through a regiment of great personalities and groups of talented individuals. Great men of action, philosophers and men of artistic achievement represented the problems and scepticism of the epoch in all its splendor.

These bearers of imperishable glory, Europe's latter-day classics, present themselves to us as enigmatic giants. Every one of them, for all his stature and power, had some shortcoming, his vulnerable spot, so that the glance we give these dubious great ones is composed as much of pity as of awe: it is a glance which cannot but stir one's deep emotions.

We may allow our awed and pitying glance to rest on one of these figures. Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky is not one of the greatest of his race - far from it. But we surmise, indeed we know, that he belongs to the company of the elect; that he was endowed with their creative power and weighted down by their infinite sadness.

Our awed and pitying glance cannot get its fill of his melancholy, nor of the noble defiance with which he overcomes it and transmutes it into art. How we love the spectacle of his pathetic struggles! For this difficult son of the waning century and contributor to its culture is always struggling: against the ~~devastating~~ devastating pain of the loneliness to which his most individual and personal characteristics condemn him; against the torment of doubt with which he regards his own talent - a talent composed of many contradictory elements - and which leads him to judge and often to despise his own achievement. He fights; he arouses opposition; he will not give way - therefore he is a hero. He feels that he is ^{pledged} ~~pledged~~ to a higher mission - therefore he is humble and religious. Every day he is confronted with the temptation to give way, to cease from striving, to lay down his tools. But always, after a profound and bitter internal conflict, he pulls himself violently together and starts again. He behaves like one who has some mysterious and very exact message to deliver and may not give way to fatigue so long as a single word, a single note, of his message remains locked in his breast. He goes on and on. It is this message that drives him on. The traveller sees landscapes change and faces change; but he remains alone with his message. He leaves one station after another behind him.

At which station do we find him now?

We see a stout, ~~agging~~ gentleman with a high forehead, sad and gentle eyes, a too-soft mouth almost hidden by the whitish-grey rounded beard. We recognize him - it is Peter Ilych. He looks like a man of sixty ^{at that time, in 1891,} though he is only fifty years old. He is alone - alone in Paris, alone in this public reading room full of people. He patiently waits for the only available Russian paper which is in the possession of a fat asthmatic lady. At last she rises, breathing heavily. With a smart movement, Peter Ilych grabs the Moscow journal, for which an

unshaven student had been lying in ambush. The paper ^{JS} was several days old. Peter Ilych thinks peevishly: 'I shan't learn anything new from this, nothing amusing...' At this moment his ~~ye~~ eyes fall on a large announcement framed in black: "Death in Kamenka near Kiev: Mrs. Alexandra Ilyinisha Davidov."

sister
Sasha was dead - his beloved sister had left him. Vladimir's mother was dead - the mother of that youthful human being whom he loved more, with a deeper and more painful tenderness than any other creature on earth. His sister, with whom he had shared thousands of common memories, had passed away. She had taken all her memories with her. She had gone to the mother whom all obedient children ought to follow, whom all children ought to obey all the time... Both, his dear mother and his beloved ~~mother~~ ^{sister}, died deliberately. There could be no doubt - his beautiful maman, Alexandra Andreievna Tchaikovsky, had wanted to die. She had challenged death and provoked it. She had beckoned to Death with her own hand, as she lifted to her mouth the glass of water which she knew was tainted. For it was thus that she had behaved in her sorrow. Her far too enterprising husband had lost his estate; owing ^{to} the influence of evil companions he had plunged deeper and deeper into frivolous and risky undertakings. Now poverty! The unhappy woman had had enough. What caused cholera? A couple of mouthfuls of water were sufficient...

She had not decided unequivocally to commit suicide, for she was religious. But God had never forbidden one to drink a glass of water. It was His concern if the water was poisoned or not, one had put nothing evil into oneself. The fatal decision rested entirely in His hands. And He decided.

The mother had died on purpose. The children prayed: "God, let us follow our mother! We wish to follow her in all things."

When Peter Ilych visited his dear sister Sasha in Kamenka, for the last time, he realized that she, too, wanted to die. Doctors ~~a~~ could not agree as to the name and nature of her illness. But everybody could see that she was fading away... It was then, after that last gloomy conversation with Sasha, that Peter Ilych took away from her young Vladimir whom they called Bob - that charming, talkative, clever boy, Sasha's favourite son. She agreed with a gesture of languid resignation to her brother's plan: Vladimir-Bob was to share his famous uncle's life, in the country house at Frolovskoe, in St. Petersburg and Moscow. The famous uncle was so very eager to acquaint his brilliant nephew with all the beauties of the great world - and young Vladimir loved beauty and was avid of knowledge...

Peter Ilych sat motionless in the overcrowded Paris reading-room. 'I must give up my American tour... I ought to go back to Kamenka to comfort Bob. Bob will cry. I have never seen Bob's face wet with tears. If I went to Kamenka now I should find it drenched with tears. Strange that I can't weep.'

Slowly Peter Ilych got up. Shaking his head, he walked through the reading room. His lips moved like those of an old man babbling to himself. People looked at him and smiled.

Should he telegraph renouncing the American tour? The temptation to do so was great, but Peter Ilych did not give way to it. He needed the dollars: he had already banked too much on these additional earnings. How would he ^{be} able to go on supporting his brother Modeste and young Vladimir if he threw away lightly such great financial possibilities as this. His contract with the American impresario guaranteed him ~~2,500 dollars~~ 2,500 ~~dollars~~ for four concerts, and probably two extra ~~concerts~~ concerts to boot - which was nothing to sneer at: especially not since he had received, some months ago, that disastrous letter from Madame von Meck.

Ah, he did not want to think of Nadejda's inexplicable, ruthless be=

havior - did not want to recall ~~these~~ ^{the} cool, almost hostile words she had addressed to him. Yet he could not help ~~but~~ asking himself ^{once} ~~more~~ more, for the thousandth time: 'Why did she do it? Why did his great benefactress suddenly stop the allowance she had generously given him for so many years? Rather unceremoniously, Madame von Meck had informed her friend that having been totally ruined and reduced to a state of utter poverty, she would be unable to continue to make him the allowance of six thousand roubles a year which she had promised him for his lifetime. What a blow this was!... And the reasons she gave to explain her catastrophic decision, were obviously untrue. For she ^{was} ~~was~~ still ~~was~~ wealthy, in spite of some minor ~~losses~~ financial losses she may have suffered. There must have been other reasons involved - sordid, embarrassing reasons. Nasty people must have incited the wealthy widow against the composer whose works she had admired so much; scandal-mongers alarmed and confused her with filthy gossip -: Peter Ilych blushed and trembled when he thought of it...

'Oh, Natejda Filaretovna, why did you give credence to such ugly talebearing? And if you had to believe it - why didn't you try to understand? I used to call you my good fairy and the truest friend I had. I dedicated ^{to} you my Fourth Symphony - a work which didn't altogether fail - To my Best Friend. I considered you my soul's friend, the ^{one being I could rely on} ~~most reliable being~~. I obeyed ~~to~~ all your whims and amazing wishes - even to the most amazing, ~~one~~ ^{one}, that we should never see one another face to face. Our unclouded relationship was founded on the interchange of stimulating and intimate thoughts, nurtured by our correspondence. You knew and understood my music. Ah, I kept hoping you would know and understand my life... I loved you as if you were my own real wife - a remote, thoughtful wife such as I needed. My real marriage - you know it, Natejda! - was ~~an~~ most embarrassing failure. Your wise and understanding comradeship offered me everything

which poor obstinate Antonina's wild devotion could never give me. I was so very grateful to you, my best friend - and now, this cruel disappointment!

I am forced now to venture on a journey across the Atlantic, alone, and my heart ^{aching} full of grief, as my dear ones would starve ~~in death~~ and ~~my own situation would be drastic were I to~~ ^{I would be in a rather alarming position} ~~but~~ cancel the tedious trip.

Nevertheless he had in ^{all} honesty to admit to himself that these reasonable considerations were not the sole reason ^{for the decision} ~~why he decided~~ to carry out his programme, which was to travel to Le Havre and there embark on ~~the French ship~~ ^{sailing April 18 for} the French ship La Bretagne, to New York. He was seized by the thought: 'Perhaps I shall breathe more freely on the other side on the great water. Perhaps I shall be quite another man in the land where, so people say, the possibilities are boundless. It must be a marvelous country: it must abound in youth and strength - and I might find that invigorating. I am curious to see what sort of a reception they will give me over there. Will they immediately recognise that their kind invitation was founded on a misunderstanding? Undoubtedly it has transpired in the meantime what I really am: that is to say, neither a great composer nor even a genuine Russian, but an entirely second-rate creature composed of the most diverse of base elements. I wonder ~~whether~~ whether Caesar Cui's enlightening book La Musique en Russie is already known to the American public. ~~As to~~ ^{have} the French & music critics, ~~they~~ ^{they} ~~very~~ obviously read it, even learned it by heart. That is why they were ^{so sure of themselves when they said:} ~~able to declare with so much determination:~~ M. Tchaikovsky n'est pas un compositeur aussi russe qu'on voudrait le croire.... They also said that the German element dominates my works ^{to the exclusion of} ~~which look in the real Slavish~~ flavour.... ^{It is really rather amusing.} ~~Isn't this exceedingly funny?~~ In Leipzig they ^{call} ~~reproached~~ me ~~with being~~ French; in Hamburg, ~~with being~~ Asiatic; in Paris, ~~with being~~ German; and in Russia - in Russia they consider me a ^{hodgepodge} ~~hotchpotch~~ of everything, and in any case quite unoriginal.

Of these proud and brutal members of the neo-Russian school, these nationalists and barbarians, these five gifted "Innovators", who stick together as thick as thieves; Borodin, Cui, Balakirev, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Moussorgsky - the Great Brotherhood: what harm they have all done to me! I have to thank them for the cry for the cry that I am "flat", without strength, a "western traditionalist" like the brothers Rubinstein. The students in Prague, who hailed me as the legitimate message-bringer and singer of the great Russia, did not think ^{so} ~~that~~. But Mr. Caesar Cui thinks it... Moussorgsky, he is the ^{real} ~~right~~ thing: only he... He would never have come before the public at all if it hadn't been for the friendly help of Rimsky-Korsakov, so wretchedly is his music written, ~~down~~. Not a soul can play it. But Boris Godounov is the opera of the Russian people...

I really would like to know if the Americans are already familiar with these essential facts. But even presuming that they don't yet know that I am only a bungler, they ^{will} ~~must~~ find it out by themselves, even without Caesar Cui's instruction. They cannot fail to notice that my music is vulgar, sentimental, luscious... Moreover, I'm not a conductor. Even if they should like my music - which is ~~possibly~~ not very ~~likely~~ probable - they'll sneer at my poor conducting. ^{How mad I am to} ~~what a madness that I~~ try it, again and again! I inevitably spoil my own compositions when I conduct them myself. I'm too bashful, too clumsy, I don't have what they call a stage personality. Ah, what a crazy, horrid idea - to make this American tour! It would be so much better to be at home, in Frolevskoe, and to work... Yes, I should work... I have things in mind which I want to write down... melodies, more beautiful, more honest than ~~any~~ ^{any} I ever composed before... No, I have no melody yet - it's still blurred, and dark, and confused... But I know and I feel, there is something... an essential part of the message: the Sixth Symphony...

But perhaps the time ^{is not} ~~now~~ yet ripe. It might be a mistake - it might be even a sin to begin it ^{yet} ~~now~~, that greatest and final

work. I must be very patient. This problematic, ~~and~~ daring journey to America probably has its advantages too. It may teach me patience...'

He was almost calm now. He slowly walked on the Boulevard, with heavy, stamping steps - an elderly, reflective gentleman, looking like a cross between a Russian prince and a Russian peasant in his big fur coat, his large round cap. He had lighted a cigarette - one of his aromatic Russian cigarettes with the long mouth piece. ~~He hardly cher~~ ^{He hardly cher} ~~is an exceptional that he inter-~~ stopped smoking for as long ~~as time~~ ^{as time} as he had ~~done~~ just now... The familiar, stimulating flavour of the ~~cigarette~~ ^{fine tobacco} and the idea of the Sixth Symphony, that "essential and final part of the Message", encouraged and comforted him.

'After all, I'm not the first European composer to risk the journey over the Atlantic. ~~Didn't Verdi go there? I'm not quite sure. But~~ I remember that Johann Strauss once told me amusing stories about his excursion to the Yankee land. They were having there some musical festival [✓] in the cause of World Peace, and Strauss accepted their invitation: ~~this~~ ^{it} must have been almost twenty years ago. Funnily enough, I still can hear his very pleasant voice when he described to me all ~~that~~ ^{the} ridiculous fuss they made about him, ~~on that~~ over there... They had huge placards, at street corners, showing poor Johann Strauss, standing on the globe, holding his baton in the form of an imperial scepter. He didn't like it at all. I think the impresarios offered him ~~loads of money~~ ^{loads of money} ~~loads of gold~~, but he returned to Europe as quickly as he possibly could... Well, he could afford to be whimsical and delicate. ^{in his place I suppose I would accept -} ~~but on no, I would hardly refuse~~ - if the offers were ~~would be~~ ^{fat} fat enough...'

He laughed a little - a strange, rather sinister ~~laugh~~ ^{laugh} - while he went on stamping the pavement of Paris.

