

ballo. They were happy evenings those! For three years we kept up these friendly meetings, and performed, besides our essay piece, the *Clemenza di Tito*, *Figaro*, *Don Juan*, and the *Così fan tutte*. At the end of this period the

Opera people had began to honour Mozart by their tardy patronage: the Philharmonic Concert also were established, and our little society, like *Othello*, found its 'occupation gone.' [To be continued.]

## SIGNOR PAGANINI.

THE emotion excited in the public mind by the Reform question having somewhat subsided, a new subject for attention was soon found in Signor Paganini's announcement of a concert, the first of a series, and in the prices of admission which this stranger was advised to demand. The following is the modest advertisement which appeared in all the daily papers; and we will assist in preserving such a document, for it really amounts to an historical one, inasmuch as it contributes to show to what impositions the wealthy classes in this country had by degrees suffered themselves to become accustomed, and the state of vicious luxury into which they had fallen, before such a measure could have been contemplated with any hope of success, and before their understandings could have been exposed to so gross an insult.

### 'THE KING'S THEATRE.

'SIGNOR PAGANINI respectfully informs the Nobility, Subscribers, and Frequenters of the Opera and the Public, that he will give a GRAND MISCELLANEOUS CONCERT of VOCAL and INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC, at this Theatre, TOMORROW EVENING.

'Prices of Boxes:—Pit Tier, 8 Guineas; Ground Tier, 10 Guineas; One Pair, 9 Guineas; Two Pair, 6 Guineas; Three Pair, 4 Guineas; Stalls, 2 Guineas: Orchestra, 1½ Guinea; Admission to the Pit, 1 Guinea; Ditto to the Gallery, Half a Guinea.'

We have every possible respect for rare talent, and think that it ought to be always most amply rewarded. But even granting the vast superiority of the artist in question—which is yet to be proved to us English people—it will not be disputed, we suppose, that the talent of a mere violinist may be overpaid. That the performances of Signor Paganini would have produced a sum infinitely greater than the most extravagant generosity could have thought adequate, had he succeeded in filling the theatre on the terms he proposed, will surely be evident from the subjoined statement. If this does not flash conviction on the minds of all who read it, then indeed is the cause of reason in a hopeless state in this country, and we must consent not only to become the contempt, the laughing-stock of all the world, but expect to find the great bulk of our population inquiring into the moral, if not the legal, right of certain classes to be guilty of such reckless, such unaccountable profusion.

The stalls in the King's Theatre are 100. The orchestra will hold about 150. The pit, 800. There are 43 boxes in the pit and ground tiers, as also in the first and second circles; and all together 34 in the third circle. The gallery, with the slips, will contain 900.

Stalls, 100 at 2 guineas	200
Orchestra, 150 at 1½ ditto	225
Pit, 800 at 1 ditto	800
Pit tier, at 8 ditto	344
Ground tier, at 10 ditto	430
1st Circle, or one pair, at 9 ditto	387
2nd Circle, or two pair, at 6 ditto	258
3rd Circle, or three pair, at 4 ditto	136
Gallery and slips at 10s. 6d.	450
	3230 guineas,

or three thousand three hundred and ninety-one pounds sterling! If this is divided by 3, it will appear that for every night, for about an hour's fiddling, Signor Paganini would have been paid two thousand two hundred and sixty pounds; and M. Laporte, for what he would not have expended above 150*l.*, if so much, would have received one thousand one hundred and thirty pounds for each concert!

This was too much for even the English nation to bear. An amiable nobleman of the very highest rank, who is always ready most liberally to patronize merit, set the example of resistance to such extortion, and indignantly ordered that his box should not be retained. The newspaper press also took the matter up, and the following article appeared in *The Times* of May the 9th.

