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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SKETCH OF HANDEL AND BEETHOVEN ***

Transcriber's note

A Table of Contents has been created for the HTML version. Minor punctuation errors have been changed without notice. All other inconsistencies are as in the original. The author's spelling has been maintained.

**SKETCH OF
HANDEL AND BEETHOVEN.**

Two Lectures,

DELIVERED IN

THE LECTURE HALL OF THE WIMBLEDON VILLAGE CLUB,

ON MONDAY EVENING, DEC. 14, 1863; AND MONDAY EVENING, JAN. 11, 1864.

BY THE

REV. T. HANLY BALL, A.B.,

CURATE AND LECTURER OF ST. MARY'S, WIMBLEDON.

Published at the request and expense of a Parishioner.

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1864.

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DEDICATION.

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TO

JOHN A. BEAUMONT ESQ.,
WIMBLEDON PARK HOUSE.

MY DEAR MR. BEAUMONT,

Seneca has well said, "The three main points in the question of benefits, are, first, a judicious choice in the object; secondly, in the matter of our benevolence; and thirdly, in the manner of expressing it."

Of the first, it would not be becoming in me to speak; of the second, you are the rightful judge; of the third, I beg leave thus publicly to state, that not only in requesting permission to publish this lecture at your own expense but *on many other occasions*, you have fully come up to Seneca's idea of what a benefactor ought to be.

[iv]

I shall not attempt describing what I hope you give me credit for; *Furnius* never gained so much upon *Augustus* as by a speech, upon the getting of his father's pardon for siding with *Anthony*, "THIS GRACE," says he, "IS THE ONLY INJURY THAT EVER CÆSAR DID ME; FOR IT HAS PUT ME UPON A NECESSITY OF LIVING AND DYING UNGRATEFUL."

Allow me to dedicate the little volume to you, and believe me, ever to remain,

Your obedient and faithful Servant,

T. HANLY BALL.

Wimbledon, 12th February, 1864.

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PREFACE.

A brief account of "The Wimbledon Village Club" will explain the origin and object of the two following Lectures.

"The design of the Institution is to afford to the inhabitants, and more especially the working and middle classes of Wimbledon and its vicinity, opportunities of intellectual and moral improvement, and rational and social enjoyment, through the medium of a Reading Room and Library, Lectures and Classes."^[A]

The Reading Room is supplied with Daily and Weekly Newspapers, Periodicals, and Books.

The Library contains upwards of Six Hundred volumes, all which have been presented to the Institution.

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The Lectures are on various literary and scientific subjects.

To these have been recently added, *Readings* and *Chat Meetings*.

Readings, are three short readings from some popular author, by different readers, on the same evening.

"*Chat Meetings* are simplifications of a soirée, or a conversazione. They originated in the idea that many parishioners, having in their homes interesting objects, the examination of which would afford pleasure and instruction to their fellow-parishioners, would on certain occasions gladly take these objects to a room appointed for the purpose, and display and explain them."^[B]

Mr. Toynbee, the *Fidus Achates* of the Club, has, in his admirable "Hints on the Formation of Local Museums," well said—"The Wimbledon Club is admirably calculated to meet the wants of the working classes, as regards their recreation and instruction. While it furnishes amusement and instruction to all classes, it brings them together at its various meetings in friendly intercourse; the management of the Institution, and the organization of its several proceedings, afford a valuable experience to the Committee, who portion among themselves their respective

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work; and the preparation of the Lectures, &c., proves a healthy mental stimulus to those intelligent inhabitants who desire to take part in *one of the most delightful of duties, viz., the conveyance to the minds of others an interest in those pleasing and elevating subjects from which, happily their own minds derive gratification.*"—"Hints," pp. 8, 9.

Should these Lectures again interest any of the large and attentive audiences with which they were honoured, I will consider myself justified in having consented to their publication, and feel happy to be the medium of imparting information, even on a secular subject, to those whom it is my duty, and is my pleasure, to profit and please. [viii]

It is scarcely necessary for me to say, biographical lectures are chiefly the result of reading and research; [C] I have, however, somewhat fully expressed my opinions on the advantages of music, and very freely on one or two cognate subjects, and others incidentally alluded to.

FOOTNOTES:

- [A] "Rules and Regulations of the Wimbledon Village Club," p. 1.
- [B] "Hints on the Formation of Local Museums, by the Treasurer of the Wimbledon Museum Committee," p. 27.
- [C] Works referred to, and extracted from, in the following Lectures:—Besides those mentioned in the Lectures, the following works are alluded to, or quoted;—Beattie's Essays; Burnet's History of Music; Hogart's Musical History; Edwards's History of the Opera; The Harmonicon; Schlegel's Life of Handel; Holmes' Life of Mozart; Moschele's Life of Beethoven.

A SKETCH OF HANDEL. [1]

A Lecture.

Before I say of that great composer and extraordinary man whose life I have undertaken to sketch, it will not be out of place, I hope, to make a few remarks on the History and Utility of Music.

I.—THE HISTORY.

It has been well said by Latrobe, that—though the concise and compressed character of the Mosaic history admits no data upon which to found this supposition, yet we may readily conclude from the nature of music, and the original perfection of the human powers, that the Garden of Eden was no stranger to "singing and the voice of melody." [2]

We read in Scripture that before the Fall, the state of our first parents was a state of unmingled happiness. Now, it is the very nature of joy to give utterance to its emotions. Happiness must have its expression. And thus it may well be supposed that man in his primal felicity would seek to express, by every conceivable mode, the love, gratitude, and joy which absorbed every affection of his nature.

Now, the most natural, as well as powerful, medium for conveying those feelings with which we are acquainted, is music. If then music be the expression of joy, it cannot be supposed unknown to our first parents, whose exultation was as intense as it was hallowed. [3]

Milton says:—

"Neither various style,
Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise
Their Maker in fit strains, pronounced or sung
Unmeditated, such prompt eloquence
Flowed from their lips, in prose or numerous verse,
More tuneable, than needed lute or harp
To add more sweetness."

But soon the voice of unalloyed thanksgiving was silenced. Sin brought with it sorrow; and, ever since, the Hallelujahs of the saints have been strangely intermingled with the moanings of self-reproach, and the cries of judicial sufferings. The heart, now become the seat of a tremendous conflict between sin and holiness, lost its elasticity, and needed some outward excitement to call forth its song of praise. Hence the invention of instrumental music, which is assigned by Scripture to Jubal.

Longfellow says:—

"When first in ancient time, from Jubal's tongue,
The tuneful anthem filled the morning air,
To sacred hymnings and Elysian song
His music-breathing shell the minstrel woke—

Devotion breathed aloud from every chord,
The voice of praise was heard in every tone,
And prayer and thanks to Him the Eternal One,
To Him, that, with bright inspiration touched
The high and gifted lyre of everlasting song,
And warmed the soul with new vitality.

"To the element of air," says Bishop Horne, "God has given the power of producing sounds; to the ear the capacity of receiving them; and to the affections of the mind an aptness to be moved by them, when transmitted through the body." The philosophy of the thing is too deep and wonderful for us; we cannot attain to it! But such is the fact; with that we are concerned, and that is enough for us to know.

II.—UTILITY.

Of the Utility of Music there can be no question.

Lycurgus, one of the wisest of all ancient legislators, gave great encouragement to music. [5]

Polybius, one of the most ancient historians ascribes the humanity of the Arcadians to the influence of this art and the barbarity of their neighbours the Cynethians to their neglect of it.

Quintilian, the great rhetorician, is very copious in the praise of music; and extols it as an incentive to valour, as an instrument of moral and intellectual discipline, as an auxiliary to science, as an object of attention to the wisest men, and a source of comfort and an assistant in labour even to the very meanest.

The heroes of ancient Greece were ambitious to excel in music. In armies music has always been cultivated as a source of pleasure, a principle of regular motion, and an incentive to valour and enthusiasm.

And there is this in music, that it is suited to please all the varieties of the human mind. The illiterate and the learned, the thoughtless and the giddy, the phlegmatic and the sanguine, all confess themselves to be its votaries. It is a source of the purest mental enjoyment, and may be obtained by all. It is suited to all classes, and never ceases to please all. [6]

Many of you, I am sure, are familiar with what Shakespeare says:—

"Nought is so stockish, hard, and full of rage,
But music for the time doth change his nature.
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted."

You recollect, too, what Lord Byron has so pathetically sung:—

"My soul is dark—oh! quickly string
The harp I yet can brook to hear,
And let thy gentle fingers fling
Its melting murmurs o'er mine ear.

"If in this heart a hope be dear,
That sound shall charm it forth again;
If in these eyes there lurk a tear,
'T will flow, and cease to burn my brain.

"But bid the strain be wild and deep,
Nor let thy notes of joy be first,
I tell thee, minstrel, I must weep,
Or else this heavy heart will burst.

"For it hath been by sorrow nursed,
And ached in sleepless sorrow long;
And now 't is doomed to know the worst,
And break at once, or yield to song."

All, however, do not agree with Byron and Shakespeare. Charles Lamb says:—

"Some cry up Haydn, some Mozart,
Just as the whim bites.—For my part,
I do not care a farthing candle
For either of them, or for Handel.
Cannot a man live free and easy
Without admiring Pergolesi?
Or through the earth with comfort go,
That never heard of Doctor Blow?

