

better in her place: "No, there never was a better; she *believed* in me when men despised me, she relieved my wants when I was poor and persecuted in the world."

THE names of Smith, Hamilton, Kelly, Allen, Jackson, Rutherford and Lord Grantham must be dear to all admirers of West; they aided him in the infancy of his fame and fortune, they cheered him when he was drooping and desponding, and watched over his person and purse with the vigilance of true friendship.

The story of his success with the portrait of Lord Grantham found its way to Allen of Philadelphia when he was at dinner with Governor Hamilton. "I regard this young man," said the worthy merchant, "as an honor to his country, and as he is the first that his country has sent out to cultivate the fine arts, he shall not be frustrated in his studies, for I shall send him whatever money he requires. "I think with you, sir," said Hamilton, "but you must not have all the honor to yourself; allow me to unite with you in the responsibility of the credit." Some time afterwards when West went to take up ten pounds from his agents, the last of the sum with which he had commenced his studies, one of the partners opened a letter and said, "I am instructed to give you unlimited credit, you will have the goodness to ask for what sum you please." It is not without cause that Mr. Galt says, "The munificence of the Medici was equalled by these American magistrates."

#### TORONTO CHORAL SOCIETY.

The last concert, this season, of the Toronto Choral Society took place in the Pavilion of the Horticultural Garden on the evening of 20th May. The large hall was well filled—all the seats, both floor and gallery, being occupied. The stage was tastefully draped with scarlet, and when the tiers of seats (rising one above another) were filled with their fair occupants, it presented the appearance of a huge bouquet of flowers.

The principal features of the concert were a sacred Cantata "Come Let us Sing," for solos, chorus and orchestra, by Mendelssohn, and Secular Cantata, "The Dream," also for solo, chorus and orchestra, composed by Sir Michael Costa. With the exception of the first number, the Overture to Semiramide, by the orchestra, the remaining numbers of the programme were of a miscellaneous character. The chorus was in good force. Sopranos and contraltos very fairly balanced, but the tenors appeared rather too strong for the basses, in fact for the whole chorus; this occasionally produced the effect of converting the tenor part into the melody to the exclusion of the real melody.

With regard to the chorus work, as a whole it is only fair to say that it was highly creditable to the society and its conductor, and although it is an open question as to whether the lesser numbers (the part songs and short chorusses) are worthy the attention of an ambitious society to the exclusion of more important works. Be

this as it may, our criticism has to deal with what was presented, and not what might have been.

No. 1. The Overture to Semiramide (*Rossini*) was a very uneven performance. The strings were full, and the attack firm and decisive; as much cannot be said of the wood and brass instruments, which, when ever they came into prominence, seemed weak, wavering and uncertain. This gave the effect of a practice rather than a performance. But while thus sharply criticising, our object is not to discourage, for we know the difficulty in obtaining Horn Oboe and Clarionet players in this city or elsewhere in Canada, the demand for them being so small. It then becomes a question, under the circumstances, whether it is better or not to attempt orchestral works at all, or, if deciding to give them, whether it were not better to import an orchestra entire from the States. On the whole we incline to the opinion that it is better to work as much as possible with the material that we have, and, although the results may not be quite so satisfactory, it will tend to encourage and develop home talent, the only error against which care should be taken to guard, is, extravagant laudation. Home talent so rarely hears the truth about itself from either press or friends, that it grows self satisfied, and when self satisfaction takes possession, there is an end of all improvement. Nevertheless, we would not be understood to say that the overture was a failure; on the contra, as a whole the performance was a very enjoyable one, and but for the blemishes to which we refer would have been a perfect one. The Cantata, "Come Let us Sing," opened with solo for Tenor, Mr. Gordon Sheriff sustaining the part. This gentleman's voice is quite unfit to effectively render the music which demands a voice of equal temperament and power. Though much pains had evidently been bestowed upon the study of the part which, be it admitted, was mechanically correct enough, it still lacked artistic finish. The unnecessarily broad pronunciation of many of the English words destroyed the musical effect. For instance, "*I said, 'Tis a people,*" was pronounced "ar sard." This, a systematically prefacing with a nasal sound, words commencing with a vowel, for instance, and being converted into *n* and, *I* into *ni*, an unnecessary hanging upon the initial consonant of a syllable and thereby spoiling the vocal sound, are among some of the faults of method which ruin the effects of Mr. Sheriff's singing.

"Ave Maria," this exquisite composition, consisting of *Bach's* first prelude which forms the harmonic foundation for the beautiful melody superadded by *Gounod* for voice and violin, was sung by Mrs. Cooper, for whose voice it is totally unfit. In the first place, Mrs. Cooper's voice is a low mezzo soprano of very good quality, while the Ave Maria demands a voice of a *ture* soprano. The song begins *piano* on the lower register of the voice, increasing in intensity as it advances, it reaches its climax at high C. This note should be well within the range of the voice, if sung, and not produced by a strained effort, which, conveying to the hearer a sense of pain utterly ruins the effect which it is the intention of the composer to create. Mrs. Cooper (from natural causes) reversed the intention of the composer. The commencement of the song, where the notes lie well within the natural compass of her voice, she sang in full round tones of very pleasing quality, but as the song advanced to the upper register the tones were weak, strained and unnatural, the notes in some places being actually false in intonation. The violin obligato forming the introduction to the song gave Mr. Bayley a fine opportunity as a solo, which, from