

**LETTERS OF RICHARD WAGNER  
TO EMIL HECKEL: WITH A BRIEF  
HISTORY OF THE BAYREUTH  
FESTIVALS. TRANSLATED AND  
INDEXED BY WM. ASHTON ELLIS**

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Letters of Richard Wagner to Emil Heckel: With a Brief History of the Bayreuth Festivals.  
Translated and Indexed by Wm. Ashton Ellis by Richard Wagner & Karl Heckel

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**RICHARD WAGNER & KARL HECKEL**

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Wagner  
Letters to Heckel

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## Preface

[I SHALL not delay the reader of this fascinating little book for any longer than it will take him—and, I may hope, also her—to note the following three facts: 1st that Herr Emil Heckel, still a member of the Bayreuth Council of Administration—or “Verwaltungs-rath”—was founder of the very earliest Wagner Society, and has ever been one of the staunchest and most unselfish friends of the Bayreuth cause; 2nd that Frau Wagner has kindly given her express authority and sanction to my translating these letters of her husband's; 3rd that Herr Karl Heckel, editor of the German book, has most generously granted me the exclusive right of rendering his father's recollections into English, subject to the sole condition that their rendering shall be faithful: my own contribution to the book is therefore limited to the very few notes which bear the symbol “Tr.”—June 1899, W.A.E.]

By invitation of the editor of the *Neue Deutsche*



## vi            Letters to Emil Heckel

*Rundschau* my father last year jotted down his reminiscences of Richard Wagner. Shortly afterwards Frau Wagner gave her most gracious consent to the publication of all the master's letters to my father. The next step, therefore, obviously was to publish both reminiscences and letters in one and the same volume. I undertook their combination.

In order to weld the two into one whole, a complete remodelling of the "reminiscences" was unavoidable. Their subjective character has been preserved, however, even where it was tinged with a certain polemical colour from the days of war.

As to Wagner's letters themselves, in very few cases has it been requisite to make omissions. These are scrupulously indicated in the text.

Since, according to Bismarck's epigram, the publication of private letters almost always "sets their author in his shirt-sleeves on the balcony," many a circumstantial explanation of minor points has become necessary, not to give spiteful neighbours too many opportunities for "misconstruction." The reproducing of such details undoubtedly thrusts the narrator more into the foreground than he himself could wish; yet, in a book of memoirs, that danger is not easy to avoid. Does it really need apology?

Surely not, if I cite the original title of these recollections: "*In the service of Art.*" For that

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denotes the sense in which to take the record of many memories of personal intercourse with the master, as also his recognition of the steadfastness of his "Strategos" in the Bayreuth work.

THE EDITOR [Karl Heckel].

MANHEIM, 1st *January* 1898.

