



WILLIAM VINCENT WALLACE

From a Photograph in the British Museum

William Vincent Wallace

A MEMOIR

BY

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Leabharlanna Connóga Dúchais

FOREWORD.

As the only existing biography of William Vincent Wallace is a French work, issued by Arthur Pougin in 1866 (*W. Vincent Wallace étude biographique et critique*), at Paris, and now out of print, no apology is needed for the present brochure. Strange as it may seem, it is none the less true that no English memoir of the Composer of "Maritana" has hitherto been attempted. On this account, the present centenary year of the birth of Wallace seems an appropriate occasion to supply this deficiency. I have therefore pieced together the tangled skeins in his romantic biography, and have endeavoured to present the facts of his career in chronological order in the following pages. For much valuable help I must express my indebtedness to Mr. Edmund Downey, Mr. W. J. Lawrence, and the Rev. Superioress of the Ursuline Convent, Thurles.

W. H. GRATTAN FLOOD.

Enniscorthy,
August, 1912.

William Vincent Wallace.

THE City of Waterford can boast of being the birthplace of many famous personages. At once the names of Luke Wadding, Peter White, John Roberts, Bishop Comerford, Charles Kean, Sir Thomas Wyse, Thomas Francis Meagher, Archbishop Kirby, and Edmund Leamy occur to the mind. To this list must be added the name of William Vincent Wallace, whose centenary is about to be celebrated.

Lovers of music need scarcely be told that Wallace was the composer of "Maritana," "Lurline," and other delightful operas, but the strange fact remains that no English memoir of this remarkable Irish musician has as yet appeared. Balfe has had two biographers—Charles L. Kenney (1875) and W. A. Barrett (1883); and he has had statues erected to his memory in Westminster Abbey ; Drury Lane Theatre, London ; and in the National Gallery, Dublin ; as well as a memorial window in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. To the present writer it has always been a puzzle why no English biography

of Wallace is available, and why no statue, window, or memorial slab has been erected to his memory in his native city. The greatest of Continental cities would have been proud to own as its birthplace such a composer as Wallace, and would have gloried in placing a bronze statue in one of the leading squares or open places—and yet Waterford has no memorial—not even a modest slab on the front of the house in which he first saw the light.. It is surely fitting that this reproach will be wiped out ere the close of this centenary year.

Like his countryman, Balfe—who was born in Dublin in May, 1808—William Wallace came of a musical ancestry. His father was a native of Ballina, Co. Mayo, although all the musical authorities dub him a “Scotch bandmaster.” The army records leave no room for doubt on this point, for in the pay-lists he is described as “of Ballina.” A floating tradition has it that he was the first to arrange “The Girl I left behind me” for regimental bands about the year 1795—but be that as it may, he wooed and won a fair Waterford girl during a brief stay in the Urbs Intacta early in the year 1811 ; and their first child was born in a house at the corner of Colbeck Street and Lady Lane on March 11th, 1812.

In proof of the statement as to the exact date of Wallace's birth in Waterford, the following

extract from the Waterford Register is convincing:—"William, the son of William and Elizabeth Wallace, was born March 11th, 1812. Registered, March 15th, 1812, by me, Richard J. Hobson,⁽¹⁾ Curate." It is of interest to add that young Wallace first saw the light in the self same house in which Charles Kean, the great actor, was born a year previously. A few months later the little household was transferred to Ballina, where Wallace's father was a music teacher and instructor of the regimental band. Another son—called Wellington in honour of the Iron Duke, who was then the hero of the Peninsular campaign—was born in Ballina in 1813, and a daughter in the following year.⁽²⁾

As early as 1820 young Wallace showed an extraordinary aptitude for music, and his father taught him the clarinet and piano. From the Army records it appears that Wallace *père* joined the 29th Regiment in 1822, and was promoted Sergeant on August 27th, 1823—proceeding with the regiment to Waterford in 1825.

Sir John Buchan, Colonel of the 29th regiment, proved a generous patron of music, and he took the keenest interest in Master Wallace, whose

(1) Rev. Mr. Hobson was subsequently made Archdeacon of Waterford.

