

The Arion,

A CANADIAN JOURNAL OF ART, DEVOTED TO MUSIC, ART, LITERATURE AND THE DRAMA.

VOL. I., No. 9.

JUNE, 1881.

PRICE, 10 CENTS.

EDITORIAL.

IN reply to a later communication from Dr. Strathy, which may be found further on, concerning the Chair of Music at Trinity College, we have this to say: First, that the communication purporting to be a reply to our editorial remarks in the May number of THE ARION, is very far from such. We said "seemingly nominal position," and we repeat it since the Dr. has not shown that a single student or other has ever taken a degree. We did not question the Dr.'s appointment, nor the manner of it. Secondly, we do not for a moment dispute that any man has a right to remuneration for services rendered. But we do emphatically deny the assertion which the Doctor makes, and whose example he professes to follow, that those who have done "*most* for Art" have always required remuneration. On the contra, there is no class of men in the world more self-sacrificing, and less prone to put a mercenary value upon service rendered for the advancement of their art, than the Artist class, whether in music or painting. And, since we cannot dispute the Dr.'s "*desire*" for the advancement of his Art, we must allow it to rest there. As far as we are personally concerned, we have not arrived at that condition entitling us to be classed as a "*rara avis*," but we modestly lay claim to having made a few sacrifices for the benefit of the art and the profession which we follow, and we had humbly hoped that our services were *worth something*. As for the "*sinister motives lurking behind*," we are at a loss to know what they could be. We assure the Dr. we have no personal feeling in this matter whatever, and shall be willing to apply for a degree, if only to remove the reproach which twenty years of existence, without a graduate, leaves upon the Chair of Music in Trinity College.

CHORUS WORK.

There has been much earnest and patient hard work done by skilful chorus masters in Toronto and other parts of Canada, and great credit and praise is due to them for the rendering of some of the best works from the great masters in the manner in which they have been given from time to time; but those among us who have spent some years in connection with the large festival choirs in the old country know full well that much hard work has yet to be done before these works can be produced in anything like the efficient manner in which they ought to be, and the question arises, how is this desired result to be brought about. The opinion of the writer of this article is that there is but one way, and that is to commence at the foundation. The choristers who desire

to take part in these sublime works should have passed through some systematic elementary musical education in class singing, or otherwise, before being allowed to become a member of an advanced choral society, so that in place of the chorus-master being obliged to spend much valuable time in teaching the choir by note, most of this parrot work would be done away with, and every member would be able to take up their part in an intelligent manner, much more work could be gone through in the same amount of time, and more attention paid to expression, etc., and especially is this required in modern works, for since the time of Beethoven and Spohr vocal harmonies have abounded with chromatic, augmented and diminished intervals (which old masters did not use so freely) and they are difficult to produce with anything like proper intonation. Therefore choristers require special training preparatory to taking part in these great works. We have many most excellent voices in our midst and many with good genial dispositions, but alas, from the lack of submitting to proper training, how many produce a nasal tone, others singing through their teeth, flat intonation, etc., and beyond all this if choristers acquired more true musical knowledge what beauties would unfold before them, how they would enjoy these rich harmonies which at present to many are as a sealed book, with what better judgment would music be selected for church, school and home use, the true from the false, in place of the drone bass, which gives a sickly monotony, we would have choral music selected, in which each part forms an independent melody, yet one rich, harmonious whole when combined. And again, more skill could and would be manifested in having a proper balance of voices in each part, which cannot be done at the present time, for the chorus-master of necessity has to make the best of his material at hand, but if certain knowledge was more general, he would receive more hearty co-operation, aid and needed generous support in bringing about that desideratum which we hope is not in the far future.

R. BLACKBURN.

THE TRAMP PROFESSOR.

To the Editor of THE ARION.

We find at the present day throughout the country many who pretend to teach vocal and instrumental music. What really actuates them to take upon themselves the responsibility of teaching that art which exerts such a refining influence upon society, is not generally known. One thing is evident, they come far short of honorably filling the position they occupy, if we may be permitted to judge them by their pupils. We find this to be the case not only with teachers of vocal but also instrumental