'LAPORTE AND PAGANINI.—Laporte's presumption in doubling the prices of admission to the King's Theatre, on the first night of Paganini's performance, is one of those extravagances which could only have entered the head of a foreigner, who had beforehand arrived at the happy conviction, moreover, of the infinite gullibility of the English nation. To understand this more clearly, it is necessary to bear in mind, that the whole theatre is on this occasion set apart, not for a dramatic performance, but for a concert merely, and that it will hold, if filled, at the ordinary prices, at least 1500*l.* in money. The expense to be sustained is considerably less than on an ordinary night. There is no chorus, no *corps dramatique*, nor *corps de ballet*, to be engaged. Nothing is wanted but an orchestra, the whole attraction centering, in fact, in the single talent of Paganini, which, without doubt, having the concurrent testimony of all Europe, is of no common kind. But is he justified, or Laporte for him, in levying this enormous tax on those who may desire to form their own opinion of him by hearing his performance on the violin? We have had instances enough before in this country of extravagant pretensions on the part of Opera singers, dancers, and others; yet none of them, in the full zenith of their popularity, and with far stronger reasons on their side, ever ventured on such an outrageous proceeding as this. What Paganini's audiences have submitted to in Frankfort, Berlin, Hamburgh, Paris, and other places, has nothing to do with this question. The public there are little in the habit of exercising their right over the mode of admission to public places, and the prices at the King's Theatre are already higher than any others in Europe. They secure, as they are, the most brilliant recompense that can possibly await individual talent. We may allow, perhaps, to very rare eminence in a public performer, that he shall occasionally count his hundreds for a single night; but this scheme, should the public swallow the bait, may possibly secure his thousands to Paganini: he may appropriate as much in that one night as former managers have assigned to our Billingtons and Catalanis for a whole season. There can be nothing in his art, a mere instrumental performance, so great a prodigy, as to deserve such a price. The frequenters of the King's Theatre are frivolous enough, perhaps, many of them, to take their estimate of Paganini's concert by the rate of admission which is demanded to it; but the common sense of the great majority of them will, we are persuaded, furnish the best remedy for such extortion, by causing them to absent themselves till Laporte and his foreign idol are brought to their senses.'

We subjoin a sort of answer to this, which appeared

in *The Courier* of the same day, throwing all the blame on Signor Paganini, and defending M. Laporte.

'There is much truth and justice in these observations with reference to the unreasonable, and, indeed, almost insolent demand of Paganini; but a more ill-natured and unjust attack than this upon M. Laporte was never made upon any individual. It is not M. Laporte's fault that the indifference of the public to the regular exertions of our managers of public places of entertainment drives him and others to extraordinary means of meeting the enormous expenditure of their establishments, and that they are compelled to accede to the exorbitant demands of talented foreigners. If there be no novelty of a very striking character at the King's Theatre, M. Laporte is charged with want of enterprise, and his receipts fall below his expenses; and if, in order to please the public, and to have a chance of recovering some of the loss occasioned by want of the encouragement due to his past exertions, he should engage artists of established fame, he is compelled to submit to their demands, and, in consequence of them, to raise the prices of admission to his theatre. We agree fully with our contemporary as to what is said of the absurdity of the encouragement given to the unreasonable pretensions of such persons as Paganini; and, as far as he is concerned, we could wish to see the King's Theatre a desert on the first night of his appearance; but after such a season as all the theatres have had, we must not be too hard upon the managers for attempting to stem the torrent of pecuniary disappointment. M. Paganini's pretensions are certainly in a high degree extravagant and offensive; but we must not involve M. Laporte in a censure more justly due to the public, who compel managers to have recourse to such means of covering losses which have been caused by the indifference of the public to the greatness of their risks, and the anxieties attendant upon their exertions.'—*Courier*, May 19, 1831.

This actually assumes that M. Laporte sought to obtain the services of Signor Paganini, as much with a view to please the public as in order to profit by the exhibition. *Credat!* If the expenses of the King's Theatre are so enormous, and the enterprise is attended by loss, let the accounts be fairly and openly stated. But no, this may not be done, the public will rest assured.

The foregoing article was next day followed by the annexed reply to it in *The Times*.

#### 'PAGANINI.

(From a very well-informed Correspondent, whose statement is worthy of general attention.)

