at every dark opening and gloomy passage, stood a sentinel with a torch to guard the entrance, but the light thrown back into its mystery revealed the same unvarying wall, with its cornice of skulls. The catacombs are open for inspection only two or three times during the year, and from one hundred and fifty to three hundred go down together, some accidents having occurred from allowing persons to wander alone. Seventy staircases lead from the busy promenade above-ground to the silent spaces of this enormous grave. Wherever we went a decorous order was everywhere visible, but what sights of untold, sickening horror, of broken skeletons and crushed skulls, may fill up the darkened pits, where no torchlight is ever allowed to fall, we know not. Along the guided path the procession passed on, till, monotony making decay familiar, Death is forgotten in the triumph of Life. As we approach the place of exit, by a different staircase from that which we had descended, the old love for placing one's name where it is deemed novel or imperishable, is observed in the many traces of "handwriting on the wall." The crowd, laying aside the hushed reverence which marked their entrance, have grown talkative and joyous, and, when the ascent to life and day commences, perhaps not one carries away great or profound emotion. Torch after torch goes up the spiral way, and a pale glimmer, as of welcome, steals faintly down the dreary depth. We breathe the upper air once more, while amid the noise of carriages, the sound of many voices, and the eternal turmoil and clamor of life, we realize there is quiet in the death we have left, and peace in the grave beneath us.

The torches are thrown hurriedly upon a stand, and haggard, clamorous old women with tattered garments, and faces full of pain, rush forward, begging for them.

We pass through the disturbed air, and without once looking back, enter the Paris of broader streets and o'erarching sky—the Paris that is still alive—convinced that—

"It is well we cannot see
What the end shall be."

THE RAPIDS OF THE ST. LAWRENCE.

THE cartoon which accompanies this number of the JOURNAL—"Descending the Rapids of the St. Lawrence"—represents a scene familiar to multitudes of our summer tourists who have made the descent, and who cannot fail vividly to remember their exciting and, indeed, somewhat alarming experience.

The first considerable rapids encountered in descending the river from Ogdensburg and Prescott are the Long Sault, which begin at Dickinson's Landing, seventy-seven miles from Montreal. These rapids are nine miles in length, divided in the centre by several islands in a continuous line. Both the north and the south channel can be used; but the south is generally preferred. The current here is exceedingly swift, a raft drifting through in forty minutes. The scenery is beautiful, and at the same time terrible. In some places the surging waters present exactly the appearance of the ocean in a storm; while in others their surface is as smooth as glass, though running with immense velocity. The inexperienced passenger on the steamboat is apt to imagine, as he sees the foaming waves and breakers, and the savage rocks, that nothing can save the vessel from destruction as it rushes along at the rate of twenty miles an hour. Great strength, courage, and dexterity, are required in the pilot, and there is generally an Indian of approved skill at the helm. With a competent pilot, there is really little danger; and, though several boats have recently struck and been destroyed in going down the rapids, there have never been, we believe, any lives lost.

Thirty miles below the Long Sault are the Coteau Rapids, eleven miles in length, and divided into three sections, called respectively Coteau, Cedars, and Cascades. The last name has been given from the water falling over several ledges of rock, one after the other, giving it the appearance of cascade over cascade, and causing a peculiar sensation in coming down it, as the vessel glides from ledge to ledge of rock.

The next and last of the St.-Lawrence rapids is at Lachine, ten miles from Montreal. This is perhaps the most exciting of all of them. There are always four pilots at the helm, on whose nerve and steadiness depends the safety of the steamer, which rushes with lightning-speed close by rocks, one touch of which would be instantly fatal; and, if her head were not kept straight with the course of the rapid, she would be instantly submerged, and rolled over and over. Unlike the ordinary pitching and tossing at sea, this going down-hill by water produces a peculiar sensation, which, as the vessel glides from ledge to ledge of rock, feels like settling down. The traveller who runs the rapids for the first time is almost sure to involuntarily hold his breath at this feeling. Occasionally, too, the vessel seems to be directly running on a ledge of rocks, and you feel certain she will strike; but the skilful hands at the helm suddenly whirl her into a different channel, and in an instant more it is passed in safety. No life has ever been lost in this seemingly-dangerous and beautiful rapid.

