

# THE OWL.

Vol. VII.

OTTAWA UNIVERSITY, MARCH, 1894.

No. 7.

## CHARLES GOUNOD.



THE eighteenth of October last, brought deep sorrow and mourning to the musical world; for on that day an artist whose harmonious strains have been heard in theatre and cathedral, a musician whose works are spread from Europe to Australia, the genius

who has given *Krist* the dress which has rendered Goethe's poem so acceptable to all civilized nations; Charles Gounod, the eminent French composer, passed away, in the seventy-fifth year of his age.

Charles Gounod was born on the 7th of June, 1818. His mother, who was an excellent musician, became a widow when Charles was but five years old, and being without means she had to give lessons on the piano. Madame Gounod did not neglect the musical education of her son, who had inherited great aptitudes from her. He profited so well by her lessons, that professors and composers who chanced to meet him, wondered at the great facility with which the boy could master any piece. When at college, even in elementary classes, young Gounod would busy himself with composing airs and writing melodies. He was often scolded and even punished by his teacher for covering his books with notes and staves. Though a diligent student in all the branches he had to apply himself to, Charles felt that he was born to be a musician; he desired above all things to make a serious study of music. Madame Gounod yielding to her son's entreaties, though not without

reluctance, for the musical career was not then, it appears, very remunerative, took him to the celebrated professor, Antony Reicha, who was then giving a course of harmony in Paris, and whose lessons were sought by all the musicians of that time. This, however did not prevent young Gounod from pursuing his literary studies at the Collège St. Louis. After two years, Reicha had nothing more to teach his pupil in the science of harmony. The German professor, formed by the great masters of his native land, naturally imparted to his pupils the taste and tendencies of the German school. Charles Gounod who was a great admirer of the German composers, did not fail to avail himself of this opportunity to make a special study of their works.

The subject of our sketch having completed his literary studies, and obtained the degree of Bachelor of Arts, entered the Conservatory when eighteen years of age. Few pupils of the Conservatory apply themselves to literature, but Gounod was one of these few, his writings prove that besides musical genius, he did not lack talent in other respects. In the Paris Conservatory Gounod studied under Halévy, the author of the famous opera *La Juive*, and under Lesueur, better known from his sacred compositions. Shortly after, Paër, whose tendencies were toward the Italian school, was appointed professor of composition; so that at the age of twenty, our young musician was already familiar with the three leading schools of music, besides the special study he made of sacred composition with Lesueur. In 1837 Gounod obtained