(2) This daughter Eliza was afterwards known as Madame Bouchelle. She died at Sydney in August, 1878.

clarinet playing was particularly good for a boy of 13. No doubt Mrs. Wallace was very glad to be back again among her friends in Waterford, but in April, 1826, there was a flutter in the household owing to the announcement that the 29th regiment was ordered to be in readiness to go to the Mauritius. A family conclave was held, and it was decided that the purchase money should be provided to buy out Wallace *père*. Accordingly, on April 14th, 1826, there is an entry in the Army records that Sergeant Wallace, bandmaster, was discharged on payment of £20.⁽¹⁾

Between the years 1825 and 1827 Master Wallace received lessons from Otho Hamilton and John Ringwood, Organist of Waterford Cathedral, as well as from his father, and at the age of 15 was a proficient pianist and organist, as well as an expert violinist; in fact it is stated that on a few occasions he led the regimental band, to the delight of the Colonel.

The spring of the year 1827 found the Wallace family transferred to Dublin, as affording a wider sphere for the musical abilities of Mr. Wallace and his two sons, William and Wellington. Not long afterwards the elder Wallace and Wellington became members of the Orchestra of the Adelphi Theatre (subsequently known as the Queen's

(1) It is well to note that bandmasters were not officially recognised in the British Army till after 1860.

Theatre, in Great Brunswick Street), and William was given the post of second violin in the Theatre Royal Orchestra, under the baton of James Barton, the teacher of Balfe.

In 1827 Master Wallace was regarded as not only a skilful performer on most orchestral instruments but also as a good organist, and he took lessons on the pianoforte from William Sarsfield Conran, and Logier, and organ lessons from Haydn Corri, Organist of the Pro Cathedral, Marlboro' Street, also studying orchestration with Phelps MacDonald.⁽¹⁾

On a few occasions in the year 1828 he took Barton's place as leader of the Orchestra—a fact which was told me by one who played off the same desk with him, the late Mr. R. M. Levey—and was complimented on his playing by Madame Catalani during her two visits to Dublin in 1829. Ten months later he made his Dublin debut at a fashionable amateur concert, playing the violin in Herz and Lafont's "Duo on Russian Airs."

In October, 1829, a strong Italian Opera Company had a successful season at the Theatre Royal in Hawkin's Street, the orchestral leader being the famous Signor Spagnoletti. The late Mr. R. M. Levey, who was leader of the Theatre Orchestra

(1) MacDonald's real name was Edward Phelps, but he assumed the name of MacDonald on his marriage with the Countess of Antrim in 1817.

from 1834 to 1880, tells the following anecdote :—
“Signor Spagnoletti, in addition to his great musical genius, had a keen sense of the ridiculous, and frequently amused the members of his orchestra with some witty observation or droll action. On one occasion after rehearsal, he descended from his elevated seat, stooped, and was observed to search closely as if under the music-stand of the violin players. W. Vincent Wallace (who, at this time, played from the same desk as Spagnoletti) asked him what he was looking for, when the Signor replied :—‘ Ah, for a great many notes which I missed from some of the violin parts. I suppose I shall find them after two or three nights more.’ He added, at the same time, addressing Wallace—‘ You didn’t drop any.’ The future eminent composer was a most accomplished violinist, and received much praise and a *souvenir* from Signor Spagnoletti at the termination of the season.”

Alfred Bunn—the “Poet Bunn” as he has been styled in derision—was lessee of the Dublin Theatre from October, 1827 to 1830. To mark the inauguration of Bunn’s *regime* Richard Lalor Shiel wrote a political address, spoken at the old Royal on Saturday, November 25, 1827, by Calcraft. In February, 1830, Macready and Miss Smithson appeared. Miss Smithson subsequently became the wife of Hector Berlioz, the great Irish

composer. Wallace's acquaintance with Bunn⁽¹⁾ stood him in good stead subsequently when Bunn was Manager of Drury Lane, as will be seen.

In January, 1830, the post of Organist of Thurles (Catholic) Cathedral was vacant, and Wallace was asked to make an application for it, doubtless on the recommendation of Haydn Corri. J. W. Glover (grandfather of "Jimmy" Glover, of Drury Lane Theatre) was about to apply for the position, but learning that Wallace was already in the field he did not care to appear as a rival, as he himself told me in 1877.⁽²⁾ Consequently, Wallace's application was favourably entertained, and he took up his residence in Thurles, being also appointed as Professor of Music at the Ursuline Convent, in that town. The organ had been procured by Archbishop Laffan in 1827, and was then regarded as a very fine instrument. It may be added that the then Superioress of the Ursuline Convent was Sister O'Kearney, a most accomplished lady.