I hardly have;
 And yet I eat, and drink, and shave,
 Like other people, if you watch it,
 And know no more of stave or crotchet
 Than did the primitive Peruvians,
 Or those old ante queer diluvians,
 That lived in the unwash'd earth with Jubal,
 Before that dirty blacksmith, Tubal,
 By stroke on anvil, or by summ'at,
 Found out, to his great surprise, the gamut."

[8]

Witty essayist, your "Free Thoughts," like many other of your clever writings, are erroneous. In all ages, and even by the least enlightened of mankind, the efficacy of music has been acknowledged, and considered as a genuine and natural source of delight. Now it awakens the latent courage in the breast of the soldier, and now administers to the pensive sorrow of the weeping mother. At one moment it inspires the soul with sublime and hallowed awe, and at the next gives life to unbounded mirth. It is suited to stimulate the feeling of devotion, and to increase the boisterous pleasures of a village harvest-home. Wearied with the oppression of the noon-day sun, and exhausted with labour, the husbandman sits beneath the shade of his native oak, and sings the songs he heard in infancy. The man of business, the man of letters, and the statesman, wearied with the exertion of mind and burden of care, seek relief round the family hearth, and forget awhile ambition and fears under the influence of music. And the dejected emigrant sings the songs of fatherland, whilst recollections, sad but sweet, arise and disappear.

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"In far-distant climes, when the tear gushes o'er
 For home, love, and friendship, that charm us no more,
 Oh! what on the exiles' dark sorrows can shine
 Like the rapture that flows at the songs of Lang-syne!

"The music of Britain is sweet 'midst the scene;
 But, ah! could you hear it, when seas roll between!
 'Tis then, and then only, the soul can divine
 The music that dwells in the songs of Lang-syne.

"The spirit, when torn from earth's objects of love,
 Loses all its regrets in the chorus above:
 So in exile we cannot but cease to repine,
 When it hallows with ecstasy songs of Lang-syne."

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But I must allow music herself to prove her influence and assert her sway.

(CAPRICE HONGROIS.)

"Cease gentle sounds, nor kill me quite
 With such excess of sweet delight.
 Each trembling note invades my heart,
 And thrills through every vital part:
 A soft—a pleasing pain
 Pursues my heated blood through every vein.
 What—what does the enchantment mean?
 Now, wild with fierce desire,
 My breast is all on fire!
 In softened raptures now I die!
 Can empty sound such joys impart?
 Can music thus transport the heart
 With melting ecstasy!
 Oh! art divine! exalted blessing,
 Each celestial charm expressing—
 Kindest gift the heavens bestow,
 Sweetest food that mortals know!
 But give the charming magic o'er—
 My beating heart can bear no more!"

George Frederick Handel was born at Halle, in Lower Saxony, on the 24th February, 1684. His father (who was a surgeon, and was sixty-three years old when this child first saw the light) determined to make a lawyer of him: but nature had resolved to make him a composer; and the struggle between nature and the father commenced at the very cradle of the future author of the "Messiah."

[11]

Scarcely had he begun to speak when he articulated musical sounds. The doctor was terribly alarmed, when he discovered instincts which in his eyes were of so low an order. He understood nothing of art, nor of the noble part which artists sustain in the world. He saw in them nothing but a sort of mountebank, who amuse the world in its idle moments. Uneasy, and almost ashamed at the inclinations of his son, the father of Handel opposed them by all possible means. He would not send him to any of the public schools, because there not only grammar but the gamut would be taught him—he would not permit him to be taken to any place, of whatever description, where

he could hear music—he forbade him the slightest exercise of that nature and banished every kind of musical instrument far from the house. [12]

But he might as well have told the river that it was not to flow. Nature surmounted every obstacle to her decree. The precautions taken to stifle the instincts of the child served only to fortify by concentrating them. He found means to procure a spinet, and to conceal it in a garret, whither he went to play when all the household was asleep—without any guidance finding out everything for himself, and merely by permitting his little fingers to wander over the keyboard, he produced harmonic combinations; and at *seven* years of age he discovered that he knew how to play upon the spinet.

The poor father soon discovered his mistake, and in the following manner. He had, by a former marriage, a son who was valet to the Duke of Saxe Weisenfeld. He wished to go and visit him; and George, who was then seven years old, and who was not acquainted with this brother, begged of his father to take him with him. When this was refused he did not insist, but watched for the moment when the coach set off, and followed it on foot. The father saw him, stopped the coach and scolded him; when the child, as if he did not hear the scolding, recommenced his supplications to be allowed to take part in the journey, and at last (thanks to that persistence which predicted the man of energy which he eventually proved to be) his request was granted. [13]

When they had arrived at the palace of the Duke, the boy stole off to the organ in the chapel as soon as the service was concluded, and was unable to resist the temptation of touching it. The Duke, not recognizing the style of his organist, made inquiries; and when the trembling little artist was brought before him he encouraged him, and soon won his secret from him.

The Duke then addressed himself to the father, and represented to him that it was a sort of crime against humanity to stifle so much genius in its birth. The old doctor was greatly astonished, and had not much to answer. The opinion of a sovereign prince must have had, moreover, a great influence over the mind of a man who considered musicians mountebanks. He permitted himself to be convinced, and promised, not without some regret, to respect a vocation which manifested itself by such unmistakeable signs. Handel was present, his eyes fastened upon his powerful protector, without losing a word of the argument. Never did he forget it, and for ever afterwards he regarded the Duke of Saxe-Weisenfeld as his benefactor, for having given such good advice to his father. On his return home his wishes were gratified, and he was permitted to take lessons from Sackau, the organist of the cathedral at Halle. [14]

Sackau was an organist of the old school, learned and fond of his art. He was not long in discovering what a pupil Fortune had sent him. He began by carefully instructing him in general principles, and then laid before him a vast collection of German and Italian music which he possessed, and which they analyzed together. Sackau was every day more and more astonished at his marvellous progress; and, as he loved wine nearly as well as music, he often sent him to take his place at the organ on Sundays, whenever he had a good *dejeuner* to take part in. At length, although he found him of great use, this worthy man confessed, with excellent and admirable pride, that his pupil knew more than himself, and advised that he should be sent to Berlin, where he might strengthen himself by studying other models. [15]

Handel was eleven years of age when he went to Berlin. There he passed for a prodigy. The Elector, wishing to become the patron of so rare a genius, manifested a disposition to attach him to himself, and to send him to Italy to complete his musical education. But when the father was consulted, he did not think it wise to enchain the future of his son to the Court of Berlin, and he excused himself, saying that he was now an old man, and that he wished to keep near him the only son who remained to him; and, as in those days it was not prudent to oppose a prince on his own land, Handel was brought back somewhat hastily to his native town. [16]

Handel's father died shortly after the return of his son from Berlin, in 1697, leaving him poor; and it became necessary to provide for his *existence* as well as his *renown*. Halle was too small to contain him. He wished to visit Italy, but not having the means of such a journey, he went to Hamburg in the month of July, 1703.

Soon after his arrival in Hamburg, the place of the organist of Lubeck was offered for competition, upon the *retirement* of the old incumbent. Handel canvassed for the vacancy; but finding a rather singular condition attached to the programme, which was *that the successor was to marry the daughter of the retiring organist*, as this was not quite agreeable to him, he returned to Hamburg as happy as he went. This adventure, at the very outset of his career, appears all the more original, when we remember that Handel never manifested any taste for matrimony. [17]

I shall not occupy your time by describing Handel's peregrinations through Italy—wherever he went his fame preceded him. In 1709 he left Italy, with an intent to settle in Germany. He came to Hanover. The Elector George of Brunswick, afterwards George I. of England, was delighted to receive such a man in his principality, and offered to retain him as his chapel master, at a salary of 1800 ducats, about £300 a year.

Handel was not very desirous of occupying this post. For at the Court of the elector he had already met some British noblemen who had pressed him to visit England; and being persuaded by them to undertake that journey, he did not wish to engage himself, except upon the condition of being allowed to accomplish it. The condition was accepted and he set out at the end of the year. Passing through Dusseldorf he could scarcely tear himself away; for the Elector Palatine [18]

wished to keep him at any price. Thence he went to Halle to embrace his mother, who was now blind; and his good old master, Sackau. Afterwards he visited Holland and arrived in London at the close of 1710.

Handel's first work in England was the Opera of Rinaldo, and this at once established his reputation.

The Cavatina in the first act, "Cairo Sposa," was to be found, in 1711, upon all the harpsichords of Great Britain, as a model of pathetic grace. The march was adopted by the regiment of Life Guards, who played it every day for forty years. Like the regiments themselves, marches have their days and their strokes of fortune; and this one, after a long and honourable existence, was subsequently pressed into the service of the highway robbers. Twenty years later Pepusch made out of it the Robber's chorus in the Beggar's Opera, "Let us take road." The brilliant morceau in the second act, "Il tri Cerbero," was also set to English words—"Let the waiter bring clean glasses," and was a long time the most popular song at all merry-makings. But what shall be said of "Lascia che io pianza?" Stradella's divine air of "I miei sospiri," has nothing more moving, or more profoundly tender. [19]

It has been asserted that in music the *beau ideal* changes every thirty years, but that is an ill-natured criticism. Certain forms of accompaniment may grow out of fashion like the cut of a coat. But a fine melody remains eternally beautiful and always agreeable to listen to. The 100th Psalm of the middle ages is as magnificent to-day as it was when nearly four centuries ago it came from the brain of its composer, Franc.^[D] "Laschia che io pianza" and "I miei sospiri" will be admirable and admired to the very end of the world.

