

S. S. STEWART'S BANJO AND GUITAR JOURNAL

Vol. IX. No. 1. Whole No. 69.

April and May, 1892.

PRICE, TEN CENTS.

S. S. STEWART'S
BANJO AND GUITAR JOURNAL,
IS PUBLISHED EACH ALTERNATE MONTH AT
221 and 223 Church Street, Philadelphia, Penna.
SUBSCRIPTION, FIFTY CENTS A YEAR, WITH PREMIUM.
SINGLE COPY, TEN CENTS.

BEWARE OF FRAUDS.

A correspondent in New York City, writes: "Different people have been telling me lately that they could buy banjos, marked 'Stewart Professional,' in stores in the Bowery and Chatham Street.

Teachers have told me that these banjos have been the means of their losing sales of your banjos."

Every good thing is imitated and scarcely an article of merit is manufactured that is not counterfeited.

There is no occasion for any one but a fool being humbugged by such clap-trap banjos as our correspondent writes about. Every Stewart Banjo is stamped with Stewart's registered trade-mark, as is fully made known in our illustrated catalogue. Every banjo also has its legitimate individual number stamped plainly upon it.

Thieves and pickpockets, like rot and vermin, always exist in certain places, and those who are ready to make a dollar without work, and by imposing upon the ignorant, are ever plying their trade as opportunity presents.

The public are again cautioned not to buy a banjo as a Stewart Banjo from an unreliable dealer without first getting its number and being sure that what is offered is genuine.

REMINISCENCES OF A BANJO PLAYER

(RIGHT LETTER).

—BY A. BAUR—

The Club, or more properly speaking, the Banjo Orchestra, is having a run at present, the like of which I have never seen. It often becomes the fashion or rage to do one thing or another, but the rage for banjo playing has never been equalled by anything in the musical line, and from all indications, it has come to stay. It is not merely a "passing thought." The more numerous and the more expert players become, the

firmer hold it will take, and the more decided will be the claims of the banjo to rank as a musical instrument. The Banjo Orchestra has done much towards pushing the banjo into popularity and establishing it on a firm basis in the minds of heretofore skeptical musical people. Two performers, taking it for granted that they have mastered the rudiments under a competent teacher, will make wonderful progress by constantly practicing together. One will assist the other, particularly in the matter of time and reading. When one practices entirely alone, it has a tendency to make him "drag" on the different passages. Two players of medium ability, by constantly practicing together will become expert players in a shorter length of time than if each were practicing by himself, and if there is anything better than two players to help each other improve in the matter of execution I should say it would be three or more players. I have had practical demonstrations of this fact in my past experience as a teacher. I have always made it a rule to give pupils instructions in transposition as soon as possible after they had mastered the rudiments and the scales, so as to enable them to take any song with piano accompaniment and to transpose the melody at sight. After a teacher gets a pupil to that stage when he or she can go into a parlor and play the melody of any song at sight by transposing it while some one plays the accompaniment on the piano forte as it is written, it is encouraging to the pupil and an inducement to try something more difficult.

Mr. T. J. Armstrong's able and well written letters on the "Banjo Orchestra" in recent numbers of the *Journal*, should be read and studied by all having a desire to become proficient in the art of arranging music for clubs and will do a power of good for one who may not care for anything better than solo playing.

Among the first banjo clubs I ever heard of was one about eleven years ago in a town on Long Island. It was composed of six eleven inch banjos, one bass banjo and piano to which was afterwards added a violincello. At that time the very novelty of the thing made it a success, but compared with the present club it stood no comparison. All the banjos had a sort of dish pan attachment on the back. It was made of tin, considerably larger than the rim of the banjo and was supposed to catch the sound and throw

it out towards the audience. All the banjos were tuned in D, which taken in connection with the patent back made a very shrill and "tinny" sound. Being a new departure in banjo playing, it caught the popular ear and took like "wild fire" wherever heard.

Before the era of banjo clubs, trick playing was the rage. With very few exceptions the trick solo was adapted from a melody composed by the late Napoleon W. Gould, called "Sangalli Dance." I have an original copy of this piece somewhere among my collection of music. Gould was an old time teacher of the banjo and guitar, and told me not more than about fourteen years ago that he found it a difficult matter to make a living in New York City, teaching both these instruments. At that time there were not a dozen teachers in New York, now they number in the hundreds, and all of them, even the poorest, are making comfortable livings. Speaking of trick playing, there is no doubt that the day of the trick soloist has gone by. It used to be a common thing to be told that so and so was playing an engagement at a certain hall and that his playing was simply wonderful. He would throw the banjo all over the stage, and twist and turn it in every direction, all the time keeping the tune going." While living in Pittsburgh in 1884, I met a man who wanted me to hear him play. I went with him and I must say he was the most wonderful juggler I ever saw; his act would have done credit to a first class contortionist or india rubber man. I heard him frequently while he was in Pittsburgh, and tried to induce him to play some piece or pieces outside of his juggling act, but he assured me that he had never learned any other piece and I believe it, for I never heard him play any thing but the Sangalli Dance, which he did to perfection.