Although Wallace at the time of his appointment to Thurles Cathedral was not quite 18 years of

(1) Bunn was evicted as lessee in August, 1830, and he then opened Fishamble Street Theatre for a season.

(2) Glover's daughter, Erminia, married James Mackey in 1859, and their son, "Jimmy" assumed the name of Glover in 1884. Mrs. Mackey died in June, 1883.

age, he was thoroughly well equipped for the post, and at once he became a favourite, as I was told by some old residents during my stay as Organist of the Cathedral from 1882 to 1884. In particular, the Ursuline Nuns were very kind to the young composer, and by way of return he composed a Mass and some Motets for them. He also composed an "O Salutaris," which he subsequently—perhaps unconsciously—utilised for the first eight bars of "Hear me gentle Maritana."

Among the boarders at the Ursuline Convent was a charming Dublin girl, Miss Isabella Kelly, of Frascati, Blackrock, and it so happened that she was one of the first pupils entrusted to the teaching of Wallace. Both being of an impressionable nature, the result was that the young teacher fell head and ears in love with his pupil. It also happened that Miss Kelly's eldest sister, Sister Vincent, was a nun in the Ursuline Convent, and she exerted her influence to prevent any entanglement, all the more as Wallace was a Protestant.

In the autumn of the year 1830 Wallace became a Catholic—some say from conviction, but others from a knowledge that Miss Kelly would not consent to marry him unless he was received into the Church. On his reception as a Catholic he took the additional name of "Vincent," in compliment to Sister Vincent Kelly, thus assuming

the name of William Vincent Wallace, which he ever afterwards bore. This information I had from one of the Ursuline Nuns who knew Wallace in 1831.

The fame of Paganini, and the furore created by his engagement at the Dublin Musical Festival in 1831 so preyed on the mind of Wallace that he accepted the offer of sub-leader of the Dublin Theatre Royal Orchestra in August, 1831, and accordingly he left Thurles. His marriage with Miss Isabella Kelly was duly solemnised, and the young couple settled down at No. 11, South William Street, Dublin.

During the month of September, 1831, the Paganini Concerts and the intercourse with Ries, Sir George Smart, Mori, and others, gave a stimulus to Wallace for further musical study, and he sat up many weary nights practising the violin, and essaying various forms of composition. In November, 1833, he became Deputy Leader (for George Stansbury) of the Theatre Royal Orchestra, Stansbury electing to act various theatrical parts with William Farren.

Wallace appeared as a serious composer at a Dublin Anacreontic Concert in May, 1834, playing a Violin Concerto of his own. Previously he had the honour of being leader of the orchestra at the first production of Beethoven's *Mount of Olives*. During the Italian Opera season of 1834 he was

leader, but soon after resigned the post to Mr. R. M. Levey. As a matter of fact the Theatre Royal remained closed from October 10 to December 3rd.

Becoming wearied of Dublin musical life, and feeling his health precarious—being threatened with consumption—Wallace, in August, 1835, accompanied by his wife and her sister and his own sister, set sail for Sydney, New South Wales. It is said that on their long voyage out to Australia he paid such marked attention to his wife's sister that Mrs. Wallace grew intolerably jealous, and on landing at Sydney he parted from his wife whom he never saw again.

Wallace's arrival in Australia was on St. Patrick's Day, 1836, and on the same day the new Catholic Church of St. Patrick's, in Sydney, was founded. He only remained a few days in Sydney, and betook himself to the bush, "far from the madding crowd," where he devoted himself for a time to sheep raising. In the course of a flying visit to Sydney, in the autumn of same year, he was induced to play the violin at a private house. His astonishing performance was so well received that Sir Richard Bourke, the Irish Governor of the Colony, prevailed on him to give a public concert, the Governor paying an admission fee of one hundred sheep.

