FERRIS GEORGE TITUS

GREAT MUSICAL COMPOSERS: GERMAN, FRENCH, AND ITALIAN

George Ferris

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Содержание

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Introduction

THE following biographical sketches were originally published in America by Mr. George T. Ferris, in two volumes, separately entitled *The Great German Composers* and *The Great Italian and French Composers*. They have achieved the success they deserved: for while we have whole libraries of books upon the history and technicalities of music in general, upon musical theories and schools, and upon the exponents thereof in their artistic capacity, there has been a distinct dearth of treatises dealing in a brief and popular fashion with the lives of eminent composers themselves. Now, when music is "mastered and murdered" in almost every house throughout the length and breadth of the land, there can be no doubt that compilations of this kind must be welcome to a very large number – we will not say of musical students, but of lovers of music. There are, it would be needless to attempt to prove, great numbers of the music-loving public, who practically have no facilities towards making acquaintance with the leading facts in the lives of those

men whose compositions they have such a genuine delight in rendering: to these mainly is such a book as *Great Composers* addressed. But, indeed, to every one interested in music and musicians the volume can hardly fail to be of interest. In his preface to *The Great Italian and French Composers*, Mr. Ferris explained that – as was very manifest – "the task of compressing into one small volume suitable sketches of the more famous Italian and French composers was, in view of the extent of field and the wealth of material, a somewhat embarrassing one, especially as the purpose was to make the sketches of interest to the general music-loving public, and not merely to the critic and scholar. The plan pursued has been to devote the bulk of space to composers of the higher rank, and to pass over those less known with such brief mention as sufficed to outline their lives, and fix their place in the history of music."

To *The Great German Composers* he prefaces a few words which may be quoted – "The sketches of composers contained in this volume may seem arbitrary in the space allotted to them. The special attention given to certain names has been prompted as much by their association with great art epochs, as by the consideration of their absolute rank as composers. The introduction of Chopin, born a Pole, and for a large part of his life a resident of France, among German composers, may require an explanatory word. Chopin's whole early training was in the German school, and he may be looked on as one of the founders of the latest school of pianoforte composition, whose

highest development is in contemporary Germany. He represents German music by his affinities and his influences in art, and bears too close a relation to important changes in musical forms to be omitted from this series."

Various important events have occurred since the publication of these volumes in America: *inter alia*, the performance of Wagner's last great work "Parsifal," and the death of the great German musician; the production of new works by Gounod and Verdi; and so forth. The editor has endeavoured, as briefly as practicable, to supplement Mr. Ferris's *causeries* with the addenda necessary to bring *Great Composers* down to date. Mr. Ferris further acknowledges his obligation to the following authorities for the facts embodied in these sketches: – Hullah's *History of Modern Music*; Fétis' *Biographie Universelle des Musiciens*; Clementi's *Biographie des Musiciens*; Hogarth's *History of the Opera*; Sutherland Edwards' *History of the Opera*; Schlüter's *History of Music*; Chorley's *Thirty Years' Musical Reminiscences*; Stendhall's *Vie de Rossini*; Bellasy's *Memorials of Cherubini*; Grove's *Musical Dictionary*; Crowestl's *Musical Anecdotes*; Schœlcher's *Life of Handel*; Liszt's *Life of Chopin*; Elsie Polko's *Reminiscences*; Lampadius' *Life of Mendelssohn*; Urbino's *Musical Composers*; Franz Hueffer's *Wagner and the Music of the Future*; Haweis' *Music and Morals*; and the various articles in the leading cyclopædias.

To this volume the present editor has appended a chronological table of the musicians referred to in the following

sketches.

In reading the lives of these great musical composers, we can trace the gradual development of music from its earliest days as an art and as a science. Unlike the other arts which have flourished, decayed, and had rebirth, music, as we now understand it, sprang into being out of the ferment of the Renaissance, and therefore is the youngest of the arts – a modern growth belonging particularly to the later phases of civilisation. Music in a rude, undeveloped condition has existed doubtless "since the world began." In all nations, and in the records of past civilisations, indications of music are to be found; martial strains for the encouragement of warriors on the march; sacred hymns and sacrificial chants in religious ceremonials; and song accompanied by some rude instrument – we find to have been known and practised among remote tribes as well as among potent races. The bards of divers peoples and many countries in ancient days played upon the harp not merely for delight, but for the exorcism of evil spirits, the dispersion of melancholy, the soothing and cure of mental and physical disorders. Here we find music as the direct expression of feeling, but not as a science. The Greeks made further use of music by incorporating it into their dramas, but it was chiefly declamatory, and was used solely in the choruses. To modern ears such music would sound very inefficient, more especially as the antique instruments were of the crudest – and although musical sounds, to a limited extent, could be produced from them, all attempts at *expression* must

have been unsuccessful.

In Europe in the early middle ages there existed two kinds of music: that of the people, spontaneous, impulsive, the song of the Troubadour, unwritten and orally transmitted from father to son; that of the Church, which had been greatly encouraged since the days of Constantine, and especially owed much to St. Ambrose and St. Gregory. For a time music became the handmaid of the Church, but it thereby, to a certain extent, also gave voice to the lyrical feelings of the people; for the chorister and composer not only embodied popular songs into the chants, but in many instances interpolated the words themselves. This incongruity at length necessitated the reform, brought about by Palestrina – the father of sacred music as we now know it – whose *Missa Papae Marcelli*, performed in 1565, established a type which has been more or less adhered to ever since. The services of the Church gave rise to the oratorio, which, however, chiefly owes its development to Protestant genius, more especially to Handel. In 1540 San Filippo Neri formed in Milan a Society called "Le congregazione dei Padri dell' Oratorio" (from *orare* to pray), and we are told by Crescembini that "The oratorio, a poetical composition, formerly a commixture of the dramatic and narrative styles, but now entirely a musical drama, had its origin from San Filippo Neri, who in his chapel, after sermons and other devotions, in order to allure young people to pious offices, and to detain them from earthly pleasures, had hymns, psalms, and such like prayers sung by one or more

voices." "Among these spiritual songs were dialogues; and these entertainments, becoming more frequent and improving every year, were the occasion that, in the seventeenth century, oratorios were invented, so called from their origin."[1]

Then came the fulness of the Renaissance, quickening dead forms into new life, laying its vivifying touch on the new-born art, music, and making it its nursling. At first the change was hardly perceptible. It was church music out of church, fine, stately, what may with seeming paradox be called statuesque, which came to bear the name of *L'Opera*, signifying *The Work*: – but, though born to a heritage of good aims, possessed of very inadequate means for their fulfilment. Once liberated from its presumed function of expressing religious feeling, and thus subjected to other impelling forces, music could not long remain in the old forms. It began to feel its way into new channels, and in the form of the opera became a national institution. Its growth at first was weak and faulty; but finally it developed into a perfect art. It was as the novice, who, freed from the sanctity of the convent with its calm lights and shadows, enters at last the portals of the life of the world – a varied world full of turmoil, passion, and strife. A greater world, after all, than that quitted, because composed of so many possibilities in so many directions, and comprising the sufferings, the joys, the aspirations of such innumerably differentiated beings; a world wherein the novice learns to widen her sympathies, to feel with

[1] Hawkin's *Musical History*, vol. iii., p. 441.

and for the people, and to express for them the never-ceasing craving for something beyond the fleeting moment. At first, therefore, the stately art and the musical needs of the people were dissimilar and apart; but little by little each gave to and took from the other, till at length, out of the marriage of these elementaries, a third arose to become the expression of the life of the people, partaking in likeness of both, having lost certain qualities, having gained many more, becoming richer, broader, more eclectic – in short, developing into the more fitting expression of the manifold aspirations of modern days, when life is varied and intense, and the mind gropes blindly in every direction.

This development is traceable in all art, and in the sphere of music it is most manifest in the opera. Like all great movements the opera began humbly. Towards the end of the sixteenth century a number of amateurs in Florence, dissatisfied with the polyphonic school of music, combined "to revive the musical declamation of the Greeks," to wed poetry and music – so long dissevered – to make the music follow the inflexion of the voice and the sense of the words. The first opera was "Il Conte Ugolino," composed by Vicenzio Galileo – father of the famous astronomer – and it was followed by various others, the titles of which need not here be recorded. At first, such performances took place in the palaces of nobles on grand occasions, when frequently both performers and musicians were of high rank. At length, however, in 1637 a famous theorbo player, Benedetto Farrari, and Francesco Manetti, the composer, opened in Venice

an opera-house at their own risk, and a little later brought out with great success "Le nozzi di Peleo e di Telide" by Cavalli, a disciple of Monteverde, and it was henceforth that the opera became, as we have said, a national institution. Schools for singing were opened in Rome, Naples, and Venice – the science of music made rapid strides – instruments for orchestral purposes naturally likewise improved in quality and in variety; and the opera developed continuously in breadth of treatment and form in the hands of Scarlatti, Leo, Jommelli, and Cimarosa.

About the beginning of the eighteenth century a rival to the *serious* opera sprang up in Naples – the *comic* opera, the direct offspring of the people, and of lower artistic standing. But as the serious opera became more stately, more scientific, more purely formal, less human, less the expression of direct feeling, cultivated more for art's sake solely, the comic opera throve on the very qualities that its elder sister rejected, till at length the greatest musicians of the day, Pergolesi, Cimarosa, Mozart, wrote their masterpieces for it. Ultimately the two were fused into one, that is, into the modern Italian opera. The comic opera, as we now understand it, is of French origin.

From Italy the opera found its way into other countries with varying results. In England it took early root, and assimilated itself with the earlier *masques* which were played at Whitehall and at Inns of Court. In the early productions in this country, however, the music was merely incidental. During the Commonwealth, an opera entitled "The Siege of Rhodes,"

composed by Dr. Charles Colman, Captain Henry Cook, Henry Lawes, and George Hudson, was performed in 1655, under the express license of Cromwell. Purcell seems, however, to have been the first to see the possibility of a national English opera; – his music to Dryden's "King Arthur," and to the "Indian Queen," is considered very beautiful; "his recitative was as rhetorically perfect as Lulli's, but infinitely more natural, and frequently impassioned to the last degree; his airs are not in the Italian form, but breathe rather the spirit of unfettered natural melody, and stand forth as models of refinement and freedom." "The Beggar's Opera," set to music by Dr. Pepusch, and Dr. Arne's "Artaxerxes," a translation from Metastasia's libretto, adapted to melodious music, were deservedly popular, and long retained a place on the stage. Nevertheless, when the Italian opera became an institution in England, the national opera made no further progress. During the last few years the former seems to have practically died out in England, and it remains to be seen in what form the English opera will revive and flourish once more as a national product. We have good promise in the works of such musicians as Balfe, Wallace, Sterndale Bennet, Sir G. A. Macfarren, Dr. A. C. Mackenzie, Sir Arthur Sullivan, Mr. C. V. Stanford, and others.

The end of the sixteenth and end of the seventeenth centuries form what has been called "the golden age of English music – aye for all musical Europe – of the madrigal. Nowhere was the cultivation of that noble form of pure vocal music, whether

in composition or in performance, followed with more zeal or success than in England." The Hon. Roger North, Attorney-General to James II., in his *Memories of Musick*, speaks thus of the state of music in the first half of the seventeenth century – "Afterwards these (Italian *fantazias*) were imitated by the English, who, working more elaborately, improved upon their patterne, which gave occasion to an observation, that in vocall the Italians, and in instrumental music the English excelled." Again he alludes to "those authors whose performance gained the nation the credit in excelling the Italians in all but vocall." In instrumental music, then, in the madrigal, the cantata, and in ecclesiastical music, England prospered. Among her most important composers were John Dowland, Ford, Henry Lawes, John Jenkens, Pelham Humphreys, Wise, Blow, Henry Purcell – great in secular and ecclesiastical works, in instrumental and in vocal – Croft and Weldon; all were predecessors of Handel, who, though one of the greatest of German composers, lived nearly fifty years in England, composed several operas and all his famous oratorios for England, and is therefore not unjustifiably added to the list of English composers.

The opera was first introduced into France by Cardinal Mazarin early in the seventeenth century, but the lyrical drama owes its origin in that country to Lulli, who also introduced into it the ballet, which was a favourite pastime of the young king Louis XIV. The ballet has since become an integral part of the French and also of the later Italian operas. It was Lulli, again,

who extended the "meagre prelude" of the Italian opera into the overture as we now know it. But as the rise and progress of the French opera is fully portrayed in the following musical sketches, it is needless to trace it further here.

Germany – equally with Italy the land of music, but of harmonious in contra-distinction to melodic music, which belongs most properly to Italy, well named the land of song – was much later in developing her musical powers than Italy, but she cultivated them to grander and nobler proportions; for to Germany we owe the magnificent development of instrumental music, which culminates in the form of the sonata for the piano, and in that of the symphony for the orchestra, in the hands of such masters as Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven. In Germany the opera took root by means of a translation of Rinaccini's "Dafne," set to music by Henry Schütz in 1627, with Italian airs and German recitative. The first German opera or *singspiel*, "Adam und Eva," by Johann Theil, was performed in 1678, but it became national through the works of Reinhard Keiser, whose opera "Basilino" was performed in 1693. "His style was purely German, less remarkable for its rhetorical perfection than that of Lulli, but exhibiting far greater variety of expression, and more earnest endeavour to attain that spirit of Dramatic Truth which alone can render such music worthy of its intended purpose." He was worthily followed by Hasse, Grann, by Mozart's "Le Nozze di Figaro," "Die Zauberflöte," "Don Giovanni," and by Beethoven's one opera "Fidelio."

The growth of a national opera in Germany and France, competing with that of Italy, induced also the rise of party quarrels between the adherents of the several schools; and the history of music demonstrates the fact, often seen in the history of politics, that in such contentions the real point at issue – the *excellence* of the subject in question – is lost sight of in the fierce strife of opponents; the broader issues are obscured in the narrowing influences of mere partizanship, wherein each side on principle shuts its eyes equally to the merits of its adversary and to its own faults. Thus in the following sketches are recorded the quarrels between the adherents of Lulli and Rameau, Handel and Bonacini, Piccini and Gluck, Mozart and Salieri, Weber and Rossini, and in the present day between the advocates of Wagner's "Music of the Future" and those of the "Music of the Past." "The old order changes, giving place to new," but only after a long protracted struggle, a struggle that will not be productive of good as long as the bitterness of partizanship exists, whose aim is wholly to annihilate its adversary, though thereby much that is good and fine be lost. This is not, however, the place to discuss the importance of such strife, nor the comparative advantages and disadvantages of its existence or non-existence – but it is as well to draw attention to it in order to point out that in the history of music the belligerents are usually blind to the important fact that, inasmuch as nations differ essentially in ways of thought and action, in character, temperament, and fundamental nature, so also must the various phases of art differ

which are their mediums of expression.

The history of the art of music is divisible into two great epochs – the first dating from its birth about three centuries ago under the impelling influences of the Renaissance, to the end of the eighteenth century, when pseudo-classicism had given all it had to give; the second dating from the rise of Romanticism in the beginning of the nineteenth century to the present day. The revival of the "forgotten world of old romance – that world of wonder and mystery and spiritual beauty," no longer crippled by lack of science, and fettered by asceticism, was to music, that youngest of the arts, a novel influence, which pushed it vigorously in a new direction, towards the more direct expression of the cravings of humanity – making it more *human*, more the fitting medium expression of this democratic age. The true romantic feeling has been described as "the ever present apprehension of the spiritual world, and of that struggle of the soul with earthly conditions." This later period gave "new seeing to our eyes, which were once more opened to the mysteries and the wonder of the universe, and the romance of man's destiny; it revived, in short, the romantic spirit enriched by the clarity and sanity that the renascence was able to lend."