Those who visit Montreal, and wish to experience the sensation of descending the rapids, can do so by taking the seven-o'clock train for Lachine, where at about eight o'clock a steamboat starts for the city, shoots the rapids, passes under the great Victoria Bridge, and lands her passengers in Montreal at nine A. M.

BEETHOVEN.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN, whose birth, just one hundred years ago, has afforded the motive in this city for a grand celebration of his first centennial, was the son of a tenor-singer in the electoral chapel at Bonn. At a very early age he gave evidence of remarkable musical talents; at four years of age he was placed at the harpsichord by his father, and forced unrelentingly to perform a severe daily task of exercises. In his fifteenth year he was appointed assistant court-organist, and in his eighteenth year was sent, through the influence of Count Waldstein, who had discovered the genius of the boy and become his protector, to Vienna, at the elector's expense, to study with Mozart. He afterward, in consequence of the death of his mother, returned to Bonn, where the next four years were passed in severe labor and study, supporting his two brothers upon a small salary as organist. At the age of twenty-two we again find him at Vienna, where, suppressing all his many juvenile attempts at composition, he came before the public only as a piano-forte *virtuoso*. The first five years of his sojourn at Vienna were the happiest of the composer's life. He was received in the best society, was a great favorite, and was placed at the head of his profession by the best judges. He meanwhile studied severely, and made himself master of musical forms. The first important works which he sent to the press were the three *sonatas*, op. 2, and the three trios, op. 1, and these were followed by others with a rapidity that exhibited extraordinary fertility. But he soon began to suffer from injured hearing, caused originally by a hæmorrhoidal difficulty. He describes the symptoms as an ever ringing and singing in his ear day and night. "I can truly say," he writes, "that I pass a wretched existence; for the last two years I have almost entirely shunned society, because it is impossible to tell people I am deaf!" Again: "In the theatre I am forced to lean up close to the orchestra to understand the actors. The higher tones of the voices and instruments, if I am at a little distance, I cannot hear, and it is remarkable that people do not notice it in conversation with me." In 1802 he had a severe attack of illness, and, in the prospect of death, wrote a remarkable paper, addressed to his brothers, in which he paints the sufferings which he had passed through in very effective language: "Born of an ardent, sanguine temperament, and peculiarly susceptible to the pleasures of society, yet at this early age I must withdraw from the world, and lead a solitary life. When I at times have determined to rise superior to all this, oh, how cruelly have I been again cast down by proofs doubly painful of my defective hearing, and yet it has been utterly impossible for me to say to people, 'Speak louder, scream, for I am deaf!' Ah, how could I proclaim the weakness of a sense which I ought to possess in a higher degree than others, which once I did possess in the highest perfection—a perfection equalled by few of my profession? Alas, I cannot do this! Forgive me, then, if I draw back when I would gladly mingle with you. My misfortune inflicts upon me a double woe in causing me to be misapprehended. For me there can be no recreation in social intercourse, no joining in refined and intellectual conversation, no mutual outpourings of the heart with others." Again: "But what humiliation, when some one standing by me hears a distant flute, and I hear nothing, or listens to the song of the herdsman, and I hear no sound! Such incidents have brought me to the verge of despair—a little more, and I had put an end to my life. One thing only, art—this restrained me. I could not leave the world until that was accomplished which I felt was demanded of me."

Upon recovering from his illness, although his hearing was still affected, he became more cheerful, and again labored at his musical compositions with patient industry. In 1804 the "Heroic Symphony" was produced; in 1805, "Fidelio." The music to Kotzebue's "Ruins of Athens" was first performed in 1812; "The Battle of Vittoria" and the Seventh Symphony, in 1813; "The Glorious Moment," in 1814. The Eighth Symphony was written in 1816. From this date his compositions appeared less rapidly, partly from the grandeur and extent of their design, and partly in consequence of domestic difficulties, involving a legal process for the possession of a nephew, of whom his brother had by will made him legal guardian, but whose mother, a dissolute woman, refused to surrender.

