

# The Arion,

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

VOL. I., No. 5.

FEBRUARY, 1881.

PRICE, 10 CENTS.

## DOCTORS AND PROFESSORS OF MUSIC.

We have expressed ourselves pretty plainly with regard to "professors" of music. We stated in our second number that the title was in most cases self-assumed by men who had little else than the title to recommend them. We further stated that such men, in the truer sense of the word, were not musicians but merely dealers, who having bought at the cheapest possible market a slight knowledge of a little trashy music, peddle it out for any price they can obtain; rarely giving an equivalent for the money they receive. So far this would be only a matter between buyer and seller, were it not that the self-assumed title is too often accepted as an assurance of ability, and thus it is that under such teaching, all that is true and good in the art is subordinated to selfish and temporary benefits, to the stultifying of public taste, and injury to those who have spent time and means, and who have faithfully labored to fit themselves for the profession. The following extract from the *Musical Critic*, N. Y., will show that we are not alone in this opinion:—

"In London they make a fight on the title "Professor," as applied to musicians. They cannot have anything else to do. Here we are much more peacable. Teachers of standing in America will not allow any one to call them by the title, and the Vaillants and Prochazkas are only too glad that the title came into existence, for it is their only pride and all they have to boast of. We consider every "professor" a nincompoop beforehand, and so do many others. "Professors" have played out in the large cities in America."

So much for Professors, and now a word about "Mus. Docs.," *i. e.* Doctors of Music. The right to use this or any other title, when legitimately obtained, we do not question. It carries with it a proof that the wearer has successfully passed an examination before a competent and authorized examiner, and received the distinction from a university, or other institution empowered to grant such. But it is when the title is usurped, or at best obtained from some unauthorized institution whereby the public is deceived and the credit of the profession injured, that we feel it our duty to raise our voice in protest against the imposition, and all such impositions whenever and wherever we may meet them. That "doctors will disagree," is a true saying, nevertheless we feel quite safe in stating that doctors cannot show ignorance of the fundamental principles of their art, and retain the respect of those competent to judge them. In connection with this subject we ask the question: Why can we not have a Chair of Music at the University? Even if not endowed, it might be filled as an honorary position. This would afford an opportunity

for students in music to obtain a degree or other mark of merit, and while the possibility of obtaining such a distinction would act as a stimulus to our native talent, the possession of the same would be a guarantee to the public as to the ability of the possessor.

## THE CHORAL AND ITS ORIGIN.

The Choral itself must rank as a strictly Protestant musical form. The Choral is essentially a psalm-tune. Its origin may be traced as far back as the time of Gregory 1st, but the modern Choral which we derive from Martin Luther, is quite distinct from those tunes used in the Roman Catholic Church. It was the endeavour of the great Reformer to incite the people to a more active participation in the religious service; therefore he chose the most popular national melodies, to which he wrote sacred words, mostly paraphrases of the Psalms. As it had been customary with earlier Italian composers to construct their fugues, canons and other choruses on the foundation of the Ambrosian or Gregorian chant, so it became a habit with Sebastian Bach and his followers to build the most complicated works upon the foundation of a Choral. Some of the most interesting specimens of this form of sacred song are to be found in Bach's St. Matthew Passion, in his Christmas Oratorio and in his numerous motets and cantatas.

It may be asserted that the Choral owes its existence to the obstacles which the Roman Catholic clergy placed in the way of the Germans, whom they tried to prevent from singing their religious hymns in their native language. From time immemorial, the Germans were used to sing their war songs and ballads in their own language. The Roman Church, always an enemy to nationality, forbade with all its authority the use of the German language, and vainly tried to prevent the excellent monks Olfred from Weissenburg (in Alsace), Rutupert of St. Gallen, and Wather Labeo, another Swiss, from introducing German hymns into the Roman Catholic Liturgy. The tyranny of the Church of Rome went so far as to shut out the congregation from all active participation in the service, save from responding with a "Kyrie Eleison" and "Christie Eleison" whilst the singing of the Psalms were confided solely to the officiating clergy. This strange prohibition was maintained in such a ridiculous degree that during one single service the congregation had to repeat about three hundred times the "Kyrie Eleison." Such exaggeration could not result in anything but mere senseless noise; and at last permission was given for the translation of hymns with Latin words, into German, on condition however, that each verse of these songs was to finish with the "Kyrie Eleison." From this