

Beethoven



George Upton

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LIFE STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

LUDWIG VAN B E E T H O V E N

*Translated from the German of
Franz Hoffmann*

BY
GEORGE P. UPTON
Translator of "Memories," etc.



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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

The life-story of Beethoven, contained in these pages, is a *résumé* of the events of his childhood and youth, those of his maturer years being merely indicated in order to give symmetry to the narrative. It covers just that period of his life in which young readers are likely to be interested. Those who have the leisure and inclination to study the details of his entire career will find them in the biographies of Schindler, Ries, Marx, Thayer, and others, but it is questionable whether any of these will bring the reader as closely to the actual man and musician as this little story. And this is so not only because it is a story, but because it is a story true to life, with actual, not imaginary, personages, set in a social, domestic, and musical environment which is accurately reproduced, and dealing with historical events which are correctly stated. In a strict sense, therefore, it is not fiction, far less is it rhapsody; and to this extent it is valuable not alone for facts charmingly set forth, but for effects, which are realistic and which seem to bring the actual Beethoven before the reader.

It is the story of a sad struggle against obstacles which sometimes appeared almost insuperable; but its lesson for youth is the reward of world-wide fame which followed the exercise of industry, courage, honesty, self-respect, and self-devotion to his calling. The translator has endeavored to reproduce the story in an English setting without sacrificing its charming German characteristics.

G. P. U.

CHICAGO, September 1, 1904.

CHRONOLOGY

The following is a chronological statement of the principal events in the life of Ludwig van Beethoven, which was mostly spent in Vienna, and mainly devoted to composition:

- 1770 Born at Bonn, Prussia, Dec. 16.
- 1783 First composition, "" Variations on a March."
- 1785 Appointed Court Organist.
- 1787 Sent to Vienna by Elector of Cologne to study with Mozart.
- 1792 Second visit to Vienna to study with Haydn.
- 1795 Composed three trios in Vienna, marked Opus 1, indicating that he regarded all he had previously produced as of no consequence.
- 1796 Made an artistic tour in North Germany.
- 1797 First Symphony.
- 1798 Deafness began, and increased during the remainder of his life.
- 1802 Second Symphony.
- 1803 Oratorio of Mount of Olives "performed in Vienna.
- 1804 Third Symphony ("Eroica").
- 1805 Composed "Fidelio," his only opera.
- 1806 Fourth Symphony.
- 1808 Fifth Symphony.
- 1808 Sixth Symphony ("Pastoral").
- 1812 Seventh Symphony.
- 1812 Eighth Symphony ("The Little").
- 1822 Mass in D.
- 1823 Ninth Symphony ("Choral") .
- 1827 Died in Vienna, Dec. 26.

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CHAPTER I

IN CHILDHOOD

December days are not usually considered the most agreeable or most comfortable days of the year, but no December day could have been more disagreeable or uncomfortable than the seventeenth of that month in 1774. A dense, almost impenetrable fog enveloped that afternoon the city of Bonn on the Rhine, and the country for miles around, in a cold, gray veil of mist, through which hardly a ray of sunshine could find its way. A fine rain, mingled with occasional flakes of snow, drizzled through the fog and made the pavements slippery and filthy. Everything one looked upon, whether animate or inanimate, seemed disagreeable. The sky was disagreeable. Disagreeably the trees and shrubs in avenues and gardens shook their leafless branches to free them from the frozen raindrops which weighed them down. The houses in the street were disagreeable, and their usually attractive and brightly lighted windows appeared that day most inhospitable. Disagreeably and sullenly the rooks sat upon the roof-tops, and the sparrows themselves, usually the sauciest and jolliest companions among the feathered folk, fluttered about anxiously, deserted each other, and sought the warmest and driest little nooks in the cornices, or near a warm chimney, without any concern for the rest of the world. If two acquaintances met on the street, the one greeted the other with a woe-begone countenance. Everything seemed depressed and disagreeable—the huckster women in the market, the sentries at their posts, the few pedestrians on the promenade, and the few faces which appeared here and there at the darkened windows and looked with lonesome gaze into the tedious, gray, dense, cold fog.

No person or object, however, appeared more irritable, morose, and disagreeable than the court musician and singer, Herr Johann van Beethoven, who hurried through the unfriendly streets of Bonn, on the third hour of that afternoon, frequently muttering to himself imprecations and other exclamations to relieve his feelings.

"What weather!" he growled, as he wrapped his threadbare cloak around him more closely, when, in turning a street corner, a sharp gust of wind smote him fiercely. "Everything goes wrong in these ill-fated days. It is enough to drive one mad. Two hours lost already this morning. Now I am sent for again to make music because my lady is not in good humor! Do these distinguished people think that a musician of His Most Serene Highness, Max Franz, Elector of Cologne, is a bootblack? I am tired of it all! And this weather, too! Nothing but fog and rain, and not a kreuzer in one's pocket! There may be those who can bear such things patiently. I can't. Pah! The inn-keeper will trust me once more. I will go to him, and better thoughts will come with something to strengthen the heart and some lively company."

Muttering these words, he turned into a side street, and after a few hundred paces entered a house, over the door of which hung a green wreath, signifying that wine was sold there. It was not until twilight fell, and the streets, already darkened by the fog, became doubly dark, that he came out. Another person followed, escorting him with a light, evidently so that he might not stumble upon the door-sill.

"Good-night, Herr van Beethoven," this person said. "I must look after my own interests. I must have the money in eight days, or credit stops. I also am the father of a family, Herr van Beethoven, and must take care of my own."

"Don't make so many words, gossip," replied the musician with some bitterness. "I give you my word of honor. You know me. Can you not act generously with me?"

The musician went on his way. The other, evidently the keeper of the wine-shop, looked after him, shaking his head.

"What a pity," he said to himself. "He well deserves better fortune. He is a pleasant, good-natured companion, but certainly his position as a member of the court chapel pays him but little, and it costs money to feed a wife and two little children. But he is past help. I cannot give him credit longer than eight days at the most. He already owes me too much."

While the wine-shop keeper was making these reflections, his guest found his way with difficulty through the dark streets. Had it been lighter, one would have noticed by his actions that his craving for a "heart strengthener" had in no way bettered his condition. On the contrary, he appeared even more sullen and morose than when he found it. His brow was wrinkled. His lips, tightly closed by his bitter feelings, opened only to utter imprecations and words of discontent, as they had done a little while before.

After walking around for about five minutes he reached the Bonn Gasse. Here he lived in a small, narrow, dark part of the "Graus Haus." He entered boisterously, and with great difficulty climbed the dark, narrow staircase.

"Is it you, Johann?" asked a gentle voice on the floor above, while at the same time a gleam of light illumined the darkness.

"It is I," replied the musician sullenly. "Have I come home a little too early, Marie?"

"Never too early, and you are always welcome, Johann," replied the first voice, with the same gentleness as before. A pretty but somewhat faded woman stepped forward and cordially gave her hand to her husband to assist him up the last steps.

"What is the matter, Johann? You seem so gloomy! Think of it, this is the birthday of our little Ludwig."

The husband was visibly surprised, and pressed his hand to his brow.

"That I should have forgotten it!" he exclaimed. "But," he added bitterly, "how would it have helped matters, anyway? I have not a kreuzer with which to make the little one happy."

"Oh! do not let that trouble you, dear husband," replied his wife, smiling. "Ludwig is happy enough, and cares nothing for presents and the like. If you would sing a little bit to him and play the piano a little he would be perfectly contented."

"Certainly he can have that much, and at least it costs nothing," replied Johann Beethoven in a somewhat more cheerful manner, as he returned the cordial handshake of his wife. "Yes, I will sing and play, and thereby drive the bad spirit of discontent out of my soul."

The two stepped into a small, narrow, meanly furnished apartment, where they were welcomed with a loud cry of joy by a little four-year-old boy, who stretched out both his little hands to his mother. He may have been somewhat timid in the dark room, and the sight of his mother returning with the light elicited from him the outcry. It had little consolation for the father, however, for when the child saw him he shrank back afraid, and hid his face in the folds of his mother's dress.

"Be polite, Ludwig, dear child," she said kindly to him. "It is your father. Give him a pat of the hand."

The boy timidly stretched out his hand, but his father did not take it. It was evident the child's conduct had displeased him, for his eyes were again gloomy and his brows wrinkled.

"It's of no use," he said, repulsing the mother, who sought to conciliate her husband. "I know, already what you will say, 'Children are children, and I'—well, certainly I am not always the tenderest of fathers to his own. But how can

one be so when there is nothing for him but poverty, wretchedness, and thirstiness?"



WHEN THE CHILD SAW HIM HE SHRANK BACK AFRAID, AND HID HIS FACE IN HIS MOTHER'S DRESS.

Ill-humoredly he threw off his cloak, and with a gloomy countenance paced to and fro in the narrow chamber. Ludwig and his mother quietly withdrew to a corner. She could scarcely keep back the tears. Her little son clung to her anxiously and tenderly.

Some minutes passed in gloomy, oppressive stillness. At last Johann Beethoven, without saying a word, seated himself at the piano and touched the keys. The tender tones which he drew from the instrument seemed gradually to allay his agitation and brighten his darkened countenance. He played on, and finally began the pleasant melody of a folk-song, gently humming it at first, and then singing it with the full power of his voice.

Upon hearing the first tones of the song, the little Ludwig raised his head and fixed his gaze with rapt attention and glistening eyes upon his father. As he began to sing aloud, the boy got down from his mother's lap and, step by step, unheard by his father, approached him, until he stood close by his side, and clung to him as tenderly as he had clung to his mother a moment before. All his fears were dispelled by the soothing, gentle tones of the music. He listened only to them. All else was buried and forgotten. His eyes were raised to heaven, he stood transfixed, and his young soul fluttered, as if on wings, among the soft modulations of the simple yet heart-stirring, beautiful melody of the song.

His father stopped abruptly, turned round, and saw the child standing near him, as it were, in a kind of ecstasy.

"Ha! Ludwig, are you dreaming?" he asked, not harshly as before, but with an entirely changed and softer tone.

"No, father, I was only listening to you," replied the child, "and it seemed to me that I heard an angel singing in heaven. It was beautiful. Oh, if I could only play something too!"

"Try it," said his father encouragingly, as he placed the boy's fingers upon the keys. "Keep your fingers firm, and let them follow as I guide them."

The little Ludwig was greatly pleased. His father repeated the melody which had so much delighted him. After he had played it a few times, the boy said:

"It is all right now, father. Now I can play it all alone."

"Oho!" said his father. "You can hardly do that yet. You are venturing a little too far."

"Only let me try," persisted the boy.

His father let him do as he wished. He seated himself at the piano; at first he ran his fingers over the keys and then accurately began the folk melody, which he played smoothly to the end without hesitation or mistake.

His father, who had not expected any kind of excellence in the performance, sat as if spellbound and regarded the boy with wide-open eyes.

"Youngster, truly there is more in you than I have expected or thought of until to-day," he exclaimed, and, taking him upon his knee, he kissed his fresh, young lips. "You will yet become a finished musician, and a support for your father and mother."

"I wish for nothing better than to be able to make music correctly," said the boy, as he joyfully clapped his hands.

"Good! No one shall prevent you, and I myself will be your teacher," said his father. "If you are truly industrious, you will get ahead wonderfully, provided you do not go too fast and will practise regularly."

No sooner said than done. The father began at once to teach his son the piano and the violin. At first it seemed as if both father and son would enjoy the work. But it was only at first. It was soon apparent that the little Ludwig was possessed

of the most extraordinary obstinacy. The continual finger and other dry exercises soon disgusted him, and he played them with unconcealed and extreme reluctance. He was willing to be faithful in his piano practice, but only in his own, not in his father's way. Owing to the latter's temper, this sometimes occasioned violent scenes. Johann Beethoven was easily excited to anger, and once irritated he lost all control of himself. He hurled taunts and reproaches at the boy, and boxed his ears; but Ludwig bore it all with unyielding firmness, and confronted his father defiantly in these outbreaks. Then his mother would weep and earnestly beseech her husband to have patience with the boy, who was too little and childish to understand. She usually appeased his anger, for, in reality, he was kind and tender-hearted. The stubborn little fellow likewise could not long withstand the piteous appeals of his mother. His defiant heart at last would yield to her caresses, and for a while he would good-naturedly submit to his father's directions.