Beethoven died in 1827, in consequence of a severe cold caught while travelling for two days in a violent storm. The exposure was too much for his feeble constitution, and brought on inflammation of the lungs. We derive from a biographical sketch in the "American Cyclopædia" the following summary of Beethoven's performances, and estimate of his genius:

"In the catalogue of Beethoven's works, we find hardly a branch of the art in which he had not wrought, but the preponderance of the instrumental over the vocal music is striking. For the full orchestra he has left us nine symphonies, eleven overtures, the Egmont music, the Battle of Vittoria, and some shorter pieces. Of chamber music the compositions—among them sixteen grand quartets, and four trios for bowed instruments, from the grand concerto and septet down to the romanza and sonata—are very numerous. There are thirty-two grand sonatas for the piano-forte solo, and more than one hundred other compositions, varying from the grand concerto to the variations upon a melody for that instrument alone or combined with others. Two masses, one sacred cantata, and a number of songs, belong to the branch of sacred music; an opera, and a vast variety of songs, trios, etc., fill up the catalogue of his vocal music. Beethoven's mission, if we may use the term, was to perfect instrumental music as the language of feeling and of the sentiments. Under Bach, Haydn, and Mozart, the sonata and the symphony had attained their complete development in form. Under Beethoven, a new soul was infused into them. Something had already been done in this direction. We perceive traces of it in Bach, and in Mozart. Clementi had written a sonata for piano-forte, entitled *Dido Abbandonata*, and Haydn, in quartet and symphony, was in the habit of imagining some story, the situations of which, in their corresponding emotions, he endeavored to depict. Beethoven went further. He not only painted character as no other master had done in music (see his overtures to Prometheus and Coriolanus), but made his music the medium of communicating the feelings which swelled his own breast. We feel this continually in his piano-forte sonatas, nor is the explanation of the fact difficult. The unremitting practice to which he was forced by his father during childhood, together with the course of instruction then in vogue, which aimed rather at making sound musicians than masters of finger gymnastics, gave him that power over the piano-forte and the organ without which no one can be said to have a mastery over those instruments. We speak of the mastery of style in an orator, when his thoughts, as they rise, clothe themselves at once in language forcible, appropriate, and elegant. So a complete mastery of the piano-forte and organ implies that the musical thought, as it rises in the composer's mind, suggests immediately the combinations and successions of notes which will express it, and the instantaneous dropping of the fingers upon the corresponding keys of the instrument. This mastery Beethoven, in common with all the really great masters, had, and it was tempered even in his youth by such a knowledge of the principles of harmony, that his extemporaneous performances were as free from false harmonic relations as the speaking of an accomplished orator from errors in the use of articulate speech. As he advanced in years his improvisations attracted more and more notice, and, upon his arrival in Vienna, men who had known Mozart, and fully appreciated his marvellous powers, confessed their astonishment at the force, vigor, and fire of the young Rhinelander when, giving his fancy the rein, his flying fingers interpreted the current of his musical thoughts. In his earliest published works will be found much of that pensive feeling which distinguished his extemporaneous efforts, and this quality in his sonatas became more marked as he advanced in years. Hence the marvellous fascination of his sonatas for every appreciative performer or hearer. They appeal to our hearts as the language of his own. They paint to us his moments of joy and of sorrow; of hope and of longings for that which is loftier and nobler—longings ofttimes which can be uttered only in music. When writing for the orchestra the grandeur of his thoughts rose with the increase of means at his command, and he reached heights beyond all that composers before him or since have attained.—Justice has not usually been done to Beethoven on the score of intellect. His large head was, in fact, filled with a brain capable of intensely energetic and long continued action. He was an insatiable reader, especially of history, and none followed with a deeper interest the rapidly-changing scenes of that great political drama which began in his nineteenth year in Paris, and ended at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Born upon the Rhine, reared under the remarkably liberal institutions of the electorate of Cologne, and subjected to the direct influence of those ideas which set France in a blaze, he was early and for life a republican in his politics. He had not the education of a scholar, and the universal fact which obtains in regard to men of strong minds and great reflective powers, who have not enjoyed the advantages of high culture, obtains also in his case, viz.: a tendency to put full faith in conclusions founded upon insufficient data, and to consider their confessedly high authority upon subjects to which they have devoted themselves as a guarantee of the correctness of their views upon others. This argues not a want, but rather the possession, of a high degree of intellectual power. In whatever sphere of mental activity Beethoven had been placed, he would have been a man of mark. The exciting social, religious, and political topics, which agitated all Europe during the age of Beethoven, are familiarly known to all. Upon these topics he studied, pondered, reflected, and the aspirations, hopes, triumphs—the grief, woe, and despair of that age—found a space in his all-embracing sympathies. We perceive a tendency in his early orchestral works, while still influenced in his style by Haydn and Mozart, in the direction which, as stated above, his piano-forte music followed, to become the medium through which the composer made known his feelings. But when, still in the prime of life, he found the sense most necessary to the musician forsaking him, and under this calamity he gradually withdrew himself from society, retaining a few old friends, but making comparatively few new ones, the tendency became more marked. As years passed on and old friends fell, he retired more and more within himself, trusting more fully to the impulses of his genius, uninfluenced by modes and fashions and popular styles; then it was that the rich stores of musical knowledge, acquired in his younger and happier days, were lavished upon works the depths of whose thoughts, and the grandeur of whose designs, so far surpassed the appreciation of many of his contemporaries as to be condemned as the vagaries of a madman. As Gothic architecture is the artistic record of the aspirations of the ages during which it grew to perfection, so the orchestral works of Beethoven are the musical record of the great ideas of his time in the form and likeness which they assumed in his mind. Haydn and Mozart perfected instrumental music in its form—Beethoven touched it, and it became a living soul."