To give a detailed account of Wallace's adventures by land and sea during the years

1837-41 would fill a goodly volume, and would make very spicy reading. In fact, unless the composer has been "drawing the long bow," an account of his doings during these four years would read like the wildest romance. Here is an extract of his doings as recorded in an American paper of the year 1842, evidently supplied by Wallace himself:—

"From Sydney Mr. Wallace sailed to Van Diemen's Land, and then visited New Zealand, where he engaged in the whale fisheries. After he left the Savages of the Bay of Islands, he went to the East Indies, where he remained a year—playing before the Queen of Oude. Here he had a most miraculous escape in a tiger hunt, when an enormous tiger sprang upon his horse, and he was thrown senseless to the ground. Recovering his consciousness and presence of mind, he drew a pistol from his belt, and, observing the tiger, who had been carried by his bound some yards beyond him, he took a deliberate aim: the ball entered the head of the animal, who fell dead, nearly crushing his vanquisher.

"Mr. Wallace next sailed from Madras for Valparaiso, in the Republic of Chili, where, and at Santiago, he gave concerts. He was in the last mentioned city of earthquakes at one of these terrible scenes. From Santiago he crossed the majestic Cordilleras of the Andes to Buenos

Ayres, where his stay, however, on account of the blockade, was but brief. He returned to Santiago, where he displayed a remarkable evidence of his enthusiasm for art. He had given a pledge to play at a concert on a certain day, in Valparaiso, for the benefit of a charity, but some circumstances drove the promise from his memory. Being reminded by a friend of the fact, when it was apparently impossible for him to reach Valparaiso in time, Wallace resolved to ride on horseback the whole distance, 125 miles, to keep his faith; and he performed this equestrian feat with 13 horses, in less than 11 hours, and was in time for the concert. From Chili he went to Peru, and gave a concert at Lima, which produced the large sum of 5,000 dollars (£1,000). His curiosity prompted him to be an eyewitness of a battle between the Peruvians and the Chilians, and he there became acquainted with Santa Cruz.

“Crossing the Isthmus of Panama, Mr. Wallace next visited the West Indies, and gave concerts at Jamaica, Cuba, and the Havannah. His flight was then taken to Mexico, and he performed both at Vera Cruz, Tampico, and the City of Mexico. In the last mentioned locality he had a narrow escape of perishing in the Inquisition. He led the Opera band in Mexico, and then crossed the Gulf to New Orleans.”

Here I think it well to note that Wallace during

his stay in Mexico composed a Grand Mass and conducted its performance. As "Senor Vincent Wallace" he was regarded as a virtuoso of the first rank. Unfortunately no trace of this Mass can be found, but it may have been an elaboration of the Mass he composed when in Thurles.

At New Orleans Wallace was accorded a great ovation, and his genius was fully recognised by M. Eugene Prosper Prevost, Conductor of the French Theatre in that city. The American paper from which I have been quoting says that "Wallace was so much cheered by these French artistes that they laid down their instruments and abandoned the *tutti* to applaud *le Jeune Irlandaise*." He was stricken with fever at New Orleans and was invalided for seven months. Having gone to Missouri to recuperate, he returned to New Orleans, where he gave a farewell concert in November, 1841.

After a triumphal progress through various American musical centres, including Philadelphia Theatre in September, 1842, he settled for a time in New York, and was one of the founders of the New York Philharmonic Society. "The novelty of a violinist setting aside his bow to play the piano seemed to have astonished the Transatlantic critics. At Boston he came into direct collision with Ole Bull, the Norwegian; Artot, the Belgian; and Vieuxtemps, also a

Belgian—three most renowned violinists; but Mr. Wallace, if we are to credit the local organs, maintained his ground." This was in the winter of the year 1843.

After a series of farewell concerts Wallace returned to Europe, and, after three days in London, in May, 1844, made a tour of Germany and Holland. He wandered back to London in March, 1845, and made his debut as a pianist at Miss Marie Billington Hawes's Concert at the Hanover Square Rooms on May 3rd of that year. Not long afterwards, at the suggestion of Hayward St. Leger, he planned an opera—"Maritana"—and was introduced by the latter to Edward Fitzball, who supplied him with the libretto of his now world-famed work. Wallace set to work with a will, and his manuscript was gladly accepted by his old friend, Alfred Bunn, the Manager of Drury Lane.

