

**BELL'S MINIATURE
SERIES OF MUSICIANS:
BEETHOVEN**

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Bell's Miniature Series of Musicians: Beethoven by J. S. Shedlock

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J. S. SHEDLOCK

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PORTRAIT OF BEETHOVEN BY KLOEBER, 1818.

Bell's *Miniature Series of Musicians*

BEETHOVEN

BY

J. S. SHEDLOCK, B.A.



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LIFE OF BEETHOVEN

THE MAN

"This appears to be the special task of biography: to present the man in relation to his times, and to show how far they are opposed to him, in how far they are favourable to him, and how, if he be an artist, poet, or writer, he reflects them outwardly."—GORKH.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN was born at Bonn, most probably on December 16, 1770. His grandfather, Ludwig, entered the service of the Elector of Cologne at Bonn in 1733, first as bass singer and afterwards as capellmeister, and his father as tenor singer in 1756. The former, an able artist, was held in high respect; the latter succumbed to the demon drink, lost his voice, and finally his position, so that before young Ludwig had completed his nineteenth year he had to look after his two younger brothers, Caspar and Nicolas—the one four, the other six years younger than himself. Ludwig at an early age displayed a love for music, and the father soon set him to hard practice, both on the violin and the spinet, possibly thinking that his son, like Mozart, might become a prodigy, and thus help to retrieve the broken fortune of the

family. In a memorandum of the Court music in 1784 the father's voice is described as worn out, and he himself as "very poor." Ludwig, when about ten years of age, received musical instruction from the Court organist, Van den Eeden, an old friend of the boy's grandfather who died in 1773, and afterwards from Neefe, who succeeded Eeden. Neefe took great interest in his pupil, who, before he was twelve years old, was appointed deputy-organist. Already at that time, as stated in a notice contributed by Neefe to *Cramer's Magazin*, the boy could play most of Bach's immortal "forty-eight" fugues, "a feat," as his master with just pride remarked, "which will be understood by the initiated." And he must also have become familiar with the clavier sonatas of Emanuel Philipp Bach, whom Neefe so much admired, and to whom he even dedicated a set of twelve sonatas. Thus Beethoven made early acquaintance with Bach's works, which summed up the past and pointed to the future, and with the music of the son, Emanuel, who, under Italian influence, was opening up "new paths." One interesting manuscript has been preserved—an incomplete copy of a cantata by Emanuel, on which Beethoven wrote, "Copied by my dear father." The attention of the latter had most probably been drawn to the work by Neefe.

The boy lived in a thoroughly artistic atmosphere. The Elector, Maximilian Friedrich (1761-1784), was an enthusiast for music. He attracted the celebrated actor Grossmann, with