

"Cleopatra" at Hamburg, Handel refused to give up the conductor's seat to the composer, who was also a singer, and was occupied on the stage during the early part of his work. This dispute led to an improvised duel outside the theatre, and but for a large button on Handel's coat which intercepted his adversary's sword, there would have been no *Messiah* or *Israel in Egypt*. In spite of all this the young men remained friends, and Matheson's writings have furnished the most valuable data to the biographers of Handel, such as Mainwaring (*Memoirs of the life of the late G. F. Handel, 1760*), the Frenchman Victor Schœlcher, and the German Chrysander. His first dramatic attempts, the operas "Almira" and "Chero," met with great success at Hamburg, 1705. He left in the following year for Italy, at that time still the great school of music, to which indeed Handel himself owed his skill and experience in writing for the voice. Remaining in Italy for three years, residing at various times in Florence, Rome, Naples and Venice, he composed operas, oratorios and numerous choral works. At Venice in 1709 he received the offer of the post of "capellmeister" to the Elector of Hanover, which he accepted on condition of a leave of absence, as he contemplated a visit to England. Accordingly, after a short stay at Hanover, he arrived in London towards the close of 1710. With the opera, "Rinaldo," composed it is said in a fortnight, and performed at the Haymarket, February the 24th, 1711, he earned his first success. He returned in June of the same year to Germany, but we find him back again in London in January, 1702, evidently little inclined to remain in Hanover, conductor of the Elector's orchestra. Two Italian operas, the celebrated Utrecht *Te Deum* written by command of Queen Anne, and other works belong to this period. It was in such circumstances somewhat awkward for the composer when his deserted master came to London as George I of England. Neither was the King slow in righting the wrongs of the elector, and for a considerable time Handel was not allowed to appear at Court. At last his pardon obtained through the intercession of friends, he wrote his celebrated Water-Music, which was performed at a great festival on the Thames and so pleased the King that he at once received the composer into his good graces. In 1716 he followed the King to Germany. Returned to England he entered the service of the Duke of Chandos as conductor of his private concerts, residing for three years at Cannons, the Duke's splendid seat near Edgeware, and producing the two *Te Deums* and the twelve