At length the fateful night of November 15th, 1845, saw Wallace's "Maritana" produced for the first time on the boards of old Drury—and at once the composer was hailed as the compeer of Balfe. The following extract from the notice of the opera is taken from the *Illustrated London News* for November 22nd, 1845:—

"The antecedents of Mr. Wallace was little known to the public. He came almost as a perfect stranger. Only to concert frequenters was

he at all familiar. We will frankly own that, in the last season, when he appeared as a pianist and composer, we were not at all prepossessed in his favour. His playing, compared with the great lion-artists (!) with whom he entered the lists—and it is by this rivalry we judged him—was anything but electrifying; nor did we trace in any of the compositions, vocal and instrumental, then inserted in the programmes, the presence of a master mind. His concert *debut* to the eyes of independent amateurs, was, in fact, a failure: we state the fact broadly, for Mr. Wallace can afford to hear the truth. When, therefore, we heard a rehearsal of his opera, through the polite attention of the lessee, on Friday week, we were fairly taken by surprise; but at once we felt compelled to avow the presence and supremacy of a genius. We predicted a great and decided success, by listening only to his inspirations without scenic adjuncts; and although, on Saturday night, the scandalous spectacle was exhibited of a *party* going into a theatre expressly to condemn the maiden work of a young composer, public opinion was omnipotent, and the unknown struggler for musical fame achieved a glorious triumph for himself, for the honour of his country, and for art which is European. We have been delighted spectators of the ratification of this great success, and right glad are we that the spirit of criticism

has been generally expressed in a generous tone, although the courage to praise heartily, whether from prejudice or dim perception, has been in some instances wanting. Our reasons for the ardent admiration we experience for Mr. Wallace's "Maritana" we will now venture to explain to our readers.

"Three times have we heard this new work since its first representation at Drury Lane Theatre last Saturday evening, and on each occasion have the ovations been much the same, namely, seven or eight encores, great applause for the composer at the termination of every act, and his appearance before the curtain vehemently insisted upon after the finale, the same compliment being extended to the principal singers, with the exception of Mr. H. Phillips, whose final exit is early in the third act. *There has been no opera produced for years that has created a greater sensation.* The most eminent members of the musical profession have attended the performances, and on all hands it is agreed that Mr. Wallace is destined to occupy a most prominent position amongst our native musicians. There are, of course, differences of opinion as to the extent of his capabilities, but *rarely has such unanimity prevailed on the advent of a new composer.*"

It is not my intention to write any criticism on

the music of "Maritana" : suffice it to say that the opera is still the trump card of English opera, and shows no diminution of popularity after close on seventy years. Perhaps, however, it may be well to mention that the original cast did credit to Wallace's work—Miss Romer, Miss Poole, Signor Borrani, W. Harrison, and H. Phillips, all contributing to its successful production. And it is not generally known that the words of two of the songs—"Scenes that are Brightest" and "In Happy Moments"—are from the pen of Mr. Bunn.

On the 50th night of "Maritana" Wallace was accorded a benefit, at Covent Garden, on Thursday, Feb. 5th, 1846, when in addition to his opera, the Pantomime, and the performance of Professor Risley and Sons, Wallace himself played a pianoforte solo and a Grand Fantasia with variations on "La Cracovienne," and vocal solos were contributed by Miss Rainforth and Signor Marras, as well as a violin solo by Mons. Sainton.

While all London was ringing with the praises of "Maritana" the composer crossed over to Ireland on the invitation of the Anacreontic Society, and received a most enthusiastic welcome in Dublin. He appeared in the historic Rotunda on February 9th, 1846, and got quite an ovation from the members of the Anacreontic Orchestra, a glowing account of which I received from the late John O'Donnell, one of the performers on that

occasion. The other stars at this concert were Miss Messent, Miss Schloss, and Mr. Grattan Cooke, the famous oboeist. To add *eclat* to the proceedings the Lord Lieutenant attended in state, and there was a crowded house. Among the attractions were the Overture and some vocal selections from "Maritana," but Wallace himself was the bright particular star, charming the vast audience by his pianoforte solos, which included a Fantasia with variations on a Romance from "L'Eclair," and a Rondo Scherzoso on "La Cracovienne."