I notice in looking over catalogues of banjo music, that publishers and dealers are striving to make their collections of banjo music as large and attractive as possible, and all seem to be making an especial effort on club music. I fear though, it will be "many a day" before any of them can begin to show such a catalogue as Stewart has issued. A serious drawback to an inexperienced person who desires to order a selection of music from any one of the numerous catalogues published, is the fact that many of the publishers and dealers have not the remotest idea of the capabilities or even the

compass of the banjo. All they want is a collection of their own, and with this end in view they hire Tom, Dick, or Harry to arrange or write them some pieces. In their haste to take advantage of the increasing demand for banjo music, they never stop to inquire if the said Tom, Dick, or Harry have the ability to do the work required of them. In this way much useless trash is thrown on the market and called banjo music. Several years since quite a prominent music house hired a piano teacher to write them a banjo book. After it was finished I received a copy from the firm for inspection, with the request that I should give my opinion of the work. I will venture to say that any one who had never seen a musical instrument of any kind could have written as good a banjo book as that was. The head of the firm told me it was to take the town by storm. It would surely have done so had they thrown it on the market. I am sorry I did not keep the copy I had. I took it home and looked it over; I corrected the mistakes in a manner, but could not do it justice. There was not room enough on the margins of the pages to note all the mistakes. Such chords as C sharp on the 4th string at 4th fret, with E, A and C sharp, on 3d, 2d and 1st strings and 12th, 13th and 14th frets, respectively. I give this one chord as an illustration, and it was among the easy ones. When I showed the book to the proprietor he asked me if it would be necessary to correct all the mistakes, and if it would not answer to correct the most glaring ones. I replied that music written by incompetent persons had already done the banjo so much harm that it would take years to overcome. He then proposed that I should correct the book as he had suggested, and as they had had one hundred copies printed and bound, they would get out another edition and add to the title page—"Revised and Corrected by A. Baur"; for allowing them the use of my name they would pay me a bonus. I declined, emphatically, to have any thing to do with it, and left him. Some time afterwards I asked him what his firm had done about the book? He replied that the expense of getting out this first edition had been an item of expense that they did not care to lose, and the cost of correcting the plates would have been greater than to get out new plates; they therefore disposed of the copies they had on hand and abandoned the publication entirely, not having realized first cost from their venture.

At another time, on my way to give a lesson I met one of the earliest and most prominent advocates of the "Simple Method humbug." He said that he had been looking for me, and requested me to call at his "studio" at my earliest convenience. A short time after this meeting I went to his place of business and soon learned why he was so anxious to see me. After talking over some unimportant matters, he opened his desk and took therefrom a formidable pile of MSS. music, and gave it to me to look over. I soon discovered that it was a new banjo instructor that he intended to launch upon the broad waters of public

ignorance, as to the requirements of a banjo book. The title was, "Modern method for the Banjo," composed, arranged and compiled by The King of the Banjo.

I saw at a glance that the entire collection had been written by a professional music copyist, whom I judged to be a violinist, from the fact that there was not a chord from the beginning to the end of the collection. I made known to the "professor" my opinion as to who had written the music and he acknowledged that, being unable to write the music himself, he had hired a man to do it for him, but that *every note had been written under his own personal supervision and instruction.* I could not help but smile at the fellow's assurance, and asked him why I had been called in? He then told me that if I would arrange the sheets progressively, as they should appear in book form, he would pay me well for my labor, and knowing my weakness for a nice dog, he offered me as pretty a black and tan dog as I had ever seen, if I would straighten out and lay the different sheets in rotation as he desired, or as I thought best. The dog would have paid a hundred fold for any service I could have rendered in the matter, but in justice to myself and to those who in the future would be "gulled" into buying such trash, I declined and took my departure.