'I take it as a favourable sign that Johann Strauss, the King of the Waltz, enjoys so astounding a popularity in that faraway country where I am going to try my luck. For it was he who brought my music

before the public, for the very first time. The Dance of the ~~Maids~~
Maids... I used it later in an opera... Friends of mine had sent him the
composition when he was touring Russia, and he was kind enough to conduct
that immature stuff - to conduct it himself, in Kiev... This was in 1865:
twenty five years ago... It was ~~a~~ wonderful ^{of him, he the} thing ~~to do from the side of~~
~~a~~ Waltz King, ~~who was~~ celebrated all over the world, and I ~~was~~ just an
unknown ^{youngster...} ~~little fellow~~... I always admired his music; I was always fond
of the waltz rhythm. Critics used to attack me because I introduced the
waltz into serious symphonic music. Waltzes in my Fifth Symphony, in
both ~~the~~ ^{the} first and third movements! ^{They made a great to-do about that.} ~~the exacting critics grumbled very~~
~~seriously~~. I trust, however, the American public may be somewhat less
strict and pedantic...

I ~~think~~ ^{think} they won't dislike the Fifth. But perhaps I should ~~make~~ ^{do} the
Nutcracker Suite as well, and Romeo and Juliet, and maybe Francesca
da Rimini. I only hope they won't demand 1812 ~~although~~ : it is my
most commonplace work, although all the ^{managers} ~~improvisers~~ swear ~~it is the~~ ^{by it.}
~~most effective one.~~ ^{went over very well} It ~~worked very well~~ when it was performed at the
dedication ceremony at the Church of the Redeemer in Moscow - with the
Russian anthem triumphing over the "Marseillaise," and with the firing
of cannon and pealing of bells. But one couldn't have cannon fired
and bells rung in a concert hall - and, in short, I'm sick and tired of it.
And all of a sudden he felt a sharp pang, ^{having no} ~~without any~~ connection
with the 1812 fantasy.

'Sasha is dead - and I have to go to America.'

The invigoration which Peter Ilych, in optimistic moments, had ex=
pected from his stay in America was certainly not afforded him by the
journey thither. The Bretagne was a large and handsome steamer, as com=
fortable as a good hotel; but he found the time he spent in his cabin,
in the smoking-room, in the dining-room, and on deck altogether into=

lerable. The sea both bored and alarmed him. It was with complete dismay that he saw the coast recede, grow indistinct, shrivel into a grey streak, fade, and finally disappear. He discovered that the desert of flat unending stretches of water and the monotony of the surrounding horizon had for him nothing of the powerful appeal possessed by the sea when viewed from land with the breakers beating against the shore.

For the first few days of the journey the sea was calm; but now the waves began to rise and the ship to roll. Peter Ilych could not endure it in the swaying dining-saloon: it seemed to him incongruous and absurd to consume a menu of eight courses, while in the storm which raged and roared in the outer darkness the waves were preparing to swallow at a gulp the cook, the kitchen-boys and the stewards, the plates and dishes and the people who ate from them. Furthermore, he found the fellow-passengers with whom he usually sat at table, particularly unbearable. They included a Canadian bishop who had come from Rome, where he had been blessed by the Pope; his secretary and a German-American married couple from Chicago with two young daughters. The conversation turned on an unfortunate fellow-traveller who the previous day had jumped into the sea from the ^Vdeck ~~of the~~ (second class) and had been drowned. The excitement on board had been enormous; the sirens had screeched, the ship had stopped, the life-boat had been lowered - but the suicide had disappeared. They found a note in his cabin, covered with almost illegible signs, out of which the following words in German were finally deciphered: "I am innocent...the boy weeps..." It meant nothing. The unhappy fellow was probably out of his mind.

"God have mercy on his soul!" said the churchman. "The unfortunate man has committed the worst, in fact the unforgivable sin. Of all the deadly sins self-slaughter is regarded by God with ^{the} greatest anger."

The lady from Chicago ventured to wonder whether the fact that the

man was mentally deranged might not be considered an extenuating circumstance; but one of the girls said in a high, shrill voice: "If he was really mad one would have noticed it before. Madmen always have a queer expression on their faces."

Peter Ilych's mind was so much taken up with the unfortunate fellow-human from the second class, on whose soul - according ^{to} the Canadian bishop's judgement - God ^{would} have no mercy, that he even forgot his fear of the sea and of being wrecked. He stamped up and down the promenade deck, which at this hour was empty of people.

What was the song which the waves sang to him? 'I know what it means, he thought as he paced the dark deck. 'It is the song of the vanished faces. It is the song of those who have been obliterated, slipped away, and disappeared, beyond my reach. How many have already gone from me and transformed themselves into shadows, or live a life in which I have ^{no} share and play no part! I move ^{among} ~~around~~ shadows. I am surrounded only by the dead. How old am I? I must be age-old; I must be the oldest of men. Who ^{of} ~~among~~ the living has remained near to me? Vladimir, my dear child. But ^{do} ~~and~~ not even his features appear in the procession of vanished faces, in the cycle of shadows? Alas, that the most familiar face of all should already seem half-estranged! Already my little Vladimir seeks the society of others whom he will love, and his love for them will be different from his love for an old man like me. But I must not pursue this thought to its conclusion; it is a thought that leads to despair: I should collapse under it; I should ~~fall~~ totter and fall into the ~~sea~~ sea - the terrifying sea into which my poor desperate brother, the "Innocent" one, jumped - the abyss out of which the Song of the Lost Faces rises.'

X

His journey continues. The sea calms down; the Bretagne does not go to the bottom. A few days later she enters the harbour at New York. Several ladies and gentlemen come on board the French steamer in order to welcome the composer Tchaikovsky, one of the glories of the old world and of the passing century. The President of the Music Hall Company of New York, Mr. Maurice Renault, in the name of musical America, welcomes the composer ~~the~~ ^{to} the shores of the United States; the slim, pretty and smart Mrs. Renault, as representative of the Women's Clubs, hands him a gigantic bouquet of red roses. The journalists inquire what Mrs. Tchaikovsky's first impressions of America are; Peter Ilych assures them that he has brought no Mrs. Tchaikovsky with him, upon which a certain disappointment is expressed on the faces of the journalists. Peter Ilych is then put in a cab by Mrs. and Mr. Renault; he is delivered up to the Hotel Normandie; he admires his suite and the bathroom, W.C., and large wall-mirror.

The strong, young, rapidly-developing New World receives the bearer of European fame, the latter-day classic, the enigmatic giant, with enthusiastic curiosity. The press, naive, indiscreet, hungry for sensations, desires to probe into the private life of the illustrious visitor. Who is this Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky? What is there to tell about him? His work is famous in this country: Peter Ilych has to admit that his music is better known here in New York, and more whole-heartedly appreciated, than in Paris, Berlin or Vienna. But now they demand facts, anecdotes, adventures; piquant, moving or amusing episodes out of his life. The picture of Tchaikovsky appears on the front pages of the newspapers. But the subject himself is now expected to supply captions for the photos: journalists besiege the Hotel Normandie. Both impressed and disappointed they have to depart. They find no way of approach to this veiled life, and not even the least sensitive of them can be unaware of the melancholy which weighs him down. The baffled journalists say

to one another: Unfortunately our famous visitor has nothing dramatic in his life; there's nothing of a sensational character to get hold of ...and as they leave him and saunter towards Broadway, they have no inkling of the state of tension in which this monotonous existence of his runs its course, nor of the tragic Task which rules it, nor of its impressive magnitude. However, the ignorance and misunderstanding are mutual. Peter Ilych, who brings a ready-made conception of his host's country, is scarcely more able to appreciate the pathos of the New World, its courage, its great charm, its zest for life, than the young journalists on Broadway ^{to understand} ~~are able to appreciate~~ the spiritual and human qualities of the Russian composer.

The famous visitor is caught up in the current of New York life; it showers honours and loving tributes upon him; he is overwhelmed by its noise, by its somewhat crude sentiment, its lavish hospitality, which can only be compared - not however in manner and atmosphere - with the Russian-Asiatic hospitality. He is hardly ever allowed an hour's peace, and when he chances to have a few moments to himself in his Hotel Normandie, he spends them in weeping: he sheds tears of exhaustion, of homesickness, of perplexity - for the phenomenon of his fame never ceases to puzzle him and to frighten him; it disgusts him, even while it flatters him, and even, to his own amazement, pleases him.

This stay in America seems to him like some marvellous and grotesque interlude in a life that appears to be rushing with ever-increasing tempo towards some dark and mysterious end. At night, when he returns to the hotel, fatigued by fêting and junketing, he tries to pull himself together and take stock, in order that he may come to the point of writing a full and lucid letter to his brother Modeste or to young Vladimir. But he finds that the impressions in his tired head are all muddled and confused... Mr. Renault had given a great dinner, which had lasted from half past seven till eleven o'clock; all the gentlemen had

been presented with buttonholes of lilies of the valley, and all the ladies with roses: such things did not happen even in the finest Moscow and St. Petersburg houses. In addition to this, every guest had received a photograph of the composer, Tchaikovsky, in whose honor all this splendor had been arranged. With the ices were served little sweetmeats on which motives from the works of the guest of honor were beautifully inscribed, a charming attention which pleased both the composer and the other guests.

The guests were curious as though they were professional news-hunters like the boys who besieged the Hotel Normandie. They interviewed the guest of honor about musical life in Russia. He answered in a strangely reluctant, embarrassed way. Yes, the season had been quite eventful in St. Petersburg. There was, for instance, the production of Hamlet, Lucien Guitry's benefit performance in the Michaels Theatre, with Tchaikovsky's music -: "but it was a poor piece of work from my side," the composer remarked. And there was the elegant concert of the Patriotic Women's Union, at which he had to conduct his Third Suite: "But it was a dull and snobbish audience," he added, "And I was entirely overshadowed, of course, by the famous singers, the brothers Reszke and the even more famous Madame Melba." The great first night of his opera Pique Dame was a social event of the first order and had been a roaring success. Yet this opera was withdrawn from the program after the thirteenth performance - an absolute scandal, Tchaikovsky said, for the ~~opera~~ theatre was always sold out when Pique Dame was performed. "Entre nous," Peter Ilych whispered, as though ~~he~~ betraying a most sinister little secret, "it was all the fault of the Czar. For he despises Russian music, and he has always despised me. He expressed himself very scornfully even about The Sleeping Beauty, notwithstanding the sweeping success of this work. One only sees His Majesty in the theatre when there are French or Italian guest performers. Oh yes, when the Melba or the Patti are going to sing, then you will find the Imperial box occupied!"

People were surprised and even slightly shocked ^{by} ~~about~~ the manner in which the master belittled his own successes. Wasn't he the undisputed leader of contemporary Russian music and one of the greatest composers of this time? Apparently he did not fully realize the importance of his own position... They were eager to hear his judgement about some of his distinguished colleagues. He declared that he loathed Chopin: "I can't bear him, he makes me ill!" - a statement which surprised and slightly shocked his listeners again. And Brahms - ^{the} great, distinguished, wonderful Johannes Brahms? - "I find in his music something dry, cold, nebulous, repellent. In everything he does there is a tendency towards the excessive, the bottomless which repels me. You will forgive this crude word. When I hear this music no warmth comes into my heart; on the contrary, I feel as if I had been attacked by an icy wind. It freezes me - do you understand that? There is a lack of beauty, melody. In his work a musical thought is never quite allowed full expression. No sooner is a musical phrase hinted at than harmonic modulations, luscious and mysterious, grow rankly all over it. It is as if the composer had set himself the task of being incomprehensible and profound, profound at any cost, even at the cost of boredom. I've often asked myself: Is this German master really so deep - deep all the time and in every phrase? Or is he only flirting with profundity, in order to cover up the appalling poverty and dryness of his imagination? ... Musical Germany is divided now into two great camps - on the one side Wagner, on the other Brahms. Now, if I have to choose between those two, I plump for - Mozart!"

They laughed. Peter Ilych, who was drinking a great deal of French champagne, vividly described his meeting with Johannes Brahms, in the house of a mutual friend, Professor Brodsky, in Leipzig. "It was terrible. The German Master treated me with a sort of withering politeness. I could feel how intensely he disliked me. It was most embarrassing..."

I wouldn't have survived that dreadful German soirée without the comforting presence of Edvard and Nina Grieg. What charming people they are! Edvard's eyes have the same kind of beauty which I love in his music: bright, strikingly pure and innocent-looking eyes..."

