

# MUSIC AS A PROFESSION.

## Condition of the Calling in the United States and England.

Sir John Stainer Advises People to Keep Out of It—Small Rewards for Most English Musicians—Many Disappointments Here Also—The Field Overcrowded.

Sir John Stainer is shortly to resign his place as professor of music in the University of Oxford, which he has held for more than ten years. His decision has not attracted nearly so much attention as his remarks on the subject as a profession in England today. Some of his opinions have been sent to this country. The composer's statistics are discouraging enough. In spite of England's great increase in musical taste, he says, the profession is so overcrowded today that the prospect is possible for only a few of its members, while most of them are not competent to succeed. The supply of musicians in England has increased very much more rapidly than the demand for their work, and unqualified persons have taken up the study of music for no better reason than their liking for the profession. Americans are familiar to some extent with the slight vocal equipment considered necessary for a singer in England. Men and women "kindly oblige" in drawing rooms when they are all but voiceless. Passengers on the transatlantic steamers have felt a sort of sympathetic embarrassment when men and women got up to sing "and were scarcely audible half way across the cabin. Yet, according to the English standard, these performers were singers and felt not the least abashed themselves. One of the most popular English burlesque actresses has so little voice that she would probably be laughed at here if she tried to sing, however she might be applauded in other respects. The English idea of what a voice is need not be described here. It is sufficient to say that it would never be accepted in the United States. Sir John Stainer gives the best explanation of one cause of the great superfluity of English musicians in these words:

"A youth who is fond of music perhaps has composed one or two drawing room ballads, and his friends of course rapturously applaud them. He is flattered into the belief that he is a born composer, and he resolves to seek fame and fortune by his musical talent. Why, there are hardly half a dozen composers in England who can live by writing music. Or, a young fellow has a tolerably good voice, and at local concerts generally gets an encore. His good-natured friends assure him on all hands that his vocal powers are something quite out of the common, and that he really ought to be in the profession. And mind you, if a young man has a really good voice it will always be a living for him. You may state that unhesitatingly."

As the singers with really good voices are likely to succeed, it will be seen that it is the English conception of what a good voice is that has led to great an excess of persons into the profession. Out of 15,000 voices which he tested Sir John said that not more than twenty-five were really first-rate, although of course many more persons went into professional life to struggle along as best they could. Of all the composers in England today Sir John said that not more than six were able to earn anything beyond a modest livelihood. Anybody attempting a professional career should learn to become a teacher as well as a performer, for teaching is the ultimate refuge of nearly all who became professional musicians, whether they depend on their natural gifts as singers or their training as pianists and violinists combined with their natural talent for those instruments. The advice of this eminent musician to his own country people who contemplate music as a profession is to learn, if they must learn something and cannot be persuaded to keep out of the business, several instruments instead of one, as it is not difficult for a performer on an instrument to find employment, while there might be vacancies for players of another. That counsel is enough in itself to show the level to which the prospects of the English musicians have fallen when an instrumentalist setting out to become a master of one musical instrument is cautioned to learn several, and woman not exceptionally gifted never to enter the profession of music.

The outlook in this country for persons who decide to make music their profession and to rely on it alone to give them support is probably not so discouraging as it is in England, but there is scarcely a musician of standing there who would not repeat Sir John's words that the profession was overcrowded and that its excessive members came chiefly from people little justified by their talents in expecting success in this field. American voices generally are of much better quality than those heard in England, and few American singers have ever gained the reputation in the music of the world that has come to many American singers. It is in the columns of a musical paper that one can realize, to the extent to which disappointment has come to men and women who set out to make themselves famous by their singing and playing. It may be thought that New York has a monopoly of Americans who have adopted foreign names and had some European experience and foreigners who have come to this country because it is a little less overcrowded than their own. It is not in New York alone that these disappointed singers and virtuosos are to be found, nor have Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago and the large cities a monopoly of them. They are to be found everywhere. In small Western cities, where one teacher of singing might seem sufficient for all the needs of the region,

there will be ten or fifteen. "From La Scala, Milan," or "From Covent Garden," are phrases that appear frequently to give a pathetic indication of what their career might have been, before the task of teaching music to a few pupils in a small American town became the only reward for the time and money spent in the pursuit of a profession that was to make them famous. In the case of nine out of every ten, this mistake in the choice of a calling could have been rectified long before it was too late if some frank advice had been given to the man or woman, if the teacher or any other judge had said:

"You have a fairly good voice, which may after, at the shortest, three or four years of training, make you one singer in four or five hundred. That will, of course, mean no great reward for you. Probably there are about 500 sopranos singing leading operatic parts the world over. "Not more than one-fifth of these will make any reputation or any fortune. Not twenty of them are known outside their own countries. Possibly you may with hard work become one of them. Again you may not. Your voice does not seem likely to develop into anything remarkable. Four years of work and a great deal of money may prepare you to go through an operatic career of about twelve years, more or less, making possibly \$6,000 a year in a way of life that costs a great deal. Or you may have a career of a few years as a singer in concert, church choir or oratorio at a yearly salary no more than that paid customarily to women who succeed in business life. You may see more of the world and enjoy more varied experiences, but you will have other adventures that tend to compensate for these pleasures. In all probability you will have to end your days in a struggle for pupils. I never saw a music who seemed to have all she wanted of them, nor did I ever see one who seemed to be making much money. That will be your career. You will never approach the heights of Sembriver, Lehmann, or Olive. You may with hard work become an acceptable routine, but there seems little more in store for you."

It may be said that few women would take this advice after they had been praised by their friends and families, and it is certain that no teacher in search of pupils would ever give it. It might do some good, however, to let these facts be known in order that some girl might be saved from a career which is so congested so little to her own ambitions. In the case of the men, the same course might lead to some good result. They are always able, however, to turn to some occupation that will supply them with bread. It is only the women who, finding youth and their best powers gone, look in vain for the prosperity which, at one time seemed their due, only to find that, beyond teaching, there is no way out for them. The demand for their singers, for men and women in chorus, is never so great as the supply. So pupils of famous foreign teachers too inexperienced to become instructors themselves are in choirs and choruses rather than in the high places they are expected to occupy. Few women singing in the comic opera choruses ever thought their progress would end there. But it often does. Music teachers increase every year in number, and the tendency to adopt music as a profession has not yet been checked by the numbers in it. Yet the struggle for success is fierce. Some succeed admirably, but more that are never heard of struggle along in obscurity with poverty as their lot and sometimes uncertainly as to the outcome of the battle for existence. Teaching of music here has not yet reached the overcrowded condition of which Sir John Stainer wrote, but there are few who ever find fortune or prosperity in it.

### A TRADE IN WAR MEDALS.

Various Ways in Which They Are Disposed of and Their Uses.

War medals, mostly won at the cost of peril and privation, are pawned by possessors and never redeemed, or are sent to the hammer by needy relatives on the decease of the veterans. It may be here noted that no man on the army active strength is allowed to pledge his medals. As is well known, war decorations that pass by the means stated, and otherwise, into commerce are eagerly purchased by dealers, who dispose of them to museums; also to private collectors of every grade, from American millionaires to British publicans. These disks of silver, especially those awarded for modern campaigns, from the Crimean war downward, are occasionally put by dealers to novel uses. By the aid of a blowpipe the inscription on the edge can be filled with silver, when the surface, if need be, is ready for re-engraving. Doctoring of the name, rank and regiment by the method mentioned is common in the trade. So it may be that the virtuous who imagines he possesses a memento of the late gallant Gen. Fitz Carnage, of the Onety-onety Foot, who pawned it before he retired into the workhouse to die.