I cite these cases so that the reader may guard against expending money for worthless books. "It is not all gold that glitters," neither will the advertised title of a book assure the purchaser that the contents will suit his case, or is what he is seeking after. The country is full of unprincipled persons who are taking advantage of the demand for banjo music, and are having music arranged by those who do not understand their business, and scattering it broadcast over the land without any regard to its worth. These dealers have but one object in view. That is, to make money out of any one willing to invest in banjo music. The innocent purchaser, if a beginner, does not discover his error until after it is too late. Teachers are, in a measure, to blame for this state of affairs. They are nearly always consulted by their pupils in the matter of purchasing music and should have stamina enough to tell the pupil what music to buy and what to leave alone. I never had and never would have the least hesitancy to throw aside a piece of music that a pupil laid before me if I thought the arrangement was faulty or tended in the remotest manner to retard the progress of the pupil. A teacher is always safe in telling his pupils to deal with a responsible house if the pupil is determined to select his or her own music. It is not to be presumed that because a firm publishes piano, violin, or other music extensively, that it would also take the same pains in publishing banjo music. To do so would require at least an expert in writing banjo music or to look over and correct such pieces as are offered to the firm for publication. From my own certain knowledge, this is done by but very few firms. In most cases when a piece of banjo music is offered, no matter by whom, it is given to

the musical critic of the firm for his judgment. If his verdict is favorable the piece is published. If not, it is handed back. Now, in nine cases out of ten, this critic tries the piece over on the piano forte. He may not even know the name of the strings on the banjo, but his judgment is accepted by the firm as final. The piece may have merit or may be the merest trash. In my opinion, and I imagine in that of any one, such a critic is not capable of judging on the merit of a piece of banjo music. The firm in whose employ he is, may be honest and aim to handle only the best grade of music, but is liable to get an inferior collection of music for the banjo. Having had ample experience and knowing the above to

(Continued on 3d Page of Cover.)

SHOULD THE BANJO BRIDGE BE KEPT STATIONARY?

Such queries are answered, under the old regime, "No;" under their present regime, "Yes." In other words, when the banjo was carried around in a cloth bag it was not safe to keep the bridge up when not in use, and the performer was therefore advised to remove the bridge when his instrument was not in use. But under the present order of things, when every performer keeps his instrument in a strong leather case, that is well lined, the protection afforded is adequate, and the bridge may be always kept in its place. It is an advantage also to keep the bridge in one stationary position, with the strings in their proper notches; for by so doing the bridge is more apt to hold its position in performing, and the notches do not so quickly wear out. With all the expenditure of gray matter of the brain on various clap trap inventions in the banjo line, it is somewhat remarkable that no aspiring inventive genius has thus far brought forward an invention for gluing the bridge down to its proper position on the head, so that it can not shift the thousandth part of an inch even when the strings are struck a sledge hammer like blow. Here is an idea for some fertile inventive mind. Bring on your patent glue.

"OBSERVATIONS ON THE BANJO."

In presenting so much of our new article, "Observations on the Banjo and Banjo Playing," to our readers in this number of the *Journal*, we may be permitted to state briefly our reasons for so doing. The work has been gotten up as an appendix to the **Complete American Banjo School**, a book that has been before the public for some years, and is a favorite among teachers and scholars alike. When the additions have been made to the book, all new purchasers of the work will have the "Observations," together with the other part of the work, bound in one book, and the price is to remain the same as before—no rise in price to take place. But a great many of our *Journal* subscribers have already got copies of the *American School*, and we do not mean that they shall pay any extra for the additions to the work, and, therefore concluded to present these additions in the *Journal*, so that all subscribers shall be in possession of them.

In order to give so large a portion of the "Observations" in one issue of the *Journal*, we have been compelled again to enlarge the paper, so that nothing else would have to be omitted, and we feel no hesitancy in saying that a more interesting and complete number than the present, No. 69, has never yet been produced. In fact we have a personal pride in pointing out the fact that the interesting matter contained in this number of the *Journal* has never been equalled for the money, and it is doubtful if much of the information herein given can be found elsewhere at any price whatever. We are pleased to give this matter to our subscribers, and trust that it will meet with as favorable a reception as previous efforts on our part have met with.

The cost of postage alone on this edition of the *Journal* is considerable, but is cheerfully borne by its publisher.

ANOTHER ABSURDITY.

Not long ago we noticed an advertisement of a Banjo Teacher—in which it was claimed that he was agent for a Banjo with waterproof head, and that his banjos were not affected by damp weather.

Now the fact is that all *Varnish* is to a certain extent *waterproof*, but all the varnish in the world would not make a banjo-head remain stretched tight and tense over a rim during damp and dry weather alike. Again, even if a banjo-head could be made as waterproof as a sheet of metal, still the banjo music would not have the same brilliant effect in damp weather as in cool clear weather. Why? Simply because it is the *air* that is the real sound conductor, and upon the condition of the atmosphere largely depends the power, intensity and purity of musical tone.

An instrument has never been devised that would sound equally well in damp weather as in cool clear weather. Neither is it possible under natural laws, so far as understood in the present generation, to construct such an instrument. Furthermore, a musical instrument that is not sensitive to dampness will never be sensitive to musical vibration and will be quite useless as a musical instrument.