After the heavy dinner the gentlemen, separated from the ladies, discussed American politics. Tchaikovsky felt quite uneasy: he had no idea what the gentlemen meant when they talked about the McKinley Tariff Bill and the rumors concerning James G. Blaine, Secretary of State. Would he get the nomination for the presidency next year? ~~next year?~~ Peter Ilych nervously smoked his cigarettes, while the others, veiled in the heavy smoke of their cigars, praised or abused Mr. Blaine's personality. Some of them felt he was brilliant, brave, even genial; another group of the party considered him somewhat unreliable. The Russian guest, with a sort of desperate politeness, asked his host to explain ~~him~~ what the McKinley Tariff Bill really was. He ~~didn't~~ ^{couldn't} understand a single word when they told him that William McKinley of Ohio, chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, had introduced into the house, a year go, the tariff bill ^{that bore} ~~with~~ ^{his} name. Duties were increased on almost all articles of household consumption; prices rose immediately. "But this sounds pretty bad," remarked Peter Ilych - whereupon all the gentlemen heartily laughed. Oh, these artists and foreigners! - their naiveté really was unbelievable! Then they discussed certain quarrels between Italy and the United States which disturbed the Harrison administration. The Italian government, not understanding that the federal administration had ^{nothing to do} ~~no concern~~ with the criminal jurisdiction of any state, demanded that the State Department investigate the lynching of some Italians in New Orleans and ~~bring to~~ ^{bring to} punish ~~the~~ the guilty men. Finally, after diplomatic relations had already been severed between Washington and Rome, the Italian government accepted as reparation 25,000 ~~dollars~~ ^{victims.} for the families of the ~~murdered~~ ^{victims.} ~~men~~ Peter Ilych mumbled: "I think the lynching of any people, whether

Italian or not, is a ghastly thing..." But this time nobody paid attention to his childish talk.

A grey-haired little man started a conversation on Russian choirs, which he wanted to ^{bring} ~~be brought~~ to America. It was old Andrew Carnegie, who possessed not less than forty million dollars, but was nevertheless very affable and even amusing; moreover he appeared to be a great lover of music, and particularly of Russian music. The great Music Hall which Peter Ilych was to inaugurate with a solemn opening concert, was named after him. He was also the founder of various libraries and other cultural institutions. A very powerful and important little gentleman, but a good sort: all the people Peter Ilych met, referred to him as a philanthropist and patron. It was considered good form among these enormously rich gentlemen of the New World to play the role of philanthropist and patron of the art: it was a sort of "indulgence" which they paid to Society in return for the vast sums they made out of ^{J.} ~~Society~~. Peter Ilych heard astonishing things about the charming, good-natured, music-loving little Carnegie; for instance that he wished to compel all the workers whom he employed in his enormous business to visit the libraries which he had so benevolently established. In order that the workmen should have nothing ^{left to buy evil} ~~over with which to pay for~~ intoxicating drinks, he paid them quite remarkably low wages; thus they were compelled to ^{use} ~~fill up~~ their spare time ⁱⁿ ~~with~~ reading instead of drinking. With the money ^{that} ~~which~~ little Carnegie saved on wages, he was able to build yet more libraries and still have a trifle over for himself. Peter Ilych was not quite sure ^{that} ~~whether~~ he ~~could~~ fully approve of ^{these} ~~such~~ tactics ^{which} ~~that~~ seemed humanitarian and at the same time astute. He was bewildered and even somehow shocked by the fact that Mr. Carnegie, who looked like an ordinary human being, should possess such tremendous wealth and power. There were other gentlemen whom he met at parties or whose

personalities were discussed among his friends: Rockefeller, Gould and Frick, the Vanderbilts and the Astors - they seemed to be the secret rulers of this free country. Tchaikovsky heard people talking about the Standard Oil Company, about Steel and Railways; the mysterious word "trust" ^{frequently} appeared in these conversations, and Peter Ilych did not dare to ask what it meant. He got the impression that the ruling clique in this country had a secret terminology just like the aristocracy in St. Petersburg and London. And he remembered ~~the~~ the novel Martin Chuzzlewit by Charles Dickens - one of the many books he had read during the endless nights of insomnia, on the boat, when Martin arrived at New York, the first person he met was Colonel Diver, editor of the New York Rowdy Journal.

"The New York Rowdy Journal, sir," resumed the colonel, "is, as I expect you to know, the organ of our aristocracy in this city."

"Oh! there is an aristocracy here, then?" said Martin. "Of what is it composed?"

"Of intelligence, sir," replied the colonel; "of intelligence and virtue. And of their necessary consequence in this republic. Dollars, sir."

Various people were particularly attentive to Tchaikovsky, for instance, Mr. Knabe, joint-proprietor of the firm of pianoforte manufacturers Knabe and Meyer, who showed the Russian visitor many of the sights of New York: the palaces on Fifth Avenue and the new thirteen-storey ^{building} on Broadway, which rose to heaven, remarkably bare and terrifying, cheek by jowl with buildings of one or two storeys and half-demolished houses; the Brooklyn Bridge, the cellar of the Treasury, the roof gardens from which one had such fine views, and the Athletes' Club with its swimming-pool and gymnasium with the most up-to-date equipment. He also invited him to dinner, with oysters and champagne, at the famous and expensive restaurant Delmonico. Peter Ilych could not help asking himself why Mr. Knabe lavished these attentions upon him. A few days later it transpired that the hospitable gentleman was desirous of having the composer's good opinion of the pianofortes of Messrs. Knabe and Meyer.

- Grand, Upright and Square Pianos; Unequaled in Tone, Touch, Workmanship, and Durability - :these had to be appraised as the best in the world - hence the sight-seeing trips and the expensive meals. Nothing is given for nothing; everything has to be paid for; everything has its price...

One ought to be businesslike and decide to remain here for a few years; one would quickly earn a lot of money and be able to subsidise Vladimir and Modeste in ~~a~~ really fine style, ~~and~~ and in due course pay back to Madame von Meck all that she had once pressed upon him. The pianist Aus-der-Ohe, for instance, who had come here penniless four years ago, had already amassed a fortune of some quarter of a million dollars, out of her great provincial tours - the indefatigable lady! Yes, this was the proper course for those who had such strength at their disposal as this pianist had, a tough and tender creature! Or Paderewski, the Polish genius: there was a great deal of talk about the fabulous sums he was earning. But Peter Ilych found that the demands which these few weeks made upon him were almost more than he could encompass; to cope with the situation, at least once a day one had to give way unrestrainedly to tears.

The opening concert at the huge and glamorous Carnegie Hall, on May 5, 1891, was a great social event. ~~Tchaikovsky conducted. There were long speeches and a short musical program. Walter Damrosch conducted Beethoven's Third Elegiac Overture and the Te Deum by Berlioz; Tchaikovsky his Festival March.~~ The newspapers failed to make nasty remarks about his style as a conductor, but hurt his vanity by describing him as a "rather stout gentleman, approximately sixty years old, good-natured and a little clumsy." He was offended: they made him ten years older than he really was. Besides, the reporters were obviously more interested in the new Music and the distinguished audience Hall than in Tchaikovsky's art or personality. ~~The distinguished audience that attended this solemn concert, seemed much more fascinating than the musical program they ostensibly came for.~~ All New York was there, Four New York paraded in ~~all its~~ dazzling effulgence. The reporters ~~were~~ ^{were} enthusiastic. "Fifty-Seventh Street, in front of the building, was ~~early~~ early lined with

carriages..." The representative of the New York Morning Journal was *impressed* by the "brilliant and appreciative audience" which filled the great hall "to overflowing" - , "lovely women in beautiful gowns glistening with jewels..." - while the New York World, in its issue of May 6, emphatically declared *unequivocally*;

"New York now undoubtedly owns one of the most beautiful music halls in the world. To those who saw it for the first time last night it came as a delightful surprise... In fact, it is a larger house than the Metropolitan and has a larger seating capacity. The consensus of opinion was that for the purposes of fashionable display, the Music Hall is superior to the Metropolitan Opera House, the boxes being so arranged that the light falls upon every tier..."

Tchaikovsky had to conduct concerts in Baltimore, Washington and Philadelphia; *between* in the ~~interstices~~ he visited Niagara Falls. Then followed a few more days in New York. Homesickness *became most poignant* ~~was at its most poignant point~~ when he heard Russian spoken. At such moments the longing to hear a familiar voice - in fact, Vladimir's voice - afflicted him like a sudden illness.

men
A certain mysterious *men* clung about some of the Russians who visited their great compatriot at the Hotel Normandie. Doubtless they were emigrants, rebellious elements who could no longer live in their own country, enemies of the Czar - who knows? Maybe they were preparing, or had even already taken share in, certain assassinations - nihilists and anarchists! Peter Ilych did not feel altogether comfortable in their society, but was nevertheless very friendly to them and even gave them money when they asked for it; partly because he was interested in and moved by their hard and unusual life, but partly also because he knew that these exiles had many views and sympathies in common with young Vladimir - that they fought and suffered for convictions which the boy so enthusiastically proclaimed.

Tchaikovsky could not help thinking of Vladimir and his revolutionary utterances when he witnessed a demonstration of workers on Broadway. It was a very long procession - five thousand strong, so *♥* he was told;

they carried red flags and banners bearing slogans such as: Comrades, we are slaves in free America! We will not work more than eight hours!

- 'I ought to ask little Carnegie if there are any grounds for these complaints,' thought Peter Ilych, who was much impressed. 'Even in free America, it looks as if everything were not as it should be. Probably my clever Bob is right, and this century of progress ~~has~~ still ^{has something of} ~~something of~~ *The wolf under its sheep's clothing*...' He brooded for a while over mysterious notions such as "Trust", "Concentration in ^{Ready Money} ~~611~~", "The Golden Circle", the "Class Struggle", and the paradoxical fact that these men, marching on the streets of New York City, considered themselves "slaves in free America."

However, he forgot to broach the subject with ^{the} ~~the~~ little Carnegie - who would certainly have been competent to express an opinion - although he had a ^{good} ~~nice~~ opportunity ^{to do} ~~in doing~~ so at the great farewell banquet which the millionaire gave in honor of the composer ^{and} in the course of which he referred to him publicly as "the uncrowned king of music". This feast was the last ⁱⁿ ~~which~~ that marvellous but grotesque interlude, the American tour. ~~had to offer Peter Ilych.~~ He still had a concert to conduct at the Composer's Club and a series of farewell visits to pay. On his return from these fatiguing journeys he always found interviewers and female autograph-hunters awaiting him in the lobby of his hotel. One of the ladies handed him a somewhat bulky plaster replica of the Statue of Liberty as a farewell gift. "But they wouldn't let the thing cross the Russian frontier," said the exhausted Peter Ilych, attempting a joke. Another admirer, with a murderous gesture, thrust a small, hard bunch of roses in the middle of his face and hurt one of his eyes; as she did so the aggressive lady shouted in an angry, piercing voice: "Long live the master!" - while she did everything in her power to bring about his untimely end. Peter Ilych stood in the middle of the hotel hall, his swollen eye streaming, surrounded by newspaper men,

ladies and photographers; and suddenly he was reminded of Johannes Brahms, the most dignified genius, ^{being made a fool by} ~~who became a half-pathetic, half-comic figure when he accepted, with an embarrassed smile, the exaggerated homage~~ of his admirers. There was that gaunt Englishwoman in Leipzig, who leaped with her huge greyhound towards Brahms like an Amazon against the foe, ^{while the master stood awaiting the attack, both frightened and a little too...} ~~The German genius looked scared and at the same time flattered~~ ^{stood} ~~stunned~~ ^{by} this enthusiastic attack.... Peter Ilych (maliciously smirked when he thought of it. 'What grotesque figures the "Masters" cut in these times!' he meditated, dabbing his wounded eye with his handkerchief. "We are heaped with ridicule ^{reproach is inflicted on us} as payment and penance for our fame...')

Tchaikovsky made the return voyage ~~on~~ a German steamer, the Fürst Bismarck, which was making the journey from New York to Hamburg for the first time. Peter Ilych tried to work on the way back: he made notes for the new Symphony - the Sixth. But he felt depleted; the rhythms and harmonies which ran through his over-worked brain were not those he sought or believed in. No, with such themes as these he could not content himself; something different had to be created and brought to perfection: the Task demanded something else - a complete out-pouring, an all-embracing confession had to be made, a great lamentation had to be sounded; what was hidden must be revealed. This ultimate goal must be reached, and he was still far off, still very far off...

Places and faces change. They appear and disappear. Peter Ilych gazes on them and gazes after them, with his soft brooding ~~open~~ glance. One station after another he leaves behind him. His life shall be without peace: such is the merciless law. His restless life drives on, always more swiftly, towards some obscure goal, towards some mysterious fulfillment.

America was just ^a ~~one~~ station on the gloomy, glamorous path. It was over... The New World had no message for the ageing master who was possessed by his own bottomless melancholy as a madman ~~is possessed~~ by

his horrible idée fixe.

Tchaikovsky's ears were deaf to the Symphony of the New World. ■ How could he grasp the tremendous melody of America, of the prairies and forests and spiring cities, the catching charm of Broadway melodies, the sober majesty of steel and stone? He was given too utterly to the mysterious voices within his own troubled heart. How could he understand the power and promise of the New Rhythm when his rapt and tormented soul was pregnant with the creation of the last ~~age~~ adagio, his own moving epitaph, final indictment, final declaration of hopeless love?

The Task had to be fulfilled. No deflexion was allowed any more. Fame was a deflexion. America too.

The managers cabled a new offer - \$4000 for twenty concerts, which was rather poor considering his former fee of \$2500 for four concerts. It was not financial consideration alone, however, that lay behind Peter Ilych's blunt refusal. His answer to the manager consisted one word:

No.