RICHELIEU.

THE splendid career of this scarlet-robed minister, who wielded the power of France in the seventeenth century, has been made familiar to us through the labor of the historian, and the skill of the novelist; the dramatist, too, has bent his energies to the task, and great actors have seconded the pen with voice and gesture, until, amid all accompaniments of scenic art, the mighty cardinal-duke still seems to issue from his long-closed tomb, and sweep in semi-regal magnificence across the stage; his genius, potent to enthrall an audience now, as it was in former days, to make wondering Europe tremble.

It has been, however, the singular fate of Cardinal Richelieu, to be either ignored or misunderstood in his character as a man of letters, though the numerous works which he either dictated or wrote himself, give him an undoubted claim to this title.

His "Political Testament," which appeared in 1687, was admitted by competent judges to bear the marks of a master-hand.

"Ponder well this work," said La Bruyère, "for it is the mirror of his mind, his genius is reflected in it. There we come upon the secret motives of his actions, there we discover the main-springs of those great events which occurred during his administration. It is gratifying to see how his just and courageous conceptions were steadily carried on to successful execution. Surely he who was capable of such achievements either did not write at all, or, if he wrote, wrote thus."

Nevertheless, Voltaire selected this work as a butt for the shafts of his ridicule, while those who recognized Richelieu as its author preferred to follow the example of the great satirist, and see nothing in it but evidence of the failure of a great mind; even Frederick of Prussia, who should, of all men in the world, have appreciated its value, adopted the opinion of his literary master, and wrote:

> "How genius undergoes eclipse!
> Richelieu can write his *Testament*;
> And Newton, his *Apocalypse*."

Only recently (1823) the memoirs of Richelieu, long buried in the Department of Foreign Affairs, were exhumed and given to the world,