Beginners and those who have no musical ear, it seems, are constantly being taken in on such representations, and that is about the only way that most of them can learn.



A lady in Hartford, Conn., writes as follows: "I wish to say a few words on the subject that Mr. Frey spoke of in the *Journal*. I think it a good idea tuning the big (E) string to G. I will also say that my guitar is always tuned to pitch and that I can very easily tune that string to G. I seldom break strings."

Wishing to ascertain the exact amount of strain upon the low E string of the guitar, at both the pitch of E and G, we lately made an experiment in that direction, using for the purpose a guitar of ordinary size, the distance from nut to bridge being 24 inches. The following is the result: The silk wrapped E string, required a weight of $17\frac{3}{4}$ pounds, avoirdupois, to bring it to the normal pitch of E, and the same string required $25\frac{1}{2}$ pounds pressure to bring it up to the note G.

An E bass string having a steel wire centre was then tried, with the following result: A weight of $22\frac{1}{4}$ pounds was necessary to produce the pitch E, and it required $31\frac{1}{4}$ pounds to bring that string up to G.

In making these tests care was taken to place the guitar in such position that very little if any resistance to the weights was caused by the notch in the nut, over which the string passes in the ordinary way of tuning. The resistance given by the notch in the nut, to the wound bass strings is found to add from one to five pounds to the tension on such strings.

We learn from these experiments that the strain of the wire strings is far in excess of that of the silk wrapped strings, and why it is that guitar manufacturers will not warrant their instruments to stand the strain forced upon them in stringing with steel strings. The performer of intelligence can judge for himself whether such stringing is advantageous to his guitar.

The resistance of the nut is also another point of interest to which the attention of the guitarist is directed. A nut with narrow wedge-shaped notches is apt to break a great many strings—bass strings particularly, as the wrapping of wire furnishes an additional friction which offers resistance to the string being drawn up to pitch, and the result is that the bass string parts readily at that point, or between the nut and the peg, where the strain is greatest.

Senor Luis T. Romero, the well-known Spanish Guitar Virtuoso, who uses a C. F. Martin & Co., Guitar—a splendid instrument—informs the writer that he does not make a practice of tuning his instrument to concert pitch, but a little flat. The guitarists of the Boston Ideal Club, who use the large concert size Wasburn Guitars, are compelled to tune a half tone below pitch on account of the strain being too great for the strings on such large instruments, when tuned to concert pitch. This causes the mandolins and banjos, played with the guitars, to sound a little flat, but they say it cannot well be avoided.

We recently had the pleasure of examining some of the new, cheaper grades of Guitars manufactured by J. C. Haynes & Co., Boston, Mass. The "Hub" guitar, and some of the other styles are remarkably well made and can hardly be duplicated for the price. All have good fingerboards and nicely shaped necks, are easy to finger, something that can not be said of guitars sold at same prices by other manufacturers. For catalogues address J. C. Haynes & Co., 453 Washington Street, Boston, Mass.

We should not neglect to state also that Messrs. Haynes & Co., manufacture high grade guitars of very superior quantity; a fact generally known to our readers.

VOLUME 9, NUMBER 1.

With this issue of the *Journal* begins a new volume—"Vol. 9, Number 1." In presenting this number—69—to the public we greet our subscribers with thanks for their many letters of well wishes, and are glad to know that our little publication has met with the hearty endorsement of one and all who have subscribed to and purchased the paper. The names that go to make up our subscription list, we are pleased to notice, have remained steadily upon the list for several years past, there having been hardly any withdrawals—and in addition to this, new names have been constantly added, thus swelling the list to such an extent that lately we have been obliged, in order to maintain a complete classification, to divide the list into sections, employing several books for that purpose. It is no longer possible to mail the *Journal* to our full list of subscribers in a single day, often having to make two or three sections of the list, and therefore if one subscriber receives his paper, in some instances, a day or two later than another, we trust that no annoyance will be manifested.

Every endeavor is made at this end of the line to have all wrappers correctly addressed and the mailing done with all the dispatch possible, and every effort is also made to have the *Journal* printed and ready for circulation on the first day of each alternate month of the year. Up to the present time there has scarcely been a day's delay in any of the issues, and if such delay should at any time occur, it is entirely owing to the binding and mailing of the work, and not to the editorial or printing department.

The *Journal* is supposed to be composed of 16 pages only, within the covers, and that is all we agree at any time to give our subscribers at the subscription rate now charged. It should be understood, therefore, that when the paper is issued, as it now appears, in a larger form, it is done purely at the option of the publisher, and because it is his desire that nothing good shall be omitted; and because his aim is to increase the knowledge of the Banjo everywhere and thereby to create a greater popularity and love for the instrument.