But of course it was only for a little while. His old obstinacy would continually block the way, and sometimes the situation would become so intolerable that the boy would declare he would have nothing more to do with music. The violent outbreaks would occur afresh. Reproaches, threats, and punishment were not spared, but they served only to make the boy still more obstinate and completely to harden him against his father. In fact, the danger that the little Beethoven might abandon music altogether could not have been averted had not the happy influence of his mother's loving appeals continually drawn him back to its sweet diversion.

There was still another thing that kept the sacred flame alive in the breast of the boy, and that was the frequent absence of his father, which permitted him to follow the inclinations of his own caprice and pleasure, and to draw beautiful accords and melodies, now from the piano, now from the violin.

Upon one occasion, when his father had treated him with unusual severity and had looked at him threateningly, the boy fled with his violin to his little bed-chamber, and there, shut out from all the world, gave vent to his anger and his sorrow in mournful tones. As this did not help to allay his inward tumults his mother, as a last expedient, adopted a course which always had the happiest result; namely, she told him of his dead grandfather, of whom the boy had preserved active and loving memories, and whose life-sized portrait hung in his chamber, thus keeping him freshly in remembrance.

This grandfather in his lifetime was a highly esteemed and distinguished man, and had served as chapel-master for Max Frederick of Cologne. The little Ludwig looked up to him as an exemplar for his future life. When his mother told him how beautifully he sang in the opera, what a fine, stately man he was, and how high he stood in the favor of his electoral patron, the boy listened with the most eager attention to every word, and not infrequently exclamations would escape from him, such as, "I shall have as great success," or, "I shall become a famous man also, mother."

Then the patient woman smiled, kissed the boy's red cheeks, and all that had happened before between father and son was buried in the sea of forgetfulness.

Some years passed in this way, ending as unsatisfactorily for the father as for the son. The former, when the little Ludwig was seven years old, at last realized that his method of teaching was not adapted to him and that they must look about for another and more suitable teacher. Fortunately they found such a one, first in the person of chapel-master Pfeiffer; later in court organist Van den Eeden, and then in court organist Neefe, all of whom instructed him in piano, violin, and organ playing; also in composition.

Ludwig now made rapid and truly astonishing progress in his art. The applause of his teachers was accorded to him in most plentiful measure. He developed into a capable and thorough musician. Every one who knew him esteemed and

loved him; and yet the already mature boy was not inwardly happy. There was a secret sorrow in his breast, which embittered his life and dispelled all his joyousness. He never had a glowing face and laughing eyes, like other young men of his age. Silent, reserved, and absorbed in himself, he went his way, and many a one who saw him walking sadly through the streets of Bonn looked wonderingly after him, and probably said, "That is a strange expression of countenance for such a young fellow to wear."

Indeed, people knew not what oppressed the young Beethoven and what had prematurely given him such a serious and melancholy disposition. Fortunately, however, the time was not far distant which would bring him a friend in whom he could fully confide, and to whom he could unreservedly pour out all the cares and troubles of his heart.

CHAPTER II

THE WALK

A divine spring day filled the beautiful Rhine valley with radiance and light. The surface of the river glistened as if strewn with thousands of diamonds. On the not far away "Sieben Gebirge" hung a blue haze, like a fine transparent veil, not concealing, but only beautifying and softening the rugged outlines of the peaks. The island of Nonnenwerth, with its bright green foliage, was set in the river like an emerald, and high above it on the left bank gleamed the red ruins of the old castle of Rolandseck—a suggestion of the flight of time in the midst of the peaceful, restful, perfect beauty of the present.

It was Sunday. Near and far sounded the peal of bells. The crisp tones from the little chapels and village churches mingled harmoniously with the deep diapason of the great church bells in Bonn, and with their trembling vibrations filled the beautiful landscape, which seemed listening in prostrate devotion. Hardly any other sound than that of the bells could be distinguished. Even the little song-birds, which a short time before had chirped and twittered loudly and joyously, were now quiet. Sunday peace and Sunday silence rested upon city and plain.

A young man slowly walked along a path which leads from Bonn down to the Rhine, threading its way through fields and meadows. He was simply and somewhat shabbily but neatly clad. One forgot, however, his modest attire as one looked into the face of the wanderer and saw those eyes in which ever and anon bright gleams sparkled and revealed the holy fire in his spirit. For the moment he had no regard for the beauty of surrounding nature. He only listened. His soul was floating, as it were, in a sea of tones, which, now loudly, now softly, like the breaking of ocean waves on the shore, forced themselves upon his tensely strained nerves and filled him

with emotion. For a time he gazed up into the bright blue sky with gleaming eyes, and folded his hands upon his breast, like one in ecstasy, as if thereby he could relieve this flood of rapture. Then he advanced a few steps, but again paused, and, muttering to himself some unintelligible exclamations, flung both hands suddenly and wildly about in the air.

He continued for a moment this strange action, which not only would have caused a quiet passer-by to smile, but might have amazed him. His amazement, however, would have lasted only until he had seen the piercing eyes of the young man and the lofty expression upon his brow, around which hung thick, bushy hair like a lion's mane. His eyes and forehead saved him from the ridicule which his otherwise insignificant appearance might have excited, and made it, if not exalted, at least entitled to respect.

Softly the bells pealed on. Only a gentle and gradually dying away murmur trembled in the almost motionless air. The young man remained immovable, his head bowed upon his breast, until the last vibrations had died away. Then, like one awakening from a dream, he raised his head and looked around with a quiet, gentle glance. He was already within a few hundred steps of the Rhine, and on the opposite shore gleamed brightly and hospitably the houses of Konigswinter, above which rose the lofty, huge, and majestic peaks of the Seven Mountains.

"I will go over there," he said to himself. "The day is so beautiful, one should improve it."

With quick steps he went down to the bank of the river and sprang into one of the boats lying there, saying to the boatman the single word, "Across."

Arrived on the other side, he threw the boatman a little silver piece and then took the first, best road he came to and went on at random. Soon he found himself in a shadowy beech wood, whose light green leaves rustled high above him. In one lighter spot he could see the blue sky through the foliage, and

here and there a sunbeam found its way through the dense leaves and glistened at the young wanderer's feet like a sparkling jewel or a bright silver shield.

There were no people in the wood. The bustle of the world did not penetrate its dusky recesses, but, notwithstanding this, there was joyousness and liveliness in its broad, dark halls. Numberless song-birds swung on the slender branches or flew lightly from bough to bough. The finches warbled their lively, rollicking songs. The blackbirds and song thrushes sang their soft and yet full-toned strophes. In the distance the cuckoo intoned its name. The young wanderer heard and watched it all, and, filled with happy feelings, his face wore a more cheerful aspect. No sound in this beautiful solitude escaped his acute ears,—not the rustle of the leaves when a gentle breeze stirred them; not the light gurgling and splashing of the little brook along the bank of which his course led him; not the rush of the water when it plunged over rocks and made pretty little waterfalls; not the tapping of the woodpecker, whose strong bill pierced the bark of the tree that concealed insects and larvae; not the sharp scream of a large bird of prey, high overhead; and, least of all, the ravishing song of a nightingale, which suddenly rose from a thicket close by the side of the lonely wanderer, so full, so tender, so pensive and heart-stirring, that he remained motionless and forgot all else that he might listen only to this wonderful, inspiring song.

"Brava, bravissima," he involuntarily exclaimed, as the lovely singer shook its pretty feathers, and then, following a gently alluring call, probably the cry of its mate, flew as swiftly as an arrow through the bushes. "The utmost that can be accomplished in a bird's throat is in thy song, charming Philomel; but the artist still must create the higher things,—so high that they bring him near to the divine. And this height I will and shall attain, with God's help."

The young man uttered these last words loudly in the wood, but hardly had he done so when a merry and mocking

laugh came back in reply. For an instant he felt a little frightened, but immediately recovered himself, and angrily answered:

"Who laughs there? I hope no one here is making sport of me."

"I have taken the liberty to do so," said a young man, stepping forward from behind the trunk of a beech-tree and making a low bow with a slightly ironical smile. "If you wish to resent it, honorable sir, I herewith surrender myself to your merciful judgment."

The angry frown which his words had caused disappeared, and Beethoven good-naturedly extended his hand, which the stranger cordially shook.

"Very learned Franz Gerhard Wegeler, worthy student of medicine," he said, "what chance brought you into this solitude, where I fancied I was all alone and far from the human rabble?"

"Doubtless the same chance which brought my melodious friend here," replied the other. "Yes, my excellent master of tone, my Ludwig van Beethoven, it was the blue sky and golden sun which enticed me out of the dull study-room into God's glorious world, where at least one can get a breath of fresh air and enjoy the wonderful works of the Almighty. Was not that your object also, worthy, pupil of Mistress Musica?"

Ludwig nodded assent. "For all that, it is a strange and remarkable chance that we should have met each other in this solitary wood," he said.

"Not altogether strange and not very wonderful, my dear fellow," replied Wegeler, "for in crossing the Rhine I engaged the same boatman who took you over. Knowing that we were old acquaintances, he told me that you had crossed scarcely half an hour before, and were roving about in this wood. As I would rather have company than walk alone, I

followed your trail, found you lost in ecstasy over a nightingale, and finally learned, for you announced it in an exceedingly loud tone of voice, that you intended shortly to soar to the very Deity. That made me laugh; but you will excuse me when you reflect that the ascent to the Deity is a somewhat difficult performance for one of your years, unless you make what they call a *salto mortale* (deadly leap). It is the easiest way in the world to break one's neck or bones."

Ludwig again frowned a little, but quickly smoothed his brow with his hand, as if wiping away all troubles and gloomy thoughts. "You are right," said he. "I was a fool to entertain such bold fancies and daring hopes. And this, too, in my melancholy circumstances and wretched plight! It is not possible. I was mad, that I was." With these last words such deep dejection manifested itself in his countenance that Wegeler suddenly felt the warmest sympathy for the young man.

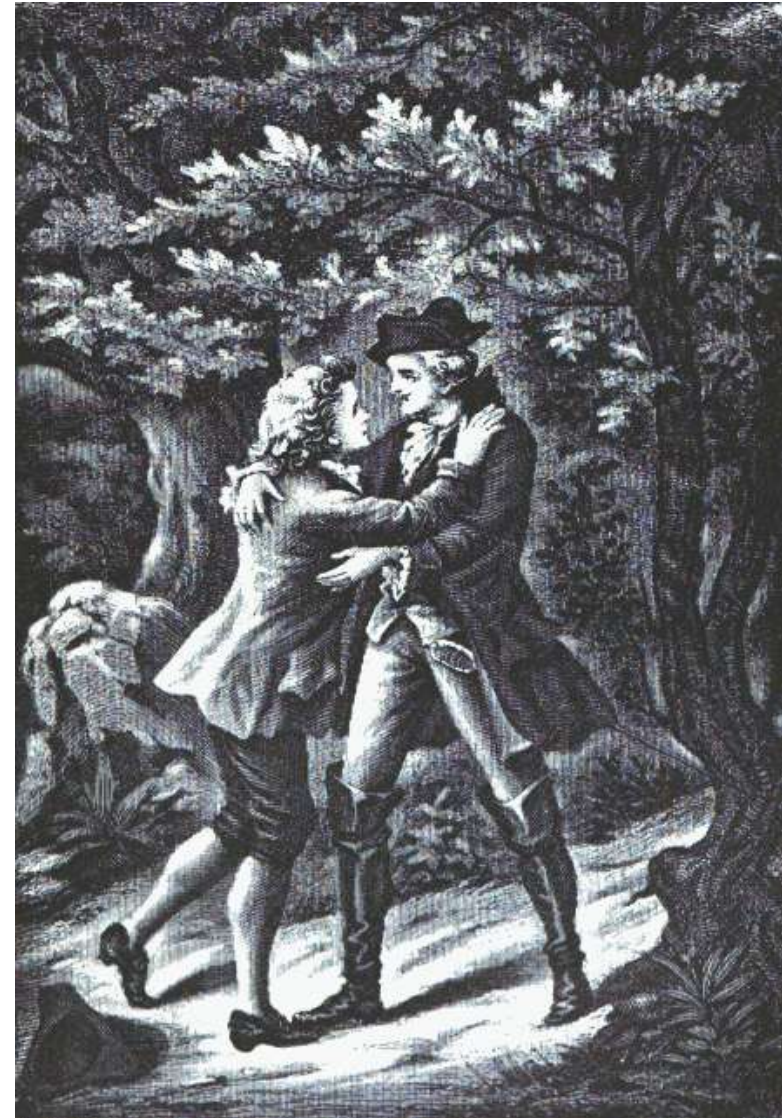
"What is the matter? Why do you speak of wretchedness and melancholy, Ludwig?" he cordially said, as he threw his arm around his much younger friend and drew him affectionately toward him.