In the opera Gluck was one of the earliest masters who came under the influence of the new movement, and he anticipated Wagner in many of his reforms. He decreased the importance of the singer, and increased that of the orchestra, elaborated the recitative, and made the music to follow the rhythm of the

words, and he also gave importance to the dramatic expression of the human emotions. In Germany Weber is styled the Father of the Romantic opera, as in France the most noteworthy figure is Berlioz, and the new method was further developed in the instrumental music by Schumann, and demonstrated by other musicians, dead and living, who, from the limited space of this volume, have not been specially noticed – Liszt, Franz, Thomas, Brahms, Rubenstein, Dvorák, Massinet, Bizet, Jensen, Grieg, and others. Gounod, is, of course, unmistakably under the same influence, and may be considered as the direct descendant of Gluck, and there is every reason to suppose that he is the last great composer of the grand opera of France, as Verdi is undeniably that of the Italian opera. The most remarkable figure of the movement, he who has carried it to its utmost limits, is Richard Wagner. At first he refused for his compositions the name of "Music of the Future," and desired for them the more comprehensive term of "Work of Art of the Future." It is impossible to predict to what extent his theories will be followed: it is not desirable that they should be blindly worked out by musicians of power inferior to his; but they are in the right direction, and may ultimately bring about a new art mode in music. The resources of art are endless, being, as the Abbé Lamennais tells us, to man what creation is to God; and music may safely be trusted to develop in such a way as to ever be the most fitting expression of the inarticulate cravings and aspirations of the human soul. Wagner has attempted to

unite the three arts of Painting, Poetry, and Music: and of his work a competent judge has written – "The musical drama is undoubtedly the highest manifestation of which men are capable. All the most refined arts are called in to contribute to the idea. The author of a musical drama is no more a musician, or a poet, or a painter; he is the supreme *artist*, not fettered by the limits of one art, but able to step over the boundaries of all the different branches of æsthetic composition, and find the proper means for rendering his thought wherever he wants it. This was Wagner's aim. His latter works, 'Tristram and Isolde,' the 'Niebelungen Ring,' and 'Parsifal,' are the actuation of the theory, or at least are works showing what is the way towards the aim." Another eminent critic, Mr. Walter Pater, writing upon the fine arts, tells us that "*All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music*… It is the art of music which most completely realises this artistic ideal, this perfect identification of form and matter. In its ideal consummate moments, the end is not distinct from the means, the form from the matter, the subject from the expression; they inhere in and completely saturate each other; and to it, therefore, to the condition of its perfect moments, all the arts may be supposed constantly to tend and aspire. Music, then, and not poetry, as is so often supposed, is the true type or measure of consummate art. Therefore, although each art has its incommunicable element, its untranslatable order of impressions, its unique mode of reaching the 'imaginative reason,' yet the arts may be represented as continually struggling

after the law or principle of music, to a condition which music alone completely realises."

We may rest assured – as assured as Emerson or Matthew Arnold concerning the illimitable possibilities of poetry – that the future has great riches in store for all lovers of music. Giants, indeed, are they who are no longer among us, but it is not derogatory to these great ones to believe and hope that – life being "moving music" according to the definition of the Syrian Gnostics – the world will yet be electrified by the genius of successors worthy of such royal ancestry as Handel and Mozart, Beethoven and Wagner.

ELIZABETH A. SHARP.

BACH

I

THE growth and development of German music are eminently noteworthy facts in the history of the fine arts. In little more than a century and a-half it reached its present high and brilliant place, its progress being so consecutive and regular that the composers who illustrated its well-defined epochs might fairly have linked hands in one connected series.

To Johann Sebastian Bach must be accorded the title of "father of modern music." All succeeding composers have bowed with reverence before his name, and acknowledged in him the creative mind which not only placed music on a deep scientific basis, but perfected the form from which have been developed the wonderfully rich and varied phases of orchestral composition. Handel, who was his contemporary, having been born the same year, spoke of him with sincere admiration, and called him the giant of music. Haydn wrote – "Whoever understands me knows that I owe much to Sebastian Bach, that I have studied him thoroughly and well, and that I acknowledge him only as my model." Mozart's unceasing research brought to light many of his unpublished manuscripts, and helped Germany to a full appreciation of this great master. In like manner have

the other luminaries of music placed on record their sense of obligation to one whose name is obscure to the general public in comparison with many of his brother composers.

Sebastian Bach was born at Eisenach on the 21st of March 1685, the son of one of the court musicians. Left in the care of his elder brother, who was an organist, his brilliant powers displayed themselves at an early period. He was the descendant of a race of musicians, and even at that date the wide-spread branches of the family held annual gatherings of a musical character. Young Bach mastered for himself, without much assistance, a thorough musical education at Lüneburg, where he studied in the gymnasium and sang in the cathedral choir; and at the age of eighteen we find him court musician at Weimar, where a few years later he became organist and director of concerts. He had in the meantime studied the organ at Lübeck under the celebrated Buxtehude, and made himself thoroughly a master of the great Italian composers of sacred music – Palestrina, Lotti, Vivaldi, and others.

At this period Germany was beginning to experience its musical *renaissance*. The various German courts felt that throb of life and enthusiasm which had distinguished the Italian principalities in the preceding century in the direction of painting and sculpture. Every little capital was a focus of artistic rays, and there was a general spirit of rivalry among the princes, who aspired to cultivate the arts of peace as well as those of war. Bach had become known as a gifted musician, not only

by his wonderful powers as an organist, but by two of his earlier masterpieces – "Gott ist mein König" and "Ich hatte viel Bekümmerniss." Under the influence of an atmosphere so artistic, Bach's ardour for study increased with his success, and his rapid advancement in musical power met with warm appreciation.

While Bach held the position of director of the chapel of Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Köthen, which he assumed about the year 1720, he went to Hamburg on a pilgrimage to see old Reinke, then nearly a centenarian, whose fame as an organist was national, and had long been the object of Bach's enthusiasm. The aged man listened while his youthful rival improvised on the old choral, "Upon the Rivers of Babylon." He shed tears of joy while he tenderly embraced Bach, and said – "I did think that this art would die with me; but I see that you will keep it alive."

Our musician rapidly became known far and wide throughout the musical centres of Germany as a learned and recondite composer, as a brilliant improviser, and as an organist beyond rivalry. Yet it was in these last two capacities that his reputation among his contemporaries was the most marked. It was left to a succeeding generation to fully enlighten the world in regard to his creative powers as a musical thinker.

II

Though Bach's life was mostly spent at Weimar and Leipsic, he was at successive periods chapel-master and concert-director at several of the German courts, which aspired to shape public taste in matters of musical culture and enthusiasm. But he was by nature singularly retiring and unobtrusive, and recoiled from several brilliant offers which would have brought him too much in contact with the gay world of fashion, apparently dreading any diversion from a severe and exclusive art-life; for within these limits all his hopes, energies, and wishes were focalised. Yet he was not without that keen spirit of rivalry, that love of combat, which seems to be native to spirits of the more robust and energetic type.

In the days of the old Minnesingers, tournaments of music shared the public taste with tournaments of arms. In Bach's time these public competitions were still in vogue. One of these was held by Augustus II., Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, one of the most munificent art-patrons of Europe, but best known to fame from his intimate part in the wars of Charles XII. of Sweden and Peter the Great of Russia. Here Bach's principal rival was a French *virtuoso*, Marchand, who, an exile from Paris, had delighted the king by the lightness and brilliancy of his execution. They were both to improvise on the same theme. Marchand heard Bach's performance and signalised his own

inferiority by declining to play, and secretly leaving the city of Dresden. Augustus sent Bach a hundred louis d'or, but this splendid *douceur* never reached him, as it was appropriated by one of the court officials.

In Bach's half-century of a studious musical life there is but little of stirring incident to record. The significance of his career was interior, not exterior. Twice married, and the father of twenty children, his income was always small even for that age. Yet, by frugality, the simple wants of himself and his family never overstepped the limit of supply; for he seems to have been happily mated with wives who sympathised with his exclusive devotion to art, and united with this the virtues of old-fashioned German thrift.

Three years before his death, Bach, who had a son in the service of the King of Prussia, yielded to the urgent invitation of that monarch to go to Berlin. Frederick II., the conqueror of Rossbach, and one of the greatest of modern soldiers, was a passionate lover of literature and art, and it was his pride to collect at his court all the leading lights of European culture. He was not only the patron of Voltaire, whose connection with the Prussian monarch has furnished such rich material to the anecdote-history of literature, but of all the distinguished painters, poets, and musicians whom he could persuade by his munificent offers (but rarely fulfilled) to suffer the burden of his eccentricities. Frederick was not content with playing the part of patron, but must himself also be poet, philosopher, painter, and

composer.

On the night of Bach's arrival Frederick was taking part in a concert at his palace, and, on hearing that the great musician whose name was in the mouths of all Germany had come, immediately sent for him without allowing him to don a court dress, interrupting his concert with the enthusiastic announcement, "Gentlemen, Bach is here." The cordial hospitality and admiration of Frederick was gratefully acknowledged by Bach, who dedicated to him a three-part fugue on a theme composed by the king, known under the name of "A Musical Offering." But he could not be persuaded to remain long from his Leipsic home.

Shortly before Bach's death, he was seized with blindness, brought on by incessant labour; and his end was supposed to have been hastened by the severe inflammation consequent on two operations performed by an English oculist. He departed this life July 30, 1750, and was buried in St. John's churchyard, universally mourned by musical Germany, though his real title to exceptional greatness was not to be read until the next generation.

III

Sebastian Bach was not only the descendant of a widely-known musical family, but was himself the direct ancestor of about sixty of the best-known organists and church composers of Germany. As a master of organ-playing, tradition tells us that no one has been his equal, with the possible exception of Handel. He was also an able performer on various stringed instruments, and his preference for the clavichord[2] led him to write a method for that instrument, which has been the basis of all succeeding methods for the piano. Bach's teachings and influence may be said to have educated a large number of excellent composers and organ and piano players, among whom were Emanuel Bach, Cramer, Hummel, and Clementi; and on his school of theory and practice the best results in music have been built.

That Bach's glory as a composer should be largely posthumous is probably the result of his exceeding simplicity and diffidence, for he always shrank from popular applause; therefore we may believe his compositions were not placed in the proper light during his life. It was through Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven, that the musical world learned what a master-spirit had wrought in the person of John Sebastian Bach. The first time Mozart heard one of Bach's hymns, he said, "Thank God! I learn

[2] An old instrument, which may be called the nearest prototype of the modern square piano.

something absolutely new."

Bach's great compositions include his "Preludes and Fugues" for the organ, works so difficult and elaborate as perhaps to be above the average comprehension, but sources of delight and instruction to all musicians; the "Matthäus Passion," for two choruses and two orchestras, one of the masterpieces in music, which was not produced till a century after it was written; the "Oratorio of the Nativity of Jesus Christ;" and a very large number of masses, anthems, cantatas, chorals, hymns, etc. These works, from their largeness and dignity of form, as also from their depth of musical science, have been to all succeeding composers an art-armoury, whence they have derived and furbished their brightest weapons. In the study of Bach's works the student finds the deepest and highest reaches in the science of music; for his mind seems to have grasped all its resources, and to have embodied them with austere purity and precision of form. As Spenser is called the poet for poets, and Laplace the mathematician for mathematicians, so Bach is the musician for musicians. While Handel may be considered a purely independent and parallel growth, it is not too much to assert that without Sebastian Bach and his matchless studies for the piano, organ, and orchestra, we could not have had the varied musical development in sonata and symphony from such masters as Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. Three of Sebastian Bach's sons became distinguished musicians, and to Emanuel we owe the artistic development of the sonata, which in its turn became

the foundation of the symphony.

HANDEL

I

To the modern Englishman Handel is almost a contemporary. Paintings and busts of this great minstrel are scattered everywhere throughout the land. He lies in Westminster Abbey among the great poets, warriors, and statesmen, a giant memory in his noble art. A few hours after death the sculptor Roubiliac took a cast of his face, which he wrought into imperishable marble; "moulded in colossal calm," he towers above his tomb, and accepts the homage of the world benignly like a god. Exeter Hall and the Foundling Hospital in London are also adorned with marble statues of him.

There are more than fifty known pictures of Handel, some of them by distinguished artists. In the best of these pictures Handel is seated in the gay costume of the period, with sword, shot-silk breeches, and coat embroidered with gold. The face is noble in its repose. Benevolence is seated about the finely-shaped mouth, and the face wears the mellow dignity of years, without weakness or austerity. There are few collectors of prints in England and America who have not a woodcut or a lithograph of him. His face and his music are alike familiar to the English-speaking world.

Handel came to England in the year 1710, at the age of twenty-

five. Four years before he had met, at Naples, Scarlatti, Porpora, and Corelli. That year had been the turning-point in his life. With one stride he reached the front rank, and felt that no musician alive could teach him anything.

George Frederick Handel (or Händel, as the name is written in German) was born at Halle, Lower Saxony, in the year 1685. Like German literature, German music is a comparatively recent growth. What little feeling existed for the musical art employed itself in cultivating the alien flowers of Italian song. Even eighty years after this Mozart and Haydn were treated like lackeys and vagabonds, just as great actors were treated in England at the same period. Handel's father looked on music as an occupation having very little dignity.

Determined that his young son should become a doctor like himself, and leave the divine art to Italian fiddlers and French buffoons, he did not allow him to go to a public school even, for fear he should learn the gamut. But the boy Handel, passionately fond of sweet sounds, had, with the connivance of his nurse, hidden in the garret a poor spinet, and in stolen hours taught himself how to play. At last the senior Handel had a visit to make to another son in the service of the Duke of Saxe-Weissenfels, and the young George was taken along to the ducal palace. The boy strayed into the chapel, and was irresistibly drawn to the organ. His stolen performance was made known to his father and the duke, and the former was very much enraged at such a direct evidence of disobedience. The duke, however, being

astonished at the performance of the youthful genius, interceded for him, and recommended that his taste should be encouraged and cultivated instead of repressed.

From this time forward fortune showered upon him a combination of conditions highly favourable to rapid development. Severe training, ardent friendship, the society of the first composers, and incessant practice were vouchsafed him. As the pupil of the great organist Zachau, he studied the whole existing mass of German and Italian music, and soon exacted from his master the admission that he had nothing more to teach him. Thence he went to Berlin to study the opera-school, where Ariosti and Bononcini were favourite composers. The first was friendly, but the latter, who with a first-rate head had a cankered heart, determined to take the conceit out of the Saxon boy. He challenged him to play at sight an elaborate piece. Handel played it with perfect precision, and thenceforward Bononcini, though he hated the youth as a rival, treated him as an equal.

On the death of his father Handel secured an engagement at the Hamburg opera-house, where he soon made his mark by the ability with which, on several occasions, he conducted rehearsals.

At the age of nineteen Handel received the offer of the Lübeck organ, on condition that he would marry the daughter of the retiring organist. He went down with his friend Mattheson, who it seems had been offered the same terms. They both returned, however, in single blessedness to Hamburg.

Though the Lübeck maiden had stirred no bad blood between

them, musical rivalry did. A dispute in the theatre resulted in a duel. The only thing that saved Handel's life was a great brass button that shivered his antagonist's point, when they were parted to become firm friends again.

While at Hamburg Handel's first two operas were composed, "Almira" and "Nero." Both of these were founded on dark tales of crime and sorrow, and, in spite of some beautiful airs and clever instrumentation, were musical failures, as might be expected.

Handel had had enough of manufacturing operas in Germany, and so in July 1706 he went to Florence. Here he was cordially received; for Florence was second to no city in Italy in its passion for encouraging the arts. Its noble specimens of art creations in architecture, painting, and sculpture produced a powerful impression upon the young musician. In little more than a week's time he composed an opera, "Rodrigo," for which he obtained one hundred sequins. His next visit was to Venice, where he arrived at the height of the carnival. Whatever effect Venice, with its weird and mysterious beauty, with its marble palaces, façades, pillars, and domes, its magnificent shrines and frescoes, produced on Handel, he took Venice by storm. Handel's power as an organist and a harpsichord player was only second to his strength as a composer, even when, in the full zenith of his maturity, he composed the "Messiah" and "Judas Maccabæus."

"Il caro Sassone," the dear Saxon, found a formidable opponent as well as dear friend in the person of Scarlatti.

One night at a masked ball, given by a nobleman, Handel was present in disguise. He sat at the harpsichord, and astonished the company with his playing; but no one could tell who it was that ravished the ears of the assembly. Presently another masquerader came into the room, walked up to the instrument, and called out: "It is either the devil or the Saxon!" This was Scarlatti, who afterwards had with Handel, in Florence and Rome, friendly contests of skill, in which it seemed difficult to decide which was victor. To satisfy the Venetian public, Handel composed the opera "Agrippina," which made a *furore* among all the connoisseurs of the city.

So, having seen the summer in Florence and the carnival in Venice, he must hurry on to be in time for the great Easter celebrations in Rome. Here he lived under the patronage of Cardinal Ottoboni, one of the wealthiest and most liberal of the Sacred College. The cardinal was a modern representative of the ancient patrician. Living himself in princely luxury, he endowed hospitals and surgeries for the public. He distributed alms, patronised men of science and art, and entertained the public with comedies, operas, oratorios, puppet-shows, and academic disputes. Under the auspices of this patron, Handel composed three operas and two oratorios. Even at this early period the young composer was parting company with the strict old musical traditions, and his works showed an extraordinary variety and strength of treatment.

From Rome he went to Naples, where he spent his second

Italian summer, and composed the original Italian "Aci e Galatea," which in its English version, afterwards written for the Duke of Chandos, has continued a marked favourite with the musical world. Thence, after a lingering return through the sunny land where he had been so warmly welcomed, and which had taught him most effectually, in convincing him that his musical life had nothing in common with the traditions of Italian musical art, he returned to Germany, settling at the court of George of Brunswick, Elector of Hanover, and afterwards King of England. He received commission in the course of a few months from the elector to visit England, having been warmly invited thither by some English noblemen. On his return to Hanover, at the end of six months, he found the dull and pompous little court unspeakably tiresome after the bustle of London. So it is not to be marvelled at that he took the earliest opportunity of returning to the land which he afterwards adopted. At this period he was not yet twenty-five years old, but already famous as a performer on the organ and harpsichord, and as a composer of Italian operas.

