

Northern Messenger

VOLUME XLIII. No. 24

MONTREAL, JUNE 12, 1908.

40 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid

'For a bit of Sunday reading commend me to the "Northern Messenger."—W. S. Jamieson, Dalton, Ont.

Ludwig von Beethoven.

Ludwig von Beethoven, the great musician and composer, was born at Bonn on the Rhine, in 1770. His father was a tenor singer in the chapel of the Elector in that town. When Ludwig was only eleven years of age, his performances on the piano excited much admiration, and in his thirteenth year he already composed music. His eminent talents led the Elector to send him to Vienna, where

he told him, when he had finished, that the piece he professed to have composed as he went along, had quite the air of a lesson learned by heart. The young man then begged Mozart to give him an original exercise. Mozart thinking to embarrass him, wrote a piece of great difficulty.

For half an hour the young man performed this exercise and variations on it, with such true genius, that Mozart exclaimed, "That young man will become great and celebrated."

art. Nature had not treated him kindly, his health was bad, and he was very deaf. He died unmarried.

Beethoven's published works are very numerous; they embrace every class, and are in all styles. His vocal music is full of beautiful melody and strong feeling. His oratorio, the 'Mount of Olives,' his opera 'Fidelio,' and his two masses, bear testimony to this. Most of his pianoforte music is admirable, but the grandeur of Beethoven's conceptions are most manifest in his orchestral works, his overtures, and more especially in his symphonies.

Beethoven died in March, 1827. In 1845 a statue was erected to his memory in his native town of Bonn. Several stories are told concerning Beethoven's strange ways. His rooms were always in great disorder. The floor of his apartment, which was never swept clean, was strewn with the envelopes of letters, on the chairs lay his valuable melodies, the remains of his breakfast often were left till evening on the window-ledge, and empty bottles rolled out from every corner and cranny when the master of the house was searching for something. He grumbled and scolded terribly, while during the search he threw things into a still greater state of confusion than they were before. The blame of this daily annoyance he laid upon his cook and housekeeper, who was called Frau 'Schnaps.' He maintained that he was himself such a lover of order, that he could find a needle in the middle of the night, unless some one had moved it from the place where he had deposited it.

One great cause of this disorder was the frequent change of his lodgings. He was always irritable and discontented with his quarters. He changed them almost as often as his linen, and thus his possessions fell into endless and increasing confusion. Once the score of his most beautiful symphony, which he had written out afresh quite recently was missing,—a most precious manuscript. For a whole fortnight Beethoven was occupied seeking for it with many angry words. At last it was found. But where? The reader will find it hard to guess. It was discovered in the kitchen used as a wrapper for the butter and bacon!

When the musical spirit came over Beethoven, it did not matter where he was, he must sit down and write his thoughts in notes. Nothing then disturbed him, for he neither saw nor heard what was going on around him. One day a musical thought, which he must write down, suddenly struck him in the streets of Vienna. Fearing lest he should lose it, he entered the nearest house, which happened to be the 'Roman Emperor' hotel. The waiters stared at the man in the grey coat, with the dark, somewhat forbidding face, and rough, unbrushed hair, but he did not seem to observe them, threw his hat on a side-table, and sat down at one of the tables which were laid out for dinner, drew a roll of paper and a little inkstand out of his pocket, and began eagerly to write down his notes.

'Who is this strange man?' one waiter asked of another, but no one knew, for none



LUDWIG VON BEETHOVEN.

Haydn and Elbrechts-berger exercised great influence over his studies. One day Mozart was invited to come and listen to a young man who was said to possess a great talent for playing off on the piano music which he composed at the moment.

The young man played before the celebrated composer, who listened coldly, though all the other auditors appeared delighted;

This young man was Ludwig von Beethoven, he was eighteen when he thus played before Mozart.

Not very long after he became organist to the court. In order to fix him at Vienna, several lovers of music, Archduke Rudolf among them, subscribed to pay him an annual salary. He lived very much in retirement, keeping very much to himself and his