Handel's publisher was said to have gained £1,500 from the publication of Rinaldo, which drew from Handel this complaint, "My Dear Sir, as it is only right that we should be upon an equal footing, *you* shall *compose* the next opera, and I will sell it." Publishers then, as now, not only lived by the brains of others, but had the lion's share of the profits. [20]

Handel's success as an harpsichordist was equal to that which he enjoyed as a composer. He very often played solos in the theatre, and at the house of Thomas Britton.

Britton, the small coal merchant of Clerkenwell Green, deserves a passing remark.

Thomas Britton belonged to that class of men whom persons of limited views are accustomed to term *the lower orders* of society, for he gained his daily bread by crying small coal, which he carried about the streets in a sack upon his shoulders. He lived near Clerkenwell Green, a quarter of the town with which fashionable people were scarcely acquainted before he made it illustrious. [21]

How it came to pass that he learnt to play upon the *viola de gamba* is not known, but he played upon it, and he was so much of an artist, that he grouped around him a number of amateurs who were happy to perform concerted music under his direction.

Britton was the tenant of a stable which he divided horizontally by a floor—on the ground floor was his coal shop. The upper story formed a long and narrow room, and it was in this chamber that the first meetings in the nature of private concerts took place in England, and instrumental music was first played regularly. Here it was that from 1678 to 1714 (the period of his death), the itinerant small coal merchant weekly entertained the intelligent world of London at his musical soirées, always gratuitously. Among others, the Duchess of Queensbury, one of the most celebrated beauties of the Court, was very regular in her attendance. [22]

Pepusch and Handel played the harpsichord and the organ there.

Hawkins mentions, as a proof of the great consideration which Britton acquired, that he was called "*Sir*;" and many persons, unable to believe that a man of that class and of such a business could arrive by natural means to be called "Sir," took him for a magician, an atheist, and a Jesuit.

In 1715, Handel had produced at the theatre in the Haymarket, a new opera *Amadiji*. The *poem* of Amadiji is signed, in right of his authorship, by the new manager of the theatre James Heidegger, commonly called the "*Swiss Count*." He was said to be the ugliest man of his time; Lord Chesterfield wagered that it was impossible to discover a human being so disgraced by nature. After having searched through the town, a hideous old woman was found, and it was agreed that Heidegger was handsomer. But as Heidegger was pluming himself upon his victory, Chesterfield required that he should put on the old woman's bonnet. Thus attired the Swiss Count appeared horribly ugly, and Chesterfield was unanimously declared the winner, amid thunders of applause. [23]

Heidegger, who made so light of a joke at his own expense, dedicated the libretto of Amadis to the Earl of Burlington, at whose house, in Piccadilly, the music had been composed by Handel. When the King asked the Earl why he went so far to live, he replied that he was fond of solitude, and that he was certain that he had found a place where no one could come and build beside him. It is one hundred and forty seven years since he said this. Piccadilly, where the house of this solitary lord is to be found, is now, I need scarcely tell you, one of the most central and fashionable parts of London.

In 1717, Handel paid a flying visit to his native town. When he returned to London, in 1718, he found the Italian theatre closed, being unable to support itself; but the chapel of the Duke of Chandos was in a flourishing condition. The Duke of Chandos, formerly Paymaster-General of [24]

Queen Anne's army, had built near the village of Edgeware a mansion called Cannons.

In "A journey through England," by Miss Spence, this mansion is thus described:—

"The palace of the Duke of Chandos was erected in the eighteenth century. This magnificent structure with its decorations and furniture cost £230,000. The pillars of the great hall were of marble, as were the steps of the principal staircase, each step consisting of one piece twenty-two feet long. The establishment of the household was not inferior to the splendour of the habitation. Notwithstanding the three successive shocks which his fortune received by his concern in the African Company and the Mississippi and South Sea speculations in 1718-19-20, the Duke lived in splendour at Cannons till his death in 1744, rather as the presumptive heir to a diadem than as one of Her Majesty's subjects. So extraordinary indeed, was his style of living, that he was designated '*The Grand Duke*.'" [25]

Among other objects of luxury this duke had a chapel furnished like the churches of Italy. It was situate a short distance from the mansion, and we are told that he went there with true Christian humility, "attended by his Swiss Guards," ranged as the Yeoman of the Guard. Every Sunday the road from London to Edgeware was thronged with carriages of the members of the nobility and gentry, who went to pray to God with his grace. Dr. Pepusch, one of the greatest musical celebrities of the time, was the first chapel master; but the Duke of Chandos, who loved ever to worship the Lord with the best of everything, made proposals to the illustrious Handel, and persuaded him to take the place of Pepusch. The Musical Biography tells us that "Dr. Pepusch fully acquiesced in the opinion of Handel's superior merit, and retired from his eminent and honourable situation without any expression whatever either of chagrin or disappointment." [26]

The wise labour for their own sakes, for their own satisfaction, and in the midst of general indifference; but artists only work when they are excited by public attention. The most fruitful have need of external animation to become productive, and require immediate applause. Handel, having an orchestra and singers at his disposal, with the guests of a wealthy nobleman for audience, set himself passionately to work. It was at Cannons that he wrote the two Te Deums and the twelve famous Anthems, called the Chandos Anthems.

Of the splendid residence wherein the Duke of Chandos gave these magnificent "feasts of reason and flow of soul," nothing is now left but the chapel, which, as I said before, was constructed apart from the mansion. It is now the parish church of Edgeware. The most interesting relic is an organ, of moderate size, which stands behind the altar. Upon this may be found a little brass plate, bearing this inscription:— [27]

HANDEL WAS ORGANIST OF THIS CHURCH FROM THE YEAR 1718 TO 1721, AND COMPOSED THE ORATORIO OF ESTHER ON THIS ORGAN.
--

The mansion was sold in 1750, three years after the Duke's death, for eleven thousand pounds. (It had cost, you recollect, two hundred and thirty thousand pounds.) Not a vestige of it is left; and, as the site is now in a state of cultivation, Pope's prediction is realized:

"Another age shall see the golden ear
Imbrown the slope and nod on the parterre.
Deep harvests bury all his pride has planned,
And laughing Ceres reassume the land."

Essay—"Of the Use of Riches."

The magnificent Duke himself is now almost forgotten. A marble statue, which was erected to his memory in the crypt of the chapel, is now in the last state of dilapidation. The wind whistles through the broken windows of its funereal abode; and the plaster of the roof, detached from its skeleton of laths, powders his enormous wig, and soils the imperial robe that drapes his shoulders. But the spirit of the master of Cannons may console itself; for in the verses of the poets are monuments of infinitely greater durability than marble. And has not Pope sung:— [28]

"True, some are open, and to all men known;
Others so very close, they're hid from none.
(So darkness strikes the sense no less than light;)
Thus gracious Chandos is beloved at sight."

Essay—"Of the Characters of Man."

On either side of the statue stand two long figures, clothed, like it, in Roman costume. These are the first two wives of the Duke. But he married a third wife, who has not, however, been permitted to enter the sanctuary. [29]

The story of this third marriage is worth telling you.

One day the Duke being on a journey, he saw, at the door of an inn at which the horses were changed, a groom beating a young servant girl with a horse-whip. Taking pity on the poor girl, the Duke went to interpose between them, when he was informed that the groom and the girl

were married. This being the case, nothing could be said; for the law of England at that time permitted husbands to beat their wives to any excess short of death. The groom, who had noticed the movement of the Duke, came up and offered to sell him his wife, if he would buy her; and in order to save her from further punishment he did so. But when the bargain was concluded, the Duke did not know what to do with his new acquisition, and so he sent her to school. Soon after this the Duchess of Chandos died, and the Duke took it into his head that he would marry his purchase—so that eventually the poor servant girl, whom a groom had beaten by the road side before every passer by, became Duchess of Chandos, and comported herself in her new rank with perfect dignity.

[30]

But to return to Handel and to Cannons. One day, as he was going there, he was overtaken by a shower in the midst of the village of Edgware, and took shelter in the house of one Powell, who was a blacksmith as well as parish clerk of Whitchurch. After the usual salutations, Powell fell to work again at his forge, singing an old song the while. By an extraordinary phenomenon, the hammer, striking in time, drew from the anvil two harmonic sounds, which, being in accord with the melody, made a sort of continuous bass. Handel was struck by the incident, listened, remembered the air and its strange accompaniment, and, when he returned home, composed out of it a piece for the harpsichord. This is the piece which has been published separately a thousand times under the title of *The Harmonious Blacksmith*. After an existence of upwards of a hundred and forty years, this piece is continually being reprinted, and it will be reprinted so long as the human race is sensible to music. Judge for yourselves, as it shall now be kindly played for you.

[31]

HARMONIOUS BLACKSMITH.

In the "London Daily Post" of the 19th August, 1738, there is the following paragraph:

"The entertainment at Vauxhall Gardens concluded with the Coronation Anthems of Mr. Handel, to the great pleasure of the company, and amidst a great concourse of people."