+++

Another Slavic master said Yes, after a certain period of wavering. Antonin Dvořák heartily disliked the idea of leaving his beloved Bohemia and of staying for any length of time on the other side of the Atlantic. He had already refused several offers from the United States. But the telegrams from Mrs. Jeanette M. Thurber, founder of the National Conservatory, New York, grew more and more urgent. This efficient lady was in Paris now, and lured him like a stubborn Circe. \$ 15.000 a year corresponded to about 30,000 florins - an imposing sum for which the Czech composer was to conduct ten concerts, of his own compositions, and to be at the disposal of the Conservatory for eight months. A four months' vacation was not bad, considering the salary. Mrs. Thurber wanted him to arrive on September 28, 1892. She bombarded him with wires while he was in Cambridge, England, receiving the Honorary Doctor's degree of that University. This was in June, 1891. 'The autumn of next year seems very remote', thought Dvorak. But he knew that he had to make up his mind: Mrs. Thurber was becoming impatient.

'Shall I? Yes or no?...And if I really accept, could I take the children with me - all of them?' He had six, and he considered them all wonders, indeed, in their various ways, quite incomparable. He was an ideal family man. He loved cozy domestic life, life in the country, idyllic landscapes, few people, no noise. He was a provincial type. He loathed travelling: it was only his sense of duty that made him accept the many invitations from England, Germany, Vienna. He realized he was famous: sometimes he even thought himself great. For he was modest and coy,

but he had no inferiority complex. He was proud and happy to represent Czech culture in the world, to win friends, everywhere, for the Czech melodies, their sadness, their jubilation, and it depressed him to realize that the splendid achievements of his people were totally ignored in other countries. Germany and Austria had assumed a kind of monopoly on symphonic music. Vienna! - always Bayreuth and Vienna: Wagner and Johann Strauss... But he and Smetana, and a few others of the new Czech school, would prove to the world that Slavonic music could surpass the work of all the German masters in beauty and significance. The Russians had already proved this to be true - Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky and Rimsky Korsakoff. But Russia was a mighty nation: she did not depend on composers to convince foreigners of her importance. While Czecho-Slovakia was miserable, poor, exploited and kept down by those ruthless tyrants, the Habsburgs. Vienna had its waltzes and its guns. But Prague had Antonin Dvořák.

He had decided: 'I accept the offer - partly for the sake of the 30,000 florins; but above all in order to promote the glory of my suffering people.'

It was the day of the solemn ceremony in Cambridge. Antonin, as he stood looking at himself in the glass, garbed in his long silk robe, half white, half red, with broad sleeves, and his gold-fringed cap, could not help laughing - a grim and yet hilarious, boyish laughter. He joked with his splendid image in the mirror! 'So you have risen to this, have you, old Antonin? You're doing pretty well - for an innkeeper's son who was born in a village that nobody can even pronounce - Nelahozaves - and who started

his career as a butcher's apprentice. But you've done quite a few things since then that weren't entirely bad - the Slavonic Dances, the Husitska Overture, some oratorios and cantatas, and, of course, the Symphony in D-Major, my precious Symphony of Joy ... Thank God! he thought, and his eyes were moist. He was a pious man, he believed in God and was grateful to Him - for the Symphony in D-Major, which exhales the peace and tender melancholia of a fertile Bohemian landscape, for his darling children, for the becoming robe of Cambridge University, for his life. He grinned at the mirror: 'Lucky fellow you are ! - And a funny one, too,' he added, taking a few haughty, comical steps.

He was indeed a queer looking creature; short and stout, the face with the broad Slavic cheek bones framed by the unkempt beard. The face was at once grim and kindly, stubborn, humorous and benign. He was the " wild-man o'-the woods" with a sentimental soul and an open childish heart.

'Lucky fellow! You're going to have a fine, exciting trip across the Atlantic. You'll have a look at America, land of the free. I hear there are a good many Czechs over there, so you won't be lonely. And maybe even some of the Americans will be nice ...

Time passed rapidly - much too rapidly, Dvořák felt, considering the great amount of work he had to do before his departure - and the fatal bitterness of the departure itself. He could not take all his children along: it had turned out to be too costly and inconvenient. Two of them, Ottilie and Anton, would come with him, but it made him unhappy to leave the other four at home.

His wife, of course, would be with him, and also a nice young fellow and reliable friend by the name of Joseph J. Kovarik, a Czech who had been born in Iowa and studied violin at the Prague Conservatory. Antonin felt somewhat less uneasy, almost reassured, since he had found a companion. He would have someone, at least, to chat with in his own language.

There was a great deal of tedious correspondence with New York, concerning a work that Dvorak was supposed to compose for the great Columbus celebrations on October 12. He understood only vaguely what it was all about. "It seems it was just four hundred years ago that Columbus accepted an offer from an American agent..." They laughed heartily - Mrs. Dvorak, young Kovarik, and old Antonin.

However, his transatlantic employers kept him waiting. The long-promised text which would serve as a basis for his music, arrived only a few days before he sailed; it was Joseph Rodman Drake's patriotic poem The American Flag. Dvorak had barely time to draft a few themes for the composition - which he was to finish several months later, in January 1893. By that time he was already sufficiently "Americanized" to appreciate the simple, popular gusto of the verses to which he had to compose. Now he was still in Bohemia, preparing the journey, waiting for the text. As he did not want to arrive "on the other side" with empty hands, he wrote a Te Deum, for soprano and bass solos. It was conceived for America but does not properly belong to the series of his "American works", as he finished the composition before leaving his homeland. The Te Deum, with its strong national

flavor, is rather a cheerful and pious farewell to the Old Country than a first greeting to the New World. It was not performed in direct connection with the Columbus celebration but a few days later, on October 21, at Dvořák's first concert in New York.

He arrived on September 26, and had to stay in quarantine because of a cholera epidemic in Europe. He did not mind this little delay: it gave him one more day of quiet. For the very moment he left the cozy, familiar boat, the hullabaloo began, flattering and fatiguing: Czech delegations to welcome the "pride and glory of our National Music"; reporters, representatives from musical organizations, conservatories, clubs. He was the center of enormous publicity. The newspapers praised him as "the genius of the Czech people", and as one of those courageous selfmade men who manage to assert themselves notwithstanding all obstacles. "That's what we Americans like", concluded the journalists. The object of so much homage felt slightly embarrassed. He did not like the Clarendon Hotel where Mrs. Thurber had reserved a spacious apartment for "the master", his wife, the two youngsters and friend Kovarik. It was all very comfortable, and Steinway had even put a grand piano at his disposal - : gratis, simply because he was famous and his portrait was all over the papers. Yet he did not feel at home in the midst of all this glamour. His Czech compatriots gave a gala dinner for him - : 3000 people, it was quite a nuisance. "I am no prodigy", he grumbled. "I am nothing to stare at ; on the contrary, I want to look around myself. There must be a great deal to see in

New York ..."

He liked New York, and could enjoy it when he had finally moved into his own apartment - which was much more friendly and less expensive than the hotel. Again he could lead the regular, simple life he was used to: up early in the morning, to bed early at night, and the long day filled with hard work and harmless pleasures. He had his little hobbies as homely, sentimental men usually do. The great composer was as crazy about locomotives as a little boy. He adored locomotives and praised them as the most impressive achievement of human genius. "I would gladly give away all my symphonies," he frequently exclaimed, "if I could only boast of being the inventor of those marvelous machines!" - American locomotives were particularly large and handsome; the only trouble was that it seemed so hard to get a look at them. Only travellers were admitted to the platform of the big stations, and often Dvořák was to be seen loitering around the Railway Terminal, Forty Second Street, hoping for a glimpse of one of his beloved monsters, the locomotives. Sometimes he took the horse car up to 155th. Street in order to watch the express trains speeding to faraway cities, Boston or Chicago ... He felt a deep admiration for their elegant lines, their tremendous strength, as they rushed along, veiled in their own smoke like an angry God in clouds.

In the late afternoon he would sometimes spend an hour or two in the little Café Boulevard, on Second Street. There he found European papers, including the familiar Narodni Listy. But he was happiest at home, with the family. His favorite workplace

was the kitchen, where, at a small deal table, he sketched out his compositions amid the familiar sounds of domestic occupations. If possible he avoided going out at night. It was nicer, he felt, to play a game of cards with his wife and Kovařík before going to bed. The only exceptions were when he himself had to conduct, or for the sake of the concerts of the Philharmonic Society, which at that time was under the direction of Anton Seidl. The relations between this ardent Wagnerian and the Czech Composer were something short of intimate at the beginning of Dvořák's stay. The sworn foes of Wagnerism and programme music were keenly interested in Dvořák's talent for pure music and praised his melodious romanticism, not without occasional sidewipes at that pretentious bore from Bayreuth. Hanslick, the best-feared music critic in Europe and Wagner's most furious enemy, was one of Dvořák's protectors - a fact which necessarily influenced Mr. Seidl against him. However, later on in Dvořák's American period, the two men made friends, and used to have lengthy, zealous discussions in a café on the corner of Broadway and 10th Street. Seidl even succeeded in persuading the Czech master to hear Siegfried at the Metropolitan, although it was entirely against his principles to go out after 9 p.m. without urgent cause. He left after the first act as he was bored by Siegfried and embarrassed at being improperly dressed. Besides, he was disturbed by the noisy conversation in a neighboring box. Yet he later attended one other performance at the Metropolitan - Rossini's Semiramis which he liked much better.

The musical life in New York was rich and colorful. There were several fine conductors - Anton Seidl, Walter Damrosch with the Symphony Society, and Arthur Nikisch with the famous Boston orchestra. And the stars! - : the Metropolitan had so many that it was able to put on all the world's most popular operas in the original: German, Italian, French. Carnegie Hall offered Paderewski, d'Albert, the violinist Marteau, and many other world celebrities. At his second concert, on November 17, Dvořák appeared after Busoni who played the Beethoven piano concerto in G-major with the charm of an arch-angel. Yet the audience grew still more enthusiastic when Antonin conducted his Symphony in D-major. The applause was frantic, until at last the master simply went home, as it already was past eleven o'clock: very late for a petit-bourgeois " wild-man-o'-the-woods."

Yet he could not help feeling somehow depressed and even alarmed about America and the musical life in this country, in spite of all those splendid names on the concert programs. There was something counterfeit, something sterile about this whole parade of fame and genius. For it was not the genius of this land and people that dominated the programs, enchanted the audiences, was lavishly paid. Why was this? - And was there nothing to be done about it! Dvořák brooded over this problem. For he liked America: he was profoundly moved by this country. His feeling for it had already found expression in The American Flag, composed shortly after his arrival. The genuine pathos of Liberty struck a deeply responsive chord in him, as a Czech, still suffering under the Austrian yoke, he was able to grasp with all the

passionate forces of his soul the real meaning of National Freedom, Democracy and Independence. When Dvořák was told of the institution of popular concerts to enable the poor to hear Beethoven, Bach and Brahms, he exclaimed with emotion: " This is Democracy!" But ^{why} did it find no adequate expression in the arts? Why did it this new spirit fail to create its new melody, to sing its new song?

Perhaps it was all a problem of education. There could be no doubt that musical education was still badly neglected, notwithstanding the fact that music schools were both numerous and expensive. But Dvořák felt them to be commercial enterprises rather than serious institutes of art. Mrs. Thurber's National Conservatory, to be sure, was a happy exception. This energetic woman combined brains with a certain bold idealism in a way that struck Antonin as quite remarkable. She, or the people who backed her, had lost the breathtaking sum of one and a half million dollars in the daring experiment of an English-speaking opera. It had been intended as a competition of the Metropolitan, and it failed, - whereupon the indefatigable lady organized the only Conservatory of Art worthy of the name.

The guest-professor from Bohemia took his duties very seriously: he was a conscientious teacher. Three times a week he had to give two lessons in composition, twice a week he conducted the pupils' orchestra. There were gifted young musicians among them; Miss L.S. Fisher, for instance, who later became a composer of popular songs. But the master's favorite was a colored boy named Henry T. Burleigh, who was avid to learn from that famous

white man, Antonin Dvořák. In many respects, however, it was the master who wanted and needed instruction. The young Negro guided him into a new world of tunes and rhythms. Burleigh sang- the plantation songs and the old spirituals which the Negroes had created during their slave days. And the composer listened. He was captivated, spellbound, and his heart was full of gratitude.

"That one is especially beautiful", said Dvořák, his eyes moist. "Sing it again for me, Henry - will you?"

And the colored boy sang it once more - Swing Low, Sweet Chariot...

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On May 21, 1893, Dvořák published a sensational article in the New York Herald, emphasizing the significance for American music, of Negro folk songs, urging American composers to pay more attention to those unused treasures, to exploit that hidden source of inspiration. The words "American music", "American melodies", "American folklore" appeared again and again in this essay, which stirred up a lively controversy pro and con. Was Negro music really the authentic expression of the American soul? Those monotonous and yet poignant songs, made up and sung by slaves - could they ever be the music of a free and civilized people? Wasn't Negro music African rather than American - burdened with all the sadness and savage sensuality of the African jungle? - But Dvořák, in another article, published in Harper's Magazine, insisted that Negro music was American, emerging from various heterogeneous elements and yet representing something essentially

new and original. It was made up of a compound of Irish and Scotch folklore intermingled with Indian rhythms, Christian moods, and the exotic flavor of the African woods. It was the creative function of America to combine all these trends and traditions, and to recast the glowing mixture into a new substance, a new amalgam as solid and supple as a fine metal.