When Queen Anne died and Handel's old patron became King of England, Handel was forbidden to appear before him, as he had not forgotten the musician's escapade; but his peace was at last made by a little ruse. Handel had a friend at court, Baron Kilmansegge, from whom he learned that the king was, on a certain day, going to take an excursion on the Thames. So he set to work to compose music for the occasion, which he arranged to have performed on a boat which followed the

king's barge. As the king floated down the river he heard the new and delightful "Water-Music." He knew that only one man could have composed such music; so he sent for Handel, and sealed his pardon with a pension of two hundred pounds a-year.

II

Let us take a glance at the society in which the composer moved in the heyday of his youth. His greatness was to be perfected in after-years by bitter rivalries, persecution, alternate oscillations of poverty and affluence, and a multitude of bitter experiences. But at this time Handel's life was a serene and delightful one. Rival factions had not been organised to crush him. Lord Burlington lived much at his mansion, which was then out of town, although the house is now in the heart of Piccadilly. The intimate friendship of this nobleman helped to bring the young musician into contact with many distinguished people.

It is odd to think of the people Handel met daily without knowing that their names and his would be in a century famous. The following picture sketches Handel and his friends in a sprightly fashion: —

"Yonder heavy, ragged-looking youth standing at the corner of Regent Street, with a slight and rather more refined-looking companion, is the obscure Samuel Johnson, quite unknown to fame. He is walking with Richard Savage. As Signor Handel, 'the composer of Italian music,' passes by, Savage becomes excited, and nudges his friend, who takes only a languid interest in the foreigner. Johnson did not care for music; of many noises he considered it the least disagreeable.

"Toward Charing Cross comes, in shovel-hat and cassock,

the renowned ecclesiastic, Dean Swift. He has just nodded patronisingly to Bononcini in the Strand, and suddenly meets Handel, who cuts him dead. Nothing disconcerted, the dean moves on, muttering his famous epigram —

> 'Some say that Signor Bononcini,
> Compared to Handel, is a ninny;
> While others vow that to him Handel
> Is hardly fit to hold a candle.
> Strange that such difference should be
> 'Twixt tweedledum and tweedledee.'

"As Handel enters the 'Turk's Head' at the corner of Regent Street, a noble coach and four drives up. It is the Duke of Chandos, who is inquiring for Mr. Pope. Presently a deformed little man, in an iron-grey suit, and with a face as keen as a razor, hobbles out, makes a low bow to the burly Handel, who, helping him into the chariot, gets in after him, and they drive off together to Cannons, the duke's mansion at Edgeware. There they meet Mr. Addison, the poet Gay, and the witty Arbuthnot, who have been asked to luncheon. The last number of the *Spectator* is on the table, and a brisk discussion soon arises between Pope and Addison concerning the merits of the Italian opera, in which Pope would have the better if he only knew a little more about music, and could keep his temper. Arbuthnot sides with Pope in favour of Mr. Handel's operas; the duke endeavours to keep the peace. Handel probably uses his favourite exclamation, 'Vat te

tevil I care!' and consumes the *recherché* wines and rare viands with undiminished gusto.

"The Magnificent, or the Grand Duke, as he was called, had built himself a palace for £230,000. He had a private chapel, and appointed Handel organist in the room of the celebrated Dr. Pepusch, who retired with excellent grace before one manifestly his superior. On week-days the duke and duchess entertained all the wits and grandees in town, and on Sundays the Edgeware Road was thronged with the gay equipages of those who went to worship at the ducal chapel and hear Mr. Handel play on the organ.

"The Edgeware Road was a pleasant country drive, but parts of it were so solitary that highwaymen were much to be feared. The duke was himself attacked on one occasion; and those who could afford it never travelled so far out of town without armed retainers. Cannons was the pride of the neighbourhood, and the duke – of whom Pope wrote, was as popular as he was wealthy. But his name is made still more illustrious by the Chandos anthems. They were all written at Cannons between 1718 and 1720, and number in all eleven overtures, thirty-two solos, six duets, a trio, quartet, and forty-seven choruses. Some of the above are real masterpieces; but, with the exception of 'The waves of the sea rage horribly,' and 'Who is God but the Lord?' few of them are ever heard now. And yet these anthems were most significant in the variety of the choruses and in the range of the accompaniments; and it was then, no doubt, that Handel

was feeling his way toward the great and immortal sphere of his oratorio music. Indeed, his first oratorio, 'Esther,' was composed at Cannons, as also the English version of 'Acis and Galatea.'"

'Thus gracious Chandos is beloved at sight' —

But Handel had other associates, and we must now visit Thomas Britton, the musical coal-heaver. "There goes the famous small-coal man, a lover of learning, a musician, and a companion of gentlemen." So the folks used to say as Thomas Britton, the coal-heaver of Clerkenwell Green, paced up and down the neighbouring streets with his sack of small coal on his back, destined for one of his customers. Britton was great among the great. He was courted by the most fashionable folk of his day. He was a cultivated coal-heaver, who, besides his musical taste and ability, possessed an extensive knowledge of chemistry and the occult sciences.

Britton did more than this. He gave concerts in Aylesbury Street, Clerkenwell, where this singular man had formed a dwelling-house, with a concert-room and a coal-store, out of what was originally a stable. On the ground-floor was the small-coal repository, and over that the concert-room – very long and narrow, badly lighted, and with a ceiling so low that a tall man could scarcely stand upright in it. The stairs to this room were far from pleasant to ascend, and the following facetious lines by Ward, the author of the "London Spy," confirm this: —

"Upon Thursdays repair

To my palace, and there
Hobble up stair by stair,
But I pray ye take care
That you break not your shins by a stumble;

"And without e'er a souse
Paid to me or my spouse,
Sit as still as a mouse
At the top of the house,
And there you shall hear how we fumble."

Nevertheless, beautiful duchesses and the best society in town flocked to Britton's on Thursdays – not to order coals, but to sit out his concerts.

Let us follow the short, stout little man on a concert-day. The customers are all served, or as many as can be. The coal-shed is made tidy and swept up, and the coal-heaver awaits his company. There he stands at the door of his stable, dressed in his blue blouse, dustman's hat, and maroon kerchief tightly fastened round his neck. The concert-room is almost full, and, pipe in hand, Britton awaits a new visitor – the beautiful Duchess of B – . She is somewhat late (the coachman, possibly, is not quite at home in the neighbourhood).

Here comes a carriage, which stops at the coal-shop; and, laying down his pipe, the coal-heaver assists her grace to alight, and in the genteelest manner escorts her to the narrow staircase leading to the music-room. Forgetting Ward's advice, she trips

laughingly and carelessly up the stairs to the room, from which proceed faint sounds of music, increasing to quite an *olla podrida* of sound as the apartment is reached – for the musicians are tuning up. The beautiful duchess is soon recognised, and as soon in deep gossip with her friends. But who is that gentlemanly man leaning over the chamber-organ? That is Sir Roger L'Estrange, an admirable performer on the violoncello, and a great lover of music. He is watching the subtile fingering of Mr. Handel, as his dimpled hands drift leisurely and marvellously over the keys of the instrument.

There, too, is Mr. Bannister with his fiddle – the first Englishman, by-the-by, who distinguished himself upon the violin; there is Mr. Woolaston, the painter, relating to Dr. Pepusch of how he had that morning thrown up his window upon hearing Britton crying "Small coal!" near his house in Warwick Lane, and, having beckoned him in, had made a sketch for a painting of him; there, too, is Mr. John Hughes, author of the "Siege of Damascus." In the background also are Mr. Philip Hart, Mr. Henry Symonds, Mr. Obadiah Shuttleworth, Mr. Abiell Whichello; while in the extreme corner of the room is Robe, a justice of the peace, letting out to Henry Needler of the Excise Office the last bit of scandal that has come into his court. And now, just as the concert has commenced, in creeps "Soliman the Magnificent," also known as Mr. Charles Jennens, of Great Ormond Street, who wrote many of Handel's librettos, and arranged the words for the "Messiah."

"Soliman the Magnificent" is evidently resolved to do justice to his title on this occasion, with his carefully-powdered wig, frills, maroon-coloured coat, and buckled shoes; and as he makes his progress up the room, the company draw aside for him to reach his favourite seat near Handel. A trio of Corelli's is gone through; then Madame Cuzzoni sings Handel's last new air; Dr. Pepusch takes his turn at the harpsichord; another trio of Hasse, or a solo on the violin by Bannister; a selection on the organ from Mr. Handel's new oratorio; and then the day's programme is over. Dukes, duchesses, wits and philosophers, poets and musicians, make their way down the satirised stairs to go, some in carriages, some in chairs, some on foot, to their own palaces, houses, or lodgings.

III

We do not now think of Handel in connection with the opera. To the modern mind he is so linked to the oratorio, of which he was the father and the consummate master, that his operas are curiosities but little known except to musical antiquaries. Yet some of the airs from the Handel operas are still cherished by singers as among the most beautiful songs known to the concert-stage.

In 1720 Handel was engaged by a party of noblemen, headed by his Grace of Chandos, to compose operas for the Royal Academy of Music at the Haymarket. An attempt had been made to put this institution on a firm foundation by a subscription of £50,000, and it was opened on May 2nd with a full company of singers engaged by Handel. In the course of eight years twelve operas were produced in rapid succession: "Floridante," December 9, 1721; "Ottone," January 12, 1723; "Flavio" and "Giulio Cesare," 1723; "Tamerlano," 1724; "Rodelinda," 1725; "Scipione," 1726; "Alessandro," 1726; "Admeto," 1727; "Siroe," 1728; and "Tolommeo," 1728. They made as great a *furore* among the musical public of that day as would an opera from Gounod or Verdi in the present. The principal airs were sung throughout the land, and published as harpsichord pieces; for in these halcyon days of our composers the whole atmosphere of the land was full of the flavour and

colour of Handel. Many of the melodies in these now forgotten operas have been worked up by modern composers, and so have passed into modern music unrecognised. It is a notorious fact that the celebrated song, "Where the Bee sucks," by Dr. Arne, is taken from a movement in "Rinaldo." Thus the new life of music is ever growing rich with the dead leaves of the past. The most celebrated of these operas was entitled "Otto." It was a work composed of one long string of exquisite gems, like Mozart's "Don Giovanni" and Gounod's "Faust." Dr. Pepusch, who had never quite forgiven Handel for superseding him as the best organist in England, remarked of one of the airs, "That great bear must have been inspired when he wrote that air." The celebrated Madame Cuzzoni made her *début* in it. On the second night the tickets rose to four guineas each, and Cuzzoni received two thousand pounds for the season.

The composer had already begun to be known for his irascible temper. It is refreshing to learn that operatic singers of the day, however whimsical and self-willed, were obliged to bend to the imperious genius of this man. In a spirit of ill-timed revolt Cuzzoni declined to sing an air. She had already given him trouble by her insolence and freaks, which at times were unbearable. Handel at last exploded. He flew at the wretched woman and shook her like a rat. "Ah! I always knew you were a fery tevil," he cried, "and I shall now let you know that I am Beelzebub, the prince of de tevils!" and, dragging her to the open window, was just on the point of pitching her into the

street, when, in every sense of the word, she recanted. So, when Carestini, the celebrated tenor, sent back an air, Handel was furious. Rushing into the trembling Italian's house, he said, in his four- or five-language style – "You tog! don't I know better as yourself vaat it pest for you to sing? If you vill not sing all de song vaat I give you, I vill not pay you ein stiver." Among the anecdotes told of Handel's passion is one growing out of the composer's peculiar sensitiveness to discords. The dissonance of the tuning-up period of an orchestra is disagreeable to the most patient. Handel, being peculiarly sensitive to this unfortunate necessity, always arranged that it should take place before the audience assembled, so as to prevent any sound of scraping or blowing. Unfortunately, on one occasion, some wag got access to the orchestra where the ready-tuned instruments were lying, and with diabolical dexterity put every string and crook out of tune. Handel enters. All the bows are raised together, and at the given beat all start off *con spirito*. The effect was startling in the extreme. The unhappy *maestro* rushes madly from his place, kicks to pieces the first double-bass he sees, and, seizing a kettle-drum, throws it violently at the leader of the band. The effort sends his wig flying, and, rushing bareheaded to the footlights, he stands a few moments amid the roars of the house, snorting with rage and choking with passion. Like Burleigh's nod, Handel's wig seemed to have been a sure guide to his temper. When things went well, it had a certain complacent vibration; but when he was out of humour, the wig indicated the fact in a very positive way.

The Princess of Wales was wont to blame her ladies for talking instead of listening. “Hush, hush!” she would say. “Don’t you see Handel’s wig?”

For several years after the subscription of the nobility had been exhausted, our composer, having invested £10,000 of his own in the Haymarket, produced operas with remarkable affluence, some of them *pasticcio* works, composed of all sorts of airs, in which the singers could give their *bravura* songs. These were “Lotario,” 1729; “Partenope,” 1730; “Poro,” 1731; “Ezio,” 1732; “Sosarme,” 1732; “Orlando,” 1733; “Ariadne,” 1734; and also several minor works. Handel’s operatic career was not so much the outcome of his choice as dictated to him by the necessity of time and circumstance. As time went on, his operas lost public interest. The audiences dwindled, and the overflowing houses of his earlier experience were replaced by empty benches. This, however, made little difference with Handel’s royal patrons. The king and the Prince of Wales, with their respective households, made it an express point to show their deep interest in Handel’s success. In illustration of this, an amusing anecdote is told of the Earl of Chesterfield. During the performance of “Rinaldo” this nobleman, then an equerry of the king, was met quietly retiring from the theatre in the middle of the first act. Surprise being expressed by a gentleman who met the earl, the latter said, “I don’t wish to disturb his Majesty’s privacy.”

Handel paid his singers in those days what were regarded

as enormous prices. Senisino and Carestini had each twelve hundred pounds, and Cuzzoni two thousand, for the season. Towards the end of what may be called the Handel season nearly all the singers and nobles forsook him, and supported Farinelli, the greatest singer living, at the rival house in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

IV

From the year 1729 the career of Handel was to be a protracted battle, in which he was sometimes victorious, sometimes defeated, but always undaunted and animated with a lofty sense of his own superior power. Let us take a view of some of the rival musicians with whom he came in contact. Of all these Bononcini was the most formidable. He came to England in 1720 with Ariosti, also a meritorious composer. Factions soon began to form themselves around Handel and Bononcini, and a bitter struggle ensued between these old foes. The same drama repeated itself, with new actors, about thirty years afterwards, in Paris. Gluck was then the German hero, supported by Marie Antoinette, and Piccini fought for the Italian opera under the colours of the king's mistress, Du Barry, while all the *littérateurs* and nobles ranged themselves on either side in bitter contest. The battle between Handel and Bononcini, as the exponents of German and Italian music, was also repeated in after-years between Mozart and Salieri, Weber and Rossini, and to-day is seen in the acrimonious disputes going on between Wagner and the Italian school. Bononcini's career in England came to an end very suddenly. It was discovered that a madrigal brought out by him was pirated from another Italian composer; whereupon Bononcini left England, humiliated to the dust, and finally died obscure and alone, the victim of a charlatan alchemist, who

succeeded in obtaining all his savings.

Another powerful rival of Handel was Porpora, or, as Handel used to call him, "Old Borbora." Without Bononcini's fire or Handel's daring originality, he represented the dry contrapuntal school of Italian music. He was also a great singing master, famous throughout Europe, and upon this his reputation had hitherto principally rested. He came to London in 1733, under the patronage of the Italian faction, especially to serve as a thorn in the side of Handel. His first opera, "Ariadne," was a great success; but when he had the audacity to challenge the great German in the field of oratorio, his defeat was so overwhelming that he candidly admitted his rival's superiority. But he believed that no operas in the world were equal to his own, and he composed fifty of them during his life, extending to the days of Haydn, whom he had the honour of teaching, while the father of the symphony, on the other hand, cleaned Porpora's boots and powdered his wig for him.

Another Italian opponent was Hasse, a man of true genius, who in his old age instructed some of the most splendid singers in the history of the lyric stage. He also married one of the most gifted and most beautiful divas of Europe, Faustina Bordoni. The following anecdote does equal credit to Hasse's heart and penetration: In after-years, when he had left England, he was again sent for to take Handel's place as conductor of opera and oratorio. Hasse inquired, "What! is Handel dead?" On being told no, he indignantly refused, saying he was not worthy to tie

Handel's shoe-latchets.

There are also Dr. Pepusch, the Anglicised Prussian, and Dr. Greene, both names well known in English music. Pepusch had had the leading place, before Handel's arrival, as organist and conductor, and made a distinct place for himself even after the sun of Handel had obscured all of his contemporaries. He wrote the music of the "Beggar's Opera," which was the great sensation of the times, and which still keeps possession of the stage. Pepusch was chiefly notable for his skill in arranging the popular songs of the day, and probably did more than any other composer to give the English ballad its artistic form.