The Coronation Anthems here alluded to are those composed for the coronation of George II. He was too fond of music to be satisfied at his coronation with that of the court composer, whom an old law compelled him to have attached to the household, so he requested Handel to give his assistance, who wrote the four anthems which are called the Coronation Anthems. These were performed at Westminster, during the ceremony of the 11th October, 1727, after having been solemnly rehearsed in the cathedral on the 6th, in the presence of a numerous assemblage. This work forms one of the most solid foundations of its author's glory. "Zadok the Priest" especially is an inspiration of prodigious grandeur—the chorus, "God Save the King" (not the National Anthem), is comparable in beauty to the "Hallelujah" chorus, in the "Messiah."

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Most of you are familiar with these anthems; they are always performed at the Annual Meeting of Charity Children in St. Paul's;^[E] and who ever tires of listening to them? Grand music has this advantage over all the other productions of the artistic faculties of man, that people are never tired of it. It is like daily bread, an aliment always new, always wished for. The oftener you hear a fine piece of music, the greater pleasure you take in hearing it again. It charms you in proportion as you have familiarized yourself with it, therefore it is not to be feared that people will be tired of listening to the Coronation Anthems of Handel to the end of time.

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I have given you a quotation from the principal daily paper of the period we are now speaking of; allow me to give you another. In the "Daily Post" of the 18th April, 1738, there is the following announcement:—

"We are informed, from very good authority, that there is now nearly finished a statue of the justly celebrated Mr. Handel, exquisitely done, by the ingenious Mr. Roubilliac, of St. Martin's Lane Statuary, out of one entire block of white marble, which is to be placed in a grand *nich*, erected on purpose, in the great grove of Vauxhall Gardens (The great grove at Vauxhall Gardens!—Sic transit gloria mundi), at the sole expense of Mr. Tyers, undertaker of the entertainment there, who, in consideration of the real merit of that inimitable master, thought it proper that his effigy should preside there, where his harmony has so often charmed even the greatest crowds into the profoundest calm and most decent behaviour."

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And in the following copy, that of the 2nd May, 1738, there is the following:—

"Last night Vauxhall was opened, and there was a considerable appearance of both sexes. The several pieces of music played on that occasion had never been heard before in the gardens: the company expressed the greatest satisfaction at the marble statue of Mr. Handel."

Some of you may have seen this marble statue in the great grove at Vauxhall Gardens. I never have; but we may all see the self-same statue any day, in the great room at Exeter Hall.

Apropos of a statue—England has shown great gratitude to Handel—Handel, a *foreigner*—has she shown anything like equal gratitude to as great, if not a greater genius, and that genius *her own son*?

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Who ever loved England more dearly than Shakespeare? His was not merely the love of a son for his mother, but it was as tender as that of a mother for her son. His works are full of delicious passages, in which his patriotism becomes manifest. No corner of the globe has been sung by native poets as England has by Shakespeare. Many of you, I dare say, are familiar with that beautiful passage in "Richard II." He is describing England, and he says—

"This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress, built by Nature for herself,
Against infection and the hand of War;
This happy breed of men—this little earth;
This precious stone set in the silver sea."

Yes, Shakespeare so loved his country, that he divined by intuition the heart-anguish of those who have lost theirs. Romeo, when Friar Laurence tells him that he is banished from Verona, cries:—

"Ha! banishment? Be merciful; say *death!*
For exile hath more terror in his look;
Much more than death: do not say 'banishment.'

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Friar.—Be patient, for the world is broad and wide.

Romeo.—There is no world outside Verona's walls!
Hast thou no poison mixed
To kill me? but 'banished!' 'banished!'
O Friar! the damned use that word in hell!"

He who spoke thus was Shakespeare, and yet *his* compatriots could not find the means of erecting a statue to him! Even at the present day in London, where you may find in every square a herd of dukes, to whom not even bronze can give celebrity, Shakespeare is nowhere to be found. His image remains shut up in Westminster Abbey, instead of being set upon a column whose height should dominate over the metropolis, as his genius dominates over the world.^[F]

I must necessarily pass over much that is interesting in the life of Handel: recollect I have undertaken to give you only a "sketch," not a history. My sketch, however, would be incomplete did I overlook his greatest production, or his visit to "that generous and polite nation," as he was pleased to call Ireland, for which nation his masterpiece was composed, and in which it was first performed.

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For a long time Handel had been wished for in Ireland. The Duke of Devonshire, the Lord Lieutenant of the country at that period, had directly invited him to pay a visit to the island, and the Irish professed great admiration for him.

Almost all the musical societies of Dublin, which were composed of amateurs, gave their entertainments for the furtherance of charitable objects. Handel put himself into communication with the most important of these, that "for the benefit and enlargement (freedom) of poor distressed prisoners for debt," and promised to give an oratorio for its benefit. For this society he composed the "Messiah," the masterpiece of this great master. Whoever has listened to his music will admit that its most distinctive character is the sublime. No one, without exception, neither Beethoven nor Mozart, has ever risen nearer to the grandeur of the ideal than Handel did, and he was never more sublime than in the "Messiah;" and, remembering this, read the dates which are inscribed with his own hand upon the manuscript:—

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"Commenced 22nd August, 1741.

"End of 1st part, 28th August.

"End of 2nd, 6th September.

"End of 3rd, 12th September, 1741.

"Filled up on the 14th."

This Herculean work was therefore accomplished in twenty-three days; and Handel was then fifty-six years old!

It is a strange phenomenon: when men of genius are to die YOUNG, they complete their masterpieces at *once*. Mozart rendered up his soul at thirty-nine; Raphael painted "The School of Athens" at twenty-five, and "The Transfiguration" at thirty-seven; Paul Potter his "Bull" at twenty-two; Rossini composed "The Barber of Seville" when he was twenty-three, "William Tell" at thirty-seven, and afterwards wrote no more. If these men had lived longer, it would have been impossible for them to surpass themselves.

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Great artists, on the other hand, who are destined to have *long lives* are *slow in production*, or rather they produce their best things in the *decline of life*. Handel, *e.g.*, composed his greatest works, "The Funeral Anthem," "Israel," "The Messiah," "Samson," "The Dettingen Te Deum," and

"Judas Macabbeus," *after he was fifty-two* years old. Gluck had not composed one of his operas when he was fifty. Haydn was an old man of sixty-five when he produced the "Creation." Murillo became Murillo only at forty years of age. Poussin was seventy when he painted "The Deluge," which is the most poetically great of all his noble pictures. Michael Angelo counted more than sixty years when he encrusted his incomparable fresco, "The Last Judgment," upon the walls of the Sistine Chapel; and he was eighty-seven when he raised the cupola of St. Peter's to the heavens. And our own Milton was sixty-three when he wrote "Paradise Lost!"

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But, to return—Handel set out on his journey and charitable mission, 4th August, 1741. It is to this journey Pope alludes in his "Dunciad:—

"But soon, ah! soon, rebellion will commence,
If music meanly borrows aid from sense;
Strong in new arms, lo! giant Handel stands,
Like bold Briareus, with his hundred hands,
To stir, to rouse, to shake the soul he comes,
And Jove's own thunders follow Mars' drums."

He was stayed by contrary winds in the ancient and picturesque city of Chester. Dr. Burney says, "I was at the public school in Chester, and very well remember seeing him smoke a pipe over a dish of coffee at the Exchange coffee house; and, being extremely curious to see so extraordinary a man, I watched him narrowly as long as he remained in Chester, where he stayed on account of the wind being unfavourable for his embarking at Park Gate."

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Wishing to employ this delay in trying over some pieces of his new oratorio—the Messiah, he sought for some one who could read music at sight, and a house painter named Janson was indicated to him as one of the best musicians attached to the Cathedral. A meeting took place, but poor Janson managed so badly, that the irascible composer became purple with anger, and after swearing, as was his wont, in four or five languages at a time, cried out, "You Schountrel! tit you not tell me dat you could sing at soite?" "Yes sir," replied the good fellow, "but not at *first sight*." Handel upon this burst out laughing, and the rehearsal proceeded no further.

He arrived in Dublin on the 18th November, 1741. It was not till April following, however, that the Messiah was for the first time heard. In the Dublin papers of March 1742, the following advertisement appeared:—

"For the relief of the prisoners in the several gaols, and for the support of Mercer's Hospital; on Monday, the 12th April, will be performed at the Music Hall, in Fishamble-street, Mr. Handel's new grand Oratorio called the *Messiah*."

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The performance having taken place, the newspapers vied with each other in commendation and praise. I give you an extract from one:—

"On Tuesday last, (the day I suppose was changed), Mr. Handel's sacred grand Oratorio, the Messiah, was performed in the New Music Hall, in Fishamble-street. The best judges allowed it to be the most finished piece of music. Words are wanted to express the delight it afforded to the admiring crowded audience. The sublime, the grand and the tender, adapted to the most elevated, majestic, and moving words, conspired to transport and charm the ravished heart and ear. It is but justice to Mr. Handel, that the world should know, he generously gave the money arising from this grand performance to be equally shared by the society for relieving prisoners, the Charitable Infirmary, and Mercer's Hospital, for which they will ever gratefully remember his name."

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This is high encomium, but the audience paid him higher still. When the chorus all struck up, "For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth," in the Hallelujah, they were so transported that they all together started up and remained standing till the chorus ended."