The controversy became so keen that the Herald considered the moment opportune to send out an inquiry to European composers and musical connoisseurs concerning Negro songs and the future of American music. Brahms and Rubinstein, the great Austrian Anton Bruckner, the critic Hanslick and others received letters from the New York paper. Some of them even answered, though only with short and evasive statements. "A new American music ... why not...The influence of Negro melodies; very interesting ... I expect a great deal from your country anyway...Incidentally, I may be giving concerts in some of your lovely cities, probably during the next season...Most sincerely yours,...."

Dvořák said: "If America ever brings forth a great composer, he will undoubtedly have Negro blood in his veins."

People kept bothering him; "Why don't you do it? Why don't you write our music?"

He declared, with melancholy pride: "I am an alien in this country. I have another mission, another task to perform - : to write the music of the Czech people."

One could sense, however, that he was not being thoroughly honest this time. He was trying to conceal something, and he was a poor liar.

Already during the last weeks of 1892 he had begun work on a

new symphony, his Fifth. He finished the great work on May 24, 1893. The entire symphony was written in New York; a few minor changes and final touches were made when he came back from a summer trip through the country.

He called this symphony From the New World.

There was a great deal of discussion and controversy as to whether Dvořák intended to create "the new American music", - a problem absurd in itself. For no genuine artist has ever "intended" to create anything but his own melody, the precise and profound reflection of his own struggles, his own yearning, his own joy. As Antonin Dvořák was deeply taken with America, his symphony is an eloquent declaration of love, an inspired homage to the New World. At the same time, however, he felt the pangs of nostalgia, and his Symphony N. 5 in E Minor is also a message of longing sent over the ocean, to his Bohemia, his own land.

It has been said that the Symphony contains more of the folk-music of Central-European Slavs than Negroid elements, and is on the whole more akin to the Slavonic than to the Afro-American world. The truth is that the striking charm and originality of the Symphony are due to this very blend of Slavonic and Negroid-American rhythms, to this complex pathos of homesickness and enthusiasm for the New World. In the peculiar melancholia of the famous Largo and certain parts of the First Movement the boundless sadness of Negro slaves and of suppressed Czech peasants seems productively

intermingled. Many different elements and flavors meet and interpenetrate in this incomparable piece of music. There is the poignant rhythm of Indian drums, and we are informed that Longfellow's sentimental interpretation of Indian life impressed and inspired the Czech composer. The Song of Hiawatha was his favorite book, and for a while he toyed with the idea of using the legend of that Indian hero and saviour for an opera libretto. And there is a certain swiftness, alertness, a reckless tempo that deserves the designation of "American" as well, although it has nothing to do with Negro or Indian folklore. The Symphony from the New World is characterized by a genial simplicity, a captivating touch of improvisation, a total lack of pedantry. Even in the solemn, languishing melodies we find accents of confidence and vitality.

American audiences, recognizing the tune of Swing Low, Sweet Chariot, in the First Movement may have considered the entire work a sort of pleasant medley of folk songs. In fact, however, Swing Low is the only folk melody quoted directly... The musical motives and reminiscences that Dvořák drew on, were transformed, interpreted in a new and personal way, thus assuming a new significance and beauty.

The American critic Henry Edward Krehbiel, who saw a great deal of Dvořák while he was working on the Symphony, wrote later, in a private letter, under the date of July 9, 1916:

"There is no instance outside that which you mention, in which Negro themes are quoted in Dr. Dvořák's music. I fancy that a fragment of 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot' was consciously or unconsciously quoted in the first movement of the 'New World' symphony; but there is no draft upon Afro-American folk-song in any other work.- That Dvořák was deeply interested in the songs of the black slaves in America I know from repeated conversations with him."

The critic then mentions the last movement which contains a recapitulation of the themes of the preceding three movements. Accompanying the Largo melody there is a theme in counterpoint, started by the violas, which is curiously like Yankee Doodle. Mr. Krehbiel laughingly asked the composer if this was an intentional touch. But Dvořák made no answer.

Artists do not like to analyze their inspiration, which has been nourished from many different sources. Yankee Doodle or a Negro song - it makes little difference what it was that stimulated his creative forces. Perhaps it was one of those mighty locomotives he used to admire so much; or it was a black child laughing on the street, or the voice of Henry T. Burleigh, or the spectacle of the Brooklyn Bridge. Dvořák, a pious man, may have been inclined to say: It was God who inspired me.

On the last page of the manuscript he wrote his usual Thank God. And he added two other lines: "The children arrived in Southampton. At 1,33 p.m. we received the telegram."

The Dvořáks- including the four youngsters who had been separated from the family - were to spend the summer in Spillville, Iowa, friend Kovarík's hometown. The young man had persuaded the master to postpone his return to Europe, originally planned for the early summer. Antonín declared that he was longing for his country house in the Bohemian village of Vysoká. But Kovarík insisted that Spillville was almost as charming as any place "on the other side". Besides, according to Kovarík, it was the oldest Czech

settlement in the United States - : the master had to see it. There were 58,000 Czechs in the State of Iowa, all decent, industrious people. How proud and happy it would make them to be visited by the great compatriot! He would find little towns there entirely Czech in character: even the later immigrants, Germans, Swiss or Norwegians were obliged to learn the Czech language. There were Czech schools, Czech churches, stores, clubs and banks.

And Antonin could not resist.

They arrived at Calmar on June 5, 1893, and were welcomed by several honorable men with good Czech names: Thomas Bělý, the pastor of Spillville, old Kovařík, the father of Dovřák's friend, and others. From Calmar they had to drive in a carriage about twelve miles to Spillville. The distinguished guests were enraptured by the fertile, idyllic landscape. "Like at home! Like in Vysoká!" the children cried. And their father beamed.

Spillville was a tiny village of 350 inhabitants, but clean and prosperous looking. The illustrious family was quartered in a spacious home belonging to a German named Schmidt. The children had a wonderful time, strolling through the forests, swimming in the nearby Turkey river. Antonin won all hearts in the village by appearing in the church of St. Venzlas, the morning after his arrival, and playing ancient Czech hymns on the organ. People called him Herr von Dvořák, according to an Austrian rather than a Czech custom: simply to show their reverence, and because the butcher of Spillville happened to be called Dvořák as well.

It was a good summer, a quiet and productive time, blessed with the steady power of the sun, the aromatic scent of the meadows, the kindness of humble, yet well-to-do people. Dvořák started a new work almost at once. Work came as naturally to him as breathing and eating. Making music was for him a self-evident function of life, a symptom of health and happiness.

Within three days he drafted the String Quartett in F-Major, op. 96 - and when the entire composition was finished, only a fortnight later, he wrote down these pious but reckless words: "Thank God! I am satisfied: it went quickly this time."

The "opening night" took place at the Dvořák's house in Spillville, with father Kovářik playing the second violin, father Dvořák the first. The peasants and their many children present thought the music lovely - and Antonin liked it himself. It was idyllic, according to the mood in which it was conceived, and yet it possessed that quality of swiftness and alertness characteristic of the works of his American period. The second, languishing movement was full of exotic sweetness, the gay Scherzo delighted even the youngsters, and the rapid Finale roused enthusiastic cheers. These rural tributes were a greater satisfaction to Father Dvořák than all the noisy ovations that were to greet the Quartett in Boston and New York, during the following winter. All the farmers agreed: "It's a masterpiece, Herr von Dvořák!" He was touched, he grinned, laughed a little, cried a bit - and went back to work. He started a Quintett, and finished it, Thank God, on July 27.

The productive idyll was disturbed by the flattering require-

ments of fame. A deputation of Czech citizens suddenly arrived from Chicago and urged the master to conduct a concert on the Czech Day of the World's Fair. He accepted and left on August 6. In Chicago he was received by Theodore Thomas, founder and conductor of the Symphonic Orchestra, an old admirer of Dvořák's works, which he had been conducting since 1880. Antonin conducted his Symphony in D Major, three Slavonic Dances, and the Overture J.K. Tyl, and afterwards was showered with regal honors by 30,000 of his countrymen. They cheered him because they understood ~~what~~ he had to say, because they could grasp his message, and was one of them by temperament and race- completely one of them, with his broad cheek-bones, his unkempt beard, and his burly, radiant face.

Before returning to Spillville, he had to visit Mr. Rosewater in Omaha. For Mr. Rosewater was both kind and influential; he had been insistent in his invitation to the Dvořáks, he was the owner of the newspaper Omaha Bee, a friend of Mrs. Thurber's and of Czech origin: in short, exactly the sort of man nobody would want to insult. Dvořák wrote about him:

"He is a Jew and people say he has changed his name. But he is a very cultured and popular man. He is very wealthy, a Republican, and has considerable political influence. Harrison, Cleveland (both Presidents of the Union) and many other eminent men are his friends."

Mr. Rosewater gave tremendous dinners for the Czech composer - who enjoyed the good food and the well-meaning speeches, and then had to rush to St. Paul, Minnesota. There he had a date with Pastor Rinda, who was, in his own way, equally gracious and powerful.

There were scarcely two weeks left for Spillville: he arrived

on September 5, and had to leave for New York on September 16. The farmers, artisans and store-keepers of Spillville waved Auf Wiedersehen; but they knew they would not see him again. They could tell their grandchildren: A long time ago, in the summer of 1893, the great composer Antonin Dvořák was our guest, and had a good time with us, too. He composed a Quartett, it sounded very nice. And they built a monument for the most distinguished visitor Spillville had ever seen. Later, in the year 1929, when he was dead and already a classic, they called the road leading from Calmar to Preston via Spillville, the Dvořák Highway.

He had agreed to keep his position at the National Conservatory for another season. New York again: the work with the pupils, the discussions with Anton Seidl in the little café, and the familiar kitchen where he spent hours composing on a small table. He wrote Opus 100 - a solemn figure -, and dedicated it to his children, Anton and Ottilie: they should be the first to play the Sonatine in G Major for piano and violin. " But it may amuse even grown people," he wrote his publisher Simrock, and was not mistaken. The second movement - a Larghetto as are all the slow movements of the American period - was to become especially popular. Simrock, a shrewd business man, later brought our various arranged editions of it under fantastic names. It was entitled Indian Cradle Song or Indian Lamento. The publisher probably knew that Dvořák had had Hiawatha in mind during the composition of the piece -: the Indian hero gazing

pensively at the waterfall. Life proceeded at the even tenor that the master liked, full of work and a bit monotonous, though sometimes brightened by festivities. There was the first performance of the Symphony No. 5, on December 16, 1893, with Anton Seidl conducting the Philharmonic Orchestra. It was a triumph; Dvořák wrote the following description to his publisher, Simrock:

"The papers say that no composer ever received such ovations. I attended the concert in a special box. Carnegie Hall was filled with the most elegant audience of New York, and the people cheered me so much that I finally had to take a bow from the box like a king, à la Mascagni in Vienna..."

The newspapers carried lengthy, enthusiastic stories; the New York Herald dedicated a whole page with copious illustrations to "Dr. Dvořák's Great Symphny 'From the New World! - About the salient beauties: First Movement the most tragic, Second the most beautiful, Third the most sprightly." - What a pity that the journalist could find no adjective for the Fourth Movement! He confines himself to these remarks: " Inspired by Indian Music,- The Director of the National Conservatory adds a Masterpiece to Music Literature."

Dvořák's position in the U.S., after the sweeping success of the Fifth Symphony, assumed a most peculiar character. He had been received and celebrated in this country as a welcome and illustrious guest from Europe, a great composer of oratorios and symphonies. Now, however, many Americans saw in him something higher, more significant. He was acclaimed as the inaugurator of the New American Music. His works - especially those which were shot through with American rhythms - aroused an enthusiasm that had an obviously national, even chauvinistic char-

acter. This Czech was on the verge of becoming a real American hero.

Mrs. Thurber renewed her offer for the season 1894/95. He accepted on condition that he be allowed to spend the time from May until October in Europe. However in the interim before this anxiously awaited holiday, there were still several important tasks to perform. There was, for instance, the big concert of his pupils in the Conservatory. He took it especially seriously, for with the exception of one white pianist, all the young musicians whom he introduced on this occasion, were colored boys and girls. He was as proud as a father of the splendid achievements of his dark disciples. This was, incidentally, the only time in America that he conducted a composition other than his own: Mendelsohn's Midsummernight's Dream Overture. The adaptation of The Old Folks At Home that followed, was Dvorák's own work.

The last composition that he completed during this American stay, was the Ten Biblical Songs. Their mournful dignity and grave pathos are in sharp contrast to the mood characteristic of this period. It is hard to guess the reasons for this sudden change in Dvorák's spiritual attitude. He may perhaps have realized, or have been moved by a presentiment, that a significant, productive period of his life was approaching its end. Or it may have been the approach of Easter - that mythological celebration of Martyrdom, Death, and Resurrection: full of solemn meaning for any Christian soul. Also he had shortly before received

from Europe the saddening news of the death of Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky.

Antonin and Peter Ilych had met in Prague, fifteen years before. Tchaikovsky was wildly acclaimed and cheered by the Czech public, especially by the youth, as an illustrious emissary of that great kindred country, Russia. A high state of political and emotional tension was expressed in this clamorous glorification of a Russian composer, Peter Ilych felt this, and was half-bewildered, half-moved. Glittering days of triumph - Tchaikovsky spent them in the company of his handsome and aloof friend, the young pianist Alexander Siloti, and of Antonin Dvořák who was neither very handsome nor aloof, but a good, trustworthy comrade, without envy or malice.