The name of Dr. Greene is best known in connection with choral compositions. His relations with Handel and Bononcini are hardly creditable to him. He seems to have flattered each in turn. He upheld Bononcini in the great madrigal controversy, and appears to have wearied Handel by his repeated visits. The great Saxon easily saw through the flatteries of a man who was in reality an ambitious rival, and joked about him, not always in the best taste. When he was told that Greene was giving concerts at the "Devil Tavern," near Temple Bar, "Ah!" he exclaimed, "mein poor friend, Toctor Greene – so he is gone to de Tevil!"

From 1732 to 1740 Handel's life presents the suggestive and often-repeated experience in the lives of men of genius – a soul with a great creative mission, of which it is half unconscious, partly yielding to and partly struggling against the tendencies of the age, yet gradually crystallising into its true form, and

getting consecrated to its true work. In these eight years Handel presented to the public ten operas and five oratorios. It was in 1731 that the great significant fact, though unrecognised by himself and others, occurred, which stamped the true bent of his genius. This was the production of his first oratorio in England. He was already playing his operas to empty houses, the subject of incessant scandal and abuse on the part of his enemies, but holding his way with steady cheerfulness and courage. Twelve years before this he had composed the oratorio of "Esther," but it was still in manuscript, uncared for and neglected. It was finally produced by a society called Philharmonic, under the direction of Bernard Gates, the royal-chapel master. Its fame spread wide, and we read these significant words in one of the old English newspapers – "'Esther,' an English oratorio, was performed six times, and very full."

Shortly after this Handel himself conducted "Esther" at the Haymarket by royal command. His success encouraged him to write "Deborah," another attempt in the same field, and it met a warm reception from the public, March 17, 1733.

For about fifteen years Handel had struggled heroically in the composition of Italian operas. With these he had at first succeeded; but his popularity waned more and more, and he became finally the continued target for satire, scorn, and malevolence. In obedience to the drift of opinion, all the great singers, who had supported him at the outset, joined the rival ranks or left England. In fact, it may be almost said that the

English public were becoming dissatisfied with the whole system and method of Italian music. Colley Cibber, the actor and dramatist, explains why Italian opera could never satisfy the requirement of Handel, or be anything more than an artificial luxury in England: "The truth is, this kind of entertainment is entirely sensational." Still both Handel and his friends and his foes, all the exponents of musical opinion in England, persevered obstinately in warming this foreign exotic into a new lease of life.

The quarrel between the great Saxon composer and his opponents raged incessantly both in public and private. The newspaper and the drawing-room rang alike with venomous diatribes. Handel was called a swindler, a drunkard, and a blasphemer, to whom Scripture even was not sacred. The idea of setting Holy Writ to music scandalised the Pharisees, who revelled in the licentious operas and love-songs of the Italian school. All the small wits of the time showered on Handel epigram and satire unceasingly. The greatest of all the wits, however, Alexander Pope, was his firm friend and admirer; and in the "Dunciad," wherein the wittiest of poets impaled so many of the small fry of the age with his pungent and vindictive shaft, he also slew some of the most malevolent of Handel's foes.

Fielding, in *Tom Jones*, has an amusing hit at the taste of the period – "It was Mr. Western's custom every afternoon, as soon as he was drunk, to hear his daughter play on the harpsichord; for he was a great lover of music, and perhaps, had he lived in town, might have passed as a connoisseur, for he always excepted

against the finest compositions of Mr. Handel."

So much had it become the fashion to criticise Handel's new effects in vocal and instrumental composition, that some years later Mr. Sheridan makes one of his characters fire a pistol simply to shock the audience, and makes him say in a stage whisper to the gallery, "This hint, gentlemen, I took from Handel."

The composer's Oxford experience was rather amusing and suggestive. We find it recorded that in July 1733, "one Handell, a foreigner, was desired to come to Oxford to perform in music." Again the same writer says – "Handell, with his lousy crew, a great number of foreign fiddlers, had a performance for his own benefit at the theatre." One of the dons writes of the performance as follows: – "This is an innovation; but everyone paid his five shillings to try how a little fiddling would sit upon him. And, notwithstanding the barbarous and inhuman combination of such a parcel of unconscionable scamps, he [Handel] disposed of the most of his tickets."

"Handel and his lousy crew," however, left Oxford with the prestige of a magnificent victory. His third oratorio, "Athaliah," was received with vast applause by a great audience. Some of his university admirers, who appreciated academic honours more than the musician did, urged him to accept the degree of Doctor of Music, for which he would have to pay a small fee. The characteristic reply was a Parthian arrow: "Vat te tevil I trow my money away for dat vich the blockhead vish? I no vant!"

V

In 1738 Handel was obliged to close the theatre and suspend payment. He had made and spent during his operatic career the sum of £10,000 sterling, besides dissipating the sum of £50,000 subscribed by his noble patrons. The rival house lasted but a few months longer, and the Duchess of Marlborough and her friends, who ruled the opposition clique and imported Bononcini, paid £12,000 for the pleasure of ruining Handel. His failure as an operatic composer is due in part to the same causes which constituted his success in oratorio and cantata. It is a little significant to notice that, alike by the progress of his own genius and by the force of conditions, he was forced out of the operatic field at the very time when he strove to tighten his grip on it.

His free introduction of choral and instrumental music, his creation of new forms and remodelling of old ones, his entire subordination of the words in the story to a pure musical purpose, offended the singers and retarded the action of the drama in the eyes of the audience; yet it was by virtue of these unpopular characteristics that the public mind was being moulded to understand and love the form of the oratorio.

From 1734 to 1738 Handel composed and produced a number of operatic works, the principal ones of which were "Alcina," 1735; "Arminio," 1737; and "Berenice," 1737. He also during these years wrote the magnificent music to Dryden's

"Alexander's Feast," and the great funeral anthem on the occasion of Queen Caroline's death in the latter part of the year 1737.

We can hardly solve the tenacity of purpose with which Handel persevered in the composition of operatic music after it had ruined him; but it was still some time before he fully appreciated the true turn of his genius, which could not be trifled with or ignored. In his adversity he had some consolation. His creditors were patient, believing in his integrity. The royal family were his firm friends.

Southey tells us that Handel, having asked the youthful Prince of Wales, then a child, and afterward George the Third, if he loved music, answered, when the prince expressed his pleasure, "A good boy, a good boy! You shall protect my fame when I am dead." Afterwards, when the half-imbecile George was crazed with family and public misfortunes, he found his chief solace in the Waverley novels and Handel's music.

It is also an interesting fact that the poets and thinkers of the age were Handel's firm admirers. Such men as Gay, Arbuthnot, Hughes, Colley Cibber, Pope, Fielding, Hogarth, and Smollett, who recognised the deep, struggling tendencies of the times, measured Handel truly. They defended him in print, and never failed to attend his performances, and at his benefit concerts their enthusiastic support always insured him an overflowing house.

The popular instinct was also true to him. The aristocratic classes sneered at his oratorios and complained at his

innovations. His music was found to be good bait for the popular gardens and the holiday-makers of the period. Jonathan Tyers was one of the most liberal managers of this class. He was proprietor of Vauxhall Gardens, and Handel (*incognito*) supplied him with nearly all his music. The composer did much the same sort of thing for Marylebone Gardens, furbishing up old and writing new strains with an ease that well became the urgency of the circumstances.

"My grandfather," says the Rev. J. Fountagne, "as I have been told, was an enthusiast in music, and cultivated most of all the friendship of musical men, especially of Handel, who visited him often, and had a great predilection for his society. This leads me to relate an anecdote which I have on the best authority. While Marylebone Gardens were flourishing, the enchanting music of Handel, and probably of Arne, was often heard from the orchestra there. One evening, as my grandfather and Handel were walking together and alone, a new piece was struck up by the band. 'Come, Mr. Fountagne,' said Handel, 'let us sit down and listen to this piece; I want to know your opinion about it.' Down they sat, and after some time the old parson, turning to his companion, said, 'It is not worth listening to; it's very poor stuff.' 'You are right, Mr. Fountagne,' said Handel, 'it is very poor stuff; I thought so myself when I had finished it.' The old gentleman, being taken by surprise, was beginning to apologise; but Handel assured him there was no necessity, that the music was really bad, having been composed hastily, and his time for

the production limited; and that the opinion given was as correct as it was honest."

VI

The period of Handel's highest development had now arrived. For seven years his genius had been slowly but surely maturing, in obedience to the inner law of his being. He had struggled long in the bonds of operatic composition, but even here his innovations showed conclusively how he was reaching out toward the form with which his name was to be associated through all time. The year 1739 was one of prodigious activity. The oratorio of "Saul" was produced, of which the "Dead March" is still recognised as one of the great musical compositions of all time, being one of the few intensely solemn symphonies written in a major key. Several works now forgotten were composed, and the great "Israel in Egypt" was written in the incredibly short space of twenty-seven days. Of this work a distinguished writer on music says – "Handel was now fifty-five years old, and had entered, after many a long and weary contest, upon his last and greatest creative period. His genius culminates in the 'Israel.' Elsewhere he has produced longer recitatives and more pathetic arias; nowhere has he written finer tenor songs than 'The enemy said,' or finer duets than 'The Lord is a man of war;' and there is not in the history of music an example of choruses piled up like so many Ossas on Pelions in such majestic strength, and hurled in open defiance at a public whose ears were itching for Italian love-lays and English ballads. In these twenty-eight

colossal choruses we perceive at once a reaction against and a triumph over the tastes of the age. The wonder is, not that the 'Israel' was unpopular, but that it should have been tolerated; but Handel, while he appears to have been for years driven by the public, had been, in reality, driving them. His earliest oratorio, 'Il Trionfo del Tempo' (composed in Italy), had but two choruses; into his operas more and more were introduced, with disastrous consequences; but when, at the zenith of his strength, he produced a work which consisted almost entirely of these unpopular peculiarities, the public treated him with respect, and actually sat out three performances in one season!" In addition to these two great oratorios, our composer produced the beautiful music to Dryden's "St. Cæcilia Ode," and Milton's "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso." Henceforth neither praise nor blame could turn Handel from his appointed course. He was not yet popular with the musical *dilettanti*, but we find no more catering to an absurd taste, no more writing of silly operatic froth.

Our composer had always been very fond of the Irish, and, at the invitation of the lord-lieutenant and prominent Dublin amateurs, he crossed the channel in 1741. He was received with the greatest enthusiasm, and his house became the resort of all the musical people in the city of Dublin. One after another his principal works were produced before admiring audiences in the new Music Hall in Fishamble Street. The crush to hear the "Allegro" and "Penseroso" at the opening performances was so great that the doors had to be closed. The papers declared there

never had been seen such a scene before in Dublin.

Handel gave twelve performances at very short intervals, comprising all of his finest works. In these concerts the "Acis and Galatea" and "Alexander's Feast" were the most admired; but the enthusiasm culminated in the rendition of the "Messiah," produced for the first time on 13th April 1742. The performance was a beneficiary one in aid of poor and distressed prisoners for debt in the Marshalsea in Dublin. So, by a remarkable coincidence, the first performance of the "Messiah" literally meant deliverance to the captives. The principal singers were Mrs. Cibber (daughter-in-law of Colley Cibber, and afterwards one of the greatest actresses of her time), Mrs. Avoglio, and Mr. Dubourg. The town was wild with excitement. Critics, poets, fine ladies, and men of fashion tore rhetoric to tatters in their admiration. A clergyman so far forgot his Bible in his rapture as to exclaim to Mrs. Cibber, at the close of one of her airs, "Woman, for this be all thy sins forgiven thee." The penny-a-liners wrote that "words were wanting to express the exquisite delight," etc. And – supreme compliment of all, for Handel was a cynical bachelor – the fine ladies consented to leave their hoops at home for the second performance, that a couple of hundred or so extra listeners might be accommodated. This event was the grand triumph of Handel's life. Years of misconception, neglect, and rivalry were swept out of mind in the intoxicating delight of that night's success.

VII

Handel returned to London, and composed a new oratorio, "Samson," for the following Lenten season. This, together with the "Messiah," heard for the first time in London, made the stock of twelve performances. The fashionable world ignored him altogether; the newspapers kept a contemptuous silence; comic singers were hired to parody his noblest airs at the great houses; and impudent Horace Walpole had the audacity to say that he "had hired all the goddesses from farces and singers of roast-beef, from between the acts of both theatres, with a man with one note in his voice, and a girl with never a one; and so they sang and made brave hallelujahs."

The new field into which Handel had entered inspired his genius to its greatest energy. His new works for the season of 1744 were the "Dettingen Te Deum," "Semele," and "Joseph and his Brethren;" for the next year (he had again rented the Haymarket Theatre), "Hercules," "Belshazzar," and a revival of "Deborah." All these works were produced in a style of then uncommon completeness; and the great expense he incurred, combined with the active hostility of the fashionable world, forced him to close his doors and suspend payment. From this time forward Handel gave concerts whenever he chose, and depended on the people, who so supported him by their gradually growing appreciation, that in two years he had paid

off all his debts, and in ten years had accumulated a fortune of £10,000. The works produced during these latter years were "Judas Maccabæus," 1747; "Alexander," 1748; "Joshua," 1748; "Susannah," 1749; "Solomon," 1749; "Theodora," 1750; "Choice of Hercules," 1751; "Jephthah," 1752, closing with this a stupendous series of dramatic oratorios. While at work on the last, his eyes suffered an attack which finally resulted in blindness.

Like Milton in the case of "Paradise Lost," Handel preferred one of his least popular oratorios, "Theodora." It was a great favourite with him, and he used to say that the chorus, "He saw the lovely youth," was finer than anything in the "Messiah." The public were not of this opinion, and he was glad to give away tickets to any professors who applied for them. When the "Messiah" was again produced, two of these gentlemen who had neglected "Theodora" applied for admission. "Oh! your sarvant, meine Herren!" exclaimed the indignant composer. "You are tamnable dainty! You would not go to 'Theodora' – dere was room enough to dance dere when dat was perform." When Handel heard that an enthusiast had offered to make himself responsible for all the boxes the next time the despised oratorio should be given – "He is a fool," said he; "the Jews will not come to it as to 'Judas Maccabæus,' because it is a Christian story; and the ladies will not come, because it is a virtuous one."

Handel's triumph was now about to culminate in a serene and acknowledged pre-eminence. The people had recognised

his greatness, and the reaction at last conquered all classes. Publishers vied with each other in producing his works, and their performance was greeted with great audiences and enthusiastic applause. His last ten years were a peaceful and beautiful ending of a stormy career.

VIII

Thought lingers pleasantly over this sunset period. Handel throughout life was so wedded to his art, that he cared nothing for the delights of woman's love. His recreations were simple – rowing, walking, visiting his friends, and playing on the organ. He would sometimes try to play the people out of St. Paul's Cathedral, and hold them indefinitely. He would resort at night to his favourite tavern, the Queen's Head, where he would smoke and drink beer with his chosen friends. Here he would indulge in roaring conviviality and fun, and delight his friends with sparkling satire and pungent humour, of which he was a great master, helped by his amusing compound of English, Italian, and German. Often he would visit the picture galleries, of which he was passionately fond. His clumsy but noble figure could be seen almost any morning rolling through Charing Cross; and everyone who met old Father Handel treated him with the deepest reverence.

The following graphic narrative, taken from the *Somerset House Gazette*, offers a vivid portraiture. Schœlcher, in his *Life of Handel*, says that "its author had a relative, Zachary Hardcastle, a retired merchant, who was intimately acquainted with all the most distinguished men of his time, artists, poets, musicians, and physicians." This old gentleman, who lived at Paper Buildings, was accustomed to take his morning walk in the garden of

Somerset House, where he happened to meet with another old man, Colley Cibber, and proposed to him to go and hear a competition which was to take place at midday for the post of organist to the Temple, and he invited him to breakfast, telling him at the same time that Dr. Pepusch and Dr. Arne were to be with him at nine o'clock. They go in; Pepusch arrives punctually at the stroke of nine; presently there is a knock, the door is opened, and Handel unexpectedly presents himself. Then follows the scene: —

"Handel: 'Vat! mein dear friend Hardgasdle – vat! you are merry py dimes! Vat! and Misder Golley Cibbers, too! aye, and Togder Peepbush as vell! Vell, dat is gomigal. Vell, mein friendts, andt how vags the vorldt wid you, mein tdears? Bray, bray, do let me sit town a momend.'

"Pepusch took the great man's hat, Colley Cibber took his stick, and my great-uncle wheeled round his reading-chair, which was somewhat about the dimensions of that in which our kings and queens are crowned; and then the great man sat him down.

"'Vell, I thank you, gentlemen; now I am at mein ease vonce more. Upon mein vord, dat is a picture of a ham. It is very pold of me to gome to preak my fastd wid you uninvided; and I have brought along wid me a nodable abbetite; for the wader of old Fader Dems is it not a fine pracer of the stomach?'

"'You do me great honour, Mr. Handel,' said my great-uncle. 'I take this early visit as a great kindness.'

"'A delightful morning for the water,' said Colley Cibber.

"'Pray, did you come with oars or scullers, Mr. Handel?' said Pepusch.