Number 67 of the *Journal* is now out of print, together with some of the other numbers, and therefore files of back numbers cannot be had. When a new subscriber remits for the back numbers of a year or two we are obliged to make up the amount with such numbers as we have left, substituting some of a much less recent date for others that are out of print. Let subscribers understand this when they order back numbers.

Should any regular subscriber not receive the paper in due time, if he has not changed his address, let him write to the office and we will endeavor to forward a duplicate. We cannot be held responsible for changes in address unless we receive notice at least a month before the issue of the paper—when the wrappers are addressed.

With the increasing popularity of the banjo and

guitar, there appear to be more subscribers who do not always receive their paper, and what becomes of the lost copies, after they are mailed here, we are unable to determine—but it is fair to suppose that somebody must get them, even when the persons to whom they are addressed do not.

THE BOSTON IDEAL CLUB.

Upon the invitation of Mr. S. S. Stewart, several ladies and gentlemen had the good fortune to be present at his residence and there met "The Boston Ideal Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Club," the members of which were on their annual tour through the State of Pennsylvania and having an "off night," to the inexpressible delight of those present, an opportunity was afforded to hear them, that will ever be remembered with pleasure.

In all their selections could plainly be seen the advantages of the perfect organization of perfect players, who by their long and careful practice have acquired such wonderful unity of action and expression.

It was really hard to discriminate between the beauty of the playing of this able quintette in their Mandolin and Guitar, or Banjo and Guitar selections. Each combination was in itself—perfect, and the widely different effects showed to the very best advantage their value as a "taking" concert combination.

The enthusiasts were delighted beyond expression, and no doubt both club organizers and solo players who were present will profit by the example of such perfect playing. To Mr. Lansing and his excellent troupe must be accredited the promoting of the best interests of this class of musical organizations, as by their high standard they cannot help but prove an impetus to similar though perhaps inferior clubs; while to the "Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar world at large each member has individually served in producing more or less good music for their respective instruments, the compositions of Messrs. Lansing, Shattuck, Grover, Galucia and Robinson being among the best known and popular selections for these instruments.

Profuse were the expressions of pleasure and gratitude to the Bostonians for their kindness and in a bumper was toasted, "The future and continued success of the great and only Ideals."

HYLARION.



A correspondent in Danielsville, Conn., writes as follows:

The tendency for organized amusement as well as labor, with the increasing popularity of the banjo, has developed the "Banjo Club." The remote country towns are not far behind the cities in taking advantage of this opportunity for mutual improvement and pleasure. Danielsville, a small town in eastern Connecticut, has maintained, for two years, a LADIES' BANJO CLUB. Like so many other successful organizations, this Club boasts of its small beginning. Three young ladies, lovers of the banjo, met one afternoon in a cozy parlor and practiced together as many simple pieces. The time passed so pleasantly that another meeting was planned for the following week. This time another banjo player was invited and a piano accompanist. Weekly meetings were at once established, new music learned, until, in a short time, the repertoire of the Club was sufficient to permit of its acceptance of some of the many invitations tendered it to play in public. After hearing the Club perform, others were induced to invest in instruments and join; so that at present it is a thoroughly organized orchestra with eight members.

Its scope is amateur, rather than professional, but it has quite a local reputation. It is sincerely in earnest in its work, and wishes to take this opportunity to thank the editor of the *Banjo and Guitar Journal* for many useful suggestions obtained from that periodical.

Frank Simpson, the well-known music dealer of Glasgow, Scotland, writes under date of January 18th last: "Received the banjos in due course of time, and wish to say how difficult it is for us to pick holes in your goods. This is our fifth consignment and still we have no complaint to make; our customers are pleased and many of them change other makes for the Stewart. Words will not make good banjos, nor can good music be got out of poor instruments and bad performers."

The Englewood Banjo and Guitar Club is now in its third season, and can be engaged for concerts. Address C. Shotwell, Jr., Manager, 642 62d Street, Englewood, Chicago, Ill.

Professor E. H. Frey, of Lima, Ohio, has organized a club called the "Lima Banjo and Guitar Club." The Mandolin, Flute and Cello are included among the instruments used.

The Fifth Annual Mammoth Banjo Concert of the Boston Ideal Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Club, given at Tremont Temple, Boston, Tuesday evening, February 9th, was another complete success. The Boston Ideal Club, the Kellogg Concert Co., the Ladies' Crescent Banjo and Guitar Club, and a Grand Orchestra, composed of one hundred and thirty-seven

banjo, guitar and mandolin players, under the direction of Mr. G. L. Lansing, were the leading features. The Concert was a grand success, drawing a very large audience, and a good feature of the affair was that the Banjo Orchestra turned out even larger than was advertised.