All this seemed infinitely long ago. Since then the two men had been little of one another; but they had remained friends. They were truly fond of each other, notwithstanding the fundamental differences of their characters and outlooks. What they had in common was enough: the Slavic pathos combined with a certain amiable, "Western" elegance to which both of them chiefly owed their international success. There were also personal features characteristic of both: a certain shyness, almost clumsiness; a constant fear of the public in spite of the years of ovations. And both had a tendency to religious meditation and melancholia - a profound sadness which, in the case of Peter Ilych, was often close to total despair, while Antonin, more robust and earthly by nature, easily succeeded in overcoming those sinister moods.

Yet he felt temperamentally allied to Peter Ilych and was

able to grasp the real drama of his death. He had died on purpose -: Antonin had no doubt whatsoever on this score.

Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony, the Pathetic, had its first performance on October 16, 1893, in St.Petersburg. Friends had described to Dvořák all the details of that fatal evening and of the events that followed. When Peter Ilych mounted the conductor's rostrum, his face was very white and there was a hard gleam in his wide-open deep blue eyes. The audience was apathetic to the first, long-drawn-out movement as well as to the Allegro con grazia, whose slow rhythm they found disappointing. The wild, forward-pressing tempo of the third movement seemed to arouse a certain uneasiness in the auditorium - a cool, almost hostile surprise that was intensified during the Adagio lamentoso. This strange, even shocking Finale, so full of suffering, produced an atmosphere that left no room for gratitude, no room for enthusiasm: this farewell lament, which appeared almost to come from another world, seemed to freeze the art-loving public of St.Petersburg. As soon as the last sound had died away, Peter Ilych strode from the platform. He did not appear again in acknowledgment of the scanty applause. The mutual friends who reported all this to Dvořák, had happened to overhear a short dialogue between Peter Ilych and his young nephew, Vladimir Davidov.

"It was wonderful", said the boy shyly. " But why has it such a sad ending?" He leaned against the old man and touched his grey hair.

"Because it is dedicated to you," said Peter Ilych.

"What do you mean by that?" asked young Bob, half alarmed, half flattered, "What do you mean, Pierre? Why must music dedicated to me be sad?"

"I do not mean anything", declared the old man, standing up. "I am tired. Let us go home."

And then, a few days afterwards, Tchaikovsky had invited his brother Modeste, Vladimir and some other young men to the Alexander Theatre, where A Burning Heart by Ostrovsky was being shown. After the show Peter Ilych went with his lively cortege to the Restaurant Leimer which was only half a mile away from the theatre. And there, at Leimer's, he had asked for that fatal glass of cold water. The head waiter reminded him that there was a slight epidemic of cholera in St. Petersburg. "It would be very unwise to drink fresh water." But Tchaikovsky thundered: "I said a glass of cold, fresh water." And he swallowed the tainted water remaining standing behind Vladimir's chair.

Dvořák knew the sinister rumours concerning the death of Tchaikovsky's mother. So he had followed her ghastly example. He had tried to outwit God the Almighty. He wanted to commit suicide without committing the deadly, the unforgivable sin. But he had been guilty nonetheless. 'May the Lord forgive him', prayed Antonin.

He brooded for many days over the reasons for the failure of Tchaikovsky's Pathetic Symphony, when his own Symphony From the New World was accepted with so much spontaneous enthusiasm. 'Yet Peter Ilych's melodious self-epitaph is at least as good as anything I have ever made: probably even better ...Why did

people cheer me, and wound his vulnerable heart with their silence? Is it because they felt that my music was written out of my love for Life, while his great Adagios were conceived by a soul longing for Death - conceived under the shadow of Death, as a mournful homage to his dark majesty?'

And his heart full of grief and admiration for Peter Ilych's moving song of farewell, he composed the psalm, Oh, Sing a New Song for the Lord ...

It was wonderful to see Prague again, and the beloved landscape surrounding Vysoká, and to chat in his own Czech idiom with his old peasant friends, or with those sleepy old officials in the lovely town-hall, or with the pastor. He gave a new organ to the little church of Vysoká : it cost 800 florins, but he could afford it now. Besides he had received a good fat advance from Simrock for the Eight Humoresques, op. 101, the main artistic product of the summer. Before crossing the Atlantic again, he conducted the first European performance of his Symphony No. 5 at the National Theatre in Prague. The Old World proved to be as impressionable as the New, and the audiences in the Czech National Theatre and in Carnegie Hall apparently had similar tastes. Both were delighted with master Dvořák's winged and candid message, that beautiful and limpid expression of human joy, human sadness, and a solid faith.

His last winter in New York and with the National Conservatory,

the winter of 1894/95, has all the characteristics of an anti-climax. America no longer had for Dvorák that power of stimulation which it had exerted upon him in the preceding years.

It was already too familiar, and not yet familiar enough. The recent renewal of contact with Czech scenery and people had woven too great a spell about him. He was bored with New York. He was hopelessly homesick.

The Violin Cello Concerto in B-Minor , begun in November 1894 and finished in February 1895, is a genuine and brilliant outburst of nostalgia. It prepares, or rather announces, his final turn toward a grand romantic style, typical of his last epoch and at the same time strangely reminiscent of the early period, when he was starting his musical career as an uncertain disciple of Liszt and Wagner. That was a long time ago: since then he had become the Master, had given much and received much in return, and as his path gradually approached its end, he began to lose his eagerness for new impressions and new melodies: his soul was looking toward home, to the landscapes and songs of his childhood.

America had been the great, decisive adventure of his maturity. He was fifty-one years old when he came, and almost fifty-five when he left, in 1895. Four years can make an enormous difference in a human life. The aging man who returned to Bohemia, enriched and somewhat exhausted by his American experiences, was no longer the one who had conceived the rousing tunes and rhythms From the New World. The one who came home, honored on two continents, was on the point of becoming, or had already become, the

"grand old man", the classic of Slavic music.

His American friends, however, and all those who had heard and known him in his American days, remembered a very different Dvorák - a more daring fellow, alert, bold, almost juvenile despite his grey hair and beard. He was a musical explorer, an inspired adventurer, and he helped the American people to discover a treasure that they had neglected: their own folk-melodies. There it was - an American music: it seemed almost a miracle. There were the ancient tunes of the New World, transformed, recreated, beautifully interwoven with familiar sounds from the other side.

What had really happened, however, was no miracle. It was merely the spontaneous reaction of a creative mind to a world that was itself teeming with potential energies. The responsive and simple heart of the man from Bohemia, Antonin Dvorák, knew only one way of answering and of expressing its gratitude: to sing, to pour out melody. In its great cry of thanks it came close to anticipating a symphony that has not yet come into being, but that will be vast and moving, simple and complex - when the day comes...

Americans liked him, feeling that he had received more from this country and had given more to it, than most other foreign visitors. When Antonin Dvorák died, on the first of May, 1904, he was mourned by the Czechs as a national hero, and Americans honored his memory as though he had been one of them.

Anton Dvořák and the New-World.

was not the type of man who would wish for recent changes and exotic adventures.

~~Another Slavic master said Yes, after a certain period of waver-~~
ing Antonin Dvořák heartily disliked the idea of leaving his beloved Bohemia and of staying for any length of time on the other side of the Atlantic. He had already refused several offers from the United States. But the telegrams from Mrs. Jeanette M. Thurber, founder of the National Conservatory, New York, grew more and more urgent. This efficient lady was in Paris now, and lured him like a stubborn Circe. \$ 15,000 a year corresponded to about 30,000 florins - an imposing sum for which the Czech composer was to conduct ten concerts, of his own compositions, and to be at the disposal of the Conservatory for eight months. A four months' vacation was not bad, considering the salary. Mrs. Thurber wanted him to arrive on September 28, 1892. She bombarded him with wires while he was in Cambridge, England, receiving the Honorary Doctor's degree of that University. This was in June, 1891. 'The autumn of next year seems very remote', thought Dvořák. But he knew that he had to make up his mind: Mrs. Thurber was becoming impatient.

'Shall I? Yes or no?...And if I really accept, could I take the children with me - all of them?' He had six, and he considered them all wonders, indeed, in their various ways, quite incomparable. He was an ideal family man. He loved cozy domestic life, life in the country, idyllic landscapes, few people, no noise. He was a provincial type. He loathed travelling: it was only his sense of duty that made him accept the many invitations from England, Germany, Vienna. He realized he was famous: sometimes he even thought himself great. For he was modest and coy,

but he had no inferiority complex. He was proud and happy to represent Czech culture in the world, to win friends, everywhere, for the Czech melodies, their sadness, their jubilation, and it depressed him to realize that the splendid achievements of his people were totally ignored in other countries. Germany and Austria had assumed a kind of monopoly on symphonic music. Vienna! - always Bayreuth and Vienna: Wagner and Johann Strauss... But he and Smetana, and a few others of the new Czech school, would prove to the world that Slavonic music could surpass the work of all the German masters in beauty and significance. The Russians had already proved this to be true - Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky and Rimsky Korsakoff. But Russia was a mighty nation: she did not depend on composers to convince foreigners of her importance. While Czecho-Slovakia was miserable, poor, exploited and kept down by those ruthless tyrants, the Habsburgs. Vienna had its waltzes and its guns. But Prague had Antonin Dvorák.

He had decided: 'I accept the offer - partly for the sake of the 30,000 florins; but above all in order to promote the glory of my suffering people.'

It was the day of the solemn ceremony in Cambridge. Antonin, as he stood looking at himself in the glass, garbed in his long silk robe, half white, half red, with broad sleeves, and his gold-fringed cap, could not help laughing - a grim and yet hilarious, boyish laughter. He joked with his splendid image in the mirror! 'So you have risen to this, have you, old Antonin? You're doing pretty well - for an innkeeper's son who was born in a village that nobody can even pronounce - Nelahozeves - and who started

his career as a butcher's apprentice. But you've done quite a few things since then that weren't entirely bad - the Slavonic Dances, the Husitska Overture, some oratorios and cantatas, and, of course, the Symphony in D-Major, my precious Symphony of Joy ... Thank God! he thought, and his eyes were moist. He was a pious man, he believed in God and was grateful to Him - for the Symphony in D-Major, which exhales the peace and tender melancholia of a fertile Bohemian landscape, for his darling children, for the becoming robe of Cambridge University, for his life. He grinned at the mirror: 'Lucky fellow you are! - And a funny one, too,' he added, taking a few haughty, comical steps.

He was indeed a queer looking creature; short and stout, the face with the broad Slavic cheek bones framed by the unkempt beard. The face was at once grim and kindly, stubborn, humorous and benign. He was the "wild-man o'-the woods" with a sentimental soul and an open childish heart.

'Lucky fellow! You're going to have a fine, exciting trip across the Atlantic. You'll have a look at America, land of the free. I hear there are a good many Czechs over there, so you won't be lonely. And maybe even some of the Americans will be nice ...

Time passed rapidly - much too rapidly, Dvořák felt, considering the great amount of work he had to do before his departure - and the fatal bitterness of the departure itself. He could not take all his children along: it had turned out to be too costly and inconvenient. Two of them, Ottilie and Anton, would come with him, but it made him unhappy to leave the other four at home.

His wife, of course, would be with him, and also a nice young fellow and reliable friend by the name of Joseph J. Kovařík, a Czech who had been born in Iowa and studied violin at the Prague Conservatory. Antonín felt somewhat less uneasy, almost reassured, since he had found a companion. He would have someone, at least, to chat with in his own language.

There was a great deal of tedious correspondence with New York, concerning a work that Dvořák was supposed to compose for the great Columbus celebrations on October 12. He understood only vaguely what it was all about. "It seems it was just four hundred years ago that Columbus accepted an offer from an American agent..." They laughed heartily - Mrs. Dvořák, young Kovařík, and old Antonín.

However, his transatlantic employers kept him waiting. The long-promised text which would serve as a basis for his music, arrived only a few days before he sailed; it was Joseph Rodman Drake's patriotic poem The American Flag. Dvořák had barely time to draft a few themes for the composition - which he was to finish several months later, in January 1893. By that time he was already sufficiently "Americanized" to appreciate the simple, popular gusto of the verses to which he had to compose. Now he was still in Bohemia, preparing the journey, waiting for the text. As he did not want to arrive "on the other side" with empty hands, he wrote a Te Deum, for soprano and bass solos. It was conceived for America but does not properly belong to the series of his "American works", as he finished the composition before leaving his homeland. The Te Deum, with its strong national

flavor, is rather a cheerful and pious farewell to the Old Country than a first greeting to the New World. It was not performed in direct connection with the Columbus celebration but a few days later, on October 21, at Dvořák's first concert in New York.