'An evening paper of yesterday, while it concurs in our remarks on the prices demanded by Signor Paganini, seems to think that what we have said bears rather too hard on M. Laporte. Figures and facts are proverbially stubborn things; and on these we rely for our justification of all that has fallen from us on the subject in question. First, we now state, from a calculation that cannot be disputed, that the King's Theatre, at the prices demanded by the Italian violinist, would hold the enormous sum of 3980*l.*, or, in round numbers, 4000*l.*!—a sum which, if properly invested, would give to Signor Paganini and his heirs, &c., for ever, the income of an Italian gentleman; and this for a single performance, the duration whereof could not altogether exceed, in the course of the evening, a single hour. It is reported, and upon authority, that the receipts of this musician during the six weeks he has just passed in Paris, amounted to 124,000 francs, or 5000*l.* For this remuneration,—and vast it is,—he performed frequently, and thought himself most amply rewarded,—a matter in which few, we should think, will be inclined to differ from him. When he arrives in this country—a country almost literally paved with gold, so far as relates to foreign artists—he at once demands, for one evening, nearly as much as he had gained in the capital of the neighbouring kingdom for ten or a dozen; calculating, doubtless, on that gullibility which is a feature in our national character perfectly understood in every *foyer* and in every orchestra in Europe.

'We are much misinformed if M. Laporte has not stipulated to be paid, for the use of his theatre and performers, one-third of Signor Paganini's gross receipts. Now, we well know how cheaply he gets the services of his band, and believe that most of his singers, if not all, are, by their engagements, obliged to perform gratis at any concert he may give, or contract for, at the King's Theatre. Will, we beg leave to inquire, M. Laporte's expenses exceed 180*l.* in the event of Paganini's concert taking place? The difference, then, between this sum and the receipts at first expected, shows how moderately M. Laporte estimates the value of his theatre for a single evening, and how reasonable is his expected share of the tax intended to be laid on a too easy British public!

'As to M. Laporte's implied want of success this season, to what is it to be imputed? Did not the booksellers take nearly as many boxes as usual, at a preposterous price? Did the subscribers fall off in any proportion to the exorbitant sums demanded of them? We answer in the negative. But if the money received at the doors, up to the period of Madame Pasta's arrival, amounted to little, where shall we seek the cause? Why, in the miserable state of the company engaged, in the want of novelty in the performances, and in the imperfect manner in which even the worn-out pieces were performed. John Bull is a patient animal up to a certain point; but when he passes this, he always proves himself a determined one; and as he is not easily provoked, so he is not readily pacified. It is understood that up to this moment only two boxes have been taken.'

The above was immediately followed by the subjoined observation of the *Times* editor, and the letter to him from M. Laporte.

'Since this was printed we have received the following communication from Mr. Laporte. The fiddler himself should now come forward.'

#### 'TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

'SIR.—It is with deep regret that I have seen in your paper a paragraph which tends to throw upon me the intended advance of prices on Signor Paganini's concert.

'A feeling of delicacy, and the lateness of the hour, when, on my return to town, the said paragraph came to my knowledge, do not allow me to enter, for the present, into a minute explanation; but I hope that a further investigation of the case will be granted to me, when I have no doubt my character will be cleared of an undeserved charge, and restored to that public estimation which it has ever been the aim of my exertions to obtain.

'I have the honour to remain,

'Your obedient humble servant,

'F. F. LAPORTE.

'King's Theatre, May 19.—11 o'clock p. m.'

On Monday the 23rd, *The Times* returned to the subject, and, it appears to us, left little to be added by any other writer.

'It is to be feared, and we announce it with some concern, conscious that we may possibly have contributed our share to the calamity, that Signor Paganini, displeased at the "bad taste" of the English nation in not coming forward with a contribution of 4000*l.* for one of his inimitable performances, has determined on withdrawing from this country without suffering even one of his notes to be heard within it! Was there ever an event more to be deplored—more fatal in its consequences—than this? We lose not only the wonder of art with which Europe has rung for years past, but our character for taste—for hospitality even—is irretrievably gone. That science, which his stay among us was to have improved so much, must remain in its present state of barbarity. The ingratitude of Signor Paganini's reception is as striking as its other bad concomitants. He had set out on the tour of Europe, his halo of glory blazing round him, in the shape of biographical anecdotes and newspaper criticisms, and every town to which he advanced, consequently, was ready to purchase, at a higher price, sounds realizing the idea of Apollo and his lyre. A climax of golden anticipations floated before his imagination, at the top of which

was England, for whom the honour was to have been reserved of paying the highest price for that which is beyond all price, and establishing, as a necessary consequence, the highest rank in taste of all the European nations.

