

Review

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contrast, and is repeated with good effect in the tonic major of the piece. On the return to the minor we might perhaps feel a slight sensation of monotony—as no variation of accompaniment is introduced—were it not for the unexpected major chord, which gives much brightness to the concluding four bars. There is such real artistic feeling shown throughout this unpretentious composition that we feel convinced its author might with confidence attempt a work of far higher importance.

Two Musical Sketches for the Pianoforte: the "Exile" and "Gleaner." Composed by C. H. Couldery.

WE have already noticed some light pieces by Mr. Couldery, the distinguishing character of which has been excessive tunefulness, and although the two now before us faithfully preserve this recommendation to popular favour, we can scarcely say that they evince any sign of advancement upon those previously reviewed. Indeed the pursuit of mere melody is often an *ignis fatuus*, which leads young composers astray, as much as the constant striving after learned harmony, and we are always glad therefore when we see an artist—after having thrown off a number of "Sketches" to feel his way—forsaking this fascinating path and entering upon the high road to a more enduring fame. The syncopated accompaniment in the first of these pieces gives character to the theme which, although "pretty," is somewhat common-place, and the broken *arpeggios* with which it is afterwards accompanied seem rather forced in to cover its feebleness. The second piece, termed the "Gleaner," we like better. Commencing with a diminished seventh in F sharp minor, the opening theme, in A major, comes with welcome freshness; and although the Sketch is light in texture, there is much to commend in the treatment of the subjects. Pianists, who care not for display, will, we think, be pleased with these two bagatelles.

WILLIAM CZERNY.

Chanson Nègre. A Lively Story. Deux Feuilles d'Album. Two Minstrel Songs. *In memoriam.* Adagio from the Sonata in D major.

Composed for the Pianoforte by A. Ergmann.

THIS group of sketches for the pianoforte will be welcomed as the trifles of a clever musician jotted down in his leisure moments, although we can scarcely say that they fulfil the expectations raised by the same composer's three pieces noticed in these columns a short time since. The "Chanson Nègre," appropriately marked "Alla Banjo," has some character; but the melody, in F major and D minor, becomes somewhat wearisome. The second piece reminds us of Schumann; but it is well written, and sufficiently spirited to justify its title. Of the two pieces which come next on the list we infinitely prefer No. 2, which has a good theme, in A minor, with a well marked subject in the relative major. No. 1 of the "Two Minstrel Songs," in F major, has a graceful *cantabile* melody, with an effective figure for the left hand, and although but little is attempted in the piece, a pianist with a trained touch may rely upon its success with a drawing-room audience. No. 2, in D, is merely the conventional "Song without words," the theme played with the thumb of the right hand; but the triplets, after the double bar, contrast well with the opening subject. The Adagio from the Sonata is a fair specimen of the composer's power of writing in a more classical form; and although the movement is somewhat dry, it is well planned, and the details satisfactorily carried out. We should of course prefer to notice the entire Sonata; but presuming that creative artists must feel their way gradually with the public, we are disposed rather to praise Herr Ergmann for what he has done than to blame him for what he has not.

ORIGINAL CORRESPONDENCE.

"CONSECUTIVE FIFTHS AND SEVENTHS."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MUSICAL TIMES.

SIR,—In your review of Dr. Stainer's "Theory of Harmony," you lately called attention to the admirable way in

which he has treated the subject of "consecutive fifths." As far as I can understand Dr. Stainer's view of the case, he seems to conclude that consecutive major fifths ought not to be excluded by a hard-and-fast rule, but that each instance must be judged of by its effect on the ear. The instances which he brings forward from the works of the great masters certainly seem to commend this view to one's common sense; and, if this be the case, would it not be well for our leading musicians to consider whether this test of ear should be the guiding principle in this matter rather than a rigid, unbending rule? And, at the same time, would it not be well to place some restriction upon the use of "consecutive sevenths," which composers are now in the habit of using rather freely in modern anthems and hymn-tunes? Surely the effect of consecutive sevenths upon the ear is often harsh and grating. As an instance of how reviewers of music sometimes fail to notice the presence of consecutive fifths, it happened to the writer some few years ago to have a Communion Service favourably reviewed in the MUSICAL TIMES and in two other journals, but in no case did the reviewers notice the presence of consecutive fifths between alto and tenor in the opening portion of the Kyrie. I can only account for this by concluding that the effect upon the ear was not harsh, and therefore the consecutives did not attract attention.

Yours faithfully,

HERBT. H. WOODWARD.

[The use of "consecutive sevenths" is, we believe, sufficiently restricted in all good treatises on harmony. We are aware that they are sometimes introduced with very unpleasant effect in modern music, and should, in such cases, be disposed to attribute them either to the ignorance or heedlessness of the writer. It is much the same with consecutive fifths.—Ed. *Musical Times*.]

DR. STAINER'S "HARMONY."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MUSICAL TIMES.

SIR,—Though your reviewer's explanation of the harmonic *crux* on p. 407 is perfectly intelligible and satisfactory, I, for one, cannot admit that the explanation with which he credits Dr. Stainer is equally so. I fail altogether to perceive how the mere altering of C \sharp to D \flat could justify anyone in calling the particular combination there quoted a chord of the "dominant minor thirteenth in the key of B \flat , resolved on the tonic." There is an extraordinary jumble of ideas in this theory. In the first place, a chord of the thirteenth is simply the suspension of the dominant harmony, with its added ninth, over the tonic fundamental bass. It is major or minor according as the ninth is major or minor. It is the ninth which gives the name to the chord, inasmuch as the ninth would form the interval of the thirteenth with the tonic bass, if the intervals were counted upward in proper gradation. In the particular instance quoted by your correspondent, all the characteristics of the chord of the thirteenth are absent. The suspension does not resolve upon the same bass. The ninth (D \flat) does not resolve according to rule—in fact does not resolve at all, but simply sharpens into the major mode of its own harmony; and instead of its being the ninth which names the chord, it is the minor *third* of the presumed tonic which forms the interval of the thirteenth with the bass. If F had been selected as the tonic instead of B \flat , the explanation would have been somewhat nearer, as far as the mere naming of the chord is concerned, since D \flat is the minor ninth of the dominant C, and forms the interval of the thirteenth with the tonic F. But in that case also, the explanation fails, because every dominant chord bears a major third, and in this instance, the third, E \flat , is minor; besides the resolution should have been into the tonic F upon the same bass.

In glancing at the example given from "Faust," one is struck by an interesting singularity. It is that any dominant chord with its seventh may be superposed upon the dominant chord of the seventh which lies a major third below it, and the product of the two resolutions conducted in the normal manner will give a combination representing the lower tonic harmony. All the care necessary is, to