

"How can you? You have never learned the violin." "One need not study for that," the child musician replied, and taking the instrument, he played with ease and accuracy. Mozart did not live to complete his 37th year. The strange story that is told in connection with his Requiem is not a myth. One night there came a stranger singularly dressed in gray with an order for a requiem to be composed without fail in a month. The visitor, without revealing his name, departed in as mysterious gloom as he came. Again the stranger called and solemnly reminded Mozart of his promise. The composer easily persuaded himself that this was a visitor from the other world, and that the requiem would be his own; for he was exhausted with labor and sickness, and easily became the prey of superstitious fancies. When his wife returned she found him with a fatal pallor on his face, silent and melancholy, laboring with intense absorption on the funeral mass. He would sit brooding over the score till he swooned away, and only came to consciousness to bend his waning energies again to their ghastly work. He died with the unfinished Requiem lying on his bed; his last efforts having been to imitate some peculiar instrumental effects. To-day, no stone marks the spot where were deposited the remains of one of the greatest musical spirits; indeed, the very grave is unknown for it was the grave of a pauper.

Beethoven is in music what Shakespeare is in poetry—a name before the greatness of which all other names, however great, seem to dwindle. He is the Sampson of music. Shut out by deafness from the outer world, his compositions are characterized by the most lofty and ideal thoughts, and the most perfect and sublime expression that have ever been conceived. His life was quiet and uneventful. Born at Bonn, in 1770, he died at Vienna, in March, 1827.

Mendelssohn, one of the favorites of fortune, was born of a Jewish family of great wealth and distinction. Nature endowed him with her rarest gifts—a most affectionate, lovable disposition; a brilliant intellect; a genius, if not of the

greatest, of the most sympathetic and attractive kind; and withal, a face of exceptional beauty, which reflected the light and nobility of his soul. His gentle, cloudless life is mirrored in his works, which abound in lovely melodies and beautiful harmonies which appeal to our affections and sympathies, rather than to our intellect. Mendelssohn is best known to the general public by his "Songs Without Words." He was born in Hamburg, 1809, and died in Leipsic, 1847.

Wagner's name has, within the last twenty years, probably been heard more frequently than that of any other artist. At the outset of his career, ridiculed and scorned, no composer ever celebrated a greater triumph than did this man. Born in Leipsic, 1813. Wagner went to Paris in 1839. The few years he spent there belong to the saddest period of his life. He lived in actual poverty—in want of the most urgent necessities. He earned a miserable pittance by giving piano lessons and arranging Italian operatic airs. His first work, *Rienzi*, after Bulwer's novel, was completed during these years; its success was decided and Wagner returned to Germany. "The Flying Dutchman," followed soon after. On the 19th of October, 1845, "Tannhäuser" was performed for the first time in Dresden. The "Meister Singer" was produced in Munich, in June, 1868, and Wagner's fame was established throughout Germany and far beyond it, as one of the greatest composers of dramatic music. "Lohengrin," the "Ring der Niebelungen" and "Parsifal" were written later.

Gounod is the sweet singer of "Faust." This opera has had unprecedented success. But a few days ago Gounod witnessed the five hundredth performance in Paris. To us he is better known in his "Redemption" and "Mors et Vita."

Listz is the king of Pianoforte players, one who has developed the capabilities of this instrument to an extent altogether unknown before. He rose to the greatest social distinction. His society was courted by kings and princes, queens and princesses. He died in 1886, at the age of seventy-five.