'To drop, however, this strain. Having, as there is reason to believe, irretrievably lost Paganini, it may be worth while to consider, if we are to be pronounced Goths and barbarians for rejecting him, whether we have not gained in some other way by his visit. The mere proposition to commit some act of immeasurable absurdity, sometimes brings those to their senses, who have gone on without reflection for years in the commission of acts, only a few degrees less absurd, and precisely of the same character. Paganini, we suspect, in this view of the case, may be turned to infinitely good account, by causing attention to be directed to the injustice of the mode of compensation to professors of his class; the spirit of extortion and oppression which it induces in the conductors of our places of public amusement, and the consequent suffering and degradation which it entails on all but the favoured few. To trace the evil only in the history of the King's Theatre for the last twenty-five years, will bring forth abundant illustrations of its workings. The *début* of Madama Catalani alone cramped the means and destroyed the comforts of a hundred families. To enable the manager to pay this queen of song the 5000*l.* which was her demand, exclusive of benefits, for the season, the stipend of almost every other retainer of the theatre was reduced. The orchestra principally suffered, and the poor figurantes were, we believe, cut down to some such pittance as 7*s.* weekly, out of which they were to find their own shoes. It was in vain to remonstrate or to rebel against such tyranny as this. The manager had his cue from the avaricious creature who formed the attraction of the day. He knew that to be discharged from his employ was felt to involve some loss of character, and that numbers would cling to it almost without any pay at all. He was peremptory, therefore, and generally carried his point. It sometimes happened that even this low salary, from the failure of funds, was never paid at all, while the great singer or dancer took care to secure theirs, by being paid part beforehand, with security for the remainder. On one occasion, not so distant as the reign of Catalani, the orchestra, with whom the manager was considerably in arrear, had no other mode of obtaining their just due but by refusing to play at the moment when the curtain was about to be drawn up.

'When once the system of low prices was established, it became, of course, under any circumstances, the standing rule of the theatre, being more or less aggravated by the personal character of the managers, among whom, however, during a long succession of them, it was rare to meet with anything like liberal dealing. Nothing, indeed, is to be deplored, in regard to our theatres generally,—forming, as they do, an important part of the amusement of the public,—than the sort of management under which, in a great majority of instances, they fall; and it is really painful in the highest degree to contemplate the insults and mortifications to which the numerous class of persons composing the *cortège* of a theatre are exposed, when subjected to the rule of a vulgar and sordid mind. It adds doubly to all the necessary evils of the star system, to which we have been referring. The present lessee of the King's Theatre, M. Laporte, is as good, perhaps, as many of his predecessors in this respect; yet his avarice, or the payment of too high salaries to individual performers, leads him to do things which the public ought not to permit, if the appeal of the injured parties could reach them. We are told, for example, and let him deny it if he can, that when Pasta performs, or a full night from any other cause is expected, a portion of the orchestra is removed to make room for visitors, who pay one guinea each for seats in that part of the house. But the members of the orchestra, whose services are dispensed with on such occasions, are uniformly deprived of their pay, though actually in attendance, or informed, perhaps, only a few hours before, that they will not be wanted, and though they have earned half that pay by assisting at the rehearsal of the music. The manager makes thus a double profit. He gains the price of the seat, and saves the half-guinea, or whatever the pittance may be, of the luckless musical professor. This abuse, and

others of the like kind, would be remedied if the public did their duty, especially at this theatre, which boasts one of the most aristocratic audiences in the world; and we do not see why the Duke of Devonshire, or any other distinguished member of the world of fashion, should not hint to the lessee of this its great place of resort, that any instance of oppression or ungentlemanly treatment of those under his control would forfeit the continuance of his patronage.

'In fine, let the public, instead of setting up as their idol this or that musical professor,—and chiefly, perhaps, for the most vulgar of all qualities, mechanical skill,—learn to value the art for its combinations, for its perfection as a whole. They will then acquire an interest in the fate of the humblest member of the profession, and, it may be, the respect of Paganini himself, notwithstanding the treatment he has just experienced at their hands.'

The following, however, removed any doubts which the article in *The Courier* might have raised regarding M. Laporte's share in the business. It shows also that, in addition to one-third of the receipts, he was to have had each night fourteen of the best boxes and thirty-three free admissions, which may fairly be valued at about 170*l.* for each concert, over and above the one-third of the receipts stipulated for!