Again, officers serving or retired sometimes lose their medals, or have them feloniously annexed. Sooner

than go through the war office red tape mill to procure duplicates relettered medals are obtained from dealers. Mendicants get hold of medals in order to exhibit them to credulous folks, and thus extract a more liberal alms. War decorations are also occasionally sported by one-armed or single-legged organ-grinders. Such gentry warrant themselves to be British, and plead for patronage as a matter of national sentiment and as opposed to the claims of the Saffron Hill musical contingent of invaders. These metal-displaying humbugs are seldom ex-soldiers, far less have they been disabled in active service. They are at times considerably "out" in respect of a bit of medal ribbon shown, for instance, an organ-grinder of about five-and-twenty years of age was observed in Holborn the other day sporting the Crimean and mutiny ribbons! Sometimes an actor possessed of a passion for realism, who may have to impersonate on the stage the hero of a hundred fights, invests in real medals with which to cover the breast of his tunic. Also genuine war decorations adorn the uniformed presentments of eminent warriors in the best-class war exhibitions throughout the country. A year or two ago a paragraph went the rounds of the papers to the effect that a king of a tribe on the west coast of Africa had a mania for collecting British war medals, and that a city firm had a standing order to supply his noble majesty. The king owned a major-general's sash, on which were sewn—both back and front, and from collar to tails—sixty of the clasp of the Victoria Cross of the peninsula and Waterloo downward. This ornament the monarch proudly sported on extra special state occasions.—*Ensign.*

### PNEUMATIC JAILS.

Various novel forms of jails are proposed from time to time. One scheme was the use of pipes for the bars, so that any attempt to cut them would let out water flowing in them. Another plan of similar nature based on the use of compressed air has been worked out very thoroughly. The walls of the vaults or cells are steel tubes spaced about 4 1/2 inches apart, and the floor and ceiling are of double steel plates, with an air space between. These tubes and air spaces are all in communication, and are kept filled with compressed air. In case the bars are cut in an attempt to escape the air pressure at once sounds an automatic alarm at any desired point. The door is also built up with air tubes, and the lock is also protected by a hollow hinged bar swinging across its face. This must be raised before the lock can be got at. The tubes contain in their interior octagonal bars about 3/4 of an inch in diameter of hardened tool steel. These are pivoted at the ends, and readily turn, so that even if the air pressure were removed the cell would be as difficult to escape from as any other now on the market.

### SECRETARY ALGER AND THE SPARROWS.

By direction of the secretary of war, the sparrow's nest and contents thereof, located on the east portico of the war department, shall not be removed, molested, or approached until further notification.

Such was the substance of an order promulgated by Secretary Alger just before his recent departure from Washington for a three week's sojourn in the West.

During the spring the sparrows have a habit of building their nests in the crevices of the state, war, and navy buildings. One particular bold bird invaded the portico in front of the secretary's office and built a nest in the folds of the awning. The sun shade remained closed for a number of weeks, and the mother bird and her family were progressing nicely, when a hot day caused the secretary to order the awning lowered.

As one of the messengers left the covering down the nest containing four half-fledged sparrows fell to the stone portico. Secretary Alger saw the hawk that had been doing, and instructed the messenger to place the nest in one of the cool corners and rebuke the young birds to their broken home. He then issued the above order. Two of the birds have attained their growth and departed, while the others are snugly close together awaiting their turn to leave their birthplace.—*Washington Star.*

### DRUNKEN CATS IN A FIGHT.

A most exciting cat fight occurred last week in the back room of N. Bergmeyer's saloon. Thirteen cats met there, presumably to discuss plans by which they could most effectually disturb midnight slumbers, when, in the midst of a discussion, and while a large tomcat was making an impassioned address, a dispute arose and the fun began. Fur flew and a din was made that aroused the town. It was dangerous to attempt to quell the riot, as the cats seemed perfectly wild. After a few minutes they ceased from sheer exhaustion, and three cats lay stone dead, the others staggering off to their various homes. They presented such an appearance of intoxication that George Motz, the barber, made an investigation and found that the cats had been drinking beer which had been left in a keg in a corner of the room. He determined to watch the keg, and late that evening saw a cat walk into the room, slyly creep to the keg, where it drank until hilarious. This story may appear incredible, but it is a fact, nevertheless.—*Greenup (Ky.) Democrat.*

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## BACK FROM 'FRISCO

### GOV. T. T. GEER AND PARTY IN A TRAIN WRECK.

Condition of the Volunteers as Seen by Others of the Oregon Party—A Great Reception.

(From Daily, July 18th.)