A few days after the performance of the Messiah, Handel waited on Lord Kinnoul, with whom he was particularly acquainted. His Lordship, as was natural, paid him some compliments on the noble *entertainment* which he had lately given in the town. "My Lord, said Handel, I should be sorry if I *only entertained them*, I wish TO MAKE THEM BETTER."

The Messiah has remained the most popular of Oratorios. It is never announced in anything like a fitting manner without attracting the public. It invariably forms part of the programme at all the festivals, and the day on which it is performed is always the most productive. The Sacred Harmonic Societies particularly give it every year for the benefit of distressed musicians. Truly does it deserve the touching eulogy that "it has fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and fostered the orphans."

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But I must hasten to a conclusion. Before I conclude this sketch of Handel, I must introduce you to one more of his Oratorios, "L'Allegro."

This magnificent composition has been eulogized by an eminent poet,—a beautiful pigeon! and an old parson! I will briefly tell you the eulogy of each, for brief is the eulogy itself.

The Poet having heard the oratorio performed, wrote thus:—

"If e'er Arion's music calm'd the floods
And Orpheus ever drew the dancing woods!
Why do not British trees and forest throng
To hear the sweeter notes of Handel's song?
This does the falsehood of the fable prove—
Or seas and woods when Handel harps would move."

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THE PIGEON.—"Let me wander not unseen," is considered one of Handel's finest inspirations. Hawkins says, "Of the air, the late Mr. John Lockman relates the following story, assuring his reader, that himself was an eye-witness to it," viz:—

"When at the house of Mr. Lee, a gentleman in Cheshire, whose daughter was a very fine performer on the harpsichord, he saw a pigeon which, whenever the young lady played this song, and *this only*, would fly from an adjacent dove-house to the window in the parlour where she sat, and listen to it with the most pleasing emotions, and the instant the song was over would fly away to her dove-house." [G]

THE PARSON, old Dr. Delaney, F.T.C.D. once heard at the opera a lady^[H] sing this song. He was so captivated and excited that he could not control himself, but standing up in front of his box exclaimed,

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"Oh! woman, for this be all thy sins forgiven!"

Now I do not know whether there is a poet present, or a pigeon, but there is an old parson; and although I shall not give my lady friend absolution for the song, still I am sure she will merit approbation, and receive applause.

"LET ME WANDER NOT UNSEEN."

Words by Milton. Music by Handel.

On the 21st January, 1751, Handel commenced "Jephtha," the last of his works. It was not finished till the 30th August following. It is the only work he ever took so long to complete. This can be easily accounted for. During its progress his eyesight became impaired; by the last pages of the MS. it appears only too plainly that his vision was no longer clear when he traced them: yet sick as he was, the intrepid old man arose once more when charity had need of him. He gave two performances of the "Messiah" for the Foundling Hospital, one on the 18th April, the other on the 16th May, 1751. The sum for the tickets delivered for the 18th April came to six hundred pounds; that for May, nine hundred and twenty-five guineas. The "London Magazine" of that month says there were eight hundred coaches and chairs. Handel presented this hospital with the copyright of the "Messiah." The performances alone during Handel's life time enriched the hospital with thousands of pounds.

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Handel submitted three times to a painful operation, the last time in 1752, but without effect. Blind he became, and was to remain as his mother had been in her old days.

Handel blind—Beethoven deaf!—Sad similitude!

This cruel misfortune afflicted him at first profoundly; but when he was compelled to recognise that the evil was without a remedy, his manly soul got the upper hand, he resigned himself to his fate, and resolved to continue his oratorio performances.

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"Samson," one of his favourite oratorios, was in the programme of the season. In spite of all his moral energy, the author could not listen untroubled to the pathetic air of the sightless Hercules of the Hebrews, in which he gave utterance to his immense grief. "Total eclipse. No sun—no moon!" Then it was that they saw the grand old man, who was seated at the organ, grow pale and tremble; and when they led him forward to the audience, which was applauding, many persons present were so forcibly affected that they were moved even to tears.

And we may still be sharers in that emotion, as when we recall the circumstances of that scene, and remember that the verses were composed by Milton, who, you recollect, was himself blind.

"Total eclipse! No sun!—no moon!
All dark amidst the blaze of noon!
Oh! glorious light! No cheering ray
To glad my eyes with welcome day.
Why thus deprived thy prime decree?
Sun, moon, and stars are dark to me."

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On the 6th April, 1759, the "Messiah" was performed for the last time under the direction of the author.

After returning home from this performance, he went to bed, never to rise again. Seized with a mortal exhaustion, and feeling that his last hour was come, in the full plenitude of his reason, he gently rendered up his soul to die, *on the Anniversary of the first performance of the "Messiah,"* Good Friday, 13th April, 1759, aged seventy-four years.

He was buried with all honour and respect in Westminster Abbey, the Pantheon of Great Britain. His remains were placed in what is called "the Poet's Corner," wherein lie buried Shakspeare, Milton, Dryden, Thompson, Sheridan, Gray. And he is in his place there; for who was ever more of a poet than Handel?—who deserved better than he to enter the Pantheon. They might have written upon his tomb the words which Antony spoke when he beheld the body of Cæsar, "*This was a man.*"

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Yes: this was a man who had done honour to music as much by the nobility of his character as by the sublimity of his genius. He was one of the too few artists who uphold the dignity of art to the highest possible standard. He was the incarnation of honesty. The unswerving rigidity of his conduct captivates even those who do not take him for a model. He worked ceaselessly for the improvement of others without ever feeling weary. He was virtuous and pure, proud and intrepid. His love of good was as unconquerable as his will. He died at his post, working to the last hour of his life. He has left behind him a luminous track and a noble example.

A Handel, like a Homer or a Milton, a Shakspeare or a Dante, is only once given to a nation. No man need ever expect to rival the genius of Handel, or approach his powers of expression; but all may emulate his love for his fellow-man—his sympathy for the distressed—his desire to promote the glory of his God. For these noble qualities I commend Handel to your consideration; and for these I hold him forth this evening as a man worthy of our imitation.

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"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

"Footprints which perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

"Then let us be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate—
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait."

FOOTNOTES:

[D] See Note, p. [91](#).

[E] See Note, p. [92](#).

[F] See Note, p. [92](#).

[G] See note, p. [93](#).

[H] The lady was Mrs. Cibber.

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A SKETCH OF BEETHOVEN.

A Lecture.

(OVERTURE.)

"Give me sweet music when I'm glad—
Give me sweet music when I'm sad;
For music softens every woe,
And brightens every rapture's flow.

"Oh! give me music! In my years
Of childhood's hopes and childhood's fears,
One sweetly-breathing vocal lay
Could steal my griefs, my fears away.

"Yes, music, come! Thou dying voice
Of distant days—of far-past joys—
Come, softly breathe into mine ear,
And thine shall be the flowing tear!

"Come in the strain I loved so well,
And of the lip that breathed it tell.
Oh! be the lingerings of thy lays

[54]

Association not only gives significancy to music, but contributes greatly to heighten its agreeable effect. We have heard it performed, some time or other, in an agreeable place, perhaps, or by an agreeable person, or accompanied with words that describe agreeable ideas; or we have heard it in our early years—a period of life which we seldom look back upon without pleasure, and of which Bacon recommends the frequent recollection, as an expedient to preserve health. Nor is it necessary that musical compositions should have much intrinsic merit, or that they should call up any distinct remembrance of the agreeable ideas associated with them. There are seasons at which we are gratified with very moderate excellence. In childhood every tune is delightful to a musical ear: in our advanced years, an indifferent tune will please, when set off by the amiable qualities of the performer, or by any other agreeable circumstance. The flute of a shepherd, heard at a distance, on a fine summer day, amidst beautiful scenery, will give rapture to the wanderer, though the tune, the instrument, and the musician be such as he could not endure in any other place. If a song, or piece of music, should call up only a faint remembrance that we were happy the last time we heard it, nothing more would be needful to make us listen to it again with peculiar satisfaction.

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Well has Cowper said—

"There is in souls a sympathy with sounds;
And as the mind is pitch'd, the ear is pleased
With melting airs, or martial, brisk or grave,
Some chord in unison with what we hear
Is touched within us, and the heart replies.
How soft the music of those village bells,
Falling at intervals upon the ear
In cadence sweet, now dying all away,
Now pealing loud again, and louder still,
Clear and sonorous, as the gale comes on!
With easy force it opens all the cells
Where mem'ry slept. Wherever I have heard
A kindred melody, the scene recurs,
And with it all its pleasures and its pains."

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Of its influence very many anecdotes, I should rather say, *facts* are recorded.

Naturalists assert that animals and birds are sensible to the charms of music—take one or two instances:—

An officer was confined in the Bastile; he begged the governor to permit him the use of his lute, to soften by the harmonies of his instrument, the rigours of his prison. At the end of a few days, this modern Orpheus, playing on his lute, was greatly astonished to see frisking out of their holes, great numbers of *mice*, and descending from their woven habitations crowds of *spiders*, who formed a circle about him, while he continued breathing his soul-subduing instrument. He was petrified with astonishment. Having ceased to play, the assembly who did not come to see him, but to hear his instrument, immediately broke up. As he had a great dislike to spiders, it was two days before he ventured again to touch his instrument. At length, having overcome, for the novelty of his company, his dislike of them, he recommenced his concert, when the assembly was by far more numerous than at first; and in the course of further time, he found himself surrounded by a hundred *musical amateurs*. Having thus succeeded in attracting this company, he treacherously contrived to get rid of them at his will. For this purpose he begged the keeper to give him a cat, which he put in a cage, and let loose at the very instant when the little hairy people were most enchanted by the Orphean skill he displayed.

