

the second prize in the contest at the *Institut*, and in the same year one of his symphonies appeared on the programme of the *Athénée Musical*. This symphony, the first of Gounod's compositions ever performed in public, was highly praised by the musical papers of the day. Two years later, the "Prix de Rome" was awarded him, our artist having to compete with such musicians as François Bazin, Charles Dancla and other renowned composers.

In compliance with the regulations of the *Institut*, Gounod visited Rome shortly after. Here he became acquainted with Lacordaire whose *conférences* he had heard in Paris, during the lenten season of the preceding year. The celebrated preacher made quite an impression on the young man's mind. He resolved to study for the Church, and with that view passed some time in the Seminary of Rome. He profited by his stay in the Eternal City, to make sacred music the special object of his attention and to store up precious material, which he afterwards used most advantageously. Moreover, he wrote several religious compositions and some delightful melodies, as: *Jésus de Nazareth*, which alone would suffice to bring a musician renown.

After spending two years in Italy, Gounod had to travel one year in Germany; such was the regulation then in force. The end proposed in these obligatory journeys, was to afford musicians the opportunity of hearing in foreign countries, masterpieces which were either unknown or imperfectly known in France. In Germany, Gounod studied the compositions of Mendelssohn, he often said that he found in this great master, a model and a guide; Mozart, however, is the musician he always admired most.

When Gounod returned to France, not being able to find an editor who would publish his compositions, though many of them were masterpieces, and having no other means of gaining his living, he became organist and leader of the choir in the Church of Foreign Missions. For several years he worked there as he had done in Rome, giving most of his time to sacred and profane music. He also studied theology, having been admitted to follow this course in the Seminary. The rumor spread that

Gounod had been ordained; but the truth is that, though for a time considered as a novice in the Seminary of Foreign Missions, he never received even Minor Orders.

Though Gounod could find no editor, his compositions were heard at the Church of Foreign Missions, and he easily made his way to some of the "salons" of Paris, which were the rendezvous of the best musicians in the French capital. Here he met the famous artist, Madame Viardot, who, in her admiration for him, used her influence to open for him the doors of the theatre. He then gave up altogether the notion of becoming a missionary; this was probably most fortunate, both for himself and for musical art. Gounod was not of such a disposition as would submit to all the exigencies of ecclesiastical life. Can one, for a moment, imagine our artist leaving his organ and an unfinished melody to attend to his priestly duties? No; had the author of *Faust* and of *Roméo et Juliette* become a priest, those masterpieces would never have been produced.

*Sapho*, with Madame Viardot to interpret the principal part, is the first opera which Gounod presented to the public. Being a new-comer, his work was awaited with the greatest interest; many eminent musicians were present at the performance. Such musical authorities as Adam and Berlioz found much to admire in the composition of *Sapho*; the latter even said that he would hear it as often as he would have the opportunity of doing so, but for some cause the opera did not take with the public. The true reason may be that Gounod's style was too different from that of the other French composers, and that the public was not as yet prepared to appreciate it.

The fact that *Sapho* had not created the favorable impression which it might have, did not discourage Gounod, and a year after, in 1852, he produced *Ulysses*, considered by all the critics as a composition of high order. For the first time the title of "Maestro" was given Gounod, and deservedly, for *Ulysses* is the work of a great artist; but the libretto was so poor that the music could not save the poem. *Sapho* had not been a success; *Ulysses* for the reason given above was a complete