"Ah! you know not—no one knows—what it is that depresses and weighs me down," answered Ludwig. "Poverty is such a heavy burden. It rests like a load upon the pinions of the soul. Oh, it is awful to feel here, here in one's inmost soul, that one could accomplish the great and the beautiful, and yet not be able to do it because he lacks a few miserable gulden and kreuzers. It is hard, Wegeler."

Tears stood in young Beethoven's eyes, and his lips quivered in the effort to repress his emotions. Wegeler's eyes rested with an expression of deep sympathy upon the dejected figure which he had seen only a short time before exulting in the joyousness of hope.

"Ludwig," he said,—and his voice had an unusually tender tone,—"I pray you, open your heart to me, and do not

conceal what troubles and oppresses you. I feel for you as for a true and sincere friend. Take me for your friend and then speak, for you know between time heart-friends there should be no restraint, no secrets."



WITH AN EXCLAMATION OF JOY HE EMBRACED WEGELER.

"Friend!" said Ludwig. "Would you actually be my true friend?"

"To the last hour of my life. I swear it," said Wegeler, in such an honest manner that his sincerity could not be doubted.

Ludwig understood him and was comforted. With an exclamation of joy he embraced Wegeler and kissed him. "So we are friends, always friends," he cried. "Oh, how I have longed for a soul that could and would understand me, and lo, at last I have found one. Now you shall learn, dear, good Wegeler, what has disturbed my soul and checked its flights. I am not happy, and the cause of my unhappiness, alas, is my father's conduct. I have kept this melancholy secret deeply hidden in my breast, but here, where no one but the dear God and the little birds can hear, I will disclose it."

He told in passionate words how his father's temper had made him suffer from the days of his childhood, of that father's insatiable craving for drink, and how, on that account, the family often had to go without the necessaries of life.

"Though my father naturally is good-natured," he went on, "this craving makes him exceedingly irritable and sometimes violent. His habits drive him to extremes. At one moment he is a tender father, at the next a cruel tyrant. The despair of it all is that when necessity and trouble press hardest he has no patience to bear, but seeks consolation and forgetfulness in wine. This is my heaviest burden, for, so long as he cannot resist drinking, there is no hope of better conditions for our family. My mother, my good, true, tender mother, secretly weeps, and bears her hard lot with Christian calmness. But I and my two younger brothers suffer unspeakably, and many a time I have been tempted to throw myself into the Rhine and end all my miseries."

"Calm yourself, dear boy," said Wegeler soothingly. "Don't be so vehement. I am free to acknowledge that your situation is bad and gloomy enough, but bad as it is, some

relief will be found. Let me think it over. For the present banish your sad thoughts, and let us enjoy the delicious atmosphere, the blue sky, the green woods, and the sparkling sunshine. This is not a day for melancholy. Cheer up! Let us go farther into the wood and visit my good friends, the monks of the Heisterbach cloister. We shall be well received there, and in any case find a good breakfast, which doubtless we shall greatly relish after the morning tramp."

Ludwig was ready to accept his friend's guidance. They sprang up from the mossy bank upon which they had been sitting during their conversation, and followed a small, scarcely perceptible footpath that led through the wood. Wegeler chattered about everything possible, told his new friend many humorous and pleasant stories, and quickly succeeded in cheering him up. When they reached the Heisterbach cloister, shortly before noon, Ludwig's melancholy had given place to a somewhat defiant but still good humor.

At the entrance to the grounds sat the Father Doorkeeper, apparently basking in the sunshine. He regarded the new-comers with a pleasant smile on his broad, rosy face. "Welcome, Herr Studiosus," he said to Wegeler,—for he had made his acquaintance in previous visits. "Have you been here long? The Abbot and the others also will be glad to see you again. Enter without any ceremony—that way—but you already know the way to the refectory."

"God's greeting for your friendly reception, Father Doorkeeper," replied Wegeler. "We come hungry and thirsty, and kindly ask you for a cordial."

"Apply to the chief cook. You may be certain he knows no greater pleasure than feeding the hungry and providing a strengthening cordial."

Wegeler bowed and proceeded with Ludwig through the forecourt, which, with its flower-beds, fountains, and cleanly kept gravel walks, looked like a garden. Arrived at the

abbey, they were cordially greeted anew and escorted to the refectory,—a cool hall, with great Gothic window recesses, in which, so roomy were they, tables with stone slabs were standing. The monk cordially invited them to be seated at one of these tables and then left to announce in kitchen and cellar that two beloved guests laid claim to hospitality. In reply to the Father Chief Cook he gave the name of the student Wegeler, and at once several ministering spirits actively began to prepare food and drink in abundance for the welcome strangers. Hardly ten minutes after the arrival of Wegeler and Ludwig a hearty break-fast was served upon the side table, which was covered with a neat cloth, and then came the Father Cellar-Master striding along, under each arm a carafe of costly, sparkling golden wine, from which he filled the glasses of his guests.

Wegeler and Ludwig thoroughly enjoyed the pleasure of this large-hearted hospitality, and paid it due honor by partaking abundantly of the food and emptying more than one glass of the delicious wine. The monks asked for the latest news in Bonn, the cream of which Wegeler was giving them, when the Abbot himself, with his friend the Father Lector, appeared, and greeted his guests with the same friendliness the other inmates of the abbey had shown. Naturally he was somewhat reserved with Ludwig, as he did not yet know him, and only recognized him with a nod of the head; but he was soon engaged in a lively conversation with Wegeler about the affairs of the new university at Bonn, in which the venerable man showed a special interest.

As Ludwig could take no part in this conversation, and as the attention of all the other cloister brothers was also devoted to the Abbot and Wegeler, he found time hanging heavily. He arose, slipped out of the refectory unnoticed, and enjoyed himself strolling around the abbey and the grounds, observing and admiring notable and interesting objects. While thus wandering about at pleasure, he came to the beautiful church of the abbey, and at once noticed its large handsome

organ, which naturally had a greater attraction for him as a musician than anything else. He went up into the choir, scrutinized the organ closely, and admired its beautiful construction.

"It is too bad the organ-blower is not here," he said aloud, for he did not suppose there was any one else in the church. "It would be the greatest pleasure to me to try such a splendid organ."

"Ho! ho! who is talking there?" said an entirely unexpected voice, and out of the organ-blower's closet stepped a serving brother, who regarded Ludwig with astonishment. "How is this?" he went on. "Did I not hear something about Monsieur wishing he could play the organ? Are you the Monsieur who wanted an organ-blower?"

"Certainly, it must have been I, since no one else but ourselves is at present in the church," replied Ludwig.

"But," said the man in amazement, and looking somewhat doubtfully at the short, thick-set figure of Beethoven, "does Monsieur say that he can play the organ?"

"Certainly," replied Ludwig; "I could easily convince you if only there were a blower at hand who was willing to serve me."

"I am the organ-blower," said the man, shaking his head and still somewhat doubtful. "If you are really in earnest about playing the organ I will right gladly offer my service."

"That is fine, perfectly splendid," cried Ludwig exultantly. "To your post, worthy colleague. We will both take the utmost pains and each one of us do his best."

Still dubiously and suspiciously shaking his head, the organ-blower took his place, but left the door ajar so that no tone of the young man's playing should escape him. Ludwig seated himself, struck the keys with his strong hands, and evoked from the splendid instrument a stream, a full volume of tones, such as had never been heard in the church before.

Majestically they rang through the church like the thunder of the Lord. Then suddenly there were soft and gentle tones like the vibrations of the harp, a heavenly melody, sung as it were by the voices of angels, anon pealing out grandly in a majestic hymn, like a song of praise from the heavens and the earth, glorifying the Eternal, the only God, the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth. Powerful as the solemn tones had been, they died away again to a soft and lovely piano, until at the close the last sound exhaled itself like a breath and seemed softly to disappear among the lofty columns of the choir.

Beethoven, who had sat like one entranced during his wonderful playing, and had looked upwards with fixed, wide-open eyes, now came to himself, wiped the perspiration from his heated brow, and drew a deep sigh.

"Young man, who taught you to play like that?" said a man in the dress of the order, advancing out of the dusk of the organ-loft. "Truly, you play magnificently. I have never heard such execution before. Who taught you this?"

"I taught myself," Beethoven replied curtly and somewhat aggressively.

"Then be doubly greeted and doubly welcome, noble disciple of the art, who sometime will make a high and mighty eagle's flight," said the monk with deep earnestness as he grasped the young man's hand. "Turn not away from me. I am also a member of the great guild which has devoted its lifework to Mistress Musica. I am the Father Organist of the abbey, and hence I am qualified to appreciate and admire your wonderful art."

Beethoven's darkening countenance quickly lightened up as he recognized in the venerable monk not an officious, inquisitive person, but a colleague, and he warmly returned the grasp of his hand.

"I thank you for your kindness, Father," he gently replied, "but you praise me too highly. I am not yet worthy of

it, but I hope and shall strive to deserve it sometime. But now, what can I do to show my gratitude for your gracious words?"

"Repeat what you have just played, my son," said the father. "Your playing has touched my old heart powerfully. Those were not earthly tones; they were the harmonies and melodies of heaven."

"No, no; that was only a free Fantasia of my own," said Ludwig. "To repeat it would be somewhat of a task, but I will gladly play something else for you, if you will wait a moment."

The father nodded assent and retired to a dark corner, where he could abandon himself to his anticipated enjoyment without any danger of being disturbed. Beethoven ran his fingers over the keys several times, as if searching for a theme, until he found a soft old melody, which he played through in simple, noble style, and then varied with marvellous skill and ingenuity. As the ravishing tones powerfully and ever more powerfully rang out, the church gradually filled up. The monks slipped in in groups. The Father Head Cook left his kitchen and the Father Doorkeeper his door to listen to the young man's playing, reports of which had quickly spread through the abbey. The Abbot and the Father Lector also came, in Wegeler's company, went up into the organ-loft, and seated themselves just behind Beethoven, who, lost in inspiration, was not aware of their presence. He continued playing variations until the theme was completely exhausted, and then, weary and exhausted himself, bowed his head upon his breast.

A unanimous "Brava, brava," resounded through the church. The Abbot stepped forward, tapped him gently on the shoulder, and said with emotion:

"Those were indeed sounds from another world, and they have penetrated my very soul. Accept my thanks, my young friend. You are truly a master, and a great future lies before you if God preserve your life and health, which I doubt not He will do."

The Lector also spoke words of praise to the young man. The Father Organist bowed low before him. The organ-blower emerged from his closet and with astonishment regarded the young man who had accomplished such prodigies and unprecedented feats in his art. "Truly," said the homely old man, "if he played the organ here I would never get tired. My old arms would work the bellows from morning to night."

Beethoven in the meantime accepted these praises somewhat coolly and indifferently, and contented himself by expressing his thanks with an awkward bow.

"He is always thus, your reverence," said Wegeler, as he seated himself again with the Abbot and the Father Lector at the wine in the cool refectory—"a sound kernel in a rough shell; a jewel of the purest water, which needs only a little polish to glisten at its real value. He is not to blame for it so much as his unhappy domestic conditions. How can he have politeness and ease of manner when there is not even daily bread in the house? I beg you therefore to treat him with gracious indulgence."

"It is entirely unnecessary to intercede for this young genius," replied the Abbot. "His magnificent playing has impressed me so deeply that I can overlook his lack of courtesy, though really his deportment is a little awkward. One must bear with everything in a great genius,—and such he is, for, after what we have heard, there cannot be the slightest doubt of it. I should greatly like to talk with him a little while."

"I should not be surprised if he had already slipped out of the church and were again roving about the wood," said Wegeler smiling. "I know his ways. He does not crave praise like many other musicians. It is absolutely painful to him to be commended to his face. He prefers to escape from it and bury himself in solitude. He is always that way, and one must take him as one finds him. The rich treasures of his soul make thousand-fold compensation for his external roughness."

"Well, we shall have to acquiesce in his absence," replied the Abbot; "but promise me, dear Wegeler, that you will soon bring this wonderful artist here again."

"With the greatest pleasure," answered Wegeler.