"'Now, how gan you demand of me dat zilly question, you who are a musician and a man of science, Togder Peepbush? Vat gan it concern you whether I have one votdermans or two votdermans – whether I bull out mine burce for to pay von shilling or two? Diavolo! I gannot go here, or I gannot go dere, but some one shall send it to some newsbaber, as how Misder Chorge Vrederick Handel did go somedimes last week in a votderman's wherry, to preak his fastd wid Misder Zac. Hardgasdle; but it shall be all the fault wid himeself, if it shall be but in print, whether I was rowed by one votdermans or by two votdermans. So, Togder Peepbush, you will blease to excuse me from dat.'

"Poor Dr. Pepusch was for a moment disconcerted, but it was soon forgotten in the first dish of coffee.

"'Well, gentlemen,' said my great-uncle Zachary, looking at his tompion, 'it is ten minutes past nine. Shall we wait more for Dr. Arne?'

"'Let us give him another five minutes' chance, Master Hardcastle,' said Colley Cibber; 'he is too great a genius to keep time.'

"'Let us put it to the vote,' said Dr. Pepusch, smiling. 'Who holds up hands?'

"'I will segond your motion wid all mine heardt,' said Handel. 'I will hold up mine feeble hands for mine oldt friendt Custos (Arne's name was Augustine), for I know not who I wouldt

waidt for, over andt above mine oldt rival, Master Dom (meaning Pepusch). Only by your bermission, I vill dake a snag of your ham, andt a slice of French roll, or a modicum of chicken; for to dell you the honest fagd, I am all pote famished, for I laid me down on mine billow in bed the lastd nightd widout mine supper, at the instance of mine physician, for which I am not altogeddere inglined to extend mine fastd no longer.' Then, laughing: 'Berhaps, Mister Golley Cibbers, you may like to pote this to the vote? But I shall not segond the motion, nor shall I holdt up mine hand, as I will, by bermission, embloy it some dime in a better office. So, if you please, do me the kindness for to gut me a small slice of ham.'

"At this instant a hasty footstep was heard on the stairs, accompanied by the humming of an air, all as gay as the morning, which was beautiful and bright. It was the month of May.

"'Bresto! be quick,' said Handel; he knew it was Arne; 'fifteen minutes of dime is butty well for an *ad libitum*.'

"'Mr. Arne,' said my great-uncle's man.

"A chair was placed, and the social party commenced their *déjeuner*.

"'Well, and how do you find yourself, my dear sir?' inquired Arne, with friendly warmth.

"'Why, by the mercy of Heaven, andt the waders of Aix-la-Chapelle, andt the addentions of mine togders andt physicians, and oggulists, of lade years, under Providence, I am surbrizingly pedder – thank you kindly, Misder Custos. Andt you have also

been doing well of lade, as I am bleased to hear. You see, sir,' pointing to his plate, 'you see, sir, dat I am in the way for to regruit mine flesh wid the good viands of Misder Zachary Hardgasdle.'

"'So, sir, I presume you are come to witness the trial of skill at the old round church? I understand the amateurs expect a pretty sharp contest,' said Arne.

"'Gondest,' echoed Handel, laying down his knife and fork. 'Yes, no doubt; your amadeurs have a bassion for gondest. Not vot it vos in our remembrance. Hey, mine friendt? Ha, ha, ha!'

"'No, sir, I am happy to say those days of envy and bickering, and party feeling, are gone and past. To be sure we had enough of such disgraceful warfare: it lasted too long.'

"'Why, yes; it tid last too long, it bereft me of mine poor limbs: it tid bereave of that vot is the most blessed gift of Him vot made us, andt not wee ourselves. And for vot? Vy, for noding in the vorldt pode the bleasure and bastime of them who, having no widt, nor no want, set at loggerheads such men as live by their widts, to worry and destroy one andt anodere as wild beasts in the Golloseum in the dimes of the Romans.'

"Poor Dr. Pepusch during this conversation, as my great-uncle observed, was sitting on thorns; he was in the confederacy professionally only.

"'I hope, sir,' observed the doctor, 'you do not include me among those who did injustice to your talents?'

"'Nod at all, nod at all; God forbid! I am a great admirer of the airs of the "Peggar's Obera," andt every professional gendtleman

must do his best for to live.'

"This mild return, couched under an apparent compliment, was well received; but Handel, who had a talent for sarcastic drolling, added —

"'Pute why blay the Peggar yourself, Togder, andt adapt oldt pallad humsdrum, ven, as a man of science, you could gombose original airs of your own? Here is mine friendt, Custos Arne, who has made a road for himself, for to drive along his own genius to the demple of fame.' Then, turning to our illustrious Arne, he continued, 'Min friendt Custos, you and I must meed togeder somedimes before it is long, and hold a *tête-à-tête* of old days vat is gone; ha, ha! Oh! it is gomigal now dat id is all gone by. Custos, to nod you remember as it was almost only of yesterday dat she-devil Guzzoni, andt dat other brecious taughter of iniquity, Pelzebub's spoiled child, the bretty-faced Faustina? Oh! the mad rage vot I have to answer for, vot with one and the oder of these fine latdies' airs andt graces. Again, to you nod remember dat ubstardt buppy Senesino, and the goxgomb Farinelli? Next, again, mine somedimes nodtable rival Bononcini, and old Borbora? Ha, ha, ha! all at war wid me, andt all at war wid themselves. Such a gonfusion of rivalshibs, andt double-facedness, andt hybocrisy, and malice, vot would make a gomigal subject for a boem in rhymes, or a biece for the stage, as I hopes to be saved.'"

IX

We now turn from the man to his music. In his daily life with the world we get a spectacle of a quick, passionate temper, incased in a great burly frame, and raging into whirlwinds of excitement at small provocation; a gourmand devoted to the pleasure of the table, sometimes indeed gratifying his appetite in no seemly fashion, resembling his friend Dr. Samuel Johnson in many notable ways. Handel as a man was of the earth, earthly, in the extreme, and marked by many whimsical and disagreeable faults. But in his art we recognise a genius so colossal, massive, and self-poised as to raise admiration to its superlative of awe. When Handel had disencumbered himself of tradition, convention, the trappings of time and circumstances, he attained a place in musical creation, solitary and unique. His genius found expression in forms large and austere, disdaining the luxuriant and trivial. He embodied the spirit of Protestantism in music; and a recognition of this fact is probably the key of the admiration felt for him by the Anglo-Saxon races.

Handel possessed an inexhaustible fund of melody of the noblest order; an almost unequalled command of musical expression; perfect power over all the resources of his science; the faculty of wielding huge masses of tone with perfect ease and felicity; and he was without rival in the sublimity of ideas. The problem which he so successfully solved in the oratorio was that

of giving such dramatic force to the music, in which he clothed the sacred texts, as to be able to dispense with all scenic and stage effects. One of the finest operatic composers of the time, the rival of Bach as an instrumental composer, and performer on the harpsichord or organ, the unanimous verdict of the musical world is that no one has ever equalled him in completeness, range of effect, elevation and variety of conception, and sublimity in the treatment of sacred music. We can readily appreciate Handel's own words when describing his own sensations in writing the "Messiah" – "I did think I did see all heaven before me, and the great God himself."

The great man died on Good Friday night, 1759, aged seventy-five years. He had often wished "he might breathe his last on Good Friday, in hope," he said, "of meeting his good God, his sweet Lord and Saviour, on the day of his resurrection." The old blind musician had his wish.

GLUCK

I

Gluck is a noble and striking figure in musical history, alike in the services he rendered to his art and the dignity and strength of his personal character. As the predecessor of Wagner and Meyerbeer, who among the composers of this century have given opera its largest and noblest expression, he anticipated their important reforms, and in his musical creations we see all that is best in what is called the new school.

The man, the Ritter Christoph Wilibald von Gluck, is almost as interesting to us as the musician. He moved in the society of princes with a calm and haughty dignity, their conscious peer, and never prostituted his art to gain personal advancement or to curry favour with the great ones of the earth. He possessed a majesty of nature which was the combined effect of personal pride, a certain lofty self-reliance, and a deep conviction that he was the apostle of an important musical mission.

Gluck's whole life was illumined by an indomitable sense of his own strength, and lifted by it into an atmosphere high above that of his rivals, whom the world has now almost forgotten, except as they were immortalised by being his enemies. Like Milton and Bacon, who put on record their knowledge that they

had written for all time, Gluck had a magnificent consciousness of himself. "I have written," he says, "the music of my 'Armida' in such a manner as to prevent its soon growing old." This is a sublime vanity inseparable from the great aggressive geniuses of the world, the wind of the speed which measures their force of impact.

Duplessis's portrait of Gluck almost takes the man out of paint to put him in flesh and blood. He looks down with wide-open eyes, swelling nostrils, firm mouth, and massive chin. The noble brow, dome-like and expanded, relieves the massiveness of his face; and the whole countenance and figure express the repose of a powerful and passionate nature schooled into balance and symmetry: altogether the presentment of a great man, who felt that he could move the world and had found the *pou sto*. Of a large and robust type of physical beauty, Nature seems to have endowed him on every hand with splendid gifts. Such a man as this could say with calm simplicity to Marie Antoinette, who inquired one night about his new opera of "Armida," then nearly finished – "*Madame, il est bientôt fini, et vraiment ce sera superbe.*"

One night Handel listened to a new opera from a young and unknown composer, the "Caduta de' Giganti," one of Gluck's very earliest works, written when he was yet corrupted with all the vices of the Italian method. "Mein Gott! he is an idiot," said Handel; "he knows no more of counterpoint then mein cook." Handel did not see with prophetic eyes. He never met

Gluck afterwards, and we do not know his later opinion of the composer of "Orpheus and Eurydice" and "Iphigenia in Tauris." But Gluck had ever the profoundest admiration for the author of the "Messiah." There was something in these two strikingly similar, as their music was alike characterised by massive simplicity and strength, not rough-hewn, but shaped into austere beauty.

Before we relate the great episode of our composer's life, let us take a backward glance at his youth. He was the son of a forester in the service of Prince Lobkowitz, born at Weidenwang in the Upper Palatinate, 2nd July 1714. Gluck was devoted to music from early childhood, but received, in connection with the musical art, an excellent education at the Jesuit College of Kommotau. Here he learned singing, the organ, the violin and harpsichord, and had a mind to get his living by devoting his musical talents to the Church. The Prague public recognised in him a musician of fair talent, but he found but little encouragement to stay at the Bohemian capital. So he decided to finish his musical education at Vienna, where more distinguished masters could be had. Prince Lobkowitz, who remembered his gamekeeper's son, introduced the young man to the Italian Prince Melzi, who induced him to accompany him to Milan. As the pupil of the Italian organist and composer, Sammartini, he made rapid progress in operatic composition. He was successful in pleasing Italian audiences, and in four years produced eight operas, for which the world has forgiven him in forgetting them.

Then Gluck must go to London to see what impression he could make on English critics; for London then, as now, was one of the great musical centres, where every successful composer or singer must get his brevet.

Gluck's failure to please in London was, perhaps, an important epoch in his career. With a mind singularly sensitive to new impressions, and already struggling with fresh ideas in the laws of operatic composition, Handel's great music must have had a powerful effect in stimulating his unconscious progress. His last production in England, "Pyramus and Thisbe," was a *pasticcio* opera, in which he embodied the best bits out of his previous works. The experiment was a glaring failure, as it ought to have been; for it illustrated the Italian method, which was designed for mere vocal display, carried to its logical absurdity.

II

In 1748 Gluck settled in Vienna, where almost immediately his opera of "Semiramide" was produced. Here he conceived a passion for Marianne, the daughter of Joseph Pergin, a rich banker; but on account of the father's distaste for a musical son-in-law, the marriage did not occur till 1750. "Telemacco" and "Clemenza di Tito" were composed about this time, and performed in Vienna, Rome, and Naples. In 1755 our composer received the order of the Golden Spur from the Roman pontiff in recognition of the merits of two operas performed at Rome, called "Il Trionfo di Camillo" and "Antigono." Seven years were now actively employed in producing operas for Vienna and Italian cities, which, without possessing great value, show the change which had begun to take place in this composer's theories of dramatic music. In Paris he had been struck with the operas of Rameau, in which the declamatory form was strongly marked. His early Italian training had fixed in his mind the importance of pure melody. From Germany he obtained his appreciation of harmony, and had made a deep study of the uses of the orchestra. So we see this great reformer struggling on with many faltering steps towards that result which he afterwards summed up in the following concise description – "My purpose was to restrict music to its true office, that of ministering to the expression of poetry, without interrupting the action."

In Calzabigi Gluck had met an author who fully appreciated his ideas, and had the talent of writing a libretto in accordance with them. This coadjutor wrote all the librettos that belonged to Gluck's greatest period. He had produced his "Orpheus and Eurydice" and "Alceste" in Vienna with a fair amount of success; but his tastes drew him strongly to the French stage, where the art of acting and declamation was cultivated then, as it is now, to a height unknown in other parts of Europe. So we find him gladly accepting an offer from the managers of the French Opera to migrate to the great city, in which were fermenting with much noisy fervour those new ideas in art, literature, politics, and society, which were turning the eyes of all Europe to the French capital.

The world's history has hardly a more picturesque and striking spectacle, a period more fraught with the working of powerful forces, than that exhibited by French society in the latter part of Louis XV.'s reign. We see a court rotten to the core with indulgence in every form of sensuality and vice, yet glittering with the veneer of a social polish which made it the admiration of the world. A dissolute king was ruled by a succession of mistresses, and all the courtiers vied in emulating the vice and extravagance of their master. Yet in this foul compost-heap art and literature flourished with a tropical luxuriance. Voltaire was at the height of his splendid career, the most brilliant wit and philosopher of his age. The lightnings of his mockery attacked with an incessant play the social, political, and religious shams

of the period. People of all classes, under the influence of his unsparing satire, were learning to see with clear eyes what an utterly artificial and polluted age they lived in, and the cement which bound society in a compact whole was fast melting under this powerful solvent.

Rousseau, with his romantic philosophy and eloquence, had planted his new ideas deep in the hearts of his contemporaries, weary with the artifice and the corruption of a time which had exhausted itself and had nothing to promise under the old social *régime*. The ideals uplifted in the *Nouvelle Héloïse* and the *Confessions* awakened men's minds with a great rebound to the charms of Nature, simplicity, and a social order untrammelled by rules or conventions. The eloquence with which these theories were propounded carried the French people by storm, and Rousseau was a demigod at whose shrine worshipped alike duchess and peasant. The Encyclopædists stimulated the ferment by their literary enthusiasm, and the heartiness with which they co-operated with the whole current of revolutionary thought.

The very atmosphere was reeking with the prophecy of imminent change. Versailles itself did not escape the contagion. Courtiers and aristocrats, in worshipping the beautiful ideals set up by the new school, which were as far removed as possible from their own effete civilisation, did not realise that they were playing with the fire which was to burn out the whole social edifice of France with such a terrible conflagration; for, back and beneath all this, there was a people groaning under long centuries

of accumulated wrong, in whose imbruted hearts the theories applauded by their oppressors with a sort of *doctrinaire* delight were working with a fatal fever.

III

In this strange condition of affairs Gluck found his new sphere of labour – Gluck, himself overflowing with the revolutionary spirit, full of the enthusiasm of reform. At first he carried everything before him. Protected by royalty, he produced, on the basis of an admirable libretto by Du Rollet, one of the great wits of the time, "Iphigenia in Aulis." It was enthusiastically received. The critics, delighted to establish the reputation of one especially favoured by the Dauphiness Marie Antoinette, exhausted superlatives on the new opera. The Abbé Arnaud, one of the leading *dilettanti*, exclaimed – "With such music one might found a new religion!" To be sure, the connoisseurs could not understand the complexities of the music; but, following the rule of all connoisseurs before or since, they considered it all the more learned and profound. So led, the general public clapped their hands, and agreed to consider Gluck as a great composer. He was called the Hercules of music; the opera-house was crammed night after night; his footsteps were dogged in the streets by admiring enthusiasts; the wits and poets occupied themselves with composing sonnets in his praise; brilliant courtiers and fine ladies showered valuable gifts on the new musical oracle; he was hailed as the exponent of Rousseauism in music. We read that it was considered to be a priceless privilege to be admitted to the rehearsal of a new opera, to see Gluck conduct in nightcap and

dressing-gown.

Fresh adaptations of "Orpheus and Eurydice" and of "Alceste" were produced. The first, brought out in 1784, was received with an enthusiasm which could be contented only with forty-nine consecutive performances. The second act of this work has been called one of the most astonishing productions of the human mind. The public began to show signs of fickleness, however, on the production of the "Alceste." On the first night a murmur arose among the spectators – "The piece has fallen." Abbé Arnaud, Gluck's devoted defender, arose in his box and replied, "Yes! fallen from heaven." While Mademoiselle Levasseur was singing one of the great airs, a voice was heard to say, "Ah! you tear out my ears;" to which the caustic rejoinder was, "How fortunate, if it is to give you others!"

Gluck himself was badly bitten, in spite of his hatred of shams and shallowness, with the pretences of the time, which professed to dote on nature and simplicity. In a letter to his old pupil, Marie Antoinette, wherein he disclaims any pretension of teaching the French a new school of music, he says – "I see with satisfaction that the language of Nature is the universal language."