'SUBSTANCE OF THE ARTICLES BETWEEN SIGNOR PAGANINI AND M. LAPORTE.

[From the *Observer*.]

'We have received the annexed defence of the conduct of the Signor put forth on his behalf by his friends, and we had at the same time an opportunity of examining the agreement with M. Laporte, under which Paganini engaged to give concerts at the King's Theatre. From an attentive consideration of the terms of that agreement, and of the correspondence which has taken place since, we are bound to admit, that if Paganini was fond of high prices,—and who is not?—Laporte was quite willing to second his efforts to obtain them. The agreement stipulates on the part of Laporte, that he is to take one-third of the gross receipts; that Paganini is in all cases to guarantee to him 290*l.* sterling per night; that if the receipts should fall short of that sum, Paganini is to make it good; that Laporte is to have 14 boxes and 33 admissions to the best seats of the house during each night of the performance; that these performances are to be for eight nights up to the 20th of June; that Paganini is not to play elsewhere for money; and that the prices of admission, and all minor arrangements, are to be settled between M. Laporte for himself and Signor Torri, or some other person for Paganini.

'It is plain, from an examination of these terms, that M. Laporte had a secure monopoly of the best days of the violinist; but we suspect that this had a due influence on the Signor, and that under the advice of Pacini, who acted for him, it was he who, following the course he had pursued elsewhere, inconsiderately proposed that the prices should be doubled. We shall be glad to find that Laporte, who must have understood the effect of this arrangement, has been able to free himself from anything but a tardy consent to it; and we wait with impatience his promised explanation. In the mean time, we should observe, that as the agreement stipulated for eight nights before the 20th of June, and as it is found, on an examination of the engagements of the King's Theatre, that there are not more than half that number of nights open to the performances of Paganini before the day mentioned, the Signor considers himself, by that circumstance, as well as others, absolved from his engagement; and proposes, if he is borne out by legal authority in that view of the case, to give forthwith a series of concerts at Willis's Rooms, and at the ordinary prices of such entertainments. The following statement is put forth by the friends of Paganini:—

“The appearance in the newspapers of a letter, dated May 19, signed by M. Laporte, renders it indispensable for the friends of Paganini to interfere, in order to disabuse the public mind in respect of the imputations endeavoured to be thrown upon him on the subject of the high prices of admission for his



proposed concerts. It is proper the public should be informed that Paganini comes to England expressly at the invitation of Laporte, fettered by a contract, the object of which is to ensure to Laporte a large proportion of the profits of his performances, and with complete indemnity for the expenses of the house, and, further, secures to Laporte each night 14 boxes and 33 free admissions. How, then, can it be fairly imputed to a foreigner on his first arrival in England, totally unacquainted with the usages and habits of the country, and ignorant of the national character, that he should be the person to hazard any measure calculated to excite public indignation or distaste, when it is evidently so greatly to his interest to conciliate the favour of a nation whom he justly considers as the most zealous in their patronage of the arts?

"The article of the contract above alluded to, founded upon Paganini's in these matters, expressly provides that a gentleman named therein, on his part, should act in concert with M. Laporte, and should arrange with him 'the selection of the days of performance, the price of the places, and other details.' And yet, in the face of this, M. Laporte evidently strives by his letter, to clear himself from the odium of the advance of prices, by throwing that upon the foreigner.

"Paganini's apology of last night will no doubt be appreciated by a liberal public as a just deference to its expressed opinion, and which course he adopted the moment it was called to his attention. The indulgence of the public, under these circumstances, will, no doubt, be readily extended to Paganini, who flatters himself that his appearance before a British audience will not only be altogether free from any marks of disapprobation, but will be as gratifying to his feelings as that by which he has been honoured in the other capitals of Europe.

"It would be particularly acceptable to Paganini, that his performances should be upon the usual footing of first-rate concerts, in regard to prices, which, if he were in a condition to exercise his own free will, he is convinced would be most conducive to his interests, inasmuch as his high reputation would, in that case, naturally secure for him most extensive audiences. It was the policy of Laporte to tie him down to a few nights of performance during his stay in London, upon terms, which, if carried into effect, at the ordinary prices, would be extremely disadvantageous, and would, in no degree, realize the just expectations of this extraordinary performer, who considers himself greatly prejudiced by the contract he has entered into, and from which he has every reason to believe the conduct of M. Laporte has allowed him honourably to relieve himself."