"Ludwig can do his best in the company of cultivated and sympathetic persons only, and I hope I shall succeed in introducing him into a circle of dear friends in Bonn where he will surely find a second home. But now, your reverence, it is time for me to take my departure and hunt up my young runaway friend, so that we may get back to Bonn in good season."

Once again the glasses were filled, and they were clinked for the last time with the wish for an early and happy "Wiedersehen," and Wegeler begged to be kept in affectionate remembrance. He then hastened in the direction of Bonn, and had been gone hardly a quarter of an hour when he found his friend Beethoven sitting upon a stump on the side of the road, lost in deep thought.

"Well; my fine fellow," said Wegeler to him, "what induced you to run away from the abbey so secretly and without saying good-bye?"

Beethoven turned about with an abrupt motion of resentment and shook his thick, curly hair, which fell about his neck like the mane of a lion. "I could not stay any longer and indulge in empty chattering after the Genius of Art in the church had struggled with me and bidden me to soar. I had to get away from it and out into the open air, into the solitude, where, as I know by experience, I can most easily find my way back to the common places of life."

"But the Abbot regretted that he could not speak with you again," said Wegeler.

"Some other time," replied Beethoven. "He is a kind, friendly man, whom I appreciate and esteem; but he must let me go my way, undisturbed, if I am to visit him again."

"And he will do that, stubborn-headed one," replied Wegeler, laughingly. "Only play for him a little from time to time and he will always be a benevolent patron and have all possible patience with your caprices. We do not always know how, when, or where such a man may be of service to us. A visit with him is always a genuine recreation and a comfort to the heart. We will soon revisit Heisterbach, will we not, Ludwig?"

Beethoven nodded assent. "But it is time now to go home. The sun is already low, and I have a presentiment that things are not as they should be at home. Let us hasten, Wegeler."

They quickened their pace. Soon they reached the Rhine, crossed it, and went on to Bonn, which was already growing dim in the gathering twilight. When their ways separated they parted from one another, but Wegeler promised he would certainly visit Beethoven the next evening, and hoped that he would bring him some good and cheering news. With a last cordial shake of the hand they separated, and Beethoven flew rather than walked through the streets, that he might reach his dwelling in the narrow and gloomy Bonn Gasse as quickly as possible; for it was already late, and the house door might be closed with the coming of darkness.

CHAPTER III

NEW FRIENDS

Wegeler kept his word. With a beaming countenance he appeared at Beethoven's house the next evening and exultantly said: "I have succeeded. Congratulate yourself, friend Ludwig! I shall introduce you this evening to a family with whom you will feel perfectly at home."

"And what kind of a family might that be?" said Beethoven, distrustfully. "You know I am not adapted to all the world, and that all the world is not adapted to me."

"But this family is in no way of the character which you so sweepingly apply to the world," replied Wegeler. "You will find it a model of the noblest sociality and a place where art and science are most zealously cherished. It is the family of the widow, Frau Hofrathin von Breuning, to which I have permission to introduce you."

"Ah! the Frau Hofrathin von Breuning," cried Ludwig, with a perceptibly brighter countenance.

"Truly that is something different from what I mean by 'all the world.' I have heard of this family. They are lovely people."

"The best in the world, Ludwig," eagerly protested Wegeler. "So hasten. Get yourself in readiness. They are expecting us immediately."

"I am already dressed," replied Beethoven, haughtily. "I have no other coat than this thread-bare one. If they won't have me in this, they shall not have me at all."

"Unruly, stubborn, cross-grained fellow that you are!" exclaimed Wegeler, with a laugh. "Will you never learn to master your capricious nature? Come along even in your

threadbare coat. These dear people into whose circle I shall take you care only for your heart and disposition, not for your clothes. You are, like all geniuses, a most ridiculous fellow. But that does not signify. You already know them, and consequently you will learn to appreciate them. Frankly, you should not appear willful and capricious, but behave like a polite youth, and occasionally perform something on the piano in your own style. They are very fond of music and have much of it at their home. The Elector's chapel-master Ries, whom you know, and other members of the chapel, often enjoy pleasant intercourse in this hospitable home, and we certainly shall meet some of them there this evening."

"Now, that is a splendid suggestion," said Beethoven, with gleaming eyes. "Then I can appear as I am. Yes, they shall learn to know me! I have composed to-day a trio for pianoforte, violin, and violoncello. We will take it with us. If a violin and violoncello can be had I will play the piano, and they will open their eyes, these people, when they hear my composition."

"Oho! you have plenty of confidence that you have made something particularly good and beautiful," said Wegeler in gentle banter.

"Certainly I have," replied Beethoven, with self-assurance. "I tell you I have created something entirely new, which will please every one of good musical taste and will be widely imitated."

"But consider, Ludwig; you will be judged not by dilettanti, but by genuine connoisseurs," said Wegeler, earnestly.

"All the better," proudly replied Ludwig. "I never intend to compose for ignorance and stupidity."

"Well, then, take your trio. We will make a trial of it," said Wegeler. "Or, what is better, give it to me. I will say that it is a composition by one of my acquaintances. If it does not please, we need not mention your name; but if it pleases, as I

wish and hope it may, then, at least, you may be sure they will not flatter or over-praise you."

"That is all right," answered Ludwig, as he handed the manuscript to his friend, who placed it in his pocket. "Now I am ready."

"Then we will start, for they will be waiting for us at the Breunings'," replied Wegeler.

Arm in arm they went through the already silent and dark streets until they came to a handsome house, before the door of which hung a lighted lantern. Wegeler was no stranger there. He conducted Ludwig up a broad, easy flight of steps, opened the door, and led his somewhat timid young friend into a spacious and brilliantly lighted apartment, in which a company of twelve persons was assembled. An elderly lady, whose face still revealed traces of beauty, and with an unusually noble and gracious expression of goodness and benevolence, advanced a few steps and received them with a kindly smile.

"Welcome, dear Wegeler," she said in a soft, gentle voice which came straight from the heart; "I think I make no mistake in welcoming in your companion my future young friend, Ludwig van Beethoven."

"You are right, gracious lady," replied Wegeler. "This is my friend Ludwig, and this, Ludwig, is the Frau Hofrathin von Breuning."

"Welcome, cordially welcome, dear Beethoven," said the Frau Hofrathin, extending her hand with friendly and very motherly good wishes.

Beethoven was by nature a strong, proud character, who did not easily bow before any one, and least of all was inclined to waste much civility in social intercourse. The amiability of Frau von Breuning, however, made such a deep impression upon him that he took the hand offered him, bowed low, and kissed it.

In the meantime the others present came forward. The sons of Frau von Breuning—Stephen, Christopher, and Lenz—shook the young man's hand cordially, and then the sister, Eleanora, welcomed him with a cordial inclination of the head and bright, friendly eyes. Some of the guests already knew Ludwig, particularly the chapel-master Ries, and some members of the Elector's chapel. He exchanged a few friendly words with them and was then presented to a handsome, distinguished-looking man, the Count von Waldstein, who, notwithstanding his high rank and standing, greeted him with genuine cordiality. In a short time Beethoven felt as much at home in this circle as if he had been in it for years, and Wegeler therefore quietly indulged the hope that his young protege would bring no discredit upon his urgent recommendations of him. He was in no way disappointed in this hope. Beethoven appeared more cheerful, companionable, frank, and affable than ever before, and when the talk turned upon music he seated himself at the piano without being urged, much to Wegeler's astonishment and delight, and played a long time with such a splendid technique and depth of feeling that all conversation at once stopped and every one paid the closest attention to his beautiful melodies.

"Brava, brava!" cried every one when the young artist finished his performance. Count Waldstein stepped up to him and tapped him lightly on the shoulder. "You have indeed done splendidly," he cordially said. "I fancy that I also understand music a little, and therefore speak so positively."

Chapel-master Ries complimented Ludwig so enthusiastically that he felt extremely comfortable as well as happy. Wegeler thought it an opportune time to try the new trio, and took it from his pocket. "As we are engaged with music," he said, "and as we have professional artists right at hand, I would beg you to play an entirely new composition, which by a happy chance has come into my possession."

"What is it?" said chapel-master Ries, "and who is the composer?"

"The composer wishes temporarily to remain unknown," replied Wegeler, "but the work is a trio for piano, violin, and violoncello."

"That can be arranged without any difficulty," said Ries. "Our Beethoven will play the piano-forte, friend Muller the violoncello, and I will undertake the violin. The instruments are here, so let us get to work at once."

In a few minutes the necessary arrangements were made and the trio began. The three accomplished artists easily played it at sight, and the audience paid close attention to the entirely original harmonies and melodies. The trio was played to its close smoothly and with precision, but instead of loud applause after the last tones there was a very painful silence. The good Wegeler turned pale with anxiety, but Beethoven sat as proud as Jupiter at the piano and seemed to have forgotten where or in whose company he was.

Chapelmaster Ries, was the first to break the uncomfortable silence and, turning quickly to Wegeler, said: "This is truly a charming composition, full of originality, and developed with true genius. Who is the composer? I am really eager to know, for I never before have heard such music."

"In fact, very strong but characteristic," Count Waldstein added.

"I have never heard anything more beautiful," said Christopher Breuning, enthusiastically and excitedly. "It must be an entirely distinctive artwork by Mozart, or perhaps something of Haydn's."

Wegeler, who had regained his natural color, smiled and shook his head. "Neither Mozart nor Haydn," said he. "The composer is a new man, and is in our midst."

"Ah! Count Waldstein," said Frau von Breuning with a light, graceful bow. "Do not deny it, Count. You have prepared a most pleasant surprise for us."

"On the contrary, dear lady, I should consider myself most fortunate if I could accept your compliment," replied Count Waldstein, "but I must reluctantly decline it. Probably we have to thank our chapel-master for the great surprise."

"No, no," said the chapel-master, "I will not adorn myself with borrowed feathers however beautiful they may be. But really, if I could accomplish such a work as this trio, I should regard myself as a pretty good artist."

"But who can the composer be if he is neither our dear Count nor the chapel-master?" said Frau von Breuning. "Surely you are just teasing us a little, dear Wegeler. Anyway, the composer of the trio is known by name."

"Yes, he has a name," said Wegeler, smiling, "but his name is not yet famous, though I have no doubt it will become so one day. The composer's name is—LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN, and he has the honor to sit before your ladyship, at the piano."

If a bomb had fallen into the company it could not have caused greater astonishment than Wegeler's simple announcement. All present evidently were surprised in the highest degree. Beethoven alone sat entirely unmoved and at ease, and looked about him smilingly and unembarrassed.

"What is there to be astonished at?" he said. "I composed the entire trio to-day."

It is hard to describe the effect these few words produced. All crowded around Beethoven, and each had his word of admiration for him. He was quietly pleased when they shook his hand and overwhelmed him with compliments; but at last he became uneasy, and sprang up from his seat.

"This is too much," he said. "I do not deserve it. Later, years hence, perhaps,—but now? no! There are still those who can construct better things than I."

"But there are very few of them," said Count Waldstein, earnestly. "Anyway, I feel impelled to exercise all

my influence for the advancement of a talent such as yours, dear Beethoven. I beg you to consider me as your fatherly friend and patron."

Beethoven bowed, and stammered a few words of thanks. A moment later he had forgotten the assurances of the Count and was chatting in the most intimate manner with the sons of Frau von Breuning, who welcomed this talented new acquaintance with genuine enthusiasm. The mother also graciously conversed with the young man, and at last asked him if he would at some future time give piano lessons to her daughter Eleonora, which Beethoven naturally was glad to promise.

As it was getting rather late, the company left one after another. Beethoven withdrew with Wegeler, and warmly thanked his friend on the street for introducing him into this pleasant family circle.

"I did it with all my heart," said Wegeler, "and with the hope that it will be for the pleasure and advantage of both parties."

All of Wegeler's hopes were realized. Beethoven soon found himself at home among his new friends. This was not strange, for the Hofrathin entertained a true motherly affection for him, and her children regarded him as a brother. Beethoven himself, at a later period, often declared that his happiest years were spent in the Breuning home.

Thus weeks and months passed. Beethoven's outward circumstances gradually improved, for the Hofrathin Breuning was assiduous in procuring pupils for him among her acquaintances, which paid well at that time. Ludwig could now furnish a part of the support for his brave mother, so that matters gradually became more pleasant in the household life. Everything contributed to keep him in good humor, so that he commended himself more and more to the affection and goodwill of his new friends.