He arrived on September 26, and had to stay in quarantine because of a cholera epidemic in Europe. He did not mind this little delay: it gave him one more day of quiet. For the very moment he left the cozy, familiar boat, the hullabaloo began, flattering and fatiguing: Czech delegations to welcome the "pride and glory of our National Music"; reporters, representatives from musical organizations, conservatories, clubs. He was the center of enormous publicity. The newspapers praised him as "the genius of the Czech people", and as one of those courageous selfmade men who manage to assert themselves notwithstanding all obstacles. "That's what we Americans like", concluded the journalists. The object of so much homage felt slightly embarrassed. He did not like the Clarendon Hotel where Mrs. Thurber had reserved a spacious apartment for "the master", his wife, the two youngsters and friend Kovářik. It was all very comfortable, and Steinway had even put a grand piano at his disposal - : gratis, simply because he was famous and his portrait was all over the papers. Yet he did not feel at home in the midst of all this glamour. His Czech compatriots gave a gala dinner for him - : 3000 people, it was quite a nuisance. "I am no prodigy", he grumbled. "I am nothing to stare at ; on the contrary, I want to look around myself. There must be a great deal to see in

New York ..."

He liked New York, and could enjoy it when he had finally moved into his own apartment - which was much more friendly and less expensive than the hotel. Again he could lead the regular, simple life he was used to: up early in the morning, to bed early at night, and the long day filled with hard work and harmless pleasures. He had his little hobbies as homely, sentimental men usually do. The great composer was as crazy about locomotives as a little boy. He adored locomotives and praised them as the most impressive achievement of human genius. "I would gladly give away all my symphonies," he frequently exclaimed, "if I could only boast of being the inventor of those marvelous machines!" - American locomotives were particularly large and handsome; the only trouble was that it seemed so hard to get a look at them. Only travellers were admitted to the platform of the big stations, and often Dvořák was to be seen loitering around the Railway Terminal, Forty Second Street, hoping for a glimpse of one of his beloved monsters, the locomotives. Sometimes he took the horse car up to 155th. Street in order to watch the express trains speeding to faraway cities, Boston or Chicago ... He felt a deep admiration for their elegant lines, their tremendous strength, as they rushed along, veiled in their own smoke like an angry God in clouds.

In the late afternoon he would sometimes spend an hour or two in the little Café Boulevard, on Second Street. There he found European papers, including the familiar Narodni Listy. But he was happiest at home, with the family. His favorite workplace

was the kitchen, where, at a small deal table, he sketched out his compositions amid the familiar sounds of domestic occupations. If possible he avoided going out at night. It was nicer, he felt, to play a game of cards with his wife and Kovářik before going to bed. The only exceptions were when he himself had to conduct, or for the sake of the concerts of the Philharmonic Society, which at that time was under the direction of Anton Seidl. The relations between this ardent Wagnerian and the Czech Composer were something short of intimate at the beginning of Dvořák's stay. The sworn foes of Wagnerism and ~~anti-programme music~~ were keenly interested in Dvořák's talent for pure music and praised his melodious romanticism, not without occasional sidewipes at that pretentious bore from Bayreuth. Hanslick, the best-feared music critic in Europe and Wagner's most furious enemy, was one of Dvořák's protectors - a fact which necessarily influenced Mr. Seidl against him. However, later on in Dvořák's American period, the two men made friends, and used to have lengthy, zealous discussions in a café on the corner of Broadway and 10th. Street. Seidl even succeeded in persuading the Czech master to hear Siegfried at the Metropolitan, although it was entirely against his principles to go out after 9 p.m. without urgent cause. He left after the first act as he was bored by Siegfried and embarrassed at being improperly dressed. Besides, he was disturbed by the noisy conversation in a neighboring box. Yet he later attended one other performance at the Metropolitan - Rossini's Semiramis which he liked much better.

The musical life in New York was rich and colorful. There were several fine conductors - Anton Seidl, Walter Damrosch with the Symphony Society, and Arthur Nikisch with the famous Boston orchestra. And the stars! - : the Metropolitan had so many that it was able to put on all the world's most popular operas in the original: German, Italian, French. Carnegie Hall offered Paderewski d'Albert, the violinist Marteau, and many other world celebrities. At his second concert, on November 17, Dvořák appeared after Busoni who played the Beethoven piano concerto in G-major with the charm of an arch-angel. Yet the audience grew still more enthusiastic when Antonin conducted his Symphony in D-major. The applause was frantic, until at last the master simply went home, as it already was past eleven o'clock: very late for a petit-bourgeois " wild-man-o'-the-woods."

Yet he could not help feeling somehow depressed and even alarmed about America and the musical life in this country, in spite of all those splendid names on the concert programs. There was something counterfeit, something sterile about this whole parade of fame and genius. For it was not the genius of this land and people that dominated the programs, enchanted the audiences, was lavishly paid. Why was this? - And was there nothing to be done about it! Dvořák brooded over this problem. For he liked America: he was profoundly moved by this country. His feeling for it had already found expression in The American Flag, composed shortly after his arrival. The genuine pathos of Liberty struck a deeply responsive chord in him, as a Czech, still suffering under the Austrian yoke, he was able to grasp with all the

passionate forces of his soul the real meaning of National Freedom, Democracy and Independence. When Dvořák was told of the institution of popular concerts to enable the poor to hear Beethoven, Bach and Brahms, he exclaimed with emotion: " This is Democracy!" But ^{why} did it find no adequate expression in the arts? Why did it this new spirit fail to create its new melody, to sing its new song?

Perhaps it was all a problem of education. There could be no doubt that musical education was still badly neglected, notwithstanding the fact that music schools were both numerous and expensive. But Dvořák felt them to be commercial enterprises rather than serious institutes of art. Mrs. Thurber's National Conservatory, to be sure, was a happy exception. This energetic woman combined brains with a certain bold idealism in a way that struck Antonin as quite remarkable. She, or the people who backed her, had lost the breathtaking sum of one and a half million dollars in the daring experiment of an English-speaking opera. It had been intended as a competition of the Metropolitan, and it failed,--whereupon the indefatigable lady organized the only Conservatory of Art worthy of the name.

The guest-professor from Bohemia took his duties very seriously: he was a conscientious teacher. Three times a week he had to give two lessons in composition, twice a week he conducted the pupils' orchestra. There were gifted young musicians among them; Miss L.S. Fisher, for instance, who later became a composer of popular songs. But the master's favorite was a colored boy named Henry T. Burleigh, who was avid to learn from that famous

white man, Antonin Dvořák. In many respects, however, it was the master who wanted and needed instruction. The young Negro guided him into a new world of tunes and rhythms. Burleigh sang- the plantation songs and the old spirituals which the Negroes had created during their slave days. And the composer listened. He was captivated, spellbound, and his heart was full of gratitude.

"That one is especially beautiful", said Dvořák, his eyes moist. "Sing it again for me, Henry - will you?"

And the colored boy sang it once more - Swing Low, Sweet Chariot...

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On May 21, 1893, Dvořák published a sensational article in the New York Herald, emphasizing the significance for American music, of Negro folk songs, urging American composers to pay more attention to those unused treasures, to exploit that hidden source of inspiration. The words "American music", "American melodies", "American folklore" appeared again and again in this essay, which stirred up a lively controversy pro and con. Was Negro music really the authentic expression of the American soul? Those monotonous and yet poignant songs, made up and sung by slaves - could they ever be the music of a free and civilized people? Wasn't Negro music African rather than American - burdened with all the sadness and savage sensuality of the African jungle? - But Dvořák, in another article, published in Harper's Magazine, insisted that Negro music was American, emerging from various heterogeneous elements and yet representing something essentially

new and original. It was made up of a compound of Irish and Scotch folklore intermingled with Indian rhythms, Christian moods, and the exotic flavor of the African woods. It was the creative function of America to combine all these trends and traditions, and to recast the glowing mixture into a new substance, a new amalgam as solid and supple as a fine metal.

The controversy became so keen that the Herald considered the moment opportune to send out an inquiry to European composers and musical connoisseurs concerning Negro songs and the future of American music. Brahms and Rubinstein, the great Austrian Anton Bruckner, the critic Hanslick and others received letters from the New York paper. Some of them even answered, though only with short and evasive statements. "A new American music ... why not...The influence of Negro melodies; very interesting ... I expect a great deal from your country anyway...Incidentally, I may be giving concerts in some of your lovely cities, probably during the next season...Most sincerely yours,...."

Dvořák said: "If America ever brings forth a great composer, he will undoubtedly have Negro blood in his veins."

People kept bothering him; "Why don't you do it? Why don't you write our music?"

He declared, with melancholy pride: "I am an alien in this country. I have another mission, another task to perform - : to write the music of the Czech people."

One could sense, however, that he was not being thoroughly honest this time. He was trying to conceal something, and he was a poor liar.

Already during the last weeks of 1892 he had begun work on a

new symphony, his Fifth. He finished the great work on May 24, 1893. The entire symphony was written in New York; a few minor changes and final touches were made when he came back from a summer trip through the country.

He called this symphony From the New World.

There was a great deal of discussion and controversy as to whether Dvořák intended to create "the new American music", - a problem absurd in itself. For no genuine artist has ever "intended" to create anything but his own melody, the precise and profound reflection of his own struggles, his own yearning, his own joy. As Antonin Dvořák was deeply taken with America, his symphony is an eloquent declaration of love, an inspired homage to the New World. At the same time, however, he felt the pangs of nostalgia, and his Symphony N. 5 in E Minor is also a message of longing sent over the ocean, to his Bohemia, his own land.

It has been said that the Symphony contains more of the folk-music of Central-European Slavs than Negroid elements, and is on the whole more akin to the Slavonic than to the Afro-American world. The truth is that the striking charm and originality of the Symphony are due to this very blend of Slavonic and Negroid-American rhythms, to this complex pathos of homesickness and enthusiasm for the New World. In the peculiar melancholia of the famous Largo and certain parts of the First Movement the boundless sadness of Negro slaves and of suppressed Czech peasants seems productively

intermingled. Many different elements and flavors meet and interpenetrate in this incomparable piece of music. There is the poignant rhythm of Indian drums, and we are informed that Longfellow's sentimental interpretation of Indian life impressed and inspired the Czech composer. The Song of Hiawatha was his favorite book, and for a while he toyed with the idea of using the legend of that Indian hero and saviour for an opera libretto. And there is a certain swiftness, alertness, a reckless tempo that deserves the designation of "American" as well, although it has nothing to do with Negro or Indian folklore. The Symphony from the New World is characterized by a genial simplicity, a captivating touch of improvisation, a total lack of pedantry. Even in the solemn, languishing melodies we find accents of confidence and vitality.

American audiences, recognizing the tune of Swing Low, Sweet Chariot, in the First Movement may have considered the entire work a sort of pleasant medley of folk songs. In fact, however, Swing Low is the only folk melody quoted directly... The musical motives and reminiscences that Dvořák drew on, were transformed, interpreted in a new and personal way, thus assuming a new significance and beauty.

The American critic Henry Edward Krehbiel, who saw a great deal of Dvořák while he was working on the Symphony, wrote later, in a private letter, under the date of July 9, 1916:

"There is no instance outside that which you mention, in which Negro themes are quoted in Dr. Dvořák's music. I fancy that a fragment of 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot' was consciously or unconsciously quoted in the first movement of the 'New World' symphony; but there is no draft upon Afro-American folk-song in any other work.- That Dvořák was deeply interested in the songs of the black slaves in America + know from repeated conversations with him."

The critic then mentions the last movement which contains a recapitulation of the themes of the preceding three movements. Accompanying the Largo melody there is a theme in counterpoint, started by the violas, which is curiously like Yankee Doodle. Mr. Krehbiel laughingly asked the composer if this was an intentional touch. But Dvořák made no answer.

Artists do not like to analyze their inspiration, which has been nourished from many different sources. Yankee Doodle or a Negro song - it makes little difference what it was that stimulated his creative forces. Perhaps it was one of those mighty locomotives he used to admire so much; or it was a black child laughing on the street, or the voice of Henry T. Burleigh, or the spectacle of the Brooklyn Bridge. Dvořák, a pious man, may have been inclined to say: It was God who inspired me.

On the last page of the manuscript he wrote his usual Thank God. And he added two other lines: "The children arrived in Southampton. At 1,33 p.m. we received the telegram."

The Dvořáks- including the four youngsters who had been separated from the family - were to spend the summer in Spillville, Iowa, friend Kovařík's hometown. The young man had persuaded the master to postpone his return to Europe, originally planned for the early summer. Antonín declared that he was longing for his country house in the Bohemian village of Vysoká. But Kovařík insisted that Spillville was almost as charming as any place "on the other side". Besides, according to Kovařík, it was the oldest Czech

settlement in the United States - : the master had to see it. There were 58,000 Czechs in the State of Iowa, all decent, industrious people. How proud and happy it would make them to be visited by the great compatriot! He would find little towns there entirely Czech in character: even the later immigrants, Germans, Swiss or Norwegians were obliged to learn the Czech language. There were Czech schools, Czech churches, stores, clubs and banks.

And Antonin could not resist.

They arrived at Calmar on June 5, 1893, and were welcomed by several honorable men with good Czech names: Thomas Bělý, the pastor of Spillville, old Kovařík, the father of Dvořák's friend, and others. From Calmar they had to drive in a carriage about twelve miles to Spillville. The distinguished guests were enraptured by the fertile, idyllic landscape. "Like at home! Like in Vysoká!" the children cried. And their father beamed.

Spillville was a tiny village of 350 inhabitants, but clean and prosperous looking. The illustrious family was quartered in a spacious home belonging to a German named Schmidt. The children had a wonderful time, strolling through the forests, swimming in the nearby Turkey river. Antonin won all hearts in the village by appearing in the church of St. Venzlas, the morning after his arrival, and playing ancient Czech hymns on the organ. People called him Herr von Dvořák, according to an Austrian rather than a Czech custom: simply to show their reverence, and because the butcher of Spillville happened to be called Dvořák as well.