So great was Wallace's success in Dublin that he and his concert party were engaged for two performances at the Theatre Royal, on February 13th and 14th, and were given a hearty reception. It was not, however, till July 1st that Dubliners had an opportunity of hearing "Maritana" by the Drury Lane Company. Again did Miss Romer, Borroni, and Harrison repeat their triumphs, to the delight of Wallace's countrymen, and the opera was repeated on July 4th, 6th, and 9th.

It must not be supposed that Wallace devoted all his attention to schemes of English opera. Already—in 1846—he had published a score or so of Fantasias, Songs, and Romances. His "Grand Valse de Concert" and his ballad "Canst thou forget?" were in particular request. Nor did Wallace overlook the native minstrelsy of Ireland :

he published numerous florid arrangements of Irish melodies.

In 1845 and 1846 Wallace was in much request both as a pianist and as a teacher, but he did not neglect his operatic instincts. Alfred Bunn provided him with the libretto of "Matilda of Hungary," and he worked at it with lightning speed. Not even Wallace could do anything with Bunn's book, which has well been described by Mr. R. H. Legge as "one of the worst librettos in existence."

On February 15th, 1847, a vast audience thronged Drury Lane Theatre to hear the first production of Wallace's "Matilda of Hungary," but, owing to the illness of Miss Romer, it had to be postponed. Wallace, however, in response to a unanimous call of the audience, played the Overture, which was tumultuously applauded. Balfe's "Bondman" was then substituted, in which Miss Messent sang charmingly. At length, on the following Monday (Feb. 22) "Matilda of Hungary" was given, and was very well received. According to the chief musical critics it showed a distinct advance on "Maritana," yet owing to various causes it did not have a long run. On the fourth night Miss Rainforth replaced Miss Romer, and the opera held the boards for over three weeks. Cramer, Beale & Co. published the vocal score, dedicated to the King of the Belgians, on Feb. 27, and some of the numbers had a wide popularity.

Wallace took ill with an affection of the eyes in March, and was succeeded as conductor by Signor Schira. He was given a benefit on May 17th, when "Maritana" and a miscellaneous concert proved an attractive bill of fare. This benefit was memorable for the *debut* of Sims Reeves, the great English tenor, and of Julius Schuloff, the Bohemian pianist. After assisting at several concerts, including Madame Dulcken's, on June 11th, Wallace went to Vienna, to make arrangements for the production of "Matilda," which was well received by the Austro-Hungarians.

The great composer returned to London in September, 1847, to meet his sister, who had been on a concert tour in South America, and both of them almost immediately set out for Vienna. In the winter of the same year he composed a fine Violin Concerto. His great triumph, however, was the production of "Maritana" at the Theatre Ander Wien, in Vienna, on January 8th, 1848, which was repeated on the 10th with even greater success, the composer being called before the curtain six times. The third performance, on the 17th, set the seal on Wallace's Continental reputation, and he added two new pieces to it. Staudigl's magnificent singing contributed to the triumph of the work, which had a run till the end of February. The composer was presented with a valuable diamond ring by the King of the

Belgians and returned to London, accompanied by his sister, who made her London debut as a concert singer on Feb. 24th at the Sacred Harmonic Society, in the "Creation."

On May 19th, 1848, he kindly played at a benefit concert for Jonathan Blewitt, who had lived many years in Ireland and had written many Irish arrangements. Wallace was indefatigable⁽¹⁾ and he finished the score of "Lurline" in July, 1848, selling the copyright advantageously to Messrs. Diabelli and Co., Vienna. His friend Bunn promised to bring out the opera at Covent Garden in the autumn of same year, but the "poet" became bankrupt, and so "Lurline" was shelved.

On August 7th, Wallace acted as conductor at a grand concert given by his compatriot, Mr. St. Leger, at which Héléne Stoepel played. He was in much request for *soirées musicales*, but his undoubted operatic genius was not given a fair chance, owing to the mania for foreign work and foreign composers. Yet so great was his fame on the Continent that he received the unusual honour of a commission to write an opera for the Grand Opera at Paris. He set to work so hard that he was threatened with blindness, and, early in September he went to Jersey for a rest cure. However, after a few months the travel fever again obsessed

(1) In the British Museum there is a Lento in D, in MS., by William Vincent Wallace, dated 1848.

him, with the result that he determined to set his face towards the New World, and he accepted an engagement as conductor of a concert party to South America, subsequently travelling to North America. Meantime, his sister made her operatic debut at Covent Garden Theatre, in "Maritana," on October 9th, achieving a genuine triumph—Signor Schira being the conductor.