Ludwig had heard nothing for a long time from Count Waldstein about the patronage he had promised. In reality he had hardly given it a thought. But the Hofrathin Breuning many a time quietly wondered that the Count should have forgotten his protege so quickly and completely, "especially when there is so much he might do for his advantage," she said to herself. "He is a favorite with the Elector, and hardly needs do more than drop a word occasionally to interest him in our Beethoven. If he would do so but once, everything else would take care of itself, and I should no longer have any anxiety about the young man's future."

But none of the Hofrathin's wishes or hopes seemed likely to be realized. Count Waldstein appeared now and then in the Hofrathin's social circle, but seldom remained there long, and seemed to concern himself little about Beethoven, though at times he gave him a friendly word. One evening, however, he asked for the trio which Beethoven composed, and requested permission to keep it a few days. The permission naturally was granted promptly and willingly, although Beethoven did not appear to attach the slightest importance to the Count's request. Frau von Breuning, however, smiled to herself in silent satisfaction. She anticipated and conjectured more than Ludwig, and this simple, unimportant act aroused the hope that something would come of it, and that his interests would be promoted.

Nothing in the least occurred in the next few days to confirm these hopes, and Frau von Breuning, though she still clung to her hope, had to admit to herself there was little foundation for it, when one evening Count Waldstein appeared entirely unexpectedly in the circle of friends who were entertaining themselves with music. Besides the Breuning family, Beethoven, Wegeler, and chapel-master Ries were present. All extended a respectful and friendly greeting to the Count. He smiled contentedly, roguishly looked at Beethoven, and pressed his right hand upon his left breast-pocket, in which something light rustled.

"Young man," he said good-humoredly, "what do you imagine I am carrying here in my coat-pocket? Guess!"

"How can I guess, Count?" replied Ludwig.

"It must be something of considerable importance, since Your Grace is so mysterious about it."

"Why, yes, important enough for certain people, though to me simply pleasant and agreeable. But I already perceive you are not gifted with the faculty of guessing, dear Ludwig, so I must help you a little. This mysterious thing in my pocket is a document from the electoral court. I got sight of the address there, and incidentally, as I intended to visit my worthy friend here, I took the document with the intention of handing it to the person addressed. He is a certain Ludwig van Beethoven, and I was sure I should find him here."

"A document from the electoral court to me! Impossible!" exclaimed Beethoven, at first astonished and then delighted, while the kindly face of Frau von Breuning was lit up with joy.

"Yes, yes, to you, my young friend," said the Count, as he removed the document from his pocket. "Here, take it. Open it, and see what the Elector has done for you."

Beethoven slowly took the large envelope, looked at the address and seal, and shook his head. "The Count doubtless is only making sport of me," he said. "If I break the seal I shall only be heartily laughed at."

"Oh, you most distrustful of all distrustful men and musicians!" the Count replied. "How can you entertain such a foolish supposition? Open it! Open it! Quick!"

"I will not," replied Beethoven, firmly, as he placed the envelope on the table.

"You foolish fellow, you can do as you please, of course," said the Count, a little impatiently. "This much I know, however, that our most gracious lord, the Elector, has

not done this for a fool, but for his court organist, and this highest of all honors he has bestowed upon you in this document."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Beethoven.

"I thought so," joyfully said the Hofrathin.

"Fine! splendid!" cried all the others.

Beethoven was so overcome with astonishment that he seemed as rigid as a statue, but at a sign from the Count, chapel-master Ries opened the envelope, showed the signature of the Elector, and the appointment of Ludwig van Beethoven as court organist, carefully drawn up in due form.

"Hearty congratulations, Ludwig," said he, handing the document to him. "I call this good fortune, even if it does come to the one most deserving of it."

All present surrounded Beethoven and congratulated him. He received their good wishes with a radiant smile and beaming eyes. Then he suddenly rushed to Count Waldstein, pressed his lips to his hand, and exclaimed to him from the fulness of his heart, "Thanks! thanks! my benefactor!" Thereupon he seized his hat, crying joyously, "To my mother, to my good mother! Goodnight to all!"—and was out of the house as quick as a flash.

No one wondered at his somewhat strange behavior. All knew him and his ways and manners, and all were his friends, which signified for him all that was sincerely true and good.

CHAPTER IV

A MERCIFUL PUNISHMENT

Good fortune often arouses jealousies and enmities, for while there are many good men in the world, there are also many base and evil-minded ones. Beethoven was destined to make this discovery at once. His appointment as court organist was received by most of the members of the electoral chapel with expressions of great discontent, and some of them did not conceal their resentment that such a green young student should have been selected as their colleague. Of course it never occurred to these narrow-minded persons that there was more creative skill in this "green student" than in the whitening heads of all these old musical pedants.

Beethoven was one who troubled himself very little about such displays of petty hatred and jealousy. As he was exempt from the pressing anxieties of everyday life by his position and teaching, and had found in Count Waldstein a truly good and fatherly patron, he carried his head high, and looked down with proud self-assurance upon his enemies. Not that he had grown supercilious,—nothing was farther from him than that,—but he could clearly discriminate between himself and these malicious ones. He knew that he surpassed them as far as the heavens are above the earth.

It happened one day that Count Waldstein called upon his young protege and found him deeply absorbed in a book.

"How is this, Ludwig?" said the Count. "I expected to find you busy at the piano, or with the violin, and now I catch you reading an insipid novel! Shame on you, my young friend! In your difficult art there is but one road to success—'forward, always forward.' You should not waste time on trifles if you expect to accomplish great and important things."

At the first words of his patron Beethoven had arisen, and greeted him in the most cordial manner. His manner did not change, however, when the Count reproached him; on the contrary, he handed him the book he was reading, and smilingly said: "Excuse me, this is not a trifle, Count; it is *Plutarch's Lives*, but unfortunately only a good translation, for I cannot read it in the original."

The Count's frown began to disappear." Of course I cannot disapprove of good reading. But I see you have more books. Are they all Plutarch?"

"No, worthy sir," replied Beethoven, excitedly, as he took his books and quickly opened them one after another. "This is Homer's *Odyssey*, these are Plato's writings, this the *Odes of Horace*, and these a few volumes of Shakespeare—all classical literature."

"Yes, yes, I see; but of what use are they to you?" said the Count, wonderingly. "Do you learn anything about music in them?"

"Certainly not, Herr Count," replied Beethoven, "but I am acquiring the general information which all composers and musicians should have. You perhaps are not aware that in consequence of my parents' poverty I could not attend a good school. The natural result was that I learned very little, and now, if I am not to be an ignoramus, I must make up by my own exertions what I lost in childhood."

"Ah, that is really quite another thing," said the Count, approvingly, "and instead of censuring you, I ought to have praised you for your zeal and industry. In reality I have called to-day neither to blame nor to praise you, but for an entirely different purpose."

"Tell me what it is, Herr Count. I am entirely at your pleasure," said Beethoven, eagerly. "You will make me very happy by assigning me to any position where I can be of the slightest service to you."

"Good, good, dear Ludwig! I knew as much when I applied to you," said the Count. "And now to the point. A Ritter ballet is to be given at the forthcoming carnival for the pleasure of His Highness, the Elector. Those who are to participate in it are already engaged, and the sketch and text are prepared and contained in this roll. The music alone is lacking. Will you do me the favor to compose it?"

"I shall be a thousand times delighted," said Beethoven. He took the roll as if it had been a precious treasure. "I will take the utmost pains to meet your expectations, so that I may not only show my gratitude to you, my most esteemed patron, but also to my most gracious lord and Prince. At what time must the music be ready, Herr Count?"

"You can have at least four weeks," replied the Count. "Therefore do not be in too much haste. When you are ready let me know. Adieu, and good luck, my young friend."

Beethoven applied himself with enthusiastic zeal to the composition of the different parts which were necessary for the performance of the ballet, and was able to give the work to Count Waldstein before the expiration of the allotted four weeks. The Count, himself a clever musician, or at least a well-schooled amateur, glanced over the score with experienced eyes, nodded several times in a satisfied way, and smiled to himself.

"Thanks, my friend," he said at last. "I hope the music will please. You are to conduct. I have this further suggestion to make. I know the prejudices of many of your colleagues against you. If they know that you composed the ballet music, then the envious ones will seize the opportunity to play badly, and thereby intentionally spoil the pretty music. Keep it secret until after the first performance that you are the composer. I will privately have the report circulated that I was the artist who wrote the music. When it comes to the knowledge of the gentlemen of the chapel for whom they are taking so much pains, they certainly will do their utmost to please. So, secrecy

and silence. I will make the necessary explanation to the Elector, and after the first, and as I hope successful, performance of the ballet, I will let all the world know who the real composer is. Are you satisfied with this arrangement?"

"I am extremely grateful to you for it, Herr Count," replied Beethoven. "You have rightly remarked that many of my associates are maliciously disposed toward me, and caution therefore will do no harm. On my part, I accept all your arrangements with pleasure."

"Then I am convinced we may hope for the best results," replied the Count.

Everything turned out as Count Waldstein had expected. The report that he had composed the music of a Ritter ballet in honor of the Elector was circulated all over the city, and particularly among the artists and musicians. Hence when the first rehearsal of the ballet took place the chapel orchestra played excellently and correctly. After the rehearsal the members were of the unanimous opinion that the music was thoroughly graceful, charming, and masterly. All were loud in their praises, and many a one cast a malicious side glance at Beethoven, as much as to say, "Now you see what certain people can learn from a mere amateur."

Rehearsals were repeated several times, and then followed the performance of the ballet in the presence of the Elector and all his court. Everything passed off well, and the music in particular received enthusiastic applause. Count Waldstein smilingly accepted the compliments which were tendered him on all sides, but no one concerned himself about Beethoven. He was not in the least troubled on that score, but smiled to himself at the fawning of his associates, who bowed low to the Count and extolled to heaven the music of the ballet. "They will be astonished sometime, when they hear that the music is mine," he said to himself, rubbing his hands.

When it was announced a few days afterwards that Beethoven was the composer of the much-praised ballet, his

associates were not only astonished, but many of them openly acknowledged they had been deceived in taking him for a fool. Of course this was said only behind his back, but he heard of it, and discovered that one of the electoral singers, named Heller, had been particularly busy in attacking him.

Some days later Beethoven went, either accidentally or purposely, to a popular wine-shop where there were a number of his chapel associates, among them the aforesaid singer, Heller. After a hasty greeting Beethoven seated himself at a side table and overheard them making sport of him. Heller, in particular, gave the young composer many palpable side-thrusts, and boasted that there were plenty of musicians who could compose better things than a certain conceited young person ever dreamed of.

Beethoven listened calmly for a little while without taking personal notice of the abuse or the boasting. Suddenly, however, he arose, went to the table where his colleagues were sitting, and looked the singer Heller sharply in the eye. "Tell me," he said quietly but firmly, "do you not perform 'The Lamentations of the Prophet Jeremiah' in church in the morning?"

"Certainly," replied Heller. "Why do you ask?"

"Because, perhaps I can make a wager with you," said Beethoven. "I will play the accompaniment on the piano, and will bet that I will break your time, or, as they say, 'put you out.'"

"I take the bet. What shall it be?" cried Heller with malicious glee; for he believed himself so sure of winning that he already regarded his opponent as a loser.

"A keg of wine, which we can empty together after church here in the wine-shop," replied Beethoven.

"It is agreed. I take the bet," said Heller.

"It's agreed," said all the other musicians, with a malicious look at Beethoven; for not one of them believed that

he could "put out" the most correct singer of them all. But Beethoven finished his glass of wine, smiling to himself.

The 'Lamentations of the Prophet Jeremiah' are little sentences of four or six lines each, and in performance are chanted like the old chorals in a definite rhythm. The tune consists of four successive tones, several words and sometimes whole sentences being sung upon the third, and coming to a rest which the accompanist fills in with a free harmonic passage. Thereupon the singer returns to the ground tone,—not a difficult accomplishment for a clever musician, if the accompanist does not "put him out."

On the following morning, confident of winning, Heller began his song. Beethoven accompanied him at first in the old and customary manner. All at once, however, he modulated so freely and independently, while he firmly held the first tone in the treble, that Heller could not find his way back to it, and, in fact, was completely "put out" by the "conceited young person."

"He played incorrectly," said Heller, angrily.

"On the contrary, he played correctly and in a masterly way," retorted Ries, "but all the same in a way that is too much for you. Everything was done fairly and honestly, as all here will concede. So keep quiet. You have lost your bet."

