

THE YOUNG ARION.

"I am only a journal of Art, Literature and Music, gentle reader," saith THE ARION, "just setting out on what I hope may prove a career of usefulness in this our little world, and lest my name may seem to have been presumptuously assumed, I will show you how it may come to be very appropriate. Here I am on the very point of being dumped, like that sweet singer of old, my name-sake, from the deck of my beloved ship, my Editor's chair, into the restless uncertain sea of human labour, and I peer out eagerly, I assure you, over the dull waste of waters in search of the Dolphin, my particular, precious dolphin, whose name in these days is *popular favour* without whom I can never hope to reach the lovely Grecian land of prosperity. Good old Arion of the ancient time is said to have been the sweetest singer in all the world, a most brilliant star, in fact, who doubtless drew crowded houses, and made Bonanzas every night, and thereby incurred the envy of those old Greek rivals of his. At least I judge so, because it was for his money that the villains hoisted him afloat, (not the only time that trick has been performed), and there, you see, my gentle readers, is another matter in which old Arion and I are alike, for, between you and me, I believe I am cast overboard partly that my proprietors may profit by the money I am worth. Poor Arion, no doubt, felt tremendously shaky when they heaved him into the water all gotten up in his dress coat and white choker, or garments to that effect, as Heroditus describes, and surprised when the ugly face of the dolphin rose before him and offered him a seat upon his back; but *my* feelings on beholding that creature if he come, shall be, not so much surprise as gratification, at seeing my usefulness so promptly recognized, and when I have mounted upon his back, harp in hand, I shall endeavour to sing you sweet songs, that may fill your heart with longing for that perfection which we so deeply need in this new but by no means untalented country of ours. Then again, just as the act of those Grecian sailors arose from want of respect for musical talent, though they were glad enough in their vulgar way, as most men would have been, to listen to the sweet singer, when he offered them a *free* farewell entertainment. So my excursion of instruction into the world of waters has its source, for the most part, in the want of appreciation which real talent meets with at the hands of many of those who ought to do their best to foster it. As I have already mentioned, my humble mission in this troubled sea, this Canadian sea of ours, is to endeavour to inspire its ambitious inhabitants with a love for those gentle arts and accomplishments, in which, me thinks, they have sufficient ability to attain great excellence; for surely it is now time that our country, with its healthy northern climate, (though perhaps not giving birth to the luxuriant imagination and startling genius which sometimes ripen under a southern sky, yet produces stalwart frames and keen manly intellects), should strive to occupy a worthy position in the world of Music, Art and Literature, whose power has in all ages, exerted such incalculable influence in the civilization of mankind. With this conviction weighing upon

my mind, I, The Young Arion, go forth to advise friends and stir them up for the honour of themselves and their country. And now I bid you adieu, kind reader, looking forward to my next monthly converse with you, the hope that my youthful tongue may be loosened by the kindly antidote against its silence, the approbation of friends.

VOCAL METHOD.

"What method do you teach, sir?"

"Vocal method, madam," "No, but I mean what particular method do you use?" "A series of exercises with certain explanations, by the means of which I am enabled to assist pupil in gaining a proper use of the voice." "But you do not yet understand me; I mean, what is the *name* of the method used by, or, in other words *whose* method is it?" How often does it happen that this persistent question is asked, and how seldom does the inquirer understand what she asks! "What method?" "Whose method?" and, yet if a name is given what significance attaches to it! One answers, "the *Ga* method;" another, "the *Bassini* method;" another, "the *Streeter* method," while others claim "the pure *Italian* method" and how much wiser is the questioner? How can she discriminate, or form any better opinion of the merits of teachers after receiving her answer than before? What does she know of the various controversies that may have taken place between the exponents of different theories? what brings us to another series of questions. What do people mean by this very formidable word which is so much used and abused? Are there so many different results to be arrived at; or are the results intended to be the same, though the roads be different? Have the persons whose names are attached to these various "methods" each discovered some *new* truth regarding vocal development, which properly entitles them to recognition as benefactors of the race; or have they merely dignified their own way of teaching with this high-sounding name? The last question may be answered affirmatively, we may be certain by looking about our own city where, at least the teachers have asserted the existence of "methods bearing their own names." As I believe that truths heretofore unknown have now for the first time brought to light, it is fair to presume that the name is intended to apply to their individual *mode* of teaching. If this be the case methods will be as numerous as teachers; for all teachers that are in earnest must differ in *manner* of teaching! No teacher can be the exact counter of another, without sinking his whole individually, in which case his teaching becomes mechanical. Every teacher must have, and make use of ideas of his or her own, especially if he has hardly two pupils can be taught precisely in the same way. Every one must know the needs of each pupil, and study means to convey the desired information. Frequently he repeats the same truth over and over again, using different language each time, before it will be understood. Illustrations must be used, and the dulness of the pupil be counteracted by the brightness of the teacher. Shall his particular manner of imparting information be called his "method?"

But there are those who claim to teach *new* truths, claim to have discovered some process by which singers can be made in short order. Others again, who claim to have gained new light, and having plausible tongues, create a furore for a time, and then disappear. Such are entitled to call their schemes "methods," even though they may not be such as to approve of. But, can any new truths be brought forth regarding "vocal culture?" Well, perhaps so, when the models of architecture, sculpture, and painting are set aside for some improved work of the present century but not then. Why? Because the art of singing was brought to perfection one hundred and fifty years ago. Because the subject was most exhaustively treated by Bernacchi, Porpora, Mancini, and a host more who followed the lead of the great head and founder of the Italian School of Singing, Francesco Antonio Pistocchi, and who taught so well that none since