E. D. Brown, of Washington, D. C., writes:

The Washington Mandolin Banjo, and Guitar Club of this city, Professor A. V. Holmes, Musical Director, gave a most enjoyable concert to a crowded and enthusiastic house at the National Rifles Armory, on the 12th of February. They were assisted by the best talent in the city, among them notably the National Banjo Club, Mrs. D. A. Dufour Musical Director, a most efficient little lady, with an excellent Club, under more than ordinary good control.

Both Clubs use the Stewart banjos; the clear, resonant tones attesting fully the undoubted superiority of that make; such sweet ringing music can be made on no other banjo. Stewart has done more to elevate the banjo to the niche it now occupies than any one else, by giving to the world so perfect an instrument, so responsive to the touch, so delightful to the ear.

One of the features of the evening was an orchestral performance of *seventy-five* banjos, mandolins and guitars, ably led by Professor Holmes. They played with great power and spirit, responding equally well to the encore they deservedly received. The National Banjo Club rendered the "Martaneaux Overture" in an artistic manner, with all the lights and shades of expression, for which they are so noted, eliciting a rapturous encore, in response to which they gave that soft little breezy melody "A Southern Zephyr."

The "Normandie March," played by the Washington Mandolin, Banjo and Guitar Club deserves special mention, also the guitar solo by J. H. Russell, the violin solo by V. H. Johnson, and the three banjo solos by J. P. Callen, S. B. Clements and L. Barringer. Altogether it was a decided success. The vocalists were excellent, and the inimitable Hub Smith, in his new song, "The Country Band," and the impersonations of Mr. A. F. Roberts, helped to make it one of the best entertainments of the season.

Never has the banjo attained such popularity as it now enjoys. The "plunkety plunk" of the old time, much abused banjo has faded from the public mind, and the banjo of to-day is making a record that keeps pace with any and all musical instruments. Let the Banjo be the "national flower" of America, and let it be a Stewart!

"The many professional friends of W. G. Collins, of Washington, D. C., will be grieved to learn of the death of his eldest son, a bright little fellow of four years.

Daniel W. Jackson, Milford, Delaware, writes:

"The Banjorette you made for me several weeks ago is a dandy. Every one likes its tone, and to say that I am pleased with it puts it mildly."

G. E. Brown, of the Lynn B. M. and G. Club, Lynn, Mass., writes:

"I received the Thoroughbred Banjo and case, and am very much pleased with the same. As far as I have had it for trial, it is very good tone and workmanship, and thus far am perfectly satisfied. Shall try and induce others to try the Stewart when they want a good instrument; but most beginners want a cheap banjo, thinking them as good, but they get left, and that is one reason why I think so many give up the instrument."

W. H. West, Fargo, Dakota, writes:

"Another heart made happy this morning, by the arrival of the \$40 Banjeaurine and case, etc., ordered from you less than a week ago. To say that I am well pleased with it poorly expresses what I mean. The finish is *superb*, and the tone is simply *grand*. Your instruments are certainly superior to all others, and I shall do all that I can to advertise them as such."

George B. Stowe, Galveston, Texas, writes:

"The sixty-dollar-banjo you made to order for me several years ago improves in tone every hour. It is a grand instrument. I played my sixty-dollar banjo before a large audience several weeks ago, and often I would hear it said, 'What a beautiful banjo and what a grand tone.' I was sent for, not long ago, to play some banjo music in the Phonograph. I played my sixty-dollar banjo and my Little Wonder Mandolin Banjo (which I also bought from you), and when I had finished playing I listened to the music through the Phonograph, and it sounded perfect, the tone was clear and loud."

M. J. Brimberry, Rock Springs, Wyoming, writes:

"I notice in your Banjo catalogue, next to the last page, your individual premium list. I also notice that you say, 'Read the following, and be sure that you know what you want before you write.' I have read the following, and am quite sure of what I want. I want the *Banjo and Guitar Journal* for one year, beginning with No. 68, and I want Rudimental Lessons for the Banjo as premium, and I enclose 50 cts. to pay for same, that is, one year's subscription (not prescription) to the *Banjo and Guitar Journal*, beginning with No. 68, with Rudimental Lessons for the Banjo as premium. I expect six numbers of the *Journal*, also Rudimental Lessons for the Banjo. I do not expect any clocks, watches, piano-stools, bicycles, second-hand clothing, railroad excursions, brick or stone houses, or any gold mines or building lots; and as for the balloon excursions, I don't want any, but merely want and expect one year's subscription to the *Banjo and Guitar Journal*, consisting of six numbers, beginning with No. 68, with Rudimental Lessons for the banjo as premium; and I think that by this time you ought to be pretty well satisfied as to what I want; and please remember that I enclose you Express Money Order to pay for same, amount 50 cents. Hope this will be satisfactory, and that your clerks will not have any trouble deciphering this chirography."