"Be it so, then. I will pay for the miserable keg of wine," roared Heller, "but I will also make complaint to our most gracious Elector about an accompaniment out of which the devil himself could not find his way."

"Complain all you will; you will make nothing by it," said Lucchesi. "As chapel-master Ries has already declared, we not only must, but will, testify that everything was done fairly."

"That does not signify," replied Heller, still in bad humor. "I will yet disgrace him. Such an accompaniment as

his is not proper in church at least." Seizing his hat, he ran out, and disappeared before any one could stop him.

Beethoven, entirely unconcerned, let him go. Neither he nor the others believed that Heller was in earnest with his threats or that he would really complain to the Elector against his enemy. But when the entire party after the service returned to the wine-shop, where they expected to find Heller, there was no trace of him.

"Well, that is of no consequence," said Beethoven, good-humoredly. "We will drink the keg of wine regardless of him. I will pay for it out of my own pocket."

Mine host was ordered to furnish some excellent wine, the glasses clinked, and they gave themselves up to unrestrained conviviality. Beethoven, delighted over the defeat of his obstinate and bitter enemy, overflowed with hilarity, when suddenly a lackey in the electoral livery appeared in their midst and loudly asked whether the court organist, Ludwig van Beethoven, was present.

Deep silence followed the question, and consternation was manifest on every countenance. Had Heller in his wrath really carried out his threat after all? Beethoven, who was the one most closely concerned, understood at once and sprang up. "Here I am," he said. "What does His Highness, the Elector, wish of me?"

"That you come at once, just as you are, to the castle," was the reply. "The Elector wishes to speak with you."

"I will obey at once," replied Beethoven, as he took his hat. "Do not be disturbed, friends. Perhaps I shall return soon."

Although he had succeeded tolerably well in concealing his apprehensions while with his companions, he was not altogether easy in his mind on his way to the castle. To be sure, he knew from Count Waldstein's description of the Elector that he was a very kind and merciful man, but notwithstanding this he neither knew nor could imagine how

he might criticise that pleasant little artistic performance in the church. Therefore he prepared himself to receive an appropriately long and sound rebuke. He determined to accept it, humbly and patiently, and at last with tolerable composure entered the apartment of the Elector.

That high personage was sitting with his back to Beethoven, writing at his desk. He did not turn around when Beethoven entered, and apparently did not hear the servant's announcement. Five minutes, which seemed an eternity to Beethoven, passed in utter silence. At last the Elector suddenly threw down his pen and quickly turned round. "Ah! there you are, dear Beethoven," he said in a by no means unfriendly manner. "Come a little nearer."

Beethoven approached within a couple of steps of the Elector and bowed low, the latter scrutinizing him with a sharp glance, which the delinquent stood bravely.

"My dear Beethoven," began the Elector, "I have sent for you that I may thank you for the beautiful music which you composed for our Count Waldstein's Ritter ballet. Accept for your services your appointment as my chamber musician, and this slight compensation of one hundred ducats." With these words he took a little roll of gold pieces and a signed document from his desk and gave them to Beethoven, whose beaming countenance could not conceal his joyous surprise.

"Gracious master, this is too much, really too much," he exclaimed.

"Take them, take them," insisted the Elector. "I am well satisfied with you. Count Waldstein has told me many nice things about you, and I myself have noticed in the court concerts that God has bestowed upon you a beautiful and important talent. It is my duty to promote this,—and besides, do you suppose that I will allow you to give me your compositions? So take this."



BEETHOVEN APPROACHED WITHIN A COUPLE OF STEPS OF THE ELECTOR, THE LATTER SCRUTINIZING HIM WITH A SHARP GLANCE.

With trembling hands Beethoven took the roll and the document, and, in his extreme confusion, stammered out a few disconnected words of gratitude. The Elector interrupted him.

"Very good," said he. "But"—and here his face assumed a stern expression—"now that we have finished up this piece of business, a word about a more serious matter. Heller has been to me, and complained of you. Before I make my decision I would like to hear from you what you have really been doing to Heller."

The flush of joy in Beethoven's face disappeared, and gave place to the pallor of fear. He courageously composed himself, however, and frankly told, without reserve and with exact truth, the circumstances of the hostile encounter with Heller.

"I understand, and find that you are not as guilty as I feared," said the Elector, resuming a kindly tone. "But, notwithstanding this, are you not aware that you have made a bad mistake?"

"Yes, I realize it now, gracious master," replied Beethoven. "The church should not have been the scene of our quarrel. In my passion I did not think of that. I deserve punishment, and will submit to it humbly and repentantly."

"Well," replied the Elector, smiling, "he who recognizes and regrets his faults has already half atoned for them. I will not be too severe in my sentence, but I ought not to let your fault go unpunished. The venerable Abbot of Heisterbach told me some time ago you had an unsurpassed talent for organ playing. This gives me the opportunity to announce your punishment. You are to be banished from my court for a year, with the special order that you spend that year in Vienna, where all distinguished organists ought to go that they may profit by the knowledge they can gain there. So you are banished for a year to Vienna. This is your punishment."

Beethoven could hardly believe he heard aright.

"But, Your Highness," he exclaimed, his eyes glistening brightly, "this is not a punishment; it is a reward—the fulfilment of my dearest wishes."

The Elector could not repress a slight smile at the open-hearted simplicity of the young man, but he quickly assumed a more serious manner and said earnestly: "Any other one would have considered banishment from my court a very severe punishment, and I regard it so also, and expected that you would. It is not complimentary to me that you should regard removal from my vicinity as a reward."

"Great heavens! I did not mean it that way," said Beethoven, seriously alarmed. "I intended to say I had always wished to go to Vienna sometime, because one can learn the most in music there. Pardon me, my gracious master. My whole heart is filled with gratitude to you."

"Well, well, quiet yourself," replied the Elector, and the kindly smile returned to his face. "I think you understand that you are still in favor, but your punishment must make expiation, and it must also be considered as punishment. Keep this in mind. In future I recommend a simple accompaniment for the church music. As to the other matter, if you should need any money for the journey, or anything else, apply to Count Waldstein. He knows my intentions in relation to you. Adieu, dear Beethoven, and employ your time usefully in Vienna, so that it may compensate for your absence from my court. Adieu."

A gracious inclination of the head by the Elector, a low bow by Beethoven, and the audience was at an end. Intoxicated with delight Beethoven staggered rather than walked down the steps, and in a corridor of the castle happened upon Count Waldstein, whom he would have rushed by without recognizing if the Count himself had not stopped him.

"Here, here, my dear fellow, are you again all fire and flame?" he said to him. "Has anything special happened to you?"

"Oh, you know everything already, Herr Count, for it is you I have to thank for your kind intercession," replied

Beethoven, cordially. "Chamber musician! A hundred ducats! A journey to Vienna! My head swims."

"Oh, yes, I suppose because of your sorrow over the unkindness of the Elector, who has punished you for your petulance," said the Count, with his peculiar smile. "As a punishment you have been consigned to banishment from your colleagues. Keep this in mind. The Elector so wills it."

"Yes, but for my advantage, Herr Count," said Beethoven, joyfully. "But, God knows, it is a merciful punishment, for which one should be a thousand times thankful."

And away he flew to the beloved mother to make his sorrowful complaint of the severity of the hard, cruel, merciful Elector.

Tears flowed. It was but natural. But the tears were certainly not altogether those of sorrow.

CHAPTER V

IN VIENNA

The most distinguished and refined society of that period was accustomed to assemble at the house of Prince Lichnowski, and the best music was often performed there by the most eminent artists. Both the Prince and his amiable wife had received a thorough musical education, and loved and promoted music of the highest kind.

Beethoven brought a most cordial letter of introduction from Count Waldstein to the Prince, and consequently received an immediate invitation to a musical evening at the Lichnowski palace, which he of course accepted.

Upon entering the splendid apartments of the Prince, he found a brilliant company assembled. The contrast with his simple, ordinary dress made him feel a little uneasy, and he would have quietly slipped away had not Prince Lichnowski fortunately prevented his attempt to escape, just in time. Beethoven's name had hardly been announced to him by a servant before he hastened to receive him, greeted him in the most cordial manner, bade him welcome, and shook hands with him warmly.

"I am exceedingly delighted to see you at my house," said he. "My friend, Count Waldstein, has written many nice and kindly things about you, and His Electoral Highness, the Archbishop, has added with his own hand the strongest and most hearty words of recommendation. I hope you will feel perfectly at home with us very soon. I beg you to come with me, that I may present you to the Princess, who will be no less pleased than myself to make your acquaintance."

After such a cordial reception Beethoven quickly regained his composure, and walked through the hall at the Prince's side with uplifted head and without permitting the

glitter and finery of the other guests to disturb him. Many eyes followed with astonishment the strange figure which, notwithstanding its entire lack of physical attractiveness, suggested the bearing of the lion, and notwithstanding its youthfulness concealed something great and distinguished under its insignificant exterior.

The Princess Lichnowski received the young man with an expression of gracious satisfaction, which was very agreeable to Beethoven. "It is nice that you are here," said she. "I hope we shall be good friends, and then we shall have some good music together. Dear Mozart"—she turned quickly to a simply but nicely dressed gentleman who stood near by—"please come here a moment."

Mozart smilingly obeyed the summons and bowed low before the Princess, who held out her hand familiarly to him, and said: "No such ceremony between us, sir. Here, look at this young man. This is Herr Ludwig van Beethoven of Bonn, the electoral chamber musician and court organist—and this, my dear Beethoven, is our world-renowned master, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the brightest sun in our musical firmament."

Mozart greeted the young man, of whom he perhaps had not yet heard, in a friendly but at the same time somewhat cool manner. Beethoven, on the other hand, who enthusiastically admired Mozart's compositions, could not conceal his delight that an opportunity was offered him to make the acquaintance of the great master, and expressed his feelings in the most emphatic manner.

"Let us be a little more quiet, young man," interposed Mozart, smiling at Beethoven's excessive adoration. "I can readily believe you like some of my compositions, and that pleases me. But we will not make too much noise about them. I see that you know me, but I do not yet know your ability as a musician. Therefore may I ask that sometime you will give us something of your best on the piano? I shall be delighted if I can return your compliments."

Beethoven needed no second request. He felt inspired by the presence of the high priest in the temple of art, whose wonderful melodies had so charmed him, and he replied eagerly and quickly: "Where is the piano? If you will listen to me, Herr Mozart, I will play at once."

"All the better," said Mozart. "There is a piano in the next room. Let us go there."

"Brava!" said the Princess, as she clapped her hands. "We shall hear something beautiful now. Let us go at once."

Beethoven, his heart swelling with pride and eager to show himself to the master of music in the most advantageous light, threw himself into his work with impetuous vigor, and played continuously for a full quarter of an hour whatever the occasion and his own genius suggested. Those present listened intently, and when Beethoven brought his performance to a close with some splendid chords, a storm of applause followed. Prince and Princess Lichnowski openly expressed their astonishment at Beethoven's artistic skill, and all the others praised him. Mozart alone remained calm and unexcited, and contented himself with saying a few coolly polite words of praise.

Beethoven blushed and turned pale alternately. He had expected a warmer recognition on the part of the renowned master, and such cool civility chilled the enthusiasm and inspiration in his breast like an icy breath. With a bitter smile he bowed his proud head and covered his heated brow with his hand. A moment before, he thought he had accomplished something excellent. Had his feelings deceived him? Had he completely overestimated his talent? That was a terrible thought.

Silence reigned in the room. The guests also were disturbed by Mozart's reserved manner,—the same Mozart who was always so willing to praise and quick to appreciate, when there was occasion for praise and appreciation, and who

now showed not a trace of his customary enthusiasm after such a specially masterly performance.

"You judge the young man too severely, dear Mozart," whispered Prince Lichnowski to him. "His playing has really electrified me."

"Oh, that performance is of no great consequence," replied Mozart, with a shrug of the shoulder. "It is only a prepared show-piece which the young man has given us; I do not allow myself to be excited by such things."

This was said in a low voice, but Beethoven heard it. The cloud disappeared from his brow. He raised his head, shook his mane, and with flashing eyes said to Mozart:

"No, sir, that is not a show-piece learned by heart that I played, but a free fantasie. In proof of this I ask you to give me a theme for another free fantasie, and then I will show you what I can do."

"Oho! Oho! don't get too excited, young man," replied Mozart. "You can have a theme—develop this one."

