Professional and Amateur Musicians

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Henri Viotta has just issued books 27 and 28 of his "Lexicon der Toonkunst," containing articles from "Middenstimmen" to "Novello."

Tschaikowsky, the celebrated Russian composer, has written a new Opera, "Mazeppa," which will be performed shortly at St. Petersburg.

"Don Carlos," with which the new Théâtre Italien in Paris will open next season, has been entirely revised by Verdi. The new version will contain only three acts instead of four, and the orchestration will be changed in many places.

An Italian composer, Signor Cagnoni, whose Opera "Don Bucefalo" has been successful in his own country, has written a new Opera on the subject of "King Lear."

King Kalakaua's band, consisting of forty well-trained musicians, is on the way to Europe, where its Conductor, a German, Heinrich Verger, formerly a member of one of the military bands of Prussia, intends giving Concerts.

The first prize of the Milan Quartet Society was allotted this year to a Trio for piano, violin, and violoncello, composed by Josef Martucci, of Naples.

Franz Doppler, the well-known flautist and composer, died on July 27, at Baden, near Vienna, aged sixty-two years.

Another virtuoso on the flute, Joseph Fahrbach, also well known by compositions for his instrument, died recently at Vienna, aged seventy-nine years.

I. P. R. Reinecke, professor of music, and father of the celebrated composer and director of the Gewandhaus Concerts at Leipzig, Carl Reinecke, died at Altona on the 14th ult., at the age of eighty-eight.

CORRESPONDENCE.

PROFESSIONAL AND AMATEUR MUSICIANS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

Sir,—Permit me a few words in reference to Dr. Pole's very interesting paper on the above subject in the issue of your valuable magazine for August.

I think the majority will agree with Dr. Pole in his clear and distinct definition of the difference between a "professional musician" and a "musical amateur." Also, I think, must we agree with him in conceding that persons engaged in various occupations other than music have a perfect right, if they think fit, to fill up spare hours by some musical occupation: as, for instance, playing the organ at church, the violin in an orchestra, or singing in a paid choir. But when this class of persons, having had little or no musical "training" in the fullest meaning of the term, being in very many instances self-taught, set themselves up as "teachers of music," then I think it is time for the legitimate professional musician, one who has, probably at much expense, been properly trained for his calling, who has made it his chief study, and depends solely upon it for his livelihood, to cry out and to inquire if some stop cannot be put to so serious a malpractice. Dr. Pole reaches the root of the matter when he says: "The semi-professional must remember that if he enters into competition with *bonâ fide* professional men on their own ground, he must expect no favour; on the contrary, he fairly provokes hostile criticism." Again, he touches upon what is to me the crying evil of the whole system when he uses these remarks: "And, again, the semi-professionals should bear in mind that in entering the field against professional musicians they ought to compete with them on equal terms, and not (if I may be pardoned the expression) to *undersell* them." Dr. Pole needs not to apologise for using the expression "undersell." It is this abominable practice which makes the non-professional competition so thoroughly unfair. The professional teacher of music has, probably, prepared himself for the exercise of his calling at the cost of considerable money and time—and time is money. Desiring to reap some return for this outlay, and relying upon his musical avocation alone for the support of himself and those dependent on him, he charges what he conceives to be a fair remunerative fee. But what about those semi-

professionals who enter into competition with him? In nineteen cases out of twenty their musical education has not cost a tithe of that of the professional teacher, and as they are not dependent upon music for their daily bread, but simply follow it, more or less, to add to their incomes, they can afford to charge a low fee for their lessons (?) (generally far more than they are worth, however) and thus enter into decidedly unfair rivalry with professional teachers. While writing, numerous illustrations of this come into my mind. I am well acquainted with a young lady whose father is very well off; she is an only child, and will some day come into a considerable sum of money. She teaches music, why I cannot conceive, except it be for the sake of occupying her time; and as she charges but a very low fee, some 7s. 6d. or 10s. 6d. per quarter, she thus unfairly places herself in distinct competition with those whose income is solely derived from the profession.

I might multiply instances; in most cases these *quasi* teachers are young girls (I can think of some half-dozen in my own town), who, possessed of sufficient practical knowledge of music to enable them to get through an ordinary drawing-room fantasia with tolerable correctness, but being generally *utterly destitute* of theoretical knowledge, set themselves up as teachers of music, principally for the sake of having some pocket-money.

The little that many—nay, most—of these self-constituted teachers really know of the art they profess to teach is amazing. Only a short time ago a pupil came to me for lessons. He displayed an utter ignorance of key and time signatures, marks of expression, &c., &c., but could get through one or two pieces, so far as mere playing went, without any very serious blunders. Of course (as is, alas! too often the case) I had to undo a great deal that had been done in the way of bad fingering, &c., and commence at the very beginning. Judge my surprise on discovering, shortly afterwards, that this very young gentleman was himself a teacher, and was being paid for attempting to instruct others in an art of which he himself was almost utterly ignorant! Does not this come very near to obtaining money by false pretences?

Of course, if no persons could be found to employ such "teachers" their "occupation" would soon be, like Othello's, "gone." But, unfortunately, in many towns, and especially in manufacturing towns like the one in which I live, plenty of people are to be found eager and willing to employ a teacher who charges low terms. It is an undoubted fact that while persons will pay the best price for the food they eat, the beverages they drink, the clothes they wear, so as to ensure the quality being good, they *will* have their children taught (?) music at the lowest possible price, no matter how inferior or, in many cases, how worthless, such teaching may be.

Only a few weeks ago a gentleman in a good position, with a substantial *settled* salary and many advantages besides, asked me to hear his daughter play. I did so, and found, as usual, that she could play, with very fair correctness, so far as the actual notes were concerned, a few ordinary and somewhat showy pieces, while the fingering was wretched, the phrasing nowhere, and the theoretical knowledge as to the construction of the pieces she played "nil." She learned from a young lady who charged but a very low fee. With all deference to Dr. Pole's exactly opposite deduction, I think that professional men are, and will be, seriously injured, especially in third or fourth rate manufacturing towns, by these semi-professional teachers. And inasmuch as no one can become a clergyman, or a dissenting minister, or a lawyer, or a doctor without having some authority to show for the exercise of his calling, failing which he becomes a "quack" at once—very shortly we shall have no schoolmasters or schoolmistresses, even in our public schools, but such as are certificated—so music ought to be placed on a similar level, and quackery suffer its just doom. Let every one who desires to follow music as a means of livelihood be obliged to pass a somewhat severe examination, and to obtain a certificate of positive efficiency before he or she can set up as a teacher of the art.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

JUSTITIA.

August 18, 1883.