So, here on the crumbling crust of a volcano, where the volatile French court danced and fiddled and sang, unreckoning of what was soon to come, our composer and his admirers patted each other on the back with infinite complacency.

But after this high tide of prosperity there was to come a reverse. A powerful faction, that for a time had been crushed by

Gluck's triumph, after a while raised their heads and organised an attack. There were second-rate composers whose scores had been laid on the shelf in the rage for the new favourite; musicians who were shocked and enraged at the difficulties of his instrumentation; wits who, having praised Gluck for a while, thought they could now find a readier field for their quills in satire; and a large section of the public who changed for no earthly reason but that they got tired of doing one thing.

Therefore, the Italian Piccini was imported to be pitted against the reigning deity. The French court was broken up into hostile ranks. Marie Antoinette was Gluck's patron, but Madame Du Barry, the king's mistress, declared for Piccini. Abbé Arnaud fought for Gluck; but the witty Marmontel was the advocate of his rival. The keen-witted Du Rollet was Gluckist; but La Harpe, the eloquent, was Piccinist. So this battle-royal in art commenced and raged with virulence. The green-room was made unmusical with contentions carried out in polite Billingsgate. Gluck tore up his unfinished score in rage when he learned that his rival was to compose an opera on the same libretto. La Harpe said – "The famous Gluck may puff his own compositions, but he can't prevent them from boring us to death." Thus the wags of Paris laughed and wrangled over the musical rivals. Berton, the new director, fancied he could soften the dispute and make the two composers friends; so at a dinner-party, when they were all in their cups, he proposed that they should compose an opera jointly. This was demurred to; but it was finally arranged that

they should compose an opera on the same subject.

"Iphigenia in Tauris," Gluck's second "Iphigenia," produced in 1779, was such a masterpiece that his rival shut his own score in his portfolio, and kept it two years. All Paris was enraptured with this great work, and Gluck's detractors were silenced in the wave of enthusiasm which swept the public. Abbé Arnaud's opinion was the echo of the general mind – "There was but one beautiful part, and that was the whole of it." This opera may be regarded as the most perfect example of Gluck's school in making the music the full reflex of the dramatic action. While Orestes sings in the opera, "My heart is calm," the orchestra continues to paint the agitation of his thoughts. During the rehearsal the musician failed to understand the exigency and ceased playing. The composer cried out, in a rage, "Don't you see he is lying? Go on, go on; he has just killed his mother."

On one occasion, when he was praising Rameau's chorus of "Castor and Pollux," an admirer of his flattered him with the remark, "But what a difference between this chorus and that of your 'Iphigenia!'" "Yet it is very well done," said Gluck; "one is only a religious ceremony, the other is a real funeral." He was wont to say that in composing he always tried to forget he was a musician.

Gluck, however, a few months subsequent to this, was so much humiliated at the non-success of "Echo and Narcissus," that he left Paris in bitter irritation, in spite of Marie Antoinette's pleadings that he should remain at the French capital.

The composer was now advanced in years, and had become impatient and fretful. He left Paris for Vienna in 1780, having amassed considerable property. There, as an old, broken-down man, he listened to the young Mozart's new symphonies and operas, and applauded them with great zeal: for Gluck, though fiery and haughty in the extreme, was singularly generous in recognising the merits of others.

This was exhibited in Paris in his treatment of Méhul, the Belgian composer, then a youth of sixteen, who had just arrived in the gay city. It was on the eve of the first representation of "Iphigenia in Tauris," when the operatic battle was agitating the public. With all the ardour of a novice and a devotee, the young musical student immediately threw himself into the affray, and by the aid of a friend he succeeded in gaining admittance to the theatre for the final rehearsal of Gluck's opera. This so enchanted him that he resolved to be present at the public performance. But, unluckily for the resolve, he had no money, and no prospect of obtaining any; so, with a determination and a love for art which deserve to be remembered, he decided to hide himself in one of the boxes and there to wait for the time of representation.

"At the end of the rehearsal," writes George Hogarth in his *Memoirs of the Drama*, "he was discovered in his place of concealment by the servants of the theatre, who proceeded to turn him out very roughly. Gluck, who had not left the house, heard the noise, came to the spot, and found the young man, whose spirit was roused, resisting the indignity with which he

was treated. Méhul, finding in whose presence he was, was ready to sink with confusion; but, in answer to Gluck's questions, he told him that he was a young musical student from the country, whose anxiety to be present at the performance of the opera had led him into the commission of an impropriety. Gluck, as may be supposed, was delighted with a piece of enthusiasm so flattering to himself, and not only gave his young admirer a ticket of admission, but desired his acquaintance." From this artistic *contretemps*, then, arose a friendship alike creditable to the goodness and generosity of Gluck, as it was to the sincerity and high order of Méhul's musical talent.

Gluck's death, in 1787, was caused by over-indulgence in wine at a dinner which he gave to some of his friends. The love of stimulants had grown upon him in his old age, and had become almost a passion. An enforced abstinence of some months was succeeded by a debauch, in which he drank an immense quantity of brandy. The effects brought on a fit of apoplexy, of which he died, aged seventy-three.

Gluck's place in musical history is peculiar and well marked. He entered the field of operatic composition when it was hampered with a great variety of dry forms, and utterly without soul and poetic spirit. The object of composers seemed to be to show mere contrapuntal learning, or to furnish singers opportunity to display vocal agility. The opera, as a large and symmetrical expression of human emotions, suggested in the collisions of a dramatic story, was utterly an unknown

quantity in art. Gluck's attention was early called to this radical inconsistency; and, though he did not learn for many years to develop his musical ideas according to a theory, and never carried that theory to the logical results insisted on by his great after-type, Wagner, he accomplished much in the way of sweeping reform. He elaborated the recitative or declamatory element in opera with great care, and insisted that his singers should make this the object of their most careful efforts. The arias, duos, quartets, etc., as well as the choruses and orchestral parts, were made consistent with the dramatic motive and situations. In a word, Gluck aimed with a single-hearted purpose to make music the expression of poetry and sentiment.

The principles of Gluck's school of operatic writing may be briefly summarised as follows: – That dramatic music can only reach its highest power and beauty when joined to a simple and poetic text, expressing passions true to Nature; that music can be made the language of all the varied emotions of the heart; that the music of an opera must exactly follow the rhythm and melody of the words; that the orchestra must be only used to strengthen and intensify the feeling embodied in the vocal parts, as demanded by the text or dramatic situation. We get some further light on these principles from Gluck's letter of dedication to the Grand-Duke of Tuscany on the publication of "Alceste." He writes: – "I am of opinion that music must be to poetry what liveliness of colour and a happy mixture of light and shade are for a faultless and well-arranged drawing, which serve to add life to the figures without

injuring the outlines; … that the overture should prepare the auditors for the character of the action which is to be presented, and hint at the progress of the same; that the instruments must be employed according to the degree of interest and passion; that the composer should avoid too marked a disparity in the dialogue between the air and recitative, in order not to break the sense of a period, or interrupt the energy of the action… Finally, I have even felt compelled to sacrifice rules to the improvement of the effect."

We find in this composer's music, therefore, a largeness and dignity of treatment which have never been surpassed. His command of melody is quite remarkable, but his use of it is under severe artistic restraint; for it is always characterised by breadth, simplicity, and directness. He aimed at and attained the symmetrical balance of an old Greek play.

HAYDN

I

"Papa Haydn!" Thus did Mozart ever speak of his foster-father in music, and the title, transmitted to posterity, admirably expressed the sweet, placid, gentle nature, whose possessor was personally beloved no less than he was admired. His life flowed, broad and unruffled, like some great river, unvexed for the most part by the rivalries, jealousies, and sufferings, oftentimes self-inflicted, which have harassed the careers of other great musicians. He remained to the last the favourite of the imperial court of Vienna, and princes followed his remains to their last resting-place.

Joseph Haydn was the eldest of the twenty children of Matthias Haydn, a wheelwright at Rohrau, Lower Austria, where he was born in 1732. At the age of twelve years he was engaged to sing in Vienna. He became a chorister in St. Stephen's Church, but offended the choir-master by the revolt on the part of himself and parents from submitting to the usual means then taken to perpetuate a fine soprano in boys. So Haydn, who had surreptitiously picked up a good deal of musical knowledge apart from the art of singing, was at the age of sixteen turned out on the world. A compassionate barber, however, took him in, and

Haydn dressed and powdered wigs downstairs, while he worked away at a little worm-eaten harpsichord at night in his room. Unfortunate boy! he managed to get himself engaged to the barber's daughter, Anne Keller, who was for a good while the Xantippe of his gentle life, and he paid dearly for his father-in-law's early hospitality.

The young musician soon began to be known, as he played the violin in one church, the organ in another, and got some pupils. His first rise was his acquaintance with Metastasio, the poet-laureate of the court. Through him Haydn got introduced to the mistress of the Venetian ambassador, a great musical enthusiast, and in her circle he met Porpora, the best music-master in the world, but a crusty, snarling old man. Porpora held at Vienna the position of musical dictator and censor, and he exercised the tyrannical privileges of his post mercilessly. Haydn was a small, dark-complexioned, insignificant-looking youth, and Porpora, of course, snubbed him most contemptuously. But Haydn wanted instruction, and no one in the world could give it so well as the savage old *maestro*. So he performed all sorts of menial services for him, cleaned his shoes, powdered his wig, and ran all his errands. The result was that Porpora softened and consented to give his young admirer lessons – no great hardship, for young Haydn proved a most apt and gifted pupil. And it was not long either before the young musician's compositions attracted public attention and found a sale. The very curious relations between Haydn and Porpora are brilliantly sketched in George Sand's

Consuelo.

At night Haydn, accompanied by his friends, was wont to wander about Vienna by moonlight, and serenade his patrons with trios and quartets of his own composition. He happened one night to stop under the window of Bernardone Kurz, a director of a theatre and the leading clown of Vienna. Down rushed Kurz very excitedly. "Who are you?" he shrieked. "Joseph Haydn." "Whose music is it?" "Mine." "The deuce it is! And at your age, too!" "Why, I must begin with something." "Come along upstairs."

The enthusiastic director collared his prize, and was soon deep in explaining a wonderful libretto, entitled "The Devil on Two Sticks." To write music for this was no easy matter; for it was to represent all sorts of absurd things, among others a tempest. The tempest made Haydn despair, and he sat at the piano, banging away in a reckless fashion, while the director stood behind him, raving in a disconnected way as to his meaning. At last the distracted pianist brought his fists simultaneously down upon the key-board, and made a rapid sweep of all the notes.

"Bravo! bravo! that is the tempest!" cried Kurz.

The buffoon also laid himself on a chair, and had it carried about the room, during which he threw out his limbs in imitation of the act of swimming. Haydn supplied an accompaniment so suitable that Kurz soon landed on *terra firma*, and congratulated the composer, assuring him that he was the man to compose the opera. By this stroke of good luck our young musician received

one hundred and thirty florins.

II

At the age of twenty-eight Haydn composed his first symphony. Soon after this he attracted the attention of the old Prince Esterhazy, all the members of whose family have become known in the history of music as generous Mæcenases of the art.

"What! you don't mean to say that little blackamoor" (alluding to Haydn's brown complexion and small stature) "composed that symphony?"

"Surely, prince," replied the director Friedburg, beckoning to Joseph Haydn, who advanced towards the orchestra.

"Little Moor," says the old gentleman, "you shall enter my service. I am Prince Esterhazy. What's your name?"

"Haydn."

"Ah! I've heard of you. Get along and dress yourself like a *Kapellmeister*. Clap on a new coat, and mind your wig is curled. You're too short. You shall have red heels; but they shall be high, that your stature may correspond with your merit."

So he went to live at Eisenstadt in the Esterhazy household, and received a salary of four hundred florins, which was afterwards raised to one thousand by Prince Nicholas Esterhazy. Haydn continued the intimate friend and associate of Prince Nicholas for thirty years, and death only dissolved the bond between them. In the Esterhazy household the life of Haydn was a very quiet one, a life of incessant and happy industry; for he

poured out an incredible number of works, among them not a few of his most famous ones. So he spent a happy life in hard labour, alternated with delightful recreations at the Esterhazy country-seat, mountain rambles, hunting and fishing, open-air concerts, musical evenings, etc.

A French traveller who visited Esterhazy about 1782 says – "The château stands quite solitary, and the prince sees nobody but his officials and servants, and strangers who come hither from curiosity. He has a puppet-theatre, which is certainly unique in character. Here the grandest operas are produced. One knows not whether to be amazed or to laugh at seeing 'Alceste,' 'Alcides,' etc., put on the stage with all due solemnity and played by puppets. His orchestra is one of the best I ever heard, and the great Haydn is his court and theatre composer. He employs a poet for his singular theatre, whose humour and skill in suiting the grandest subjects for the stage, and in parodying the gravest effects, are often exceedingly happy. He often engages a troupe of wandering players for months at a time, and he himself and his retinue form the entire audience. They are allowed to come on the stage uncombed, drunk, their parts not half learned, and half dressed. The prince is not for the serious and tragic, and he enjoys it when the players, like Sancho Panza, give loose reins to their humour."

Yet Haydn was not perfectly contented. He would have been had it not been for his terrible wife, the hair-dresser's daughter, who had a dismal, mischievous, sullen nature, a venomous

tongue, and a savage temper. She kept Haydn in hot water continually, till at last he broke loose from this plague by separating from her. Scandal says that Haydn, who had a very affectionate and sympathetic nature, found ample consolation for marital infelicity in the charms and society of the lovely Boselli, a great singer. He had her picture painted, and humoured all her whims and caprices, to the sore depletion of his pocket.

In after-years again he was mixed up in a little affair with the great Mrs. Billington, whose beautiful person was no less marked than her fine voice. Sir Joshua Reynolds was painting her portrait for him, and had represented her as St. Cecilia listening to celestial music. Haydn paid her a charming compliment at one of the sittings.

"What do you think of the charming Billington's picture?" said Sir Joshua.

"Yes," said Haydn, "it is indeed a beautiful picture. It is just like her, but there's a strange mistake."

"What is that?"

"Why, you have painted her listening to the angels, when you ought to have painted the angels listening to her."

At one time, during Haydn's connection with Prince Esterhazy, the latter, from motives of economy, determined to dismiss his celebrated orchestra, which he supported at great expense. Haydn was the leader, and his patron's purpose caused him sore pain, as indeed it did all the players, among whom were many distinguished instrumentalists. Still, there was nothing to

be done but for all concerned to make themselves as cheerful as possible under the circumstances; so, with that fund of wit and humour which seems to have been concealed under the immaculate coat and formal wig of the strait-laced Haydn, he set about composing a work for the last performance of the royal band, a work which has ever since borne the appropriate title of the "Farewell Symphony."

On the night appointed for the last performance a brilliant company, including the prince, had assembled. The music of the new symphony began gaily enough – it was even merry. As it went on, however, it became soft and dreamy. The strains were sad and "long drawn out." At length a sorrowful wailing began. One instrument after another left off, and each musician, as his task ended, blew out his lamp and departed with his music rolled up under his arm.

Haydn was the last to finish, save one, and this was the prince's favourite violinist, who said all that he had to say in a brilliant violin cadenza, when, behold! he made off.

The prince was astonished. "What is the meaning of all this?" cried he.

"It is our sorrowful farewell," answered Haydn.

This was too much. The prince was overcome, and, with a good laugh, said: "Well, I think I must reconsider my decision. At any rate we will not say 'good-bye' now."

III

During the thirty years of Haydn's quiet life with the Esterhazys he had been gradually acquiring an immense reputation in France, England and Spain, of which he himself was unconscious. His great symphonies had stamped him world-wide as a composer of remarkable creative genius. Haydn's modesty prevented him from recognising his own celebrity. Therefore, we can fancy his astonishment when, shortly after the death of Prince Nicholas Esterhazy, a stranger called on him and said, "I am Salomon, from London, and must strike a bargain with you for that city immediately."

Haydn was dazed with the suddenness of the proposition, but the old ties were broken up, and his grief needed recreation and change. Still, he had many beloved friends, whose society it was hard to leave. Chief among these was Mozart. "Oh, papa," said Mozart, "you have had no training for the wide world, and you speak so few languages." "Oh, my language is understood all over the world," said Papa Haydn, with a smile. When he departed for England, December 15, 1790, Mozart could with difficulty tear himself away, and said, with pathetic tears, "We shall doubtless now take our last farewell."

