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LUDWIG VON BEETHOVEN.

LUDWIG VON BEETHOVEN was born on the 17th of December, 1770. From the earliest age Beethoven evinced a disposition for music. His father (a tenor singer in the chapel of the Elector of Cologne) began to instruct him when he was only in his fifth year, but soon delivered him over to M. von der Eden, esteemed the best pianist in Bonn, who dying shortly after, the youthful pupil was transferred to M. Neefe, his successor, the Archduke Maximilian of Austria defraying the expense of his tuition. This excellent master initiated his pupil in the works of Sebastian Bach. At the age of thirteen, Beethoven published at Mannheim and at Spire, in his own name, Variations on a March, Sonatas, and Songs, and also displayed his genius in extempore fantasies.

The Elector of Cologne now sent Beethoven to Vienna, where he studied counterpoint under Albrechtsberger; and, after a short sojourn at Bonn, he finally took up his residence at Vienna. About 1791 he began to try his powers in the composition of quartets, in which so much had been done by Haydn and Mozart, and in which he proved himself a musician of the highest order. He next composed his opera of "Leonora," better known in England as "Fidelio;" but, as frequently happens in such works, its first reception was a cold one, the performers were unequal to their task.

Beethoven had received invitations and encouragement from Jerome Bonaparte and others, but the disastrous course of the war interfered with all these plans, and Beethoven in 1809 resolved to accept an invitation from the Philharmonic Society and come to England; but from this he was deterred by the growth of his master-malady—deafness. This calamity came on gradually, but from the first defied all remedies and every effort of skill, till at length the sense became so wholly extinct that he could only communicate with others by writing. The consequences of so severe a deprivation were, as his friend Seyfried feelingly but candidly remarks, "a habit of gloomy, anxious distrust, and a violent desire of solitude, the usual precursors of hypochondria." To read, to stroll into the country, were his most agreeable occupations; and a small very select circle of dear friends formed his only social enjoyment. By slow degrees, maladies, arising probably from a long-continued state of mental irritation, attacked a frame which nature had made healthy and robust, and rendered recourse to medical aid absolutely necessary. He lingered on many years in pain and delirium, and died March 26, 1827.

Beethoven died unmarried, and he was never known to form any attachment of a tender kind. His portraits are faithful representations. He was of the middle size, stout, and his form altogether indicated strength. Notwithstanding the strange kind of life he led, his only illness was that of which he died. Though his early education had been somewhat neglected, yet he made up for the deficiency by subsequent application; and those who knew him well state that he had a tolerable knowledge of German and Italian literature. Whenever he could, he induced to throw off the reserve arising, most likely, from his infirmity, his conversation became "extremely animated, full of interesting anecdote, and replete with original remarks on men and manners."

Beethoven's published works reach over 120 at least. They embrace every class, and are in all styles. His vocal music is full of beautiful new melody, and equally distinguished by a strong feeling and a just expression of words. His oratorio, "the Mount of Olives," his opera, "Fidelio," his two masses his two cantatas, and his numerous songs, bear evidence of this. Most of his piano-forte music is admirable, and possesses every quality that vast genius could endow it with; while some is crude, wantonly difficult, and betrays a wayward fancy. His quintets and quartets are elaborately written, thoroughly original, and full of exquisite beauties. But the grandeur of Beethoven's conceptions, and his marvellous skill in development, are most manifest in his orchestral works, in his overtures, and in his symphonies. This is the field in which all his faculties are called into action; in which the wonders of his imagination are displayed, and every resource of his art is made contributory. And the power which he here exhibits is the more remarkable, as the ground seemed to be so entirely occupied by Haydn and Mozart, that no room appeared to be left for a third. The study of Beethoven's music has very greatly extended in England within the last few years.

Five years after the death of Beethoven, his friend the Chevalier Ignaz von Seyfried published, in German, his posthumous didactic work, under the title of "Beethoven's Studies in Thorough-Bass, Counterpoint, and the Theory of Composition, collected from his autograph MSS." &c.

In 1845 a fine statue of Beethoven, by Halmel, of Dresden, was erected in his native town, Bonn, under circumstances of great rejoicing, in the presence of the Queen of England.

At a recent wedding, the minister was about to salute the bride, when she stayed him with, "No, mister; I give up them vanities now."