It was a good summer, a quiet and productive time, blessed with the steady power of the sun, the aromatic scent of the meadows, the kindness of humble, yet well-to-do people. Dvořák started a new work almost at once. Work came as naturally to him as breathing and eating. Making music was for him a self-evident function of life, a symptom of health and happiness.

Within three days he drafted the String Quartett in F-Major, op. 96 - and when the entire composition was finished, only a fortnight later, he wrote down these pious but reckless words: "Thank God! I am satisfied: it went quickly this time."

The "opening night" took place at the Dvořák's house in Spillville, with father Kovařík playing the second violin, father Dvořák the first. The peasants and their many children present thought the music lovely - and Antonín liked it himself. It was idyllic, according to the mood in which it was conceived, and yet it possessed that quality of swiftness and alertness characteristic of the works of his American period. The second, languishing movement was full of exotic sweetness, the gay Scherzo delighted even the youngsters, and the rapid Finale roused enthusiastic cheers. These rural tributes were a greater satisfaction to Father Dvořák than all the noisy ovations that were to greet the Quartett in Boston and New York, during the following winter. All the farmers agreed: "It's a masterpiece, Herr von Dvořák!" He was touched, he grinned, laughed a little, cried a bit - and went back to work. He started a Quintett, and finished it, Thank God, on July 27.

The productive idyll was disturbed by the flattering require-

ments of fame. A deputation of Czech citizens suddenly arrived from Chicago and urged the master to conduct a concert on the Czech Day of the World's Fair. He accepted and left on August 6. In Chicago he was received by Theodore Thomas, founder and conductor of the Symphonic Orchestra, an old admirer of Dvořák's works, which he had been conducting since 1880. Antonín conducted his Symphony in D Major, three Slavonic Dances, and the Overture J.K. Tyl, and afterwards was showered with regal honors by 30,000 of his countrymen. They cheered him because they understood what he had to say, because they could grasp his message, and was one of them by temperament and race- completely one of them, with his broad cheek-bones, his unkempt beard, and his burly, radiant face.

Before returning to Spillville, he had to visit Mr. Rosewater in Omaha. For Mr. Rosewater was both kind and influential; he had been insistent in his invitation to the Dvořáks, he was the owner of the newspaper Omaha Bee, a friend of Mrs. Thurber's and of Czech origin: in short, exactly the sort of man nobody would want to insult. Dvořák wrote about him:

"He is a Jew and people say he has changed his name. But he is a very cultured and popular man. He is very wealthy, a Republican, and has considerable political influence. Harrison, Cleveland (both Presidents of the Union) and many other eminent men are his friends."

Mr. Rosewater gave tremendous dinners for the Czech composer -- who enjoyed the good food and the well-meaning speeches, and then had to rush to St. Paul, Minnesota. There he had a date with Pastor Rinda, who was, in his own way, equally gracious and powerful.

There were scarcely two weeks left for Spillville: he arrived

on September 5, and had to leave for New York on September 16. The farmers, artisans and store-keepers of Spillville waved Auf Wiedersehen; but they knew they would not see him again. They could tell their grandchildren: A long time ago, in the summer of 1893, the great composer Antonin Dvořák was our guest, and had a good time with us, too. He composed a Quartett, it sounded very nice. And they built a monument for the most distinguished visitor Spillville had ever seen. Later, in the year 1929, when he was dead and already a classic, they called the road leading from Calmar to Preston via Spillville, the Dvořák Highway.

He had agreed to keep his position at the National Conservatory for another season. New York again: the work with the pupils, the discussions with Anton Seidl in the little café, and the familiar kitchen where he spent hours composing on a small table. He wrote Opus 100 - a solemn figure -, and dedicated it to his children, Anton and Ottilie: they should be the first to play the Sonatine in G Major for piano and violin. " But it may amuse even grown people," he wrote his publisher Simrock, and was not mistaken. The second movement - a Larghetto - as are all the slow movements of the American period - was to become especially popular. Simrock, a shrewd business man, later brought our various arranged editions of it under fantastic names. It was entitled Indian Cradle Song or Indian Lamento. The publisher probably knew that Dvořák had had Hiawatha in mind during the composition of the piece -: the Indian hero gazing

pensively at the waterfall. Life proceeded at the even tenor that the master liked, full of work and a bit monotonous, though sometimes brightened by festivities. There was the first performance of the Symphony No. 5, on December 16, 1893, with Anton Seidl conducting the Philharmonic Orchestra. It was a triumph; Dvořák wrote the following description to his publisher, Simrock:

"The papers say that no composer ever received such ovations. I attended the concert in a special box. Carnegie Hall was filled with the most elegant audience of New York, and the people cheered me so much that I finally had to take a bow from the box like a king, a la Mascagni in Vienna..."

The newspapers carried lengthy, enthusiastic stories; the New York Herald dedicated a whole page with copious illustrations to "Dr. Dvořák's Great Symphny 'From the New World! - About the salient beauties: First Movement the most tragic, Second the most beautiful, Third the most sprightly." - What a pity that the journalist could find no adjective for the Fourth Movement! He confines himself to these remarks: "Inspired by Indian Music,- The Director of the National Conservatory adds a Masterpiece to Music Literature."

Dvořák's position in the U.S., after the sweeping success of the Fifth Symphony, assumed a most peculiar character. He had been received and celebrated in this country as a welcome and illustrious guest from Europe, a great composer of oratorios and symphonies. Now, however, many Americans saw in him something higher, more significant. He was acclaimed as the inaugurator of the New American Music. His works - especially those which were shot through with American rhythms - aroused an enthusiasm that had an obviously national, even chauvinistic char-

acter. This Czech was on the verge of becoming a real American hero.

Mrs. Thurber renewed her offer for the season 1894/95. He accepted on condition that he be allowed to spend the time from May until October in Europe. However in the interim before this anxiously awaited holiday, there were still several important tasks to perform. There was, for instance, the big concert of his pupils in the Conservatory. He took it especially seriously, for with the exception of one white pianist, all the young musicians whom he introduced on this occasion, were colored boys and girls. He was as proud as a father of the splendid achievements of his dark disciples. This was, incidentally, the only time in America that he conducted a composition other than his own: Mendelssohn's Midsummernight's Dream Overture. The adaptation of The Old Folks At Home that followed, was Dvořák's own work.

The last composition that he completed during this American stay, was the Ten Biblical Songs. Their mournful dignity and grave pathos are in sharp contrast to the mood characteristic of this period. It is hard to guess the reasons for this sudden change in Dvořák's spiritual attitude. He may perhaps have realized, or have been moved by a presentiment, that a significant, productive period of his life was approaching its end. Or it may have been the approach of Easter - that mythological celebration of Martyrdom, Death, and Resurrection: full of solemn meaning for any Christian soul. Also he had shortly before received

from Europe the saddening news of the death of Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky.

Antonin and Peter Ilych had met in Prague, fifteen years before. Tchaikovsky was wildly acclaimed and cheered by the Czech public, especially by the youth, as an illustrious emissary of that great kindred country, Russia. A high state of political and emotional tension was expressed in this clamorous glorification of a Russian composer, Peter Ilych felt this, and was half-bewildered, half-moved. Glittering days of triumph - Tchaikovsky spent them in the company of his handsome and aloof friend, the young pianist Alexander Siloti, and of Antonin Dvořák who was neither very handsome nor aloof, but a good, trustworthy comrade, without envy or malice.

All this seemed infinitely long ago. Since then the two men had been little of one another; but they had remained friends. They were truly fond of each other, notwithstanding the fundamental differences of their characters and outlooks. What they had in common was enough: the Slavic pathos combined with a certain amiable, "Western" elegance to which both of them chiefly owed their international success. There were also personal features characteristic of both: a certain shyness, almost clumsiness; a constant fear of the public in spite of the years of ovations. And both had a tendency to religious meditation and melancholia - a profound sadness which, in the case of Peter Ilych, was often close to total despair, while Antonin, more robust and earthly by nature, easily succeeded in overcoming those sinister moods.

Yet he felt temperamentally allied to Peter Ilych and was

able to grasp the real drama of his death. He had died on purpose -: Antonin had no doubt whatsoever on this score.

Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony, the Pathetic, had its first performance on October 16, 1893, in St. Petersburg. Friends had described to Dvorák all the details of that fatal evening and of the events that followed. When Peter Ilych mounted the conductor's rostrum, his face was very white and there was a hard gleam in his wide-open deep blue eyes. The audience was apathetic to the first, long-drawn-out movement as well as to the Allegro con grazia, whose slow rhythm they found disappointing. The wild, forward-pressing tempo of the third movement seemed to arouse a certain uneasiness in the auditorium - a cool, almost hostile surprise that was intensified during the Adagio lamentoso. This strange, even shocking Finale, so full of suffering, produced an atmosphere that left no room for gratitude, no room for enthusiasm: this farewell lament, which appeared almost to come from another world, seemed to freeze the art-loving public of St. Petersburg. As soon as the last sound had died away, Peter Ilych strode from the platform. He did not appear again in acknowledgment of the scanty applause. The mutual friends who reported all this to Dvorák, had happened to overhear a short dialogue between Peter Ilych and his young nephew, Vladimir Davidov.

"It was wonderful", said the boy shyly. " But why has it such a sad ending?" He leaned against the old man and touched his grey hair.

"Because it is dedicated to you," said Peter Ilych.

"What do you mean by that?" asked young Bob, half alarmed, half flattered, "What do you mean, Pierre? Why must music dedicated to me be sad?"

"I do not mean anything", declared the old man, standing up. "I am tired. Let us go home."

And then, a few days afterwards, Tchaikovsky had invited his brother Modeste, Vladimir and some other young men to the Alexander Theatre, where A Burning Heart by Ostrovsky was being shown. After the show Peter Ilych went with his lively cortege to the Restaurant Leimer which was only half a mile away from the theatre. And there, at Leimer's, he had asked for that fatal glass of cold water. The head waiter reminded him that there was a slight epidemic of cholera in St. Petersburg. "It would be very unwise to drink fresh water." But Tchaikovsky thundered: "I said a glass of cold, fresh water." And he swallowed the tainted water remaining standing behind Vladimir's chair.

Dvořák knew the sinister rumours concerning the death of Tchaikovsky's mother. So he had followed her ghastly example. He had tried to outwit God the Almighty. He wanted to commit suicide without committing the deadly, the unforgivable sin. But he had been guilty nonetheless. 'May the Lord forgive him', prayed Antonin.

He brooded for many days over the reasons for the failure of Tchaikovsky's Pathetic Symphony, when his own Symphony From the New World was accepted with so much spontaneous enthusiasm.

'Yet Peter Ilych's melodious self-epitaph is at least as good as anything I have ever made: probably even better ...Why did

people cheer me, and wound his vulnerable heart with their silence? Is it because they felt that my music was written out of my love for Life, while his great Adagios were conceived by a soul longing for Death - conceived under the shadow of Death, as a mournful homage to his dark majesty?'

And his heart full of grief and admiration for Peter Ilych's moving song of farewell, he composed the psalm, Oh, Sing a New Song for the Lord ...

It was wonderful to see Prague again, and the beloved landscape surrounding Vysoká, and to chat in his own Czech idiom with his old peasant friends, or with those sleepy old officials in the lovely town-hall, or with the pastor. He gave a new organ to the little church of Vysoká : it cost 800 florins, but he could afford it now. Besides he had received a good fat advance from Simrock for the Eight Humoresques, op. 101, the main artistic product of the summer. Before crossing the Atlantic again, he conducted the first European performance of his Symphony No. 5 at the National Theatre in Prague. The Old World proved to be as impressionable as the New, and the audiences in the Czech National Theatre and in Carnegie Hall apparently had similar tastes. Both were delighted with master Dvořák's winged and candid message, that beautiful and limpid expression of human joy, human sadness, and a solid faith.

His last winter in New York and with the National Conservatory,

the winter of 1894/95, has all the characteristics of an anti-climax. America no longer had for Dvořák that power of stimulation which it had exerted upon him in the preceding years. It was already too familiar, and not yet familiar enough. The recent renewal of contact with Czech scenery and people had woven too great a spell about him. He was bored with New York. He was hopelessly homesick.

The Violin Cello Concerto in B-Minor, begun in November 1894 and finished in February 1895, is a genuine and brilliant outburst of nostalgia. It prepares, or rather announces, his final turn toward a grand romantic style, typical of his last epoch and at the same time strangely reminiscent of the early period, when he was starting his musical career as an uncertain disciple of Liszt and Wagner. That was a long time ago: since then he had become the Master, had given much and received much in return, and as his path gradually approached its end, he began to lose his eagerness for new impressions and new melodies: his soul was looking toward home, to the landscapes and songs of his childhood.

America had been the great, decisive adventure of his maturity. He was fifty-one years old when he came, and almost fifty-five when he left, in 1895. Four years can make an enormous difference in a human life. The aging man who returned to Bohemia, enriched and somewhat exhausted by his American experiences, was no longer the one who had conceived the rousing tunes and rhythms From the New World. The one who came home, honored on two continents, was on the point of becoming, or had already become, the