Gov. T. T. Geer, accompanied by his staff, returned from San Francisco on yesterday morning's overland train, having enjoyed an extremely pleasant visit in the California metropolis, and greeted Oregon's war-torn veterans upon their arrival on the home shores from a fourteen-months' campaign in the Philippines. Gov. Geer expressed himself as highly pleased with the reception accorded him in San Francisco, saying that, within a few hours after his arrival, Gen. Wm. Shafter, the hero of Santiago, called upon him at his quarters, and tendered him the services of the military in any way possible; that every few hours General Shafter's aid called to ascertain if anything could be done for the veterans, and the military, as well as civil authorities, were unceasing in their attentions. The greeting extended volunteers by the people of San Francisco was most enthusiastic and was much appreciated. During the parade while the carriage occupied by the governor and his staff were preceding the volunteers, General Summers, who led the battle-scarred troops, was presented with a beautiful bouquet of carnations. He immediately urged his horse to the side of the governor's carriage and presented the flowers to Gov. Geer amid the thunderous applause of the thousands lining the streets.

On the way home Gov. Geer and party met with quite an adventure. At Blue cut, ten miles south of Delta, Shasta county, while the overland train was crossing the steel bridge across the Sacramento river, the next to the last car in the train, an observation car, turned the rail and left the track. The Pullman, the last car in the train, and which was occupied by the governor's party, also left the track, the wheels of both cars cutting deep into the cross-ties. The accident was caused by the breaking loose from the car, the front trucks, and they immediately left the track. They made such a train as to break the coupling connecting the observation with the train, bringing the two last coaches to a sudden stop, one on either side of the track, and still coupled together. Some of the ladies were slightly cut and bruised, but no one was dangerously injured. Gov. Geer said the escape of the party from an awful fate was miraculous, the breaking of the coupling and the guard rails on the bridge preventing a fearful accident. Had the accident occurred on any of the high trestles of the road, instead of on the steel bridge, instant death would have been the fate of the entire party.

Justice H. A. Johnson, who arrived home from San Francisco yesterday morning, had numerous messages to deliver from members of the regiment by anxious and solicitous relatives of the boys, whose many inquiries he answered to the best of his advantage.

During the afternoon Justice Johnson was seen by a Statesman representative to whom he said he never enjoyed a trip more than he did his visit to San Francisco. On Wednesday, Mr. Johnson and other members of the Salem reception committee accompanied Governor Geer and staff aboard a small vessel to greet the boys, but he only came within hailing distance of the transports but he caught sight of his son Claude, a member of Company M. Early the next morning Mr. Johnson and District Attorney Hayden, together with three Portland gentlemen, chartered a small launch and went out to the transport Ohio, upon which they found both of the Marion county companies. They

George P. Litchfield yesterday received a letter from his son, George, a member of Company K, who complained of the lack of proper clothing for the boys assigned to guard duty in the camp, but it will be seen from the telegraphic dispatches that the needs of the boys in that respect have been provided for.

The following appeared in the Albany Herald of Sunday morning:

"Frank M. Girard, a member of Company I, Oregon volunteers, arrived in Albany yesterday from San Francisco. He came contrary to orders, but under conditions which will arouse sympathy in his behalf. On reaching San Francisco harbor, while yet on shipboard, he received a dispatch announcing that his mother, who resides near Monmouth, Oregon, was dying, and asking him to come at once. He appealed to the proper officer for a furlough, submitting the telegram as a reason, but it was refused. By the aid of sympathetic comrades, he was let down by a rope over the ship's side into a small boat and was rowed ashore. He took the train at once for Albany. Arriving here, he hired a buggy and driver and hastened to his home. After remaining at the bedside of his mother a few minutes, he came out weeping and told the driver, Frank McClung, that his mother was yet alive but very low, and said that he would return to his regiment within a few days.

"Young Girard enlisted in I Company from Albany. He is a young man of unquestioned veracity, and was an excellent soldier. He had in his possession the original telegram received by him in San Francisco.

"Influential friends will endeavor to secure a release for him from the serious charge of desertion."

