

failure, and *La Nourie Sanglante*, which followed shared the same fate.

Besides the above mentioned operas, Gounod had already written several other vocal and instrumental compositions, which contributed in no small degree to win him a certain reputation, both in France and abroad. Among these may be mentioned his well known *Meditation on the First Prelude of Bach*, which was universally applauded. Gounod dedicated his *Meditation* to the celebrated professor Zimmermann, whose daughter he married and thereby acquired for himself a powerful protector in the person of his father-in-law.

Though at this period of his life, Gounod already enjoyed the reputation of being no ordinary musician, he had not as yet displayed his wonderful talent in all its strength. The time now arrived for him to produce his masterpiece, the touchstone of his genius, the immortal *Faust* which gave its author a prominent place in the foremost rank of modern composers. The young laureate had read Goethe's poem on leaving the *Institut*. Then *Faust* became the dream of his life. It was not till sixteen years afterwards that Gounod could obtain a suitable libretto, then he immediately began his favorite work. In less than a year, more than half of the partition was completed; the great master called this the honeymoon of his *Faust*. He might well have called it so, for soon he met with difficulties which almost prevented the great work from ever being finished. At last, all obstacles being removed, *Faust* was completed, rehearsed, and performed for the first time in 1859, at the *Théâtre Lyrique*. Many renowned musicians had already treated the same subject; among these, Spohr had been the most successful and his opera was highly considered in Germany; but Gounod left the German composer far behind. *Faust* quickly spread throughout Europe, and the success with which its author met, at least equalled that which greeted Goethe's poem. And we may say that by this masterpiece, Gounod's name will be transmitted to posterity.

Strange to say, *Faust*, one of the masterpieces of modern compositions, was not at first, received by the French public as it deserved to be. It was only

when Germany and Italy had given it the sanction of their applause, conferring at the same time upon its author the greatest honors, that the doors of the *Grand Opéra* were thrown open to the distinguished artist. Gounod had now given *Faust* the form it has at present. Then France refused the eminent musician neither applause nor honors; everyone wished to see the great master; the people would even cheer him as he passed along the streets. *Faust* became a common topic of conversation and the *Grand Opéra* was too small to hold the enthusiastic audience. Within the space of eighteen years *Faust* appears five hundred times on the programme of the *Grand Opéra*. Gounod's musical fame was now at its highest. *La Reine de Saba*, *Mireille* and *Roméo et Juliette* followed *Faust*. These three operas did not obtain the same success, though all worthy of their author. In the order of merit *Roméo et Juliette* comes next to *Faust*.

In 1870 we find Gounod in London. England already knew and admired the works of the French artist, so that he was cordially welcomed in that country. The author of *Faust*, as might be expected, soon made the acquaintance of the leading English musicians. During his stay in England he produced, among other works, *Galla* which he undertook at the request of the administration of the International Exposition. It was there also that he composed most of his *Polyeucte*. This opera happened to fall into the hands of Mrs. Weldon, and it was with the greatest difficulty that Gounod succeeded in getting it back from her. In fact he had lost all hope of ever seeing it returned when it was sent him, after he had written almost the whole score a second time. We have mentioned the name of Mrs. Weldon. The relations of the author of *Faust* with the Weldon family were most friendly for three years, but ended by a lawsuit, and the condemnation of Gounod to pay ten thousand pounds for pecuniary losses, which calm examination at this distance scarcely shows him to have caused to the eccentric Mrs. Weldon. The esteem in which the French artist was held in England, is attested by the following telegram which the Queen sent Madame Gounod through