Mozart leaned over Beethoven's shoulder, played the theme, and then stepped back a little. Beethoven instantly grasped the theme. He always played best when aroused, and at this instant he was still excited by the presence of the honored master. He developed the theme with such skill and brilliancy of technique that he carried his audience away with wonder at his inspired performance.

All indifference and coolness disappeared from Mozart's manner. With the young musician's first passages and accords, deep interest was apparent on his countenance, and when Beethoven finished his fantasie and arose from the piano, Mozart went up to him, embraced him, and said in a tone of voice all could hear, "This young man, some day or other, will make a noise in the world."

Now it was all joy and exultation. Beethoven was visibly affected, and trembled, while flashes of triumph shot

from his piercing eyes. The princely couple and the guests overwhelmed him with congratulations.

After that evening Beethoven was regarded in Vienna as destined to musical greatness, and he found friends and well-wishers everywhere. Prince Lichnowski was completely devoted to him. He gave him a room in his palace, and a standing invitation to his table as a guest.

Beethoven thoroughly appreciated these friendly attentions, but he was not on that account any the less obstinate and self-willed. Proud of his genius, which the great Mozart had so clearly recognized, he did not display a fawning, servile manner. He seemed rather like one who was on guard against favors, than as one who was receiving them.

Prince Lichnowski, an extremely amiable man, and one who was well acquainted with the world, let Beethoven go his own way. He clearly recognized the great genius of his young friend, and did not trouble himself about the oddities, and at times rude ways, in his behavior. The Princess did the same. She valued and admired the inner worth of the young artist, and did not concern herself about his rough exterior.

The first visit of Beethoven to Vienna was not a long one. His leave of absence, or, if you prefer, his term of banishment from the electoral court at Bonn, approached its end, and he must return home. His devoted friends, Prince and Princess Lichnowski chief among them, let him go reluctantly, and cordially and urgently invited him to return soon.

"Always consider my house as your residence, dear Beethoven," said Prince Lichnowski, as he embraced him at his departure. "Whether I may be in Vienna or not, you will always find a room ready for you here." The Princess manifested the same kind feeling.

Beethoven was deeply affected by his separation from these noble and devoted friends, and with heart-felt emotion expressed his gratitude for all the favors he had received.

"I shall come again," said he. "Be it sooner or later, depend upon it, I shall come. Vienna has become very dear to me. Such friends as I have found here are treasures for a lifetime. One must find such friends to appreciate the joyousness of living." So he departed; but he forgot neither his promises nor his affectionate friends and admirers.

In the narrow limits of Bonn the young eagle, Beethoven, could not spread his wings for his highest flight. He longed to be back again in the Kaiser city. There were the great masters of the art, Gluck, Haydn, and Mozart, whose music was admired by all cultured persons; and there, music was considered the highest of all the arts and was most honored. Beethoven needed such a soil to bring his mighty genius to its highest development, and therefore his thoughts repeatedly turned toward Vienna, and he longed for nothing so ardently as to go back there. This was not because he loved and esteemed his old friends in Bonn less than his new Vienna friends. He clung to them with all his earlier attachment; but his art urged him on to the highest and holiest things of life, and it was only in Vienna that he could find at that time the soil fitted to bring his art to its complete blossoming.

The Elector, in whose good graces Beethoven still remained, heard of the ardent wishes of the young man from Count Waldstein, but for a long time he did nothing to promote them. A fortunate dispensation brought the renowned Haydn to Bonn in July, 1792, and Beethoven did not lose the opportunity to renew the acquaintance which he had made during his first visit to Vienna.

Haydn manifested delight at seeing the young artist again, and expressed his astonishment that he had not yet gone back to Vienna, where he would be received with the greatest possible pleasure and honors.

"It is not my fault that I was not there long ago," he replied. "The Elector wishes me to remain here, and I am so greatly indebted to him that it is impossible for me to oppose his desires."

"That is truly an unanswerable argument," said Haydn. "For all that, keep up good courage. Everything will come out right yet."

And so it did, and more quickly than Beethoven had dared to hope. The good Haydn eloquently appealed to the Elector to gratify the young man's wishes, and Count Waldstein reinforced him so enthusiastically that the Elector at last decided to let him go. It was done as a mark of favor and honor; and delighted with the realization of his longings, Beethoven returned, in 1792, to his loved Vienna, where he was to settle down for the rest of his life.

His friends in Vienna received him with open arms. Prince Lichnowski again arranged a room for him in his palace, and gave him a seat at his table, and the Princess treated him as if she had been his mother. Beethoven accepted all these proffered favors with gratitude, and such truly intimate relations soon existed between his patron and himself; that his peculiarities, and the little improprieties of which he was often guilty, failed to disturb them for any length of time. And the young musician showed himself peculiar, very peculiar, often extremely so. For instance, he did not come to the table for a long time. Prince Lichnowski asked him the reason, and Beethoven curtly replied:

"What! do you think it strange that I am not seated promptly at table at four o'clock in the afternoon? Must I be at home every day at half-past three, dress myself, comb my hair, and shave? Not by any means! I will not endure it. I decided at the very first it was best to go to a restaurant. There at least I am under no restraint, and I can go and eat at any hour I please."

The Prince let him have his own way. He fully realized that one must not put bridle and reins on an artist like Beethoven, but must let him go as he pleases.

At another time Beethoven took a fancy to have daily horseback rides, and had hardly intimated his purpose when

Prince Lichnowski generously placed his entire stable at his disposal.

"What!" said Beethoven, "shall I ride a strange horse? shall I go and obsequiously ask the stable-master every time I wish to ride whether it is agreeable to him to saddle a horse for me? I will do nothing of the kind; I will buy my own horse."

And he did so. He rode a fortnight, and then seemed entirely to have forgotten that he had a horse. His whim was over, and his servant had been doing a profitable business for a long time by hiring the horse out by the hour.

On still another occasion Beethoven rang his bell several times one morning, but the servant did not answer the call. When he came at last, and excused his neglect by saying that he was ordered to wait upon the Prince, Beethoven flew into a passion, took the fellow by the collar, and marched him to the Prince.

"This churl has let me wait," he cried in a furious rage, "because you had called him."

"That is all right, of course," said the Prince, quietly. "Excuse me, dear Beethoven; but you, Friedrich"—he turned and spoke decidedly to the servant—"must serve Herr van Beethoven first when he and I ring for you at the same time."

The young artist's anger was quickly changed to shame, and the result was that he procured a servant of his own that very day, to answer his bell.

The Prince, as usual, let him do as he pleased, without paying any attention to his extraordinary conduct. The good understanding between them was so little disturbed by it that he gave him an annuity of six hundred gulden, for the Elector of Cologne had died in the meantime, and by his death Beethoven's salary as chamber musician was cut off.

The young artist's obstinacy was not only displayed in his countenance, but in his behavior toward other people. One day he was invited by an old, wealthy Countess to a reception

which she gave in honor of Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia. Beethoven accepted the invitation, for he highly esteemed the Prince, with whom he was personally acquainted and of whom he once said:

"He plays the piano not like a Prince, but like a correct, skilful musician." There was music, and the Prince was friendly and unconstrained in his intercourse with Beethoven. When they were invited to supper Beethoven noticed that the haughty old Countess had arranged to serve the Prince and certain gentlemen of the higher nobility at a special table. He arose in a rage, uttered some coarse expressions about the "old fool," put on his hat, turned his back upon the whole company, and rushed out like the thundering Jupiter.

All the greater was his delight when the Prince shortly afterwards compensated him in a most satisfactory manner. The Prince gave a dinner of state a few days later, to which, besides Beethoven, the "old fool" and the guests of the previous evening were invited. When they went to the table he seated Beethoven at his right hand and the old Countess at his left. Beethoven at last was contented, and chatted with the Prince during the dinner in the most agreeable manner.

Beethoven cordially despised what is called etiquette, and he neither could nor would submit to the etiquette of the royal court. The Archduke Rudolph had prevailed upon Beethoven, though he was very unwilling to do it, to give him lessons on the piano and in composition. He highly esteemed the Prince, and on that account faithfully performed his "court service," as he called his lessons to the Archduke, but submission to instructions from the court chamberlain, who tried to make him observe the formalities of etiquette, was far from his intentions. The chamberlain, however, did not relax his efforts to instruct him in the regulations, and made all sorts of signs to him, until at last Beethoven's patience was completely worn out.

One day, when the chamberlain attempted to give him a stricter lesson than usual, Beethoven said in a violent tone:

"Sir, follow me to the Archduke's room. I am sick of your everlasting court chamberlaining and will make an end of it, once for all."

The chamberlain's face grew a yard long at Beethoven's order to go to the Archduke, as well as at his furious tone. He indignantly refused to obey the sharp command, and Beethoven might perhaps have been still more vociferous had not the Archduke himself, who had heard the dispute, opened the door at that instant and come out of his room.

"What is going on here?" he asked, astonished at the wrathful expression on Beethoven's face.

"Herr Archduke, I have the utmost possible respect for Your Royal Highness, but if I am expected to obey all the orders and instructions the court chamberlain is continually pestering me with, then I must give up coming here any more, for I don't care about such trifles."

The Archduke smiled good-naturedly and then turned with a serious countenance to his chamberlain.

"I must request you," he said, "to let Herr van Beethoven go his own way undisturbed. He is my teacher, and I regard myself simply as his pupil. I consider it an honor to be one."

The chamberlain of course accepted this suggestion in silence, and concealed his chagrin in a low bow. Beethoven did not again have cause to complain of him. The chamberlain always kept out of his way if he could. It was not, however, silly caprice and obstinacy which made Beethoven so haughty, but simply the consciousness of his own greatness, which made him feel himself a peer of all the great ones of the earth. He would never humble himself, and he would not be humbled by anyone else; hence at times his justifiable haughtiness of manner.

His outward circumstances improved every year that he spent in Vienna. In 1792 he had the opportunity to avail himself of instruction by Haydn and others, which greatly assisted his artistic progress. Eight years later he had composed famous works, and was justly ranked as one of the first masters in his art, whose star of glory shone not less brilliantly than those of Mozart and Haydn. He visited in the highest circles of Vienna society, and was on friendly terms with the most distinguished members of the aristocracy of the Austrian 'capital.' Notwithstanding this, his manner of life was extremely simple; but he was somewhat peculiar in his personal habits. A description of one day in his life will give the reader some idea of his habits.

It is a fine summer day. As the first rays of the sun stream into his chamber, Beethoven springs from his bed and rushes to the basin to wash in cool, fresh water. A bath was an absolute necessity to him. He pours one pitcherful after another over his head and hands, and indulges so freely in this refreshment that he does not notice the wash-basin is running over. In a (few minutes the floor is inundated, so that he is standing in the water like a duck. He no longer thinks of the bath. His head being refreshed, he begins composing, and while thus engaged continually pours streams of water over his body, at the same time roaring, and humming to himself—for he had no voice for singing—in a way that would have made a dog run. His old housekeeper in the outer room hears the noise and knows from experience what it all means. She pounds on the door with, both fists and cries: "Alas! Herr van Beethoven! Herr van Beethoven!"

"What is the matter?" he thunders back from his more.

"You will flood all Vienna if you go on in this way."

Now, for the first time, Beethoven comes to his senses. Ashamed of what he has done, he discontinues his ablutions, quickly throws on his clothes, and hurries to the desk in his room to create one of those majestic masterpieces which are

destined to astonish the world. Suddenly he throws down his pen, and calls: "Christine!"

The old housekeeper thrusts her head in the doorway. "What is your pleasure, Herr van Beethoven?"

"Coffee."

The head vanishes, but shortly after, the whole figure of the old woman appears. With an air of solemnity she gives her master a tin box. Beethoven opens it. It is filled with roasted coffee beans. Beethoven sniffs their fragrance with delight, then takes the box and counts the beans, one by one, with scrupulous accuracy, placing them in a little pile on the table.

"Sixty! hold!" he cries. "That is one cup. Now another." Again he carefully counts sixty beans, and then gives both piles to the housekeeper.

"Here is enough for two cups. Make it good, or I will make it myself to-morrow."

The housekeeper promises to do her best, and Beethoven resumes his work, sketching down notes with wonderful rapidity. When the housekeeper brings the coffee, he sips it with evident satisfaction, and then goes to the window to see what the weather is.

"Beautiful! The sun shines! I will take a walk," he says.