In its account of the welcome extended to, and the parade by, the Ore-

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were received on board where they spent the day with their near relatives from whom they had so long been separated. They took dinner with Captain Worrick and Lieutenant Murphy.

On the following day the boys landed and Mr. Johnson says the reception the boys were accorded was simply grand. He expressed himself unable to find words adequate in their meaning to fittingly express the demonstration. He says the Californians did themselves proud. The troops marched directly to the Presidio where they were assigned quarters. The Salemites obtained leaves of absence for their soldier boys whom they escorted to the city during the afternoon and regaled at banquets and sightseeing until Saturday afternoon shortly before they started for Salem.

The health of the boys is reported generally good by Mr. Johnson, but Bert Low is quite seriously ill in the hospital. He was first stricken with diphtheria but other complications have set in. The boys all appear thin and fagged out but are strong and hearty. They are not so badly tanned as Mr. Johnson had expected to find them.

Asked as to what the boys thought of the criticism they were being subjected to by small representatives of their native state, for desiring to be mustered out in San Francisco, Mr. Johnson said the volunteers thought it was asking too much of them to request that they sacrifice their travel pay, which means an actual profit of about \$25 per man. The average volunteer has saved nothing from his meagre earnings as a private and he will need every cent that is available in order to begin life anew. Speaking for the Salem, or rather Marion county companies, Mr. Johnson says they do not crave receptions, banquets, etc. but, on the contrary, are desirous of getting home as soon as possible. While they will enjoy being received by their friends at home, the boys do not desire to go to Portland, or in fact any other place, to be tendered receptions at the hands of people with whom they are personally unacquainted.

Justice Johnson says he does not believe the volunteers can be mustered out and returned to their homes within less time than four weeks. One of the Portland companies brought over with them a real, live curio—a young Filipino, aged about 10 years, who has been adopted as company mascot. The importation is as ugly as his skin is dark, but the boys are proud of him and see to it that he knows no want, having purchased for him an entire outfit of citizens' clothing. Mr. Johnson happened to be on the first section of the overland train and did not experience the wreck in California, although his section did run over and kill a man, whose name was not obtained, at Gold Hill. The good natured "squire" was presented a box of genuine Manila Perfectos by his son Claude, and he was very generous in his distribution of the choice cigars among his friends. The writer can attest the splendid quality of the imported article.

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In its account of the welcome extended to, and the parade by, the Ore-

gon volunteer soldiers at San Francisco on last Friday, the Chronicle has the following:

"Some companies looked much better than others. In the band were men who seemed scarcely able to drag one foot after another, but Captain Worrick's men of Company K, all Salemites from the quiet tree-bordered capitulation, showed that some one had been looking out for them, though even these were lean to the point of thinness and on their tall frames was not one ounce of superfluous flesh.

"Nor did the volunteers smile and look around and court attention, as they did when they went away. No one who remembers that march down to the dock will ever forget how the men smiled and nodded and called back encouragingly; how red and round their cheeks were; how light their hearts. These men whose tread was so much heavier, and whose bodies were so much lighter, it scarcely seemed that they could be the same. And they looked neither up nor down, neither to the right nor left. Once in a while a woman ran out, usually an old one, utterly regardless of those who might be looking on, caught a face between her hands and pressed some head, battered campaign hat and all, close to her breast. And then she kissed the changed mouth of the boy who would always seem a little lad to her, even though he had shot a hundred Filipino arrows or so. And, scarcely attaching his pace, the son kissed back, straightened his hat and walked on, and those who saw the pretty act of mother love and utter self-forgetfulness felt a grip on their throats and a smarting of their eyes, for these are the times when humanity closes its ranks.

"Occasionally a woman walked for a while at the side of the man who evidently belonged to her by right of the common blood in their veins, lengthening her step to his. Sometimes she pressed his hand and looked worshipfully at him, while a dark red flush crept up under his yellow skin and he showed the shyness bred of long months of camp life without the softening influence of good women. Other women, with altruistic interest or because of some one in another regiment, threw flowers until by the time the regiment had reached Kearny street there was scarcely a man without a posy."

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