T. J. Armstrong and Miss E. Hastings played the banjo at a miscellaneous concert, at the Hall of the Gesu, Philadelphia, February 26th.

S. S. Stewart and T. J. Armstrong played the five and six string banjos at a concert given in the parish building of St. Mary's Church, Ardmore, Pa., on the evening of February 29th.

Walter J. Stent, of Sydney, N. S. W., Australia, says that since his address appeared in Stewart's *Journal* he has been receiving circulars and catalogues from American Banjo manufacturers and publishers by every mail. He is almost deluged with them, and thinks that Stewart's *Journal* must be perused carefully by all the banjo makers in America.

The Lynn B. M. and G. Club, of Lynn, Mass., under the direction of A. F. Adams, Boston, Mass., 34 Union street, Lynn, Mass., is a very successful organization.

Archie S. Anderson, of Charlotte, N. C., has organized a new Banjo Club.

The Cecilia Banjo and Guitar Club, of Littleton, N. H., gave its first grand concert at that place, at Union Hall, on the evening of February 23d. Erastus Osgood is musical director and is doing good work in Littleton.

Thanks are tendered to the Arion Banjo Club, of Oshkosh, Wis., for a photograph of its members, recently received.

The Columbus Troubadours, of Columbus, O., gave their second annual concert, in that city, Thursday evening, February 18th. The affair is said to have been a grand success considering the misfortune the company met with in the burning of the block in which the rooms of the club were situated a short time ago, and the loss of the music they were practicing. The club presented 25 banjo and guitar players.

E. M. Hall is performing with Haverley's Minstrels in Chicago.

N. P. Bachus, Detroit, Mich., writes under date of February 29th: "Enclosed you will find two programs of concerts of our Society Mandolin, Banjo and Guitar Club, under the direction of Professor Henry Haug. The club is composed of ladies and gentlemen, fourteen in number, about equally divided, and for a three months old club can outdo anything in its line. It may be of interest to you to know that only Stewart's Banjos and Banjeaurines are used in this organization: 4 No. 2 Orchestra Banjos, and 2 No. 1 Banjeaurines; six of your instruments, all told. The last concert, February 25, was given in the Detroit Ring, the capacity of which is about 5,000, and was well attended. The club played elegantly, and were encored 'out of sight.' The balance of the program was of Detroit's finest musicians and a consequently critical audience, but our little club and Stewart banjos 'took the cake.'"

A Banjo Orchestra, under the direction of Prof. Sherry, performed the Normandie March, Dance in the Wood, and other selections, at Metropolitan Opera House, St. Paul, Thursday evening, February 25, at the benefit of Co. "E," N. G. S. M.

Master Eddie Buchart, of Providence, R. I., who is known as a talented young banjoist, was tendered a benefit in that city, at Blackstone Hall, on Tuesday evening, March 1st. The Palma Banjo and Guitar Orchestra, under Mr. J. H. Jennings' direction, took part in the entertainment, also Mr. Allen G. Oatley, banjoist. There was a full house and the affair was a complete success in every way.

W. B. Leonard's Juvenile Banjo and Guitar Orchestra gave a musicale, in Cortland, N. Y., recently. Mr. Leonard is kept very busy with his classes on the Banjo and Guitar.

H. N. Casad, Band Master, writing from Crookston, Minn., under date of February 26 says: "I have purchased one of your No. 3 Orchestra Banjos, and as it is not necessary to say anything in favor of your banjos at this late day, all I will say is that I am pleased with the instrument in every respect and think I have one of the best banjos in the world. All who hear it pronounce what I call it."

D. C. Everest, the well-known teacher of violin and banjo, of Philadelphia, has been very ill with pneumonia.

Professor VanDeventer is right "in it," as a Banjo Teacher, in Tacoma, Washington.

John Davis, 402 Main Street, Springfield, Mass., is doing a large business in banjo teaching. He handles more copies of Stewart's American Banjo School, than any other teacher in the country.

Dr. W. F. Roberts, Marshall, Mich., writes: "The banjo you sent me arrived in nice shape, much sooner than I expected. I find it a perfect instrument, and am perfectly charmed with its fine tone qualities and beautiful finish. The raised frets were a revelation to me. They are as near perfection as possible."

Observations on the Banjo and Banjo Playing.

By S. S. STEWART.

There are a great many books published on the Banjo and in use by the public—many of which contain a number of scales and exercises for the Banjo—but all more or less deficient in explanatory lessons, by which the student can go at the practice of his scales and exercises understandingly.