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Haydyn tells the following story:—

"I went, with some other young people equally devoid of care, one day during the extreme heat of summer, to seek for coolness and fresh air on one of the lofty mountains, which surround the Lago Maggiore in Lombardy. Having reached by daybreak the middle of the ascent, we stopped to contemplate the Borromean isles, which were displayed under our feet, in the middle of the lake, when we were surrounded by a large flock of sheep, which were leaving the fold to go to their pasture.

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One of our party, who was no bad performer on the flute, and who always carried his instrument along with him, took it out of his pocket. "I am going," said he, "to turn Corydon; let us see whether Virgil's sheep will recognize their pastor." He began to play. The sheep and goats, which were following one another towards the mountain, with their heads hanging down, raised them at the first sound of the flute, and all with a general and hasty movement turned to the side from whence the agreeable noise proceeded. Gradually they flocked round the musician, and listened with motionless attention. He ceased playing; still the sheep did not stir. The shepherd with his staff, obliged those nearest to him to move on; they obeyed; but no sooner did the fluter begin to play, than his innocent audience again returned to him. The shepherd, out of patience, pelted them with clods of earth; but not one would move. The fluter played with additional skill. The shepherd fell

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into a passion, whistled, scolded, and pelted the poor fleecy amateurs with stones. Such as were hit by them began to march; but the others still refused to stir."

Marville gives us the following curious account:—

"Doubting the truth of those who say that the love of music is a natural taste, especially the sound of instruments, and that beasts themselves are touched by it; being one day in the country, I tried an experiment.

While a man was playing on the trump marine, I made my observations on a *cat*, a *dog*, a *horse*, an *ass*, a *hind*, *cows*, *small birds*, and a *cock and hens*, who were in a yard, under a window on which I was leaning.

I did not perceive that the *cat* was the least affected, and I even judged by her air that she would have given all the instruments in the world for a mouse, sleeping in the sun all the time.

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The *horse* stopped short from time to time before the window, raising his head up now and then, as he was feeding on the grass.

The *dog* continued for above an hour seated on his hind legs, looking steadfastly at the player.

The *ass* did not discover the least indication of his being touched, eating his thistles peaceably.

The *hind* lifted up her large, wide ears, and seemed very attentive.

The *cows* slept a little, and after gazing, as though they had been acquainted with us, went forward.

Some *little birds*, who were in an aviary, and others on the trees and bushes, almost tore their little throats with singing.

But the *cock*, who minded only his hens, and the hens, who were solely employed in scratching a neighbouring dunghill, did not show in any manner that they took the least pleasure in hearing the trump marine."

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One of the best descriptions of the influence of music I consider to be Wordsworth's lines on the Blind Fiddler of Oxford Street. Many of you, doubtless, are familiar with them; but for the information of those who may not, I shall quote them.

"An Orpheus! an Orpheus! Yes, faith may grow bold,
And take to herself all the wonders of old.
Near the stately Pantheon you'll meet with the same
In the street that from Oxford hath borrowed its name.

"His station is there, and he works on the crowd:
He sways them with harmony merry and loud:
He fills with his power all their hearts to the brim.
Was aught ever heard like his fiddle and him?

"What an eager assembly! what an empire is this!
The weary have life, and the hungry have bliss;
The mourner is cheered, and the anxious have rest;
And the guilt-burthened soul is no longer opprest.

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"As the moon brightens round her the clouds of the night,
So he, where he stands, is a centre of light;
It gleams on the face there of dusk-browed Jack
And the pale-visaged bakers, with basket on back.

"That errand-bound 'prentice was passing in haste—
What matter! he's caught—and his time runs to waste;
The newsman is stopped, though he stops on the fret;
And the half-breathless lamplighter he's in the net!

"The porter sits down on the weight which he bore;
The lass with her barrow wheels hither her store.
If a thief could be here, he might pilfer at ease:
She sees the musician—'tis all that she sees!

"That tall man, a giant in bulk and in height,
Not an inch of his body is free from delight.
Can he keep himself still, if he would? Oh not he!
The music stirs in him, like wind through a tree.

"Mark that cripple, who leans on his crutch, like a tower
That long has leaned forward, leans hour after hour!
That mother, whose spirit in fetters is bound,

While she dandles the babe in her arms to the sound.

"Now coaches and chariots roar on like a stream;
Here are twenty souls happy as souls in a dream;
They are deaf to your murmurs—they care not for you,
Nor what ye plying, nor what ye pursue!

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"He stands, backed by the wall—he abates not his din;
His hat gives him vigour, with boons dropping in
From the old and the young—from the poorest; and there—
The one-pennied boy has his penny to spare!

"Oh! blest are the hearers! and proud be the hand
Of the pleasure it spreads through so thankful a band!
I'm glad for him, blind as he is! All the while,
If they speak 'tis to praise, and they praise with a smile."

But why should I occupy your time by quotations from celebrated poets or prose writers, to prove the influence of music, when I have it in my power to verify the saying of that eminent composer whose life I have undertaken to sketch?

"The effect of music on a man should be to strike fire from his soul."

(SONATA PATHETIQUE.)

Ludwig Von Beethoven was born on the 17th December, 1770, at Bonn. His father and grandfather were both musicians by profession. The former occupied the situation of principal vocal tenor, and the latter that of first bass singer in the chapel of the Elector of Cologne.

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From the earliest age Beethoven evinced a disposition for music; or, in other words, he learnt the language of music and his mother tongue both at the same time; and as modulated sounds seldom fail to make a deep impression on a young, fervid mind, when they are almost constantly presented to it, as was the case in the present instance, he soon acquired, and as speedily manifested, a taste for the art of which they are the foundation.

His father began to instruct him when he was only in his fifth year. An anecdote is told of his early performances, which corroborates what I have already said on the influence of music. It is said that, whenever little Ludwig was playing in his closet on the violin, a spider would let itself down from the ceiling and alight upon the instrument. The story, I am sorry, goes on to say that his mother one day, discovering her son's companion, destroyed it, whereupon little Ludwig dashed his violin to shatters.

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At the early age of thirteen, Beethoven published at Mannheim, in his own name, Variations on a March, Sonatas, and Songs. But at this time his genius displayed itself more decidedly in musical improvisations. His extempore fantasias are mentioned by Gerber, in his Lexicon, as having excited the admiration of the most accomplished musicians of the time.

The fame of his youthful genius attracted the attention of the Elector of Cologne, who sent him at his own expense to Vienna, in character of his Court organist, to study under the celebrated Haydyn, in order to perfect himself in the art of composition.

Vienna was at this time (1792), the central point of every thing great and sublime, that music had till then achieved on the soil of Germany.

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Mozart, the source of all light in the region of harmony, whose acquaintance Beethoven had made on his first visit to Vienna in 1786, who when he heard Beethoven extemporize upon a theme that was given him, exclaimed to those present, "This youth will some day make a noise in the world"—Mozart, though he had been a year in his grave, yet lived freshly in the memory of all who had a heart susceptible of his divine revelations, as well as in Beethoven's. Gluck's spirit still hovered around the inhabitants of the old city—F. Haydyn and many other distinguished men in every art, and in every branch of human knowledge, yet lived and worked together harmoniously. In short, no sooner had Beethoven, then but twenty-two, looked around him in this favoured abode of the Muses, and made a few acquaintances, than he said to himself, "Here will I stay, and not return to Bonn even though the Elector should cut off my pension."

Beethoven did not long enjoy the instructions of his master, for Haydyn handed him over to the care and instructions of the learned Allrechtsberger. It appears, that the character of Beethoven was marked by great singularity from his earliest years. Both Haydyn and Allrechtsberger, but particularly the latter, have recorded that he was not willing to profit by good advice. Beethoven has himself been heard to confess, that among other peculiarities which he prided himself on displaying, when a young man, was that of refusing to acknowledge himself as the pupil of Haydyn, at which this master took great offence.

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The consequence of this self-confident spirit was, that at this period, he made but little progress in composition, and was more ambitious to become a brilliant performer. Hence by the periodicals of that day, he is not allowed to possess the ability of composition; harshness of modulation, melodies more singular than pleasing, and a constant struggle to be original, are among the principal faults of which he was accused. As to the latter charge it may be remarked, that it is the besetting sin which has adhered to Beethoven through life; and who can help

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wishing that with it, he had also possessed the power of spreading the vice among his contemporaries, and of bequeathing it to his successors. But if this indefatigable search after originality be a sin, to what new and extraordinary effects, to what wonders, has it not given birth? To whom so justly than to this author can these lines be applied—

"Great wits may sometimes gloriously offend,
And rise to faults true critics dare not mend?"

Beethoven never defended himself against criticisms or attacks, he never suffered them to have more than a superficial effect upon him. Not indifferent to the opinions of the good, he took no notice of the attacks of the malicious, and allowed them to go on unchecked, even when they proceeded so far as to assign him a place, sometimes in one madhouse, sometimes in another. "If it amuses people to say or to write such stuff concerning me, let them continue so to do as long as they please." [69]

(This may remind you of an anecdote of the Earl of Derby; being once attacked in the House of Lords by the Duke of Argyle, the Earl in his reply said, "A certain navvy, who happened to be married to a very violent woman, a regular virago, was asked why he allowed his wife to abuse him, or use such intemperate language. 'Poor creature,' said the navvy, 'it amuses her, and does not hurt me.' So say I, the attack of the noble duke may amuse him but cannot injure me.")

