

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS.

When treating of the lives of men great in the world of art, science, or literature, their honest admirers usually confine themselves to the actual work and its result ; but for the casual reading of the casual reader, a sketch of personal traits and characteristics is of more interest. The true exponent of Beethoven's music finds in it ample scope for character study, and it is often no easy task to trace the connection between a childish touchiness of mind and irascibility and some musical passages the grandeur of which has never been surpassed.

Beethoven early developed his musical talent, and equally early his quick impracticable temper which brooked no restraint. He was only conquered in his hatred of receiving instruction by being driven to the piano, and nothing short of a beating would induce him to practice. His childhood and early instruction was mismanaged by his dissipated father, but the great saving influence in his life was his strong love for his mother ; and the chief factor in his life-long attachment to Ries was his keen memory of the substantial sympathy shewn by the elder Ries at the time of his mother's last illness.

All his life a favorite with those of high degree, Beethoven very early made the acquaintance of the family of Von Breuning, living with them and teaching the junior members for some years. The friendship was a true one, and in spite of occasional tiffs—a necessary part of intercourse with a character such as Beethoven's—it lasted until his death. Madame Von Breuning was the only person who could at all manage him, and even she could not make him go to his lessons in time. When he proved quite unmanageable, she would give up, saying, " he is again in

his *raptus*," an expression which Beethoven never forgot.

In his teachings he was as whimsical as in everything else, absenting himself on the least pretext ; and if he really found himself beside his pupil, would as likely as not be unbearably captious or blissfully inattentive. On the other hand, when he did take the trouble to teach, he was patient and accurate, and in many cases would accept no payment.

In his own careless studies Albrechtsberger could not hide his disgust, when the latter was endeavoring to teach Beethoven counterpoint : and truly, what contrapontist could be satisfied with a pupil who made such remarks as that "it was a good thing to learn occasionally what is according to rule, that one may hereafter come to what is contrary to rule : " a pupil who did not hesitate to say that everything in music—even consecutive fifths—might be regarded an open question.

In appearance Beethoven was short and square, measuring only five feet five, and broad in the shoulders—" the image of strength " ; a broad nose over a well-formed mouth, which, when he smiled was pleasant in expression ; small dark eyes sunk in his head, but which were capable of being distended under stress of excitement. Although personally clean, he had little regard for the state of his clothes and as a rule presented a truly wild figure, the finishing touch being given by his shock of unkempt gray hair. In his early Vienna days he attempted the fashionable dress of the period—silk stockings, perruque, long boots and sword, double eyeglass and seal ring ; but dress was as irksome as etiquette, and he quickly abandoned the attempt.

Born in Bonn, he left that place as