No attempt has yet been made to controvert any of the former statements. A lame letter, it is true, appeared in *The Chronicle* of the 23rd, which we insert, but it does anything rather than aid the cause it is intended to defend.

#### 'TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING CHRONICLE.'

'Sir,—I take the liberty of addressing a few words to you on the subject of Signor Paganini's late proposed prices, and I do so in a spirit of mere justice to all parties. Your paper of this morning contains a statement\*, avowedly from the friends of that gentleman, which calls for some observations. It is now admitted that the doubling the prices was first proposed by Signor Paganini, under the advice of his agent; that he did so, "inconsiderately following the course he had pursued elsewhere." This latter sentence points to the real source of Signor Paganini's error, and deserves a fuller explanation than has been given to it. Abroad, most of the great theatres are supported in great part by the governments, and not by the prices of admission. They are in fact, in so much, donations to the public of theatrical entertainments, and the prices are consequently far below what I may call the natural prices. Here, things are upon a wholly different footing. All our theatres are private speculations, and all our prices are consequently wound up to their full pitch. To double prices here, is therefore a very different thing from doubling them at the continental

theatres. The not having sufficiently adverted to these considerations easily enough led to error in Signor Paganini, and even in M. Laporte himself. In addition to this, the Signor has, without delay, expressed himself ready, and even anxious, to correct the mistake into which he has fallen, so as fully to meet the public wishes.

'Under all these circumstances, I think Signor Paganini may rest assured, that whenever he may appear before a London audience he will be received with all the enthusiasm which his extraordinary fame and unrivalled excellence give him a right to expect, and that he will reap a pecuniary harvest without example since the days of Farinelli.

'But having said thus much in behalf of the great artist, I am in justice bound to say a word or two of M. Laporte. It is to be regretted that Signor Paganini's friends should have thought themselves under the necessity, while they vindicated him, of turning the public ill-humour against M. Laporte, and of throwing as much odium upon him as possible. It is admitted that the proposal to double the prices originated with the Signor. M. Laporte, therefore, did no more than acquiesce, and that too in a case in which, from the greater share in the receipts which Signor Paganini was to have, as well as from there being a certain sum secured to M. Laporte in all events, the Signor was naturally the person to take the lead in fixing the prices. M. Laporte may have demanded high advantages for the use of his theatre. It was to be expected that he would do so. He has the exclusive command of our greatest theatrical establishment. He is liable to great expenses and to great losses, and the present case was one which was sure to leave to the great artist himself an abundant remuneration. It is also to be recollected, that the present Manager of the King's Theatre has been in the habit of supplying us with all the first performers in their art, and that it is to him we owe the immediate presence of Paganini himself amongst us. Surely, then, there is no just ground of public complaint against M. Laporte.

#### 'AN ENTIRE STRANGER TO ALL THE PARTIES.'

Any one reading the above, and being uninformed of the real state of things, might almost be led to conclude that M. Laporte engages performers for the Opera, from a pure and disinterested wish to oblige the English nation! The writer takes us for greater dupes than we really are. However, all this produced a note, addressed to M. Laporte, and advertised in the newspapers, in the following terms.

'Sir, Friday, 20th May.

'Finding myself too unwell, I request you will respectfully inform the Public, that the Concert announced for to-morrow will not take place. Your obedient Servant,

To M. Laporte. (Signed) NICOLÒ PAGANINI.'

And it was immediately rumoured that the great violinist would quit our shores in disgust, for ever! But the Signor is too cunning a person to do any such thing; on the contrary he and M. Laporte have come to a fresh agreement, and we are, *if we choose to attend*, to hear this wonder-working fiddle six times this month; the first concert to take place on the 3rd instant. Now, after the daring attempt made and frustrated, it seems to us that the public should stipulate for their own terms, and demand that the Opera prices be reduced one half at Signor Paganini's concert or concerts; this would pay him enormously for his labour, and amply remunerate M. Laporte for any expense he may incur in furnishing the shamefully paid band, lights, door-keepers, and the one or two singers he may be called upon to engage.

