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Consecutive Sevenths and False Relations

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of the *Musical Times*, which he says points distinctly to a method identical with his: "It is not because Mr. Curwen has proved that the 'moveable Do' is the natural system of noting music for class singers, that his method of arranging letters in a straight line should universally obtain. There is much to be said for the *staff*, whatever may be the number of lines it contains; and we have a fixed conviction that it will never disappear, even if vocal music for classes should ultimately be printed relatively instead of absolutely." As no mention is here made of a *five-line staff*, we can scarcely see that these remarks anticipate the proposed system of our author, especially as, although he writes *relatively*, he does so with an *absolute* notation. But let us give Mr. Pearson's description of his method in his own words. "The National Method of Vocal Music for Elementary Schools," he says, "is the only system of teaching singing from the established notation, on the principle of substitution of pitch," and further on he writes, "the use of the established notation, without the slightest addition or alteration, must recommend it to the favour of all true musicians." Now, allowing that this may be the first time that singing has been taught from the established notation "on the principle of substitution of pitch," we cannot admit that this notation is used "without the slightest addition or alteration," inasmuch as our present system names a note according to its absolute place in the ladder of sounds, and Mr. Pearson's system names it according to its place in the scale. That there may be an advantage in this, we are not prepared to deny, but the proof that it is a mere device adopted for the sake of making those sing who know nothing of music, is that every composition for the use of the class must be printed expressly for it, and that those who learn on this system will not afterwards be able to read from the established notation. In the face of these two facts, therefore, we cannot agree with Mr. Pearson that the mere use of the present system of notation "must recommend it to the favour of all true musicians." The exercises are generally carefully written, and melodious enough to interest young students. We enter no protest against the simplicity of the words selected—indeed we rather think that the less pretentious they are, the better are they suited for their purpose—but in these two lines of the Round, No. 86—

"I am quite tir'd of this Sol-fa-ing,
I've forgot what you've been saying."

—we certainly have neither good rhyme nor good English. Some of the rules for reckoning the value of notes, too, appear to us somewhat eccentric; as, for instance, where, in C time, four quavers, a crotchet and a crotchet rest are counted, "One and, Two and, Three, 4." surely the important "and" (or at least a beat for the quaver), is left out in the only two places where it is at all necessary. We have before us two parts of this work, and presume that it will be continued indefinitely. Members of singing classes may, and have a right to, regard Mr. Pearson as one of the zealous reformers of the day; but those who think more deeply are fully aware that to write *relatively* and *truly* we must have a new notation.

ASHDOWN AND PARRY.

Adieu, Mélodie pour Piano.

Weber's Concert-Stück. Paraphrase, for the Pianoforte.

La Fille du Régiment. Fantaisie brillante, pour Piano.

Bolero, for the Pianoforte.

Composed by Sydney Smith.

So industrious a Fantasia writer as Mr. Sydney Smith has but small occasion to appeal to the reviewer; for after having once discovered the exact article required for the market, there can be little doubt of his works obtaining a steady sale, whatever may be the amount of abstract merit contained in them. As long as he keeps, therefore, to "Arrangements" and "Paraphrases" we need only say that, according to the conventional phraseology, he "fully sustains his reputation;" but in his original pieces he appeals to us as a composer, and in this capacity we have no hesitation in saying that he has as much right to be heard as the many others who have but little to say, and say that little gracefully. The amateurs who have

made Mr. Smith's name for him will perhaps be somewhat disappointed to find that his elegant little piece "*Adieu*" is written in G flat major; but presuming that they can surmount this difficulty, they will be sure to please the majority of listeners if they can play the melodious, though not very original, phrases contained in this composition with the requisite refinement of touch. Of the two pieces, however, we much prefer the "*Bolero*," which has a capital subject in B minor, a good effect being created by the change into the tonic major. We are inclined to think that this is one of the best of the many pianoforte works we have yet seen by this composer.

ORIGINAL CORRESPONDENCE.

CONSECUTIVE SEVENTHS AND FALSE RELATIONS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MUSICAL TIMES.

SIR,—Thanking you for the space already granted, may I crave a little more for some explanatory words? for I do not wish to appear as an apologist for faulty consecutives, and false relations generally. Whether the extreme case suggested by me last month be well or ill sounding, every reader, will of course, decide for himself. To my mind, the sevenths and the false relations are completely covered (in the free style of composition) by the movement of the inner part. Indeed, but for this principle, I hardly know what we should make of some (not to say most) of Bach's combinations, or in fact, of the simplest passing note *with* its harmony and *without* its context. But I think the question lies somewhat deeper than this. Granting any given progression to be offensive, is its use by a composer to be therefore condemned, or perhaps excused as an oversight? What if he *intended* to offend? Pupils are (very properly) forbidden to resolve a second into a unison. But when Schubert uses this means to express the scream of the child in the "Erl König," what shall we say? Shall we excuse the passage as a temporary aberration of a great master, or shall we not rather thankfully accept it as a stroke of genius, which once heard can never be forgotten? Certainly, I should be loth to advance the paradox that "music is the art of offending the ear." But however false, I do say that this statement is far nearer to the truth than this other. "Music is the art of pleasing the ear," yet I have heard something very like this said by those who would be ashamed to maintain that "painting is the art of pleasing the eye."

I am, &c.,

CLEVELAND WIGAN.

Dover, November 18th, 1874.

MUSICAL SETTINGS OF THE TE DEUM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MUSICAL TIMES.

SIR,—May I beg leave to offer a few remarks in reply to the letter under the above heading which appeared in your last number. I doubt whether the division of the hymn followed by your correspondent is quite reasonable and natural. Dean Comber also divides it into three parts:—1. Praise; 2. Creed; 3. Supplication. He makes the second section extend from v. 10 to 19 inclusive. It is obvious that there is nothing of the nature of a Creed before the 10th verse. Equally clear is it that the plain, dogmatic statements as to the Faith "acknowledged" by the "Church throughout all the world," which constitute a Creed, extend to the close of the 19th verse. Is your correspondent correct in his information as to the practice of prostration during *that* verse, in the Eastern Church? In the West the custom is to kneel during the 20th verse only. As to the musical treatment of these several portions of the hymn, I would remark that a careful study of the ancient setting, to which alone it was sung for more than a thousand years, would probably be highly suggestive to a thoughtful composer. That setting is especially interesting as an ancient example of a "Chant-service"—a mode of treatment supposed to have been invented in