The "Sticker Action" in Pianofortes

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used if another bar were added. So we see that neither of the above rules is definite, but that they give rise to various modes of using accidentals. One will write a passage as N; another will write it as O, and another as N.

P. Passages are frequently seen where an accidental B flat may occur in a certain bar; then the note is not seen again for three, five, or ten bars; but when it does occur again a *natural* is placed in front of it, thus leaving one to infer that if the natural had not been placed there the note would have been performed as B flat, from the influence of the flat which occurred three, five, or ten bars previously.

Again, writers of music do not divide themselves into classes, one using this rule and another that; I think it will be almost impossible to find a composer who does not use at least two different methods of employing his accidentals. Every person in the musical profession may find for himself numerous illustrations of what I have referred to above, in both vocal and instrumental music. But, for the sake of example, let any one examine St. Peter, pp. 48, 126; St. Paul, pp. 24, 35, 50; Mozart's Twelfth Mass, pp. 21, 29, 30 (Novello's Octavo Editions). Now this very unsatisfactory state of things proceeds entirely from the want of a *simple* and *definite* rule about accidentals. Such a rule I wish to suggest, viz. "Accidentals affect the notes which they immediately precede, and all other notes of the same name which follow, in the same bar, and in the same stave in which they appear. Accidentals in no case exercise any influence beyond the bar in which they appear." This rule would make the whole subject very simple, and would entirely do away with two different ways of writing the same passage. I can only further urge every one who reads this to study the matter carefully; and for the sake of *simplicity* and *unanimity* to adopt the rule I have suggested.—I am, sir, yours obediently, A. R. SWAINE.

Parish Church, Bradford, October 22, 1877.

THE "STICKER ACTION" IN PIANOFORTES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—I have had considerable experience with all sorts of pianofortes, English and foreign, having been a dealer for many years. I cannot agree with the letter from Messrs. Challen and Son in the September number, that the tape action is the most useful for foreign and country use. I think their own remarks prove the contrary; they admit that damp affects all actions in the centres and bushing. Now we get five centres at least in the tape action to one in the sticker; in the tape all leather parts of course, and keys also, are equally liable to swell, the loss of touch and blocking becomes quite as bad, and much more difficult to regulate by ordinary tuners. The fact is pianoforte makers are not the best judges of how any particular action will wear, because they seldom see their instruments after they once leave the factory, and little know the trouble we have with some of them afterwards or their state in a few years. That is the time to test a piano, after it has had some years' wear. I have done this with all sorts of pianos by very many different makers, and I find the best kind of action to be depended upon is the old sticker action with "round nose" levers; the touch is not so perfect as the slanting lever at first, but it is more lasting, safer to trust to without fear of blocking, easier to regulate when wrong than the tape action, and cheaper at any time to renovate. There is another great objection to the crank action: as soon as it becomes loose and worn it is noisy everywhere, and you cannot stop it without a general repair. I maintain that the more centres you have in any action the more likely is it to be affected by damp or extreme heat, the more liable to get stiff, and on the

other hand the more noisy from shrinking and the friction of so many small parts.

At present I know of nothing better than the sticker actions when well made, of good stuff, and properly regulated, unless it be the short actions of Erard, or Collard and Collard; these are first-rate, but, as we know, can only be used for expensive instruments—in the making of such these two great manufacturers have never been surpassed.—I am, sir, yours faithfully, ALFRED LEMARE.

44, High Street, Guildford, October 2, 1877.

[Our correspondent is surely in error in stating that pianoforte makers never see their instruments again after they leave their hands new. On the contrary, as they are often called upon to repair them, they have ample opportunities of finding how they have worn. Again, some makers let out their instruments on hire, and this is another source of valuable experience. It is a mistake to think that the crank action does not stand damp as well as the sticker action; the pianos that were sent on the recent Arctic Expedition in the *Alert* and *Discovery* were crank-action instruments of Broadwood's. They came back with strings completely rusted, yet we know, on dependable authority, that the actions were in good playing order; indeed, it is doubtful whether a sticker action would have stood so severe a trial with an equally satisfactory result. In closing this correspondence, with Mr. Lemare's letter, we must state our conviction that the sticker action, good as it has been, must ultimately yield to the more perfect crank action, which Messrs. Challen and Son have rightly credited the late Mr. Wornum with having invented.—Ed. MUSICAL TIMES.]

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

* Notices of concerts, and other information supplied by our friends in the country, must be forwarded as early as possible after the occurrence; otherwise they cannot be inserted. Our correspondents must specifically denote the date of each concert, for without such date no notice can be taken of the performance.

Our correspondents will greatly oblige by writing all names as clearly as possible, as we cannot be responsible for any mistakes that may occur.

Correspondents are informed that their names and addresses must accompany all communications.

We cannot undertake to return offered contributions; the authors, therefore, will do well to retain copies.

Notice is sent to all Subscribers whose payment (in advance) is exhausted. The paper will be discontinued where the Subscription is not renewed. We again remind those who are disappointed in obtaining back numbers that, although the music pages are always stereotyped, only a sufficient quantity of the rest of the paper is printed to supply the current sale.

D. P. W.—(1) Zellner's treatise on the Harmonium is published by Schreiber (late Spina), of Vienna, and has not been translated into English. (2) We do not at this moment recollect an example of the combination you mention in a harmonium solo; but you will find a specimen in the first movement of E. Proust's Duet in A for Piano and Harmonium, where it occurs in an unaccompanied passage for the latter instrument. (3) The figure 5 in harmonium arrangements is used to indicate the *voix céleste*.

MUS. BAC.—The Licentiate wears a black hood lined with violet and trimmed with white fur; the gown is of black stuff or silk. The hood worn by Honorary Licentiates, and by such others as under the new regulations shall have taken Honours, is of violet lined with white silk. For further particulars our correspondent should apply to the Registrar of Trinity College, London, W.

T. T.—Cherubini's work on Counterpoint would be a suitable book, but if you find that too difficult we should recommend you to await the appearance of Dr. Bridge's "Counterpoint" (Novello's Music Primers), which will be published shortly.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF COUNTRY NEWS.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for any opinions expressed in this Summary, as all the notices are either collated from the local papers or supplied to us by correspondents.

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH.—The vicar (Rev. J. Denton, M.A.) and choir of the Parish Church have presented Keble's "Christian Year," illustrated by Overbeck, together with an inkstand, to Mr. Whiteley, on his leaving for Kenilworth, in kind remembrance of his able services as Organist and Choirmaster during the last four years.

BELFAST.—The Choral Association gave its first grand Concert of the season in the Ulster Hall, on the 12th ult., before a large and thoroughly appreciative audience. The artists included Madame Sinico-Campobello, Mdle. Emma Howson, Madame Elena Franchi,