Haydn and Mozart were perfectly in accord, and each thought and did well towards the other. Mozart, we know, was born when Haydn had just reached manhood, so that when Mozart

became old enough to study composition the earlier works of Haydn's chamber music had been written; and these undoubtedly formed the studies of the boy Mozart, and greatly influenced his style; so that Haydn was the model, and, in a sense, the instructor of Mozart. Strange is it then to find, in after-years, the master borrowing (perhaps with interest!) from the pupil. Such, however, was the fact, as every amateur knows. At this we can hardly wonder, for Haydn possessed unbounded admiration not only for Mozart, but also for his music, which the following shows. Being asked by a friend at Prague to send him an opera, he replied: —

"With all my heart, if you desire to have it for yourself alone, but if you wish to perform it in public, I must be excused; for, being written specially for my company at the Esterhazy Palace, it would not produce the proper effect elsewhere. I would do a new score for your theatre, but what a hazardous step it would be to stand in comparison with Mozart! Oh, Mozart! If I could instil into the soul of every lover of music the admiration I have for his matchless works, all countries would seek to be possessed of so great a treasure. Let Prague keep him, ah! and well reward him, for without that the history of geniuses is bad; alas! we see so many noble minds crushed beneath adversity. Mozart is incomparable, and I am annoyed that he is unable to obtain any court appointment. Forgive me if I get excited when speaking of him, I am so fond of him."

Mozart's admiration for Haydn's music, too, was very marked.

He and Herr Kozeluch were one day listening to a composition of Haydn's which contained some bold modulations. Kozeluch thought them strange, and asked Mozart whether he would have written them. "I think not," smartly replied Mozart, "and for this reason: because they would not have occurred either to you or me!"

On another occasion we find Mozart taking to task a Viennese professor of some celebrity, who used to experience great delight in turning to Haydn's compositions to find therein any evidence of the master's want of sound theoretical training – a quest in which the pedant occasionally succeeded. One day he came to Mozart with a great crime to unfold. Mozart as usual endeavoured to turn the conversation, but the learned professor still went chattering on, till at last Mozart shut his mouth with the following pill – "Sir, if you and I were both melted down together, we should not furnish materials for one Haydn."

It was one of the most beautiful friendships in the history of art, full of tender offices, and utterly free from the least taint of envy or selfishness.

IV

Haydn landed in England after a voyage which delighted him in spite of his terror of the sea – a feeling which seems to be usual among people of very high musical sensibilities. In his diary we find recorded – "By four o'clock we had come twenty miles. The large vessel stood out to sea five hours longer, till the tide carried it into the harbour. I remained on deck the whole passage, in order to gaze my fill at that huge monster – the ocean."

The novelty of Haydn's concerts – of which he was to give twenty at fifty pounds apiece – consisted of their being his own symphonies, conducted by himself in person. Haydn's name, during his serene, uneventful years with the Esterhazys, had become world-famous. His reception was most brilliant. Dinner parties, receptions, invitations without end, attested the enthusiasm of the sober English; and his appearance at concerts and public meetings was the signal for stormy applause. How, in the press of all this pleasure in which he was plunged, he continued to compose the great number of works produced at this time, is a marvel. He must have been little less than a Briareus. It was in England that he wrote the celebrated Salomon symphonies – the "twelve grand," as they are called. They may well be regarded as the crowning-point of Haydn's efforts in that form of writing. He took infinite pains with them, as, indeed, is well proved by an examination of the scores. More

elaborate, more beautiful, and scored for a fuller orchestra than any others of the one hundred and twenty or thereabouts which he composed, the Salomon set also bears marks of the devout and pious spirit in which Haydn ever laboured.

It is interesting to see how, in many of the great works which have won the world's admiration, the religion of the author has gone hand-in-hand with his energy and his genius; and we find Haydn not ashamed to indorse his score with his prayer and praise, or to offer the fruits of his talents to the Giver of all. Thus, the symphony in D (No. 6) bears on the first page of the score the inscription, "*In nomine Domini: di me Giuseppe Haydn, maia 1791, in London*;" and on the last page, "*Fine, Laus Deo, 238*."

That genius may sometimes be trusted to judge of its own work may be gathered from Haydn's own estimate of these great symphonies.

"Sir," said the well-satisfied Salomon, after a successful performance of one of them, "I am strongly of opinion that you will never surpass these symphonies."

"No!" replied Haydn; "I never mean to try."

The public, as we have said, was enthusiastic; but such a full banquet of severe orchestral music was a severe trial to many, and not a few heads would keep time to the music by steady nods during the slow movements. Haydn, therefore, composed what is known as the "Surprise" symphony. The slow movement is of the most lulling and soothing character, and about the time the audience should be falling into its first snooze, the instruments

having all died away into the softest *pianissimo*, the full orchestra breaks out with a frightful BANG. It is a question whether the most vigorous performance of this symphony would startle an audience nowadays, accustomed to the strident effects of Wagner and Liszt. A wag in a recent London journal tells us, indeed, that at the most critical part in the work a gentleman opened one eye sleepily and said, "Come in."

Simple-hearted Haydn was delighted at the attention lavished on him in London. He tells us how he enjoyed his various entertainments and feastings by such dignitaries as William Pitt, the Lord Chancellor, and the Duke of Lids (Leeds). The gentlemen drank freely the whole night, and the songs, the crazy uproar, and smashing of glasses were very great. He went down to stay with the Prince of Wales (George IV.), who played on the violoncello, and charmed the composer by his kindness. "He is the handsomest man on God's earth. He has an extraordinary love of music, and a great deal of feeling, but very little money."

To stem the tide of Haydn's popularity, the Italian faction had recourse to Giardini; and they even imported a pet pupil of Haydn, Pleyel, to conduct the rival concerts. Our composer kept his temper, and wrote, "He [Pleyel] behaves himself with great modesty." Later we read, "Pleyel's presumption is a public laughing-stock;" but he adds, "I go to all his concerts and applaud him."

Far different were the amenities that passed between Haydn and Giardini. "I won't know the German hound," says the latter.

Haydn wrote, “I attended his concert at Ranelagh, and he played the fiddle like a hog.”

Among the pleasant surprises Haydn had in England was his visit to Herschel, the great astronomer, in whom he recognised one of his old oboe-players. The big telescope amazed him, and so did the patient star-gazer, who often sat out-of-doors in the most intense cold for five or six hours at a time.

Our composer returned to Vienna in May 1795, with the little fortune of 12,000 florins in his pocket.

V

In his charming little cottage near Vienna Haydn was the centre of a brilliant society. Princes and nobles were proud to do honour to him; and painters, poets, scholars, and musicians made a delightful coterie, which was not even disturbed by the political convulsions of the time. The baleful star of Napoleon shot its disturbing influences throughout Europe, and the roar of his cannon shook the established order of things with the echoes of what was to come. Haydn was passionately attached to his country and his emperor, and regarded anxiously the rumblings and quakings of the period; but he did not intermit his labour, or allow his consecration to his divine art to be in the least shaken. Like Archimedes of old, he toiled serenely at his appointed work, while the political order of things was crumbling before the genius and energy of the Corsican adventurer.

In 1798 he completed his great oratorio of "The Creation," on which he had spent three years of toil, and which embodied his brightest genius. Haydn was usually a very rapid composer, but he seems to have laboured at the "Creation" with a sort of reverential humility, which never permitted him to think his work worthy or complete. It soon went the round of Germany, and passed to England and France, everywhere awakening enthusiasm by its great symmetry and beauty. Without the sublimity of Handel's "Messiah," it is marked by a richness of

melody, a serene elevation, a matchless variety in treatment, which make it the most characteristic of Haydn's works. Napoleon, the first consul, was hastening to the opera-house to hear this, 24th January 1801, when he was stopped by an attempt at assassination.

Two years after "The Creation" appeared "The Seasons," founded on Thomson's poem, also a great work, and one of his last; for the grand old man was beginning to think of rest, and he only composed two or three quartets after this. He was now seventy years old, and went but little from his own home. His chief pleasure was to sit in his shady garden, and see his friends, who loved to solace the musical patriarch with cheerful talk and music. Haydn often fell into deep melancholy, and he tells us that God revived him; for no more sweet, devout nature ever lived. His art was ever a religion. A touching incident of his old age occurred at a grand performance of "The Creation" in 1808. Haydn was present, but he was so old and feeble that he had to be wheeled in a chair into the theatre, where a princess of the house of Esterhazy took her seat by his side. This was the last time that Haydn appeared in public, and a very impressive sight it must have been to see the aged father of music listening to "The Creation" of his younger days, but too old to take any active share in the performance. The presence of the old man roused intense enthusiasm among the audience, which could no longer be suppressed as the chorus and orchestra burst in full power upon the superb passage, "And there was light."

Amid the tumult of the enraptured audience the old composer was seen striving to raise himself. Once on his feet, he mustered up all his strength, and, in reply to the applause of the audience, he cried out as loud as he was able – "No, no! not from me, but," pointing to heaven, "from thence – from heaven above – comes all!" saying which, he fell back in his chair, faint and exhausted, and had to be carried out of the room.

One year after this Vienna was bombarded by the French, and a shot fell in Haydn's garden. He requested to be led to his piano, and played the "Hymn to the Emperor" three times over with passionate eloquence and pathos. This was his last performance. He died five days afterwards, aged seventy-seven, and lies buried in the cemetery of Gumpfenzdorf, in his own beloved Vienna.

VI

The serene, genial face of Haydn, as seen in his portraits, measures accurately the character of his music. In both we see healthfulness, good-humour, vivacity, devotional feeling, and warm affections; a mind contented, but yet attaching high importance to only one thing in life, the composing of music. Haydn pursued this with a calm, insatiable industry, without haste, without rest. His works number eight hundred, comprising cantatas, symphonies, oratorios, masses, concertos, trios, sonatas, quartets, minuets, etc., and also twenty-two operas, eight German and fourteen Italian.

As a creative mind in music, Haydn was the father of the quartet and symphony. Adopting the sonata form as scientifically illustrated by Emanuel Bach, he introduced it into compositions for the orchestra and the chamber. He developed these into a completeness and full-orbed symmetry, which have never been improved. Mozart is richer, Beethoven more sublime, Schubert more luxuriant, Mendelssohn more orchestral and passionate; but Haydn has never been surpassed in his keen perception of the capacities of instruments, his subtile distribution of parts, his variety in treating his themes, and his charmingly legitimate effects. He fills a large space in musical history, not merely from the number, originality, and beauty of his compositions, but as one who represents an era in art-development.

In Haydn genius and industry were happily united. With a marvellously rich flow of musical ideas, he clearly knew what he meant to do, and never neglected the just elaboration of each one. He would labour on a theme till it had shaped itself into perfect beauty.

Haydn is illustrious in the history of art as a complete artistic life, which worked out all of its contents as did the great Goethe. In the words of a charming writer: "His life was a rounded whole. There was no broken light about it; it orbed slowly, with a mild, unclouded lustre, into a perfect star. Time was gentle with him, and Death was kind, for both waited upon his genius until all was won. Mozart was taken away at an age when new and dazzling effects had not ceased to flash through his brain: at the very moment when his harmonies began to have a prophetic ring of the nineteenth century, it was decreed that he should not see its dawn. Beethoven himself had but just entered upon an unknown 'sea whose margin seemed to fade forever and forever as he moved;' but good old Haydn had come into port over a calm sea and after a prosperous voyage. The laurel wreath was this time woven about silver locks; the gathered-in harvest was ripe and golden."

MOZART

I

The life of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, one of the immortal names in music, contradicts the rule that extraordinary youthful talent is apt to be followed by a sluggish and commonplace maturity. His father entered the room one day with a friend, and found the child bending over a music score. The little Mozart, not yet five years old, told his father he was writing a concerto for the piano. The latter examined it, and tears of joy and astonishment rolled down his face on perceiving its accuracy.

"It is good, but too difficult for general use," said the friend.

"Oh," said Wolfgang, "it must be practised till it is learned. This is the way it goes." So saying, he played it with perfect correctness.

About the same time he offered to take the violin at a performance of some chamber music. His father refused, saying, "How can you? You have never learned the violin."

"One needs not study for that," said this musical prodigy; and taking the instrument, he played second violin with ease and accuracy. Such precocity seems almost incredible, and only in the history of music does it find any parallel.

Born in Salzburg, 27th January 1756, he was carefully trained

by his father, who resigned his place as court musician to devote himself more exclusively to his family. From the earliest age he showed an extraordinary passion for music and mathematics, scrawling notes and diagrams in every place accessible to his insatiate pencil.

Taken to Vienna, the six-year-old virtuoso astonished the court by his brilliant talents. The future Queen of France, Marie Antoinette, was particularly delighted with him, and the little Mozart naïvely said he would like to marry her, for she was so good to him. His father devoted several years to an artistic tour, with him and his little less talented sister, through the German cities, and it was also extended to Paris and London. Everywhere the greatest enthusiasm was evinced in this charming bud of promise. The father writes home – "We have swords, laces, mantillas, snuff-boxes, gold cases, sufficient to furnish a shop; but as for money, it is a scarce article, and I am positively poor."

At Paris they were warmly received at the court, and the boy is said to have expressed his surprise when Mdme. Pompadour refused to kiss him, saying, "Who is she, that she will not kiss me? Have I not been kissed by the queen?" In London his improvisations and piano sonatas excited the greatest admiration. Here he also published his third work. These journeys were an uninterrupted chain of triumphs for the child-virtuoso on the piano, organ, violin, and in singing. He was made honorary member of the Academies of Bologna and Verona, decorated with orders, and received at the age of thirteen an order to write

the opera of "Mithridates," which was successfully produced at Milan in 1770. Several other fine minor compositions were also written to order at this time for his Italian admirers. At Rome Mozart attended the Sistine Chapel and wrote the score of Allegri's great mass, forbidden by the Pope to be copied, from the memory of a single performance.

The record of Mozart's youthful triumphs might be extended at great length; but aside from the proof they furnish of his extraordinary precocity, they have lent little vital significance in the great problem of his career, except so far as they stimulated the marvellous boy to lay a deep foundation for his greater future, which, short as it was, was fruitful in undying results.

II

Mozart's life in Paris, where he lived with his mother in 1778 and 1779, was a disappointment, for he despised the French nation. His deep, simple, German nature revolted from Parisian frivolity, in which he found only sensuality and coarseness, disguised under a thin veneering of social grace. He abhorred French music in these bitter terms – "The French are and always will be downright donkeys. They cannot sing, they scream." It was just at this time that Gluck and Piccini were having their great art-duel. We get a glimpse of the pious tendency of the young composer in his characterisation of Voltaire – "The ungodly arch-villain, Voltaire, has just died like a dog." Again he writes – "Friends who have no religion cannot long be my friends… I have such a sense of religion that I shall never do anything that I would not do before the whole world."

With Mozart's return to Germany in 1779, being then twenty-three years of age, comes the dawn of his classical period as a composer. The greater number of his masses had already been written, and now he settled himself in serious earnest to the cultivation of a true German operatic school. This found its dawn in the production of "Idomeneo," his first really great work for the lyric stage.

The young composer had hard struggles with poverty in these days. His letters to his father are full of revelations of his friction

with the little worries of life. Lack of money pinched him close, yet his cheerful spirit was ever buoyant. "I have only one small room; it is quite crammed with a piano, a table, a bed, and a chest of drawers," he writes.

Yet he would marry; for he was willing to face poverty in the companionship of a loving woman who dared to face it with him. At Mannheim he had met a beautiful young singer, Aloysia Weber, and he went to Munich to offer her marriage. She, however, saw nothing attractive in the thin, pale young man, with his long nose, great eyes, and little head; for he was anything but prepossessing. A younger sister, Constance, however, secretly loved Mozart, and he soon transferred his repelled affections to this charming woman, whom he married in 1782 at the house of Baroness Waldstetten. His *naïve* reasons for marrying show Mozart's ingenuous nature. He had no one to take care of his linen, he would not live dissolutely like other young men, and he loved Constance Weber. His answer to his father, who objected on account of his poverty, is worth quoting: —

"Constance is a well-conducted, good girl, of respectable parentage, and I am in a position to earn at least *daily bread* for her. We love each other, and are resolved to marry. All that you have written or may possibly write on the subject can be nothing but well-meant advice, which, however good and sensible, can no longer apply to a man who has gone so far with a girl."

Poor as Mozart was, he possessed such integrity and independence that he refused a most liberal offer from the King

of Prussia to become his chapel-master, for some unexplained reason which involved his sense of right and wrong. The first year of his marriage he wrote "Il Seraglio," and made the acquaintance of the aged Gluck, who took a deep interest in him and warmly praised his genius. Haydn, too, recognised his brilliant powers. "I tell you, on the word of an honest man," said the author of the "Creation" to Leopold Mozart, the father, who asked his opinion, "that I consider your son the greatest composer I have ever heard. He writes with taste, and possesses a thorough knowledge of composition."

Poverty and increasing expense pricked Mozart into intense, restless energy. His life had no lull in its creative industry. His splendid genius, insatiable and tireless, broke down his body, like a sword wearing out its scabbard. He poured out symphonies, operas, and sonatas with such prodigality as to astonish us, even when recollecting how fecund the musical mind has often been. Alike as artist and composer, he never ceased his labours. Day after day and night after night he hardly snatched an hour's rest. We can almost fancy he foreboded how short his brilliant life was to be, and was impelled to crowd into its brief compass its largest measure of results.