"Oh, you never trouble yourself much about the weather," suggests the old woman. "We know that you run around the city two or three times every day, whether it blows, rains, freezes, or snows. I believe you would walk even if you knew that the heavens above you would fall."

Beethoven assents to this. "It is healthy." Then he takes his hat and disappears.

He walks rapidly at first, until he is away from the bustle of the streets. Then he slackens his speed, and moves on at a moderate pace, with his hands behind him, his head

thrown back, his eyes fixed upon the sky. Sometimes he remains motionless, as if he were unconscious of the world around him. Upon these occasions his figure rises to its full height, and his eyes roll and flash brightly, looking upward or straight forward with the eyeballs fixed and motionless. A moment of the highest inspiration has come to him, as it often came, not alone in the streets, but also in the midst of the gayest company.

After some minutes of this inward ecstasy, Beethoven goes on his way, runs around the city a few times, and then rushes to his house as if his head were burning. People in the streets stare at him, wondering why he hurries so, looking neither to the right nor to the left. In this way he reaches his house, and enters his room.

"For mercy's sake, Herr van Beethoven, where have you left your hat?" exclaims his housekeeper.

Beethoven does not hear her. He rushes to the piano, plays beautiful melodies for an hour, then hastens to his desk and writes with the enthusiasm of one inspired.

When he again lays down his pen his house-keeper ventures to approach him and repeat her question—"For mercy's sake, Herr van Beethoven, where have you left your hat?"

"Lost it, very likely," he replies in a distracted sort of way.

"But, sir, this is the third time in two months," she says. "You are so absent-minded I really must fasten your hat upon your head more securely."

Beethoven smiles. "I will buy another," he says, and thus the matter ends.

"Ries," calls Beethoven after a little. A young man soon appears, and salutes the master reverently and tenderly. He is the son of Beethoven's old friend, chapel-master Ries of Bonn. The great master, who usually was extremely reluctant

to give lessons, accepted the young man as a pupil as a mark of gratitude to his father. Chapel-master Ries had been very kind to Beethoven's mother in the last years of her life, and Beethoven repaid his kindness by this favor to his son.

"Let us get to work," says he.

Young Ries puts some sheets before the master, and, now at the piano, now at the desk, they are speedily absorbed in their work, which is continued until the housekeeper announces that dinner is ready. Work is laid aside, and they refresh themselves with a frugal repast. Beethoven, always simple in his tastes, drinks a little of the wine grown on the heights around Buda. Fresh, clear spring-water is his favorite beverage, copious draughts of which satisfy his needs.

After dinner they go out to enjoy the sylvan beauty of the Schonbrunn gardens. Ries accompanies the master, but there is little conversation between them. Beethoven's brain is restlessly at work. It seems, indeed, that the beauty of the spot was made only for the purpose of inspiring his musical ideas. He frequently stops, and jots them down in a notebook which he always carries, and in which he preserves them for future use. As evening approaches they return to the city. On their arrival at home, the old housekeeper hands Beethoven two notes, which had been delivered during his absence. One is from Prince Lichnowski, simply inviting Beethoven to a musical soiree that evening. The other is from Baron Swieten, and is characteristic enough. It runs: "Dear Beethoven, if there is nothing to prevent, I should be glad to see you about nine o'clock this evening, with your nightcap in your pocket."

"Well, this will do for to-day," says Beethoven, as he throws both the invitations on the table. "I feel at home with the Prince, and I can enjoy myself at Van Swieten's. But I shall be late to bed. When Van Swieten tells me to come with my night-cap it means in plain language, 'I will not let you off before midnight.' Well, let it be so. He is, at least, a clever musician and a generous host. That's all right. But when you are continually pestered by people who have not the slightest

idea of music, and who only invite you that they may give their guests some piano-pounding, and then force you to play until the blood under your fingernails is on fire, the devil might stand it,—I won't."

"Well, the Prince will not be likely to force you to play, and Van Swieten just as little," says Ries quietly.

"Yes, you are right. I will go, and am glad to go."

And he goes. Between one and two in the morning he returns in a lively, cheerful mood which promises pleasant dreams. He is in bed in five minutes, and five minutes later is sleeping soundly. And so ends the day—one day in Beethoven's life.

CHAPTER VI

THE END

Although Beethoven lived to see happy days and happy times in beautiful Vienna, other days and other times succeeded them, darkened by a terrible fate which only a strong and lofty spirit like his could endure and even overcome.

One fine summer evening Beethoven and his pupil, Ries, took a pleasant ramble among the beautiful fields around Vienna. The setting sun flooded the earth with a sea of gold and purple. Rosy clouds slowly floated in the sky. High in air the lark sang its sweet-toned evening song. On a green hillock sat a shepherd lad, filling the fields and woods around with the pretty melody of his flute, which he had fashioned out of elder. Beethoven and Ries stopped and quietly enjoyed the wonderful beauty of the dying day.

"How beautifully the song of the lark blends with the shepherd's melody," said Ries. Beethoven leaned forward and listened. "Flute and lark? I do not hear them," he said, with an expression of painful suspense on his face. "There is the young shepherd, playing on his pipe. Do you not see him?"

"I see him," said Beethoven in a pitiful tone. "I see him—but—I do not hear him."

On that spot his distressing fate was pronounced. Beethoven, the musician, who lived only in the realm of music, had lost his hearing! He could no longer hear his own beautiful melodies! He would never hear again the song of the nightingale or the orchestra's surging volume tone.



HE HAD LOST HIS HEARING. RIES TRIED TO CONSOLE AND CALM HIM.

His misfortune did not come suddenly, like a bolt out of the clear sky. For years Beethoven had observed the gradual loss of his hearing, and had sought medical help for it but it was during this walk that he conviction was a last forced upon

him that there was no hope he would ever be better. Silent, sad, and absorbed in gloomy thought, he went home. Ries tried to console and calm him, but for such an artist, with such an affliction, there could be no consolation, no relief except in humble submission to the divine will.

An extract from a letter written by him to his old true friend, Wegeler, in Bonn, dated May 2, 1810 shows how keenly Beethoven felt this affliction. He writes: "I, however, should have been happy, perhaps the happiest of men, had not that demon taken possession of my ears. I have read somewhere that man should not willfully part from this life so long as he can do even one good deed; and but for this I should ere now have ceased to exist, and by my own hand too."

It could not well be otherwise. His total deafness could not but exercise a depressing influence upon Beethoven's disposition, even though it could not completely dominate his strong character. Usually frank, cordial, and confiding in his friends, Beethoven soon became suspicious and distrustful, irritable and passionate. It was easy for any outsider to slander his truest friends and set him against them. On such occasions—and, alas, they were not rare—Beethoven would show no outward sign of his enmity, utter no reproaches, make no complaints, and not even call the suspected one to account. But from that time he would exhibit the utmost contempt for him. At the same time he would feel the deepest sorrow, and yet make no explanation of his conduct. When by some chance the misunderstanding was cleared up, then Beethoven sought to make reparation for his injustice in every possible way. He would offer apologies, and not rest until reconciled to his injured friend. Then he was as usual the truest friend, ready to help in every time of trouble as much as it was in his power to do so. Even those nearest to him bitterly felt the pain of his capricious disposition.

"You cannot believe," writes Stephen von Breuning, one of Beethoven's devoted friends at Bonn, "what an

indescribable impression the decay of his hearing has made upon Beethoven. Think what the feeling of unhappiness must be in one of such earnest character, besides his reserve and frequent distrust of his best friends and his irresolution in many things. For the most part, when he expresses his original feeling freely, intercourse with him is an actual exertion, as one can never feel absolutely free."

True indeed; but was not the unfortunate one the most to be pitied? Let us hear what he says about it himself.

Early in 1802 Beethoven was attacked by an illness so dangerous that for the first time he had serious doubts whether he should recover. His friend, the celebrated Doctor Schmidt, checked the progress of the disease, and when he was fully restored sent him to Heiligenstadt, a village in the suburbs of Vienna. There in solitude, his mind busy with thoughts about death, he wrote the following document, a kind of will, addressed to his two brothers:

"For my brothers, CARL, and JOHANN BEETHOVEN:

"Oh, you who consider or assert that I am hostile, obstinate, or misanthropic, what injustice you do me! You know not the secret causes of that which makes me appear so. My heart and my mind have been moved by the tender feelings of affection from childhood. I have always been disposed to perform great actions; but consider that for the last six years I have been afflicted with a hopeless complaint, aggravated by the unskilful treatment of physicians; that I have been disappointed from year to year in the hope of relief, and am at last obliged to submit to the endurance of an evil the removal of which may take years, if it can be removed at all, Born with an ardent, lively disposition, susceptible to the pleasures of society, I was forced at an early age to renounce them, and pass my life in seclusion. When I strove to rise above this, oh, how cruelly was I forced back by the doubly painful experience of my defective hearing! And yet, how could I say to people, 'Speak louder-shout for I am deaf'? How could I proclaim the defect of a sense that I had once in the

highest perfection—a perfection which few of my colleagues ever surpassed? I could not! Forgive me then when you see me refrain from mingling with you, which I would very gladly do. My misfortune is doubly mortifying to me, for it causes me to be misunderstood. I am cut off from recreation in the society of my fellow-creatures, from the pleasures of conversation, and from the enjoyment of friendship. Wellnigh alone in the world, I dare not go into society more than is absolutely necessary. I am obliged to live like an exile. If I go into company, a painful anxiety seizes me lest I may be forced to betray my situation. This has been my condition also during the half year I have spent in the country. Enjoined by my sensible physician to spare my hearing as much as possible, I have been almost encouraged by him in my present disposition, though, carried away by fondness for society, I have allowed myself to be drawn into it. But how humiliating it was when one beside me could hear at a distance a flute that I could not hear, or a shepherd singing, and I could not distinguish a sound! Such things brought me to the verge of despair, and only my art restrained my hand from putting an end to my life. It seemed impossible for me to quit the world before I had completed the work which I felt myself set apart to do. So I endured this wretched life—a life so absolutely wretched that the slightest thing is' capable of plunging me from the best into the worst condition. I am told I must be patient. I have been so. I hope I may be steadfast in my resolution to persevere until it shall please the inexorable Fates to cut the thread. I may be better, I may not. I am prepared for the worst,—I, who as early as my twenty-eighth year was forced to become a philosopher. It is not easy—it is harder for the artist than for any other. O God! Thou seest my misery. Thou knowest that, wretched as I am, I love my fellow-creatures, and am disposed to do good. O men! when you shall read this, reflect that you have wronged me; and let the child of affliction take comfort on finding one like himself, who, in spite of all the impediments of nature, yet did his utmost to

obtain admittance into the ranks of worthy artists and worthy men."

And he has been admitted to those ranks. Notwithstanding the malignant disease which dispelled every outward joy of life, Beethoven created those immortal symphonies, overtures, and sonatas, in which he proved himself the greatest master of music and inscribed his name indelibly in the history of the art. Misfortune could not overcome him. His splendid genius made him superior to it. "I will clutch fate by the throat," he once wrote to a friend. "It never shall make me bow to it." And it never did. He wrestled manfully with it, and subjected it to his powerful will.

That in spite of this he was unsociable to the end, and often alienated his nearest friends, is easily explained by the nature of his ailment, which made conversation extremely difficult. It was due to this also that Beethoven, always good-hearted and generous to the suffering, experienced the ingratitude of his own brothers in various ways. He had suffered them to come to Vienna, supported them in every way, and sacrificed a considerable part of his income in their maintenance for a year. They treated him with shameful ingratitude, and broke open his chest and stole all the jewels, snuff-boxes, watches, rings, and other souvenirs which had been given to Beethoven by high personages, in recognition of his performances. Beethoven, that great, noble heart, made no allusion to the theft; but the knowledge that those who were nearest to him, who owed their very existence to him, upon whom he had absolutely heaped benefactions, had lied to him, cheated him, and robbed him,—such knowledge could not contribute to his happiness, cheerfulness, and affability.

And yet, notwithstanding all this, with all his misfortune, was Beethoven actually unhappy? Was he alone in his gloomy solitude? He may have been at first, but in his later life certainly not. The happiness of knowing he could create sublime masterpieces was greater than the unhappiness of being deaf and misunderstood. He was not solitary, for the

divine genius of art always was his companion. Beethoven was really happy because he was greater than his misfortunes. Upon his heroic brow rests a more splendid ornament than the crown of any king,—the laurel-wreath of ever-lasting fame, the radiant diadem of immortality.