As in that classic period of musical activity, Beethoven was the sun which all strove to approach, and rejoiced if they could but catch a glance of his brilliant eyes, it was natural that he should converse much with ladies, several of whom were always contending for his affections at once, as it is well known, and he more than once found himself like Hercules in a dilemma. Dr. Wegeler, in his life of Beethoven says, "He was never without an attachment, and that mostly he was very deeply smitten." This is quite true. How could any rational person who is acquainted with Beethoven, or ever heard his compositions, maintain the contrary. Whoever is capable of feeling how powerfully the pure flame of love operates upon the imagination, more especially of the sensitive and highly endowed artist, and how in all his productions it goes before him like a light sent down from Heaven to guide him, will take it for granted without any evidence that Beethoven was susceptible of the purest love, and that he was conducted by it. What genius could have composed the Fantasia in C, commonly called the "Moonlight or the Moonshine Sonata," without such a passion? It was love, for Bettine, to whom that imaginative composition is dedicated, (and to whom I shall again have occasion to allude,) which inspired him while engaged upon it. This piece will now be performed, and judge for yourselves whether I have said too much in its praise:— [70] [71]

[Fantasia in C., commonly called the "Moonlight Sonata," to designate this enthusiastic period of Beethoven's passion.]

In the year 1800, we find Beethoven engaged in the composition of his "Christ on the Mount of Olives." He wrote this work during his summer residence at Hetzendorf, a pleasant village, closely contiguous to the gardens of the imperial palace of Schönbrunn, where he passed several summers of his life in profound seclusion. A circumstance connected with this great work, and of which Beethoven many years afterwards still retained a lively recollection, was that he composed it in the thickest part of the wood, in the park of Schönbrunn, seated between the two stems of an oak, which shot out from the main trunk at the height of about two feet from the ground.

About this period Beethoven endured much family annoyance and domestic trouble. His brothers who had some years previously followed him to Vienna, began to govern him and to make him suspicious of his sincerest friends and adherents, from wrong notions or even from jealousy. Surrounded by friends who loved and esteemed him—his fame already established—with an ample income, he ought to have been completely happy; and he certainly would have been but for an infirmity which began to afflict him, and the persecution of his brothers. His misery both of mind and body, I can best describe by reading a portion of his extraordinary will, which he at this time executed, and having that song sung which he at the same time composed, with special reference to the torture he was undergoing. [72]

Extracts from Beethoven's Will.

"O ye who consider or declare me to be hostile, obstinate, or misanthropic, what injustice ye do me! Ye know not the secret causes of that which to you wears such an appearance. My heart and my mind were from childhood prone to the tender feelings of affection. Nay, I was always disposed even to perform great actions. Born, with a lively, ardent disposition, susceptible to the diversions of society, I was forced at an early age to renounce them and to pass my life in seclusion. If I strove at any time to set myself above all this, O, how cruelly was I driven back, by the doubly painful experience of my defective hearing! And yet it was not possible for me to say to people, 'Speak louder, for I am deaf.' Ah! how could I proclaim the defect of a sense, that I once possessed in the highest perfection, in a perfection in which few of my colleagues possess or ever did possess it? Indeed, I cannot. Forgive me then, if ye see me draw back when I would gladly mingle among you. [73]

"O God, thou lookest down upon my misery; thou knowest that it is accompanied with love of my fellow creatures, and a disposition to do good! O, men, when ye shall read this, think that ye have wronged me! [74]

I go to meet death with joy; if he comes before I have had occasion to develop all my professional abilities, he will come too soon for me, in spite of my hard fate, and I should wish that he had delayed his arrival. But even then I am content, for he will release me from a state of endless suffering. Come when thou wilt, I shall meet thee with firmness. Farewell."

"There is a calm for those who weep;
A rest for weary pilgrims found;
And while the mouldering ashes sleep
 Low in the ground,
The soul of origin divine,
God's glorious image, freed from day,
In Heaven's eternal sphere shall shine
 A star of day."

[In Questa Tomba Oscura. Words by Göthe; Music by Beethoven.]

Let us proceed from grave to gay. I have already told you that Beethoven was a man of ardent feeling, and passionately in love with a young lady, Madame Von Arnim. I will read to you, one of his love letters, and I recommend the style to all the unmarried I have the pleasure to address:— [75]

VIENNA, August 11th, 1810.

"DEAREST BETTINE,

"Never was a fairer spring than this year's; this I say and feel, too, as in it I made your acquaintance. You must, indeed, have yourself seen, that, in society, I was like a fish cast on the sand, that writhes, and struggles, and cannot escape, until some benevolent Galatea helps back again into the mighty sea; in very truth, I was fairly aground. Dearest Bettine, unexpectedly I met you, and at a moment when chagrin had completely overcome me; but, truly, your aspect put it to flight. I was aware in an instant that you belong to a totally different world from this absurd one, to which, even with the best wish to be tolerant, it is impossible to open one's ears. I am myself a poor creature, and yet complain of others! this you will, however, forgive, *with the kindly heart that looks out from your eyes, and with the intelligence that dwells in your ears*—at least, your ears know how to flatter when they listen. Mine, alas! are a barrier through which I can have hardly any friendly intercourse with mankind, else, perhaps, I might have acquired a still more entire confidence in you. As it was, I could only comprehend the full, expressive glance of your eyes, and this has so moved me that I shall never forget it. Divine Bettine! dearest girl! Art! who comprehends the meaning of this word? With whom may I speak of this great divinity? how I love the recollections of the few days when we used to chat with each other, or rather correspond. I have preserved every one of the little scraps of paper on which your intelligent, precious, most precious replies were given—thus, at least, may I thank my worthless ears that the best portion of our fugitive discourse is retained in writing. [76]

"Since you went, I have had many uncomfortable hours, in which the power to do anything is lost. After you had gone away, I rambled about for some three hours in the Museum at Schönbrunn; but no good angel met me there, to chide me into good humour, as an angel like you might have done. Forgive, sweetest Bettine, this transition from the fundamental key—but I must have such intervals to vent my feelings. [77]

"And you have written of me to Göethe, have you not? saying that I would fain pack up my head in a cask, where I should see nothing and hear nothing of what passes in the world, since you, dearest angel, meet me here no longer. But, surely I shall at least have a letter from you. Hope supports me—she is, indeed, the nursing mother of half the world, and she has been my close friend all my life long—what would have become of me else? I send with this 'Knowest thou the land,' which I have just composed, as a memorial of the time when I first became acquainted with you."

This song will now be sung for you. The words are from the German of Göthe.

("Knowest thou the land where the sweet citron blows.") [78]

Beethoven's interviews with Bettine were not all wasted in rhapsodies of love. In one of his conversations with this accomplished lady he thus eloquently describes the power of poetry and the philosophy of music:—

"Göthe's poems exercise a great sway over me, not only by their meaning but by their rhythm also. It is a language that urges me on to composition, that builds up its own lofty standard, containing in itself all the mysteries of harmony, so that I have but to follow up the radiations of that centre from which melodies evolve spontaneously. I pursue them eagerly, overtake them, then again see them flying before me, vanish in the multitude of my impressions, until I seize them anew with increased vigour no more to be parted from them. It is then that my transports

give them every diversity of modulation: it is I who triumph over the first of these musical thoughts, and the shape I give it I call symphony. Yes, Bettina, *music is the link between intellectual and sensual life.*

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"Melody gives a sensible existence to poetry; for does not the meaning of a poem become embodied in melody? The mind would embrace all thoughts, both high and low, and embody them into one stream of sensations, all sprung from simple melody, and without the aid of its charms doomed to die in oblivion. This is the unity which lives in my symphonies—numberless streamlets meandering on, in endless variety of shape, but all diverging into one common bed. Thus it is I feel that there is an indefinite something, an eternal, an infinite to be attained; and although I look upon my works with a foretaste of success, yet I cannot help wishing, like a child, to begin my task anew, at the very moment that my thundering appeal to my hearers seems to have forced my musical creed upon them, and thus to have exhausted the insatiable cravings of my soul after my 'beau ideal.'

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"Music alone ushers man into the portal of an intellectual world, ready to encompass *him*, but which *he* may never encompass. That mind alone whose every thought is rhythm can embody music, can comprehend its mysteries, its divine inspirations, and can alone speak to the senses of its intellectual revelations. Although spirits may feed upon it as we do upon air, yet it may not nourish all mortal men; and those privileged few alone, who have drawn from its heavenly source, may aspire to hold spiritual converse with it. How few are these! for, like the thousands who marry for love, and who profess love, whilst love will single out but one amongst them, so also will thousands court Music, whilst she turns a deaf ear to all but the chosen few. She, too, like her sister arts, is based upon morality—*that fountain-head of genuine invention!* And would you know the true principle on which the arts *may* be won? It is to bow to their immutable terms, to lay all passion and vexation of spirit prostrate at their feet, and to approach their divine presence with a mind so calm and so void of littleness as to be ready to receive the dictates of fantasy and the revelations of truth. Thus the art becomes a divinity, man approaches her with religious feelings, his inspirations are God's divine gifts, and his aim fixed by the same hand from above which helps him to attain it."