We cannot conclude this article better than by the annexed letter, which must open the eyes of the most blind to the conspiracy against the purses of the good people of this metropolis.

#### 'TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.'

'Sir,—Being at Calais last week, I was informed by a gentleman, that the Signor had been performing at that place, and I

\* Copied from the 'Observer' Sunday Paper.

subsequently saw one of the bills, and was much surprised at the moderate charge for admittance; to subscribers five francs, and non-subscribers eight francs, and this just before he arrived at Dover. You may depend upon this as a fact.

‘ G. C.’

Our readers may rest assured that if they only hold back, they will find the prices at the King's Theatre reduced by Signor Paganini, and his colleagues, to whatever they can get.

## FESTIVAL OF THE SONS OF THE CLERGY.

THE rehearsal took place on Tuesday the 17th, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. With the exception of the overture to *Esther*, which was omitted, and a new *Cantate Domino*, composed for the occasion by Mr. Attwood, which was introduced, the selection was the same as usual: that is, the whole of the *Dettingen Te Deum*; Boyce's anthem, composed expressly for this charity, ‘ Lord thou hast been our refuge;’ Handel's Coronation Anthem, ‘ Zadoek the priest,’ and Hallelujah Chorus from the *Messiah*, together with the ‘ Gloria Patri’ to the ‘ Deus Misereatur,’ from Handel's *Jubilate*. Nothing can be said in praise of the performance at the rehearsal; it was altogether a most careless exhibition. Several of the choruses in the *Te Deum* could hardly have been so badly performed by a band of itinerants. The bass solo, ‘ Thou art the King of Glory,’ (announced in the bills to be sung by Mr. Phillips,) was omitted, in consequence of that gentleman's non-attendance; and although another gentleman (Mr. Blackburn, we believe) volunteered his services to perform it, still it was passed over, and they went on with the succeeding chorus in a very straggling sort of way—in all sorts of time. The disappointment in not hearing Mr. Harper's delightful trumpet accompaniment was generally felt, and afterwards bitterly complained of. Mr. Phillips's other solo, ‘ Vouchsafe, O Lord!’ was very respectably sung by Mr. Blackburn.

*Festival Day, Thursday 19th.*—This made up for the disappointment experienced on Tuesday. We never recollect a better performance on the grand day. The whole of the music (with a very slight exception, and which was only known in the orchestra) went off with great precision and accuracy. The effect, at times, was quite electric. We could not help noticing the majestic and ponderous effect of the organ in several of the choruses, especially in the pedal points. It was truly grand. The *Cantate Domino*, composed by Mr. Attwood, ought to have had a private rehearsal, and then to have had two more on Tuesday. It was very fairly performed on Thursday; but still we discovered a few defects in the instrumental parts, arising solely, no doubt, from the carelessness of the copyist. We allude to the trombone accompaniments in the 7th verse, ‘ With trumpets also

and with shawms.’ We hope to hear it better performed another year. The verse, for a soprano voice, ‘ Praise the Lord upon the harp,’ was most delightfully set and admirably sung. The accompaniment (organ obligato) was very effective. The collection on Tuesday amounted to 130*l.*; on Thursday to 257*l.*: the choir on each day was very crowded.

## ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

ON Thursday morning, May 12th, the pupils performed one of their monthly concerts at the Hanover Square Rooms, which were very well filled on the occasion. A new MS. symphony by C. Lucas was performed for the first time, and possesses a considerable share of actual merit as well as future promise. Young Blagrove played an air and variations by Mayseder with most deserved applause. This is the proper place wherein to hear the students of the Academy so long as they are called pupils, and they should be confined to these performances: they are not only out of place elsewhere, but it is a mistaken kindness, an act of indiscretion, to put them in competition with experienced persons, till they have completely finished their studies, and have quitted their school.

The other parts of the concert do not demand particular notice, nor did they show any striking advance in the progress of the pupils.

## GRESHAM PRIZE MEDAL.

WE have the pleasure to announce the intended establishment of an Annual Prize Medal for the best original composition in sacred vocal music. The words to be selected from the Canonical Scriptures, Apocrypha, or Liturgy of the Church of England. The conditions will be published in the *Harmonicon* for July.



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