
D 6551 Reminiscences of August Heinicke, A.M.H.

Translation by John Fletcher, Lecturer in Germanic Studies, University of Sydney

[1] I was born on the 21 July, 1863 in Dresden, the capital and royal residence of the Kingdom of Saxony.

I was baptised on the 30 August, 1863, in the Evangelical-Lutheran church in Dresden, with the full name of my father, viz./i.e. August Moritz Hermann Heinicke.

The Heinicke family numbered seven: father, mother and five children, of which I was the fourth-youngest.

My father was a foreman in one of the biggest brush-factories in Saxony, which he himself had originally established but was however unable to go on running through lack of capital. The business, which was developing in leaps and bounds, consequently passed into the hands of a capitalist called Ferdinand Kobisch, who formed it into a limited company.

In reparation my father was appointed as foreman at a fixed wage and with a commission from the net profits. He held this position until he was 70.

I should mention here too that in recognition of his literary knowledge, skill, experience and humane qualities, my father was, at the early age of 30, granted citizen status.

I still treasure in my possession the royal Saxon citizen's crest with its motto "Upwards to the light", as well as the family tree of the Heinicke family, dating back to 1586.

[2] My parents possessed a considerable musical and theatrical talent, which they displayed, for their own pleasure, in light farces, comedies and musical items performed at the entertainment evenings held in the various amateur theatrical clubs in Dresden and its suburbs. As children, even in the earliest years, we were taken to such performances, and to concerts given by symphony orchestras and military bands.

Bearing this in mind, it is not at all surprising that the impressions made by such occasions should contribute towards the germination and growth of the as yet latent musical instinct within us children. Such developments in us also aroused our parents' attention to a very great degree.

I can still clearly remember the wonderful, warm-hearted evenings we spent as children in the company of our parents, sitting round the family table. With particular clarity I can remember my father taking up his guitar, which used to hang right next to the piano. He would ask mother and us children to join with him in one of the well-known folk-songs. Quite extemporaneously he would improvise an accompaniment which would have drawn applause from any professional guitarist.