Wallace's tour of 1848-1851 was replete with adventure, and he narrowly escaped being blown up in a steamboat.

Wallace's concerts in New York and other cities were remunerative, and he composed much pianoforte music which had an ephemeral popularity. In October, 1850, he contracted a *liaison* with Hélène Stoepel, a distinguished pianist. Fortune seemed to smile on him, but alas! the fickle jade soon proved unkind, for Wallace made some unfortunate investments, and almost became bankrupt. Meantime many of his ballads were being sung everywhere, notably his "Why do I weep for thee," popularised by Catherine Hayes.

Returning to London in 1853, Wallace settled down as a fashionable teacher of the pianoforte, for which instrument he composed an enormous quantity—both original and transcriptions. He also composed a goodly output of ballads, including "The Bell Ringer."

In 1859 Wallace again took up the operatic cue, and elaborated a work which he had conceived during a trip on the Rhine. This was the famous "Lurline," the libretto of which was by Edward Fitzball. After some delay "Lurline," dealing with the story of the Lorelei, was produced at the Royal English Opera, Covent Garden, by the Pyne and Harrison Company on February 23rd, 1860. It was described as "a grand legendary opera in three acts," and was even more successful than "Maritana." Contrary to general expectation it proved a most unqualified hit, and ran to the end of the season. Early in the next year it was transferred to Dublin, and was performed by the self same Company. With Louisa Pyne, William Harrison, Charlie Lyall, George Honey, and Henri Corri, and a capable orchestra under Alfred Mellon, "Lurline" was first heard by Dubliners on April 30th, 1861, and was well received. No need here to dwell on the delightful melodies and orchestration of this charming opera, which many critics regard as a distinct advance on "Maritana." It will scarcely be credited, but is none the less true, that Wallace gave away the performing rights of "Lurline" for ten shillings! yet the deed of assignment—dated March 16th, 1858—can be seen in the British Museum, and the document distinctly says that William Vincent Wallace absolutely assigned "Lurline" to William Harrison and

Louisa Pyne "in consideration of the sum of ten shillings." It is said that Pyne and Harrison made £50,000 by that one opera, and that Wallace presented the "consideration" of ten shillings to the widow of a stage carpenter at Covent Garden Theatre. I shall only add that a French edition of "Lurline" was published by Meissonier of Paris under the title of "Lorelei ou La fille du Rhin."

The composer's pen was not idle in 1860, for he sketched out the greater part of "The Amber Witch" to a libretto by H. F. Chorley, and it was produced at Her Majesty's Theatre on February 28th, 1861, with considerable success. Wallace himself regarded it as his best work, but the public did not endorse the composer's verdict. Nothing daunted, he started on a new opera, "Love's Triumph," in three acts, the book being from the pen of J. R. Planché, and it was produced by the Pyne and Harrison Company at the Royal English Opera, Covent Garden, on November 3rd, 1862. It had a short run, and was replaced by Balfe's "Blanche de Nevers" on November 21st, which fell equally flat. The full score of "Love's Triumph" in Wallace's autograph is now in the British Museum.

Less than a year later Wallace composed "The Desert Flower," which was produced at Covent Garden Theatre on October 12th, 1863, by the

Pyne and Harrison Company, and although much of the music in this opera is very melodious the public did not appreciate it, and it was withdrawn after a fortnight. This was the eighth and last season of the English Opera Company, and the only consolation afforded Mr. Harrison and Miss Pyne was that in retiring from the venture they did so without loss.