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And he adds:—"We know not whence our knowledge is derived. The seeds which lie dormant in us require the dew, the warmth, and the electricity of the soil to spring up, to ripen into thought, and to break forth. Music is the electrical soil in which the mind thrives, thinks, and invents. Music herself teaches us harmony; for *one* musical thought bears upon the whole kindred of ideas, and each is linked to the other, closely and indissolubly, by the ties of harmony."

Hearken to proof of the truth of this eloquent and beautiful description of music.

(WALTZ.—Beethoven.)

The talents of a Haydyn and Mozart raised instrumental composition in Germany to an astonishing elevation; and Beethoven may be said not only to have maintained the art in that stupendous altitude, but even in some respects to have brought it to a still higher degree of perfection. "Haydyn," says Reichardt, "drew his quartets from the pure source of his sweet and unsophisticated nature, his captivating simplicity and cheerfulness. In these works he is still without an equal. Mozart's mightier genius and richer imagination took a more extended range, and embodied in several passages the most profound and sublime qualities of his own mind. Moreover, he was much greater as a performer than Haydyn, and as such expected more from instruments than the latter did. He also allowed more merit to highly-wrought and complicated compositions, and thus raised a gorgeous palace within Haydyn's fairy bower. Of this palace Beethoven was an early inmate; and in order adequately to express his own peculiar forms of style, he had no other means but to surmount the edifice with that defying and colossal tower which no one will probably presume to carry higher with impunity."

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"If any man," says an able writer in the Quarterly, "can be said to enjoy an almost universal admiration as composer, it is Beethoven—who, disdaining to copy his predecessors in any, the most distant manner, has, notwithstanding, by his energetic, bold, and uncommon style of writing, carried away a prize from our modern Olympus."

Beethoven, like most great men, had many peculiarities.

In winter, well as in summer, it was his practice to rise at daybreak, and immediately to sit down to his writing-table. There he would labour till two or three o'clock, his usual dinnertime. Scarcely had the last morsel been swallowed, when, if he had no more distant excursion in view, he took his usual walk—that is to say, he ran in double quick time, as if hunted by bailiffs, twice round the town—whether it rained, or snowed, or hailed, or the thermometer stood an inch or two below the freezing point—whether Boreas blew a chilling blast from the Bohemian mountains, or whether the thunder roared, and forked lightnings played, what signified it to the enthusiastic lover of his art, in whose genial mind, perhaps, were budding, at that very moment, when the elements were in fiercest conflict, the harmonious feelings of a balmy spring.

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The use of the bath was as much a necessity to Beethoven as to a Turk—and he was in the habit of submitting himself to frequent ablutions. When it happened that he did not walk out of doors

to collect his ideas, he would, not unfrequently, in a fit of the most complete abstraction, go to his washhand basin, and pour several jugs of water upon his hands, all the time humming and roaring. After dabbling in the water till his clothes were wet through, he would pace up and down the room with a vacant expression of countenance, and his eyes distended, the singularity of his aspect being often increased by an unshaven beard. Then he would seat himself at his table and write; and afterwards get up again to the washhand basin and dabble and hum as before. Ludicrous as were these scenes, no one dared venture to notice them, or to disturb him while engaged in his inspiring ablutions, for these were his moments of profoundest meditation.

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Many anecdotes are told of him likewise.

The wife of an esteemed pianoforte player, residing in Vienna, was a great admirer of Beethoven, and she earnestly wished to possess a lock of his hair—her husband, anxious to gratify her, applied to a gentleman who was very intimate with Beethoven, and who had rendered him some service. Beethoven sent the lady a lock of hair cut from a *goat's beard*—and Beethoven's own hair being very grey and harsh, there was no reason to fear that the hoax would be very readily detected. The lady was overjoyed at possessing this supposed memorial of her saint, proudly showing it to all her acquaintance; but, when her happiness at its height, some one who happened to know the secret, made her acquainted with the deception that had been practised on her—the lady's wrath who will attempt to describe?

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Beethoven's name I have already told you was Ludwig Von Beethoven. In some legal proceedings in which he was concerned, it was intimated by the court that the word von, of Dutch origin, does not ennoble the family to whose name it is prefixed—according to the laws of Holland—that, in the province of the Rhine in which Beethoven was born, it was held to be of no higher value—that, consequently, the halo of nobility ought to be stripped from this Von in Austria also. Beethoven was accordingly required to produce proofs of his nobility. "My nobility! My nobility!" he exclaimed—"Why, my nobility is here, here!"—clapping his forehead.

Right, Beethoven, brains are the highest nobility, if not the richest. I love birth, and ancestry, when they are incentives to exertion not the title deeds to sloth. Who would not prefer being the descendant of a Stephenson, an Arkwright, or a Crompton, or any other of those great architects of their own fortunes, and to feel some of their noble energies, firing their blood to efforts of industry, than to be for ever falling back on some legend or fiction of ancestry; and in the absence of any *personal* claim to greatness to be referring back and depending on those great mistakes of our forefathers, when he who waded through slaughter to a peerage was honoured *above* those whose brains and whose industry were the means of promoting the comfort of their fellow men. Believe me, my young friends, the highest honour of earth, is the honour of independence, and the highest nobility, *to be the Rodolph of your own fortune, and a benefactor to mankind.*

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Beethoven died 26th March, 1827, in the fifty-sixth year of his age. Although his warmth of temper, extreme frankness and singularity of manners, his little reserve in judging of people, and above all, that deplorable calamity—the greatest which can befall a man of his profession—his extreme deafness, seemed little calculated to endear him to the true admirers of his genius. Still, notwithstanding his foibles, which much more frequently belong to great than to ordinary men, his character as a man and as a citizen ranked deservedly high. Although his originality induced him to deviate from ordinary rules, in the little affairs of common life, yet his high feeling of honour and right produced a rectitude in his moral conduct, which ensured to him the esteem of every honourable man.

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Beethoven—the master spirit of his age—
Has passed away to his eternal rest,
His name belongs to history's page,
Enrolled with men the noblest and the best.

We to whom it was not given to view
His living lineaments with wond'ring eye,
May in his tones behold him pictured true
In breathing colours that can never die.

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For he could paint in tones of magic force
The moody passions of the varying soul;
Now winding round the heart with playful course;
Now storming all the breast with wild control.

Forthdrawing from his unexhausted store,
'Twas his to bid the burden'd heart o'erflow,
Infusing joys it never knew before,
And melting it with soft luxuriant woe!

He liveth! It is wrong to say he's dead—
The sun, tho' smoking in the fading west,
Again shall issue from his morning bed,
Like a young giant vigorous from his rest.

He lives! for that is truly living when

Our fame is a bequest from mind to mind,
His life is in the breathing hearts of men,
Transmitted to the latest of his kind.

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NOTES.

Note on Page 19.

The earliest copy of the tune, as far as is known, stands in a Genevan edition of a portion of the English Psalter, preserved as an article of rare value in the library of St. Paul's Cathedral. The date of the Psalter is 1561. The tune is therein given to Sternhold's version of the Hundredth Psalm.

This fairly settles the *vexata questio* as to the authorship of the tune. There is no evidence that it originated with Luther, to whom it is generally attributed—but there is evidence that it did originate with Franc, of Geneva; and the only claim to originality is grounded on the discovery of the sources from whence Franc derived the phrases of the tune. Those phrases are so palpably Gregorian, that Franc's construction of the tune can be regarded only a fragmentary compilation.

Considered, then, as Gregorian in its texture, "The Old Hundredth" is, indeed, very old, much older than is commonly imagined. Its several strains had been sung by Christian voices not only one thousand years before Luther was born, but for centuries before the Papal system was developed. Viewed in this light, the old tune assumes a new interest, and its antique tones vibrate with freshened impulse.

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Note on Page 32.

In 1699 and the following years many schools were established under the agency of the Christian Knowledge Society, in and about the metropolis; and, in the year 1704, when the first meeting of the children educated in these charity schools took place, in St. Andrew's Church, Holborn, the number of children present amounted to no less than two thousand!

From that time to the present, the children of these schools assemble yearly in some church of the metropolis, when a sermon, appropriate to the occasion, is preached. In 1782, they first met in St. Paul's Cathedral, where they have ever since assembled.

Note on Page 36.

We may reasonably hope that something will now be done towards effecting this object. Committees have been formed, and numerous meetings are being held to consider the subject. As might be expected, many and diverse tributes of respect are proposed, not the least sensible or suitable that of our national *Thersites*. "It will be hard to find a better site for the Memorial than in the Temple Garden, which is seen from the river, and will be seen from the embankment."—PUNCH, *26th December, 1863*.

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Note on Page 45.

A lady who heard this lecture has since told me an equally strange fact. In her native parish there was an amateur choir, which assembled twice a week in the parish church to practise. On the lobby of the gallery wherein the choir assembled, there was a piano, to lead and accompany the voices; as regularly as the piano was played, a *Robin Red Breast*—an old tenant of the churchyard—would perch on the instrument, and remain as long as the music continued. My informant was frequently the performer and always had the pleasure of *Dicky's* company.

THE END.

C. J. SKEET, 10, KING WILLIAM STREET, CHARING CROSS.

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