Unison or Harmony

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takes place, the combination of the *legato* and *staccato* touches being extremely effective. No. 2, alternating between E minor and major, is eccentric, but the theme is bald and dry, and misses that humour at which the composer evidently aimed. No. 3 contains some clever points, the second subject, especially, being well written and melodious. We quite admit that in A minor, G sharp may be in the harmony and G natural in the melody, but we cannot like the opening phrase: it is harsh and ungainly to our ears. As for the "characteristic" quality of these compositions we are inclined to admit only No. 1 as a success. What No. 2 has to do with a "Gnome's Wedding," we cannot comprehend; and the first bar of No. 3, of which we have already spoken, is scarcely a melody which we should associate with the gentle and refined nature of "Undine."

The Merry Beggar's Song.

I sing because I love to sing.

Words from "The Afterglow," composed by Mrs. Mounsey-Bartholomew.

THESE two songs should command the attention of all vocalists who desire to produce their effects by legitimate means, for they are in no respect written down to the level of a commonplace audience. No. 1 especially, although having a highly characteristic melody, is so handled throughout with the skill of a practised musician that, unlike most songs of this class, it appeals rather to the cultivated than the uncultivated listener. The bold subject in A minor, contains some excellent modulations, one of which—into B flat major—is exceedingly telling, and the final phrases of each verse may be also mentioned as happily illustrative of the words. In No. 2 we have praise not only for the music, but for the careful manner in which the true accent of the words has been studied, a qualification in a composer which cannot be overpraised, seeing what an excellent example it sets to a singer. As an instance of this, we might cite the opening phrase, where the lengthening out of the word "sing" gives precisely the emphasis with which the whole line would be read, and this, as we have said, is observable throughout the song. Here again we have some most effective modulations, that into the tonic minor, on the words "It cheers the brightest day," being one of the most attractive. We sincerely trust that these clever songs may meet with the success they deserve.

WEEKES AND Co.

Te Deum. Composed by Nicholas Heins.

THIS is a setting for voices in unison with organ accompaniment, and, as such, it will be welcome to many a minister who wishes to promote singing among his congregation, and who righteously detests the form of the Chant, as totally inappropriate to the Canticles, and as becoming tedious through its monotonous repetition when applied to anything but the doxology and the daily psalms. As a composition, the present is a little weak in its frequent beginnings and endings in the same key of C; but it has points of interest—the charming transition from A minor into F, at the words, "O Lord, have mercy upon us," for instance, and the voice part is melodious and easy to sing. One high recommendation of this mode of treating the subject, is, that it may present a good declamation of the texts, and so help the people to feel the words while they sing them; but this, the composer seems to have overlooked, or he would not have come to a full close, which is equivalent to a full stop in punctuation, on the words, "The Holy Church doth acknowledge Thee," and so cut them from the conclusion of the sentence, without saying what the Church acknowledges. Let him and others who essay this class of writing, give careful consideration to such matters, and they may render signal service to congregational music.

ORIGINAL CORRESPONDENCE.

UNISON OR HARMONY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MUSICAL TIMES.

SIR,—Reviewing the recent writings on this interesting question, it appears that we have (as the statesman would say) "three courses" before us.

The musical conservative will exclaim, "None of your new-fangled notions. Sing as in the good old times. True, the double air is an evil, but let only the organist throw in plenty of double-diapason and pedal-pipes, then, out of the evil good must come."

"Not so," cries the advanced reformer. "Don't you see the disturbing elements? Part-singing must perforce be put out of church. We'll nought but unison."

Now, advocating a middle course between these extreme views, I readily admit the trite truth that the pedal (like charity) "covereth a multitude of sins;" but it must be borne in mind that not every church-organ is provided with pedals—not every organist everlastingly persists in pedalling—and not in all "places where they sing" are organs or other musical instruments to be met with. Moreover, few musicians will be persuaded that any reasonable reinforcement of the bass will convert into sweet concord the horrible dissonance their ears experience, when lusty-vocaged male worshippers in the congregation "heartily" vociferate the 6th of a key, against vigorous tenors giving vent in the choir to the 7th (see first tune, "Hymns

Ancient and Modern," 3rd line).

An occasional unison has, undoubtedly, a charm; but its constant use, week after week, year after year, unrelieved by a particle of vocal harmony would, I fear, prove extremely distasteful to many.

Driven to the conclusion then that part-singing in church is (to say the least) desirable, I cannot shut my eyes to the pressing demand for the revision of many tunes and chants commonly used in congregational worship, inasmuch as all these ought to be so harmonised as to "go" satisfactorily by themselves, with or without the aid of an instrument and in spite of the frequently inevitable *double air*. It may not be possible to map out accurately the boundaries of this happy *via media*; nor may the exact positions be pointed of all the contrapuntal rocks and quicksands whereon many a good tune has been wrecked. Suffice it to be known, that (in this, more than any other branch of the divine art) there *are* harmonic "breakers a-head;" and the skilful pilot, with his eyes open, will not fail to distinguish and steer clear of the danger.

Your obedient servant,

J. CONWAY BROWN.

Aldershot, April 15th, 1874.

TALLIS MEMORIAL FUND.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MUSICAL TIMES.

SIR,—A few weeks ago I sent out nearly 200 circulars to members of the musical profession and others, soliciting subscriptions to a Fund formed (under an influential Committee) for the purpose of placing a brass to the memory of Thomas Tallis in Greenwich Parish Church, where he lies buried. In reply to those circulars I have been promised subscriptions to the amount of about £6. It is obvious that nothing worth doing can be done with so small a sum.

I do not believe that it is through any unwillingness to honour the memory of one to whom English music owes so much that more subscriptions have not been received; it is probably owing to a slight misapprehension of the wish and intention of the promoters of the Fund. Our desire is that no sum may be considered as too small as a