Nothing daunted, Wallace, early in 1864. set to work on a new opera, "Estrelle," but ere the end of the year his health completely broke down, and he was ordered by his medical adviser to winter in the South of France. Accordingly, in the spring of the year 1865 he set out for Paris *en route* for the Pyrenees. He was recommended to stay for a short time in the French capital and to have the advantage of a Parisian doctor. Some kind friends provided him with the use of a cottage at Passy, in the suburbs of Paris, and here he enjoyed the congenial company of the great composer, Rossini, almost daily. On the advice of his physician, Dr. Bouillot, he removed, in September, 1865, to a relative's chateau in the Department of Hautes Pyrénées. All previous writers, following the French journals, give the name of the chateau as "Chateau de Bagen," but my esteemed friend, Monsieur Michel Brenet, the distinguished French musical critic, tells me there is no such chateau to be found. "There is,

however," writes M. Brenet, "a Chateau de Haget, in the Commune of Vieuzos, Canton d'Aries, Department of Hautes Pyrénées, and, doubtless, this is the one in question, 'Bagen' being an error for 'Haget.'"

Tended lovingly by his relatives, William Vincent Wallace passed peacefully away at the Chateau de Haget, on the 12th of October, 1865, aged 53.

A correspondent in the "Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris," October 27th, 1865, thus writes:—"This man, formerly so vigorous in mind and body, so active, so indefatigable, and who had gone through so many adventures, went to rest calmly, having at his bedside his wife,⁽¹⁾ who had nursed him in his illness, leaving two sons, aged respectively 13 and 11. His mortal remains have been taken to England where they will be honoured with a funeral worthy of his great reputation." The funeral took place on October 23rd, and Wallace⁽²⁾ was interred in Kensal Green

(1) This is an error on the part of the French writer. The lady who nursed Wallace in his last illness was Héléne Stoepel, who subsequently returned to New York, where she died in 1885, aged 58. The two boys committed suicide in America.

(2) His widow taught music in Dublin for many years, and she died on July 25th, 1900. His only son, Vincent, died a poor brother of the Charterhouse on December 31st, 1909.

Cemetery—where also lie the remains of Balfe, Lover, Tom Cooke, and Catherine Hayes.

The operas already named do not exhaust the list of Wallace's contributions to the operatic stage: he also wrote "The Maid of Zurich," "Gulnare," and "Olga," as well as a pretty Cantata, "May Pole." Of his extraordinary fecundity as a composer it is sufficient to mention that a list of his musical works occupies upwards of 100 pages of the British Museum Catalogue. Yet, while most of his piano pieces and transcriptions are on the top-shelf, some of his songs are still popular, especially "Hope in absence," "The winds that waft my sighs to thee," "Coming of the Flowers," "The Wood Nymph," "Why do I weep for thee," and "The Bellringer." However, his enduring title to fame lies in his operas of "Maritana," "Lurline" and "The Amber Witch": these—especially the first two—will live by reason of sheer melody. The late Sir Robert Stewart, in a conversation regarding Wallace, told me that "there was sufficient melody in 'Maritana' to vamp out half a dozen grand operas." Not alone was Wallace supreme in the vocal department, but he was a perfect master of orchestration. Public taste has varied considerably since 1845, but "Maritana" is still a "sure draw," and shows no diminution of popularity even in comparison with the works of Wagner, Strauss, and Debussy.

Several portraits of Wallace have appeared. The first was that which was published in the *Illustrated London News* in 1845. Another was drawn by Davignon. A third is the well-known flamboyant water colour by Hanshew, in 1853, now in the National Gallery, Dublin. There is also a good photograph of the composer in the British Museum (Add. MSS. 36747 f75), which I am enabled to reproduce as a frontispiece.

In conclusion, I deem it a privilege to pay this small tribute of appreciation to Wallace's life-work, and I trust that a more adequate biography will be undertaken at no distant date. It has been well said that Wallace, like Wren (who built his own monument in erecting St. Paul's Cathedral) has bequeathed an enduring memorial of his genius in his operas, but it is greatly to be desired that a statue or other monument be erected in his native city of Waterford, if only to remind the passer-by that Waterford is not unmindful of a man whose musical genius is universally recognised.

Handwritten musical manuscript on ten staves. The top staff contains a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes various notes, rests, and bar lines. Below the staves, there is a handwritten signature 'Wallace' and the name 'Wallace' written vertically. The page number '96' is in the bottom right corner.

A specimen of a Page of Wallace's Manuscript with his Autograph