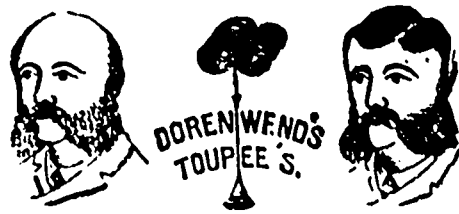


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The Field of Art

THE story of the "National Tribute" to Professor Ruskin is told in the April number of the *Magazine of Art*. Never (says the writer) did the general feeling of reverent admiration and affectionate esteem with which the late John Ruskin was regarded, find fuller and happier expression than on the occasion of the attainment of his eightieth birthday, on the 8th of February, 1898. Occasional tributes, of a special nature and of a more or less public character, had been offered, it is true, to the genius of Coniston at various times, but never were such appreciative addresses presented to him as those which so signally commemorated the last anniversary, as it proved, of the day on which he was born. Of the four formal addresses of congratulation presented on the occasion, the principal one was of such significance and comprehensive importance as to render it a document of an almost national character. It consists of twenty-four leaves of vellum, each page having, as already stated, an illuminated border bearing the miniatures, emblems, and numerous other typical devices associated with the constituent bodies concerned in the presentation, and specially connected with Mr. Ruskin's life-work. While these minutely-studied subjects would be recognizable at a glance by Mr. Ruskin himself, it is probable that they would not be so readily discerned by anyone who is not intimately acquainted with the representative subjects in which he over took the keenest delight. It will, therefore, be well that any such particulars should be explained as the reader proceeds with the examination of the pages. The first page preceding the address bears the Ruskin coat-of-arms and crest (as supplied from the College of Arms) elaborately emblazoned, with helmet, sword and buckler. The arms comprise a silver chevron bearing three cross crosslets fitchée, gules, between six silver spear-heads on a sable shield, three in chief and three in base. The crest consists of a boar's head, gules, charged with two golden cross-crosslets fitchée on the neck; and the motto is "Ago quod agis."

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The World of Music

IN the villa of St. Agatha, near Bassetto in Italy, stood, for many years, an old spinet. It had no strings left, its lid was lost and its keyboard was likened by one who saw it to a jaw with long and worn-out teeth. On the removal of one of the jacks the following inscription was discovered:

"I, Stephen Cavaletti, made these jacks anew and covered them with leather and fitted the pedals; and these, together with the jacks, I give gratis, seeing the good disposition of the boy, Giuseppe Verdi, for learning to play the instrument, which is of itself reward enough to me for my trouble."

This spinet emeritus was purchased in 1820 by Carlo Verdi, an innkeeper of Le Roncole in the Duchy of Parma, Italy, for his seven-year-old son. The passion of the child for the grinding organs that occasionally passed through the village was evidently the cause of this extravagance, which, from a practical point of view, may have been a premature purchase, as it is said that the child's anger at not being able to reproduce, one day, certain chords, that, to his delight, he had discovered the day before, was vented on the instrument itself with a hammer. This incident evidently accounts for the necessary repairing done by Stephen Cavaletti, but the boy received from his father a blow that he never forgot, and the spinet was thereafter treated with greater respect. He succeeded in gaining so definite a knowledge of music and, through determination and perseverance, made such a reputation as a musician, that at ten years of age he was appointed organist in his native town at a little over seven dollars a year, to which he added about twelve dollars for playing at weddings and funerals. About this time he began his schooling at Bassetto, which has been called "the Weimar of the Duchy of Parma," and consequently he was soon well launched on a prosperous musical career. Here, too, he fell in love with Margherita Barezzi, whom he married in 1836, her father, a man of wealth, appreciating the genuine worth of a talented though poor son-in-law. The entire Philharmonic Society of the town attended the wedding, and there were many manifestations of pride in the young man of twenty-three, who, under instructors at Milan, had made a promising start in the art of composition. In 1838, Verdi moved with his family to Milan, and on November 17th, 1839, his first opera, "Oberto Conte di S. Bonifacio" was successfully produced. His second opera, "Un Giorno di Regno," proved a failure, but the third, "Nabucco," first given in 1842, established his fame. Of the operas produced during the next ten years, "Eranani" lived longest. He was now the favorite composer of the operatic world; but along with his successes came domestic afflictions in the death of his two sons and his wife in quick succession, leaving Verdi alone. He turned to his work for consolation, and the world was made richer through his efforts to absorb himself in matters outside of his immediate personal life. He produced many musical masterpieces—"Attila," "Un Ballo in Maschera," "Trovatore," "La Traviata," and "Rigoletto" being among those which for twenty years were heard with enthusiasm, and whose very titles

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bring recollections to many people living to-day, of most delightful evenings with Caroline Richings Bernard, Zelda Seguin, Campbell, Castle, and, later, with Campanini, Clara Louise Kellogg, and Patti. His last opera to win international favor was "Aida," which was first produced at Cairo, December 27, 1871, having been ordered by the Khedive of Egypt, the contract giving \$20,000 to the composer.

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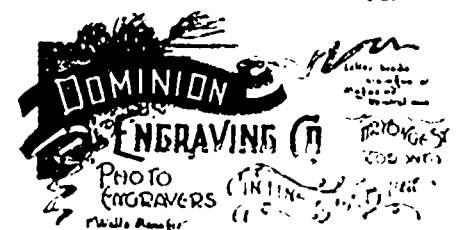
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