

"The Harmonious Blacksmith"

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say 240 pages of music. He has also to defray the cost of music-paper and other requisites. It will be acknowledged that his remuneration is not excessive at the rate of \$50 (about £8 15s.) per month (the pay of a "writer" is about \$60).

The proposed bill doubles his salary, but at the same time increases his labours by raising the numerical strength of his band to fifty performers; and, as the report on the bill states, neither can this be considered a very extravagant allowance.

Señor Ponce is stated to have studied seven years in Colombia and five in Europe, and to be the composer of two important and promising works, "Esther" and the "Mysterious Castle."

Happy Colombia, to find time in the intervals of an intermittent state of civil war to foster the arts of peace, even though the medium be a military band! And fortunate José Maria Ponce de Leon, to be held worthy of a whole Act of Parliament to himself!—Yours truly,

C. B.

### THE "STICKER ACTION" IN PIANOFORTES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—It is a matter of constant regret to the writer of this that the London pianoforte-makers, with rare exceptions, continue to use the old Sticker action, the simplicity of which can be its only recommendation, for a more unsatisfactory action for general use is rarely to be met with. The regulator (or tuner, if in the country) may adjust it perfectly to-day, and for a short time it will be satisfactory; but from changes of temperature, often in two or three days, or it may be a little longer, the action will be almost certain to block in some notes, if not all through. A complaint of bad tuning is usually, and not unnaturally, made. The tuner has then to call and alter the blocking (which has been credited to him as bad tuning, but which has really nothing to do with it), yet the action still remains uncertain, even after the most careful regulating. This has been my own experience for many years, and will no doubt be borne out by many who sell or let out pianofortes on hire in the country, and particularly by those at the seaside. The use of Bord's pianettes and other foreign instruments for the last twenty years, all of which have had the foreign action (often called the French), has entirely removed all trouble on the matter in question; and no instruments have proved more generally satisfactory, as they are always to be depended on, and seldom if ever does a note get out of order. Nos. 6 and 7 in Broadwood's list have the action referred to (called by them "crank action"), and better London-made cottage pianofortes cannot be met with. The wonder is that other makers do not also adopt this improvement, and at least give the choice of either action to their customers. Most makers will apply the foreign action if ordered; but this has seldom proved successful, for, in consequence of the fitter-up not thoroughly understanding the action, or balancing the key improperly, the touch is often tough or heavy, and very different to the beautiful elastic and sensitive touch of the Broadwood pianofortes before named.

Can any of your readers or any pianoforte-makers state what is the real hindrance to the introduction generally of the foreign action, as it appears to me (unless there are some valid objections) inconceivable that it is not more frequently used? There can be little doubt that the London pianoforte-makers would be wise in adopting this action in some of their instruments, as a large portion of the trade would not then have to seek abroad for pianofortes they cannot obtain at home.—Apologising for the length of this letter, I remain, yours truly,

A MUSICSELLER OF THIRTY YEARS' STANDING.

### THE BARKER FUND.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—The result of the appeal made on behalf of Mr. Barker, the inventor of the pneumatic action, having fallen somewhat short of the anticipations of the committee,

they have determined to make a final effort to obtain additional funds before closing the list of subscriptions. The committee feel sure that there are many musicians, both professional and amateur, who would gladly contribute towards this object, and that the absence of their names from the present list can only arise from want of knowledge of the urgency of the case. The committee venture, therefore, earnestly to press upon such of your readers who are interested in organ matters the desirability of their assisting as speedily as possible in efforts to procure a small annuity for this most deserving artist.

Subscriptions may be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, F. Davison, Esq., 24, Fitzroy Square, N.W.—Yours, &c.,

(Signed) J. F. BRIDGE, Mus. Doc.

F. DAVISON, Hon. Treasurer.

HENRY SMART.

J. STAINER, M.A., Mus. Doc.

E. H. TURPIN, Hon. Sec. Coll. Org.

GEORGE CARR, Hon. Sec. Sub-Committee Barker Fund.

### "THE HARMONIOUS BLACKSMITH."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Your reply to "An Amateur" in the current number of the *MUSICAL TIMES* contains a reference to the name of Dr. Crotch in connection with "The Harmonious Blacksmith." I possess the late Dr. Crotch's copy of Handel's "Suite de pièces," full of annotations made by the Doctor; and I find his note to the air in question stands thus: "This taken from one in G by Wagenseil, with variations, but greatly improved; also said to be like something called 'The Harmonious Blacksmith'!"—Yours, &c.

WILLIAM H. CUMMINGS.

Brackley Villas, Thurlow Park Road, S.E.

August 24.

### 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.*

*EZRA R. BITTINGTONE.—We cannot reply to our correspondent's string of trivial questions.*

*We will answer our correspondent who enquires how to proceed respecting the publication of some compositions, on three conditions, viz that the name of the writer shall be legible enough to read, that the address be given, and that we shall be informed whether we are replying to a lady or gentleman.*

### 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.*

**BANGOR.**—The members of the Choral Society gave a Grand Rehearsal of the *Messiah*, at the Penrhyn Hall, on Monday the 20th ult., prior to their appearance in the same Oratorio at the Carnarvon National Eisteddfod and Musical Festival. The solos were taken by Miss Mary Davies, winner of the Christine Nilsson first prize at the Royal Academy of Music, London; Miss Martha Harries, R.A.M., Mr. James Sauvage, gold medalist at the R.A.M., and Mr. J. L. Williams, R.A.M. Mr. Hutton, of Cheltenham's Orchestra, played the accompaniments, the conductor being Mr. W. Williams, Port Penrhyn, Bangor. At Carnarvon Eisteddfod the solos were sung by Miss Edith Wynne, Madame Patey, Eos Morlais, Mr. James Sauvage, Signor Foli, and Mr. D. Gordon Thomas (Bangor Cathedral), the same orchestra supplying the accompaniments.