Yet he was always pursued by the spectre of want. Oftentimes his sick wife could not obtain needed medicines. He made more money than most musicians, yet was always impoverished. But it was his glory that he was never impoverished by sensual indulgence, extravagance, and riotous living, but by his lavish

generosity to those who in many instances needed help less than himself. Like many other men of genius and sensibility, he could not say “no” to even the pretence of distress and suffering.

III

The culminating point of Mozart's artistic development was in 1786. The "Marriage of Figaro" was the first of a series of masterpieces which cannot be surpassed alike for musical greatness and their hold on the lyric stage. The next year "Don Giovanni" saw the light, and was produced at Prague. The overture of this opera was composed and scored in less than six hours. The inhabitants of Prague greeted the work with the wildest enthusiasm, for they seemed to understand Mozart better than the Viennese.

During this period he made frequent concert tours to recruit his fortunes, but with little financial success. Presents of watches, snuff-boxes, and rings were common, but the returns were so small that Mozart was frequently obliged to pawn his gifts to purchase a dinner and lodging. What a comment on the period which adored genius, but allowed it to starve! His audiences could be enthusiastic enough to carry him to his hotel on their shoulders, but probably never thought that the wherewithal of a hearty supper was a more seasonable homage. So our musician struggled on through the closing years of his life with the wolf constantly at his door, and an invalid wife whom he passionately loved, yet must needs see suffer from the want of common necessaries. In these modern days, when distinguished artists make princely fortunes by the exercise of their musical gifts,

it is not easy to believe that Mozart, recognised as the greatest pianoforte player and composer of his time by all of musical Germany, could suffer such dire extremes of want as to be obliged more than once to beg for a dinner.

In 1791 he composed the score of the "Magic Flute" at the request of Schikaneder, a Viennese manager, who had written the text from a fairy tale, the fantastic elements of which are peculiarly German in their humour. Mozart put great earnestness into the work, and made it the first German opera of commanding merit, which embodied the essential intellectual sentiment and kindly warmth of popular German life. The manager paid the composer but a trifle for a work whose transcendent success enabled him to build a new opera-house, and laid the foundation of a large fortune. We are told, too, that at the time of Mozart's death in extreme want, when his sick wife, half-maddened with grief, could not buy a coffin for the dead composer, this hard-hearted wretch, who owed his all to the genius of the great departed, rushed about through Vienna bewailing the loss to music with sentimental tears, but did not give the heart-broken widow one kreutzer to pay the expense of a decent burial.

In 1791 Mozart's health was breaking down with great rapidity, though he himself would never recognise his own swiftly advancing fate. He experienced, however, a deep melancholy which nothing could remove. For the first time his habitual cheerfulness deserted him. His wife had been enabled

through the kindness of her friends to visit the healing waters of Baden, and was absent.

An incident now occurred which impressed Mozart with an ominous chill. One night there came a stranger, singularly dressed in grey, with an order for a requiem to be composed without fail within a month. The visitor, without revealing his name, departed in mysterious gloom, as he came. Again the stranger called, and solemnly reminded Mozart of his promise. The composer easily persuaded himself that this was a visitor from the other world, and that the requiem would be his own; for he was exhausted with labour and sickness, and easily became the prey of superstitious fancies. When his wife returned, she found him with a fatal pallor on his face, silent and melancholy, labouring with intense absorption on the funereal mass. He would sit brooding over the score till he swooned away in his chair, and only come to consciousness to bend his waning energies again to their ghastly work. The mysterious visitor, whom Mozart believed to be the precursor of his death, we now know to have been Count Walseck, who had recently lost his wife, and wished a musical memorial.

His final sickness attacked the composer while labouring at the requiem. The musical world was ringing with the fame of his last opera. To the dying man was brought the offer of the rich appointment of organist of St. Stephen's Cathedral. Most flattering propositions were made him by eager managers, who had become thoroughly awake to his genius when it was too

late. The great Mozart was dying in the very prime of his youth and his powers, when success was in his grasp and the world opening wide its arms to welcome his glorious gifts with substantial recognition; but all too late, for he was doomed to die in his spring-tide, though "a spring mellow with all the fruits of autumn."

The unfinished requiem lay on the bed, and his last efforts were to imitate some peculiar instrumental effects, as he breathed out his life in the arms of his wife and his friend, Süssmaier.

The epilogue to this life-drama is one of the saddest in the history of art: a pauper funeral for one of the world's greatest geniuses. "It was late one winter afternoon," says an old record, "before the coffin was deposited on the side aisles on the south side of St. Stephen's. Van Swieten, Salieri, Süssmaier, and two unknown musicians were the only persons present besides the officiating priest and the pall-bearers. It was a terribly inclement day; rain and sleet came down fast; and an eye-witness describes how the little band of mourners stood shivering in the blast, with their umbrellas up, round the hearse, as it left the door of the church. It was then far on in the dark, cold December afternoon, and the evening was fast closing in before the solitary hearse had passed the Stubenthor, and reached the distant graveyard of St. Marx, in which, among the 'third class,' the great composer of the 'G minor Symphony' and the 'Requiem' found his resting-place. By this time the weather had proved too much for all

the mourners; they had dropped off one by one, and Mozart's body was accompanied only by the driver of the carriage. There had been already two pauper funerals that day – one of them a midwife – and Mozart was to be the third in the grave and the uppermost.

"When the hearse drew up in the slush and sleet at the gate of the graveyard, it was welcomed by a strange pair – Franz Harruschka, the assistant grave-digger, and his mother, Katharina, known as 'Frau Katha,' who filled the quaint office of official mendicant to the place.

"The old woman was the first to speak: 'Any coaches or mourners coming?'

"A shrug from the driver of the hearse was the only response.

"'Whom have you got there, then?' continued she.

"'A bandmaster,' replied the other.

"'A musician? they're a poor lot; then I've no more money to look for to-day. It is to be hoped we shall have better luck in the morning.'

"To which the driver said, with a laugh, 'I'm devilish thirsty, too – not a kreutzer of drink-money have I had.'

"After this curious colloquy the coffin was dismounted and shoved into the top of the grave already occupied by the two paupers of the morning; and such was Mozart's last appearance on earth."

To-day no stone marks the spot where were deposited the last remains of one of the brightest of musical spirits; indeed, the

very grave is unknown, for it was the grave of a pauper.

IV

Mozart's charming letters reveal to us such a gentle, sparkling, affectionate nature, as to inspire as much love for the man as admiration for his genius. Sunny humour and tenderness bubble in almost every sentence. A clever writer says that "opening these is like opening a painted tomb… The colours are all fresh, the figures are all distinct."

No better illustration of the man Mozart can be had than in a few extracts from his correspondence. He writes to his sister from Rome while yet a mere lad: —

> "I am, thank God! except my miserable pen, well, and send you and mamma a thousand kisses. I wish you were in Rome; I am sure it would please you. Papa says I am a little fool, but that is nothing new. Here we have but one bed; it is easy to understand that I can't rest comfortably with papa. I shall be glad when we get into new quarters. I have just finished drawing the Holy Peter with his keys, the Holy Paul with his sword, and the Holy Luke with my sister. I have had the honour of kissing St. Peter's foot; and because I am so small as to be unable to reach it, they had to lift me up. I am the same old
> *"Wolfgang."*

Mozart was very fond of this sister Nannerl, and he used to write to her in a playful mosaic of French, German, and Italian. Just after his wedding he writes: —

"My darling is now a hundred times more joyful at the idea of going to Salzburg, and I am willing to stake – ay, my very life, that you will rejoice still more in my happiness when you know her; if, indeed, in your estimation, as in mine, a high-principled, honest, virtuous, and pleasing wife ought to make a man happy."

Late in his short life he writes the following characteristic note to a friend, whose life does not appear to have been one of the most regular: —

"Now tell me, my dear friend, how you are. I hope you are all as well as we are. You cannot fail to be happy, for you possess everything that you can wish for at your age and in your position, especially as you now seem to have entirely given up your former mode of life. Do you not every day become more convinced of the truth of the little lectures I used to inflict on you? Are not the pleasures of a transient, capricious passion widely different from the happiness produced by rational and true love? I feel sure that you often in your heart thank me for my admonitions. I shall feel quite proud if you do. But, jesting apart, you do really owe me some little gratitude if you are become worthy of Fräulein N – , for I certainly played no insignificant part in your improvement or reform.

"My great-grandfather used to say to his wife, my great-grandmother, who in turn told it to her daughter, my grandmother, who again repeated it to her daughter, my mother, who repeated it to her daughter, my own sister, that it was a very great art to talk eloquently and well, but

an equally great one to know the right moment to stop. I therefore shall follow the advice of my sister, thanks to our mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, and thus end, not only my moral ebullition, but my letter."

His playful tenderness lavished itself on his wife in a thousand quaint ways. He would, for example, rise long before her to take his horseback exercise, and always kiss her sleeping face and leave a little note like the following resting on her forehead – "Good-morning, dear little wife! I hope you have had a good sleep and pleasant dreams. I shall be back in two hours. Behave yourself like a good little girl, and don't run away from your husband."

Speaking of an infant child, our composer would say merrily, "That boy will be a true Mozart, for he always cries in the very key in which I am playing."

Mozart's musical greatness, shown in the symmetry of his art as well as in the richness of his inspirations, has been unanimously acknowledged by his brother composers. Meyerbeer could not restrain his tears when speaking of him. Weber, Mendelssohn, Rossini, and Wagner always praise him in terms of enthusiastic admiration. Haydn called him the greatest of composers. In fertility of invention, beauty of form, and exactness of method, he has never been surpassed, and has but one or two rivals. The composer of three of the greatest operas in musical history, besides many of much more than ordinary excellence; of symphonies that rival Haydn's for symmetry and

melodic affluence; of a great number of quartets, quintets, etc.; and of pianoforte sonatas which rank high among the best; of many masses that are standard in the service of the Catholic Church; of a great variety of beautiful songs – there is hardly any form of music which he did not richly adorn with the treasures of his genius. We may well say, in the words of one of the most competent critics: —

"Mozart was a king and a slave – king in his own beautiful realm of music; slave of the circumstances and the conditions of this world. Once over the boundaries of his own kingdom, and he was supreme; but the powers of the earth acknowledged not his sovereignty."

BEETHOVEN

I

The name and memory of this composer awaken, in the heart of the lover of music, sentiments of the deepest reverence and admiration. His life was so marked with affliction and so isolated as to make him, in his environment of conditions as a composer, an unique figure.

The principal fact which made the exterior life of Beethoven so bare of the ordinary pleasures that brighten and sweeten existence, his total deafness, greatly enriched his spiritual life. Music finally became to him a purely intellectual conception, for he was without any sensual enjoyment of its effects. To this Samson of music, for whom the ear was like the eye to other men, Milton's lines may indeed well apply: —

> "Oh! dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon!
> Irrecoverably dark – total eclipse,
> Without all hope of day!
> Oh first created Beam, and thou, great Word,
> 'Let there be light,' and light was over all,
> Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree?
> The sun to me is dark."

To his severe affliction we owe alike many of the defects of his character and the splendours of his genius. All his powers, concentrated into a spiritual focus, wrought such things as lift him into a solitary greatness. The world has agreed to measure this man as it measures Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare. We do not compare him with others.

Beethoven had the reputation among his contemporaries of being harsh, bitter, suspicious, and unamiable. There is much to justify this in the circumstances of his life; yet our readers will discover much to show, on the other hand, how deep, strong, and tender was the heart which was so wrung and tortured, and wounded to the quick by —

"The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune."

Weber gives a picture of Beethoven – "The square Cyclopean figure attired in a shabby coat with torn sleeves." Everybody will remember his noble, austere face, as seen in the numerous prints: the square, massive head, with the forest of rough hair; the strong features, so furrowed with the marks of passion and sadness; the eyes, with their look of introspection and insight; the whole expression of the countenance as of an ancient prophet. Such was the impression made by Beethoven on all who saw him, except in his moods of fierce wrath, which towards the last were not uncommon, though short-lived. A sorely tried, sublimely gifted man, he met his fate stubbornly, and worked out his great mission with all his might and main, through long years of weariness and

trouble. Posterity has rewarded him by enthroning him on the highest peaks of musical fame.

II

Ludwig van Beethoven was born at Bonn in 1770. It is a singular fact that at an early age he showed the deepest distaste for music, unlike the other great composers, who evinced their bent from their earliest years. His father was obliged to whip him severely before he would consent to sit down at the harpsichord; and it was not till he was past ten that his genuine interest in music showed itself. His first compositions displayed his genius. Mozart heard him play them, and said, "Mind, you will hear that boy talked of." Haydn, too, met Beethoven for the first and only time when the former was on his way to England, and recognised his remarkable powers. He gave him a few lessons in composition, and was after that anxious to claim the young Titan as a pupil.

"Yes," growled Beethoven, who for some queer reason never liked Haydn, "I had some lessons of him, indeed, but I was not his disciple. I never learned anything from him."

Beethoven made a profound impression even as a youth on all who knew him. Aside from the palpable marks of his power, there was an indomitable *hauteur*, a mysterious, self-wrapped air as of one constantly communing with the invisible, an unconscious assertion of mastery about him, which strongly impressed the imagination.

At the very outset of his career, when life promised all fair

and bright things to him, two comrades linked themselves to him, and ever after that refused to give him up – grim poverty and still grimmer disease. About the same time that he lost a fixed salary through the death of his friend, the Elector of Cologne, he began to grow deaf. Early in 1800, walking one day in the woods with his devoted friend and pupil, Ferdinand Ries, he disclosed the sad secret to him that the whole joyous world of sound was being gradually closed up to him; the charm of the human voice, the notes of the woodland birds, the sweet babblings of Nature, jargon to others, but intelligible to genius, the full-born splendours of *heard* music – all, all were fast receding from his grasp.

Beethoven was extraordinarily sensitive to the influences of Nature. Before his disease became serious he writes – "I wander about here with music-paper among the hills, and dales, and valleys, and scribble a good deal. No man on earth can love the country as I do." But one of Nature's most delightful modes of speech to man was soon to be utterly lost to him. At last he became so deaf that the most stunning crash of thunder or the *fortissimo* of the full orchestra were to him as if they were not. His bitter, heart-rending cry of agony, when he became convinced that the misfortune was irremediable, is full of eloquent despair – "As autumn leaves wither and fall, so are my hopes blighted. Almost as I came, I depart. Even the lofty courage, which so often animated me in the lovely days of summer, is gone forever. O Providence! vouchsafe me one day

of pure felicity! How long have I been estranged from the glad echo of true joy! When, O my God! when shall I feel it again in the temple of Nature and man? Never!"

And the small-souled, mole-eyed gossips and critics called him hard, churlish, and cynical – him, for whom the richest thing in Nature's splendid dower had been obliterated, except a soul, which never in its deepest sufferings lost its noble faith in God and man, or allowed its indomitable courage to be one whit weakened. That there were periods of utterly rayless despair and gloom we may guess; but not for long did Beethoven's great nature cower before its evil genius.

III

Within three years, from 1805 to 1808, Beethoven composed some of his greatest works – the oratorio of "The Mount of Olives," the opera of "Fidelio," and the two noble symphonies, "Pastorale" and "Eroica," besides a large number of concertos, sonatas, songs, and other occasional pieces. However gloomy the externals of his life, his creative activities knew no cessation.

The "Sinfonia Eroica," the "Choral" only excepted, is the longest of the immortal nine, and is one of the greatest examples of musical portraiture extant. All the great composers from Handel to Wagner have attempted, what is called descriptive music with more or less success, but never have musical genius and skill achieved a result so admirable in its relation to its purpose and by such strictly legitimate means as in this work.

"The 'Eroica,'" says a great writer, "is an attempt to draw a musical portrait of an historical character – a great statesman, a great general, a noble individual; to represent in music – Beethoven's own language – what M. Thiers has given in words, and Paul Delaroche in painting." Of Beethoven's success another writer has said – "It wants no title to tell its meaning, for throughout the symphony the hero is visibly portrayed."

It is anything but difficult to realise why Beethoven should have admired the first Napoleon. Both the soldier and musician were made of that sturdy stuff which would and did defy the

world; and it is not strange that Beethoven should have desired in some way – and he knew of no better course than through his art – to honour one so characteristically akin to himself, and who at that time was the most prominent man in Europe. Beethoven began the work in 1802, and in 1804 it was completed, and bore the following title: —

Sinfonia grande

“Napoleon Bonaparte”

1804 in August del Sigr

Louis van Beethoven

Sinfonia 3

Op. 55

This was copied and the original score despatched to the ambassador for presentation, while Beethoven retained the copy. Before the composition was laid before Napoleon, however, the great general had accepted the title of Emperor. No sooner did Beethoven hear of this from his pupil Ries than he started up in a rage, and exclaimed – “After all, then, he’s nothing but an

ordinary mortal! He will trample the rights of men under his feet!" saying which, he rushed to his table, seized the copy of the score, and tore the title-page completely off. From this time Beethoven hated Napoleon, and never again spoke of him in connection with the symphony until he heard of his death in St. Helena, when he observed, "I have already composed music for this calamity," evidently referring to the "Funeral March" in this symphony.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.