The fingering of the left-hand in banjo playing is important, and a right application in this direction is very necessary. The same may be said of the manipulation of the strings with the right-hand; or in other words, without a good execution and a proper application of the right-hand, one can not acquire the act of banjo playing; for in "playing on the Banjo" the use of the hands and fingers is required to such an extent as to act in unison with the mind. The mind must be concentrated upon the subject in hand and the hands must be ready to act in unison with the mind, as the implements of thought.

To this end a certain knowledge and practice is necessary—knowledge of the proper manner of setting to work—and then the practice that gives the power to the hands to express on the musical instrument the musical sounds as conveyed to the mind through the musical notation.

There are some who are good theorists in banjo playing, but who can not execute well, or put their theories into practice. There are others, almost without theory, who can execute to a certain extent—and indeed many of whom would pass for skilled performers when playing for persons unfamiliar with all kinds of banjo playing—were it not that some bad fault is constantly showing itself in their performances. The writer, coming constantly into contact, as he does, with very many banjo players, has had constant opportunity to observe and note defects as well as many excellent points in the work of many performers.

Some have been met with who while quite good executants, were at a loss to explain any thing they performed, and if asked to go over certain passages more slowly, in order that the same might be analyzed, they at once became lost, as it were, in a great fog, and hopelessly befuddled, in fact unable to execute the passages twice in the same way.

Again, there are performers of no doubt excellent ability *as performers* on the Banjo—but who as teachers, or in the capacity of writers on the Banjo, are hopelessly at sea. They can not put any thing on paper in a manner that will render it intelligible to a student, and when such persons attempt to produce instruction books, such works often prove so utterly un-clear and so discouraging to the student that he gives up the study. Such cases are legion.

Quite recently the writer received a circular from a banjo teacher, in which a work for the Banjo was advertised

the contents, than which, scarcely any thing could have been more preposterous. It professed to teach the Banjo in three different ways—one by musical notation, as accepted by all enlightened banjoists,—another system called the English method, and still another, termed the "Simple Method,"—the latter named being the old "Simple Simon" newly served up.

One is apt to inquire after reading such advertisements, or after perusing briefly such works, as to whether their reputed authors can execute from any of the methods, of which they give so unsavory a mixture.

Too much importance can hardly be given to the practice of the scales on the Banjo. Not that it is necessary to practice thoroughly all the scales in the twelve major and twelve minor keys. But in those keys in which the performer wishes to play selections, the value of practice of the scales can hardly be over-estimated.

In practicing the "Natural Scale" of the Banjo, or Gamut in A Major, the left hand fingering, both in ascending and descending the scale, is the same; and is not likely to be improved upon. In the following scale the proper fingering of the left hand is placed under each of the notes. The hand should be allowed to shift its position after making the second note in the scale (B), as is indicated by the figures under B and C. The second finger is used to stop the bass string to make each of those notes and then the little finger falls in place at the 5th fret, for the note D. The short string of the Banjo—the nut of which should be directly at the 5th fret—is generally indicated, in musical notation of banjo music, by a double stem, or sometimes by a cross (x). The double stem is rather better, on account of the cross (x) being also used to denote the thumb of right hand. The note represented in music as E for the "5th string open," may also be made on the first string at the 5th fret; and for this reason, the first and fifth strings should be of the same thickness and quality and the nut for the fifth string should be directly at the 5th fret. It was unusual some time ago to finger the fifth string, at all, with the left hand; but it is at the present time coming more and more into use on account of the varied effects that are producible by its use in connection with the first string.

As the note E—the fifth string—is being made in the scale, the left hand shifts, so that the first finger of that hand falls upon the first string at the 7th fret, making the note F \sharp ; the third finger then falls readily upon the string at the 9th fret, where the note G \sharp is found; and the two octaves of the scale are completed by the little finger falling upon A, at the 10th fret.

The left hand fingering of the "Natural scale of the Banjo" is the same ascending and descending.

Having spoken of the *left hand* fingering it will now be in place to say something about the best modes of picking the strings with the fingers of the *right hand*.

In the beginning of the practice of the scales it is sufficient for the pupil to use the thumb, as a general rule, for the third, fourth and fifth strings,—picking the second string with the first finger, and the first string with the second finger. After some degree of skill has been acquired in this way practice may be begun in using the three fingers of the right hand and picking the first string with the third finger, the second string with the second finger and the third string with the first finger. Practice of this kind is a great help, as it brings the three fingers into use and supple and strengthens them.

As a general rule, for rapid execution, it is well to rest the little finger on the head and execute, by picking,

with the thumb and first and second fingers only—although there are frequently passages to be met with where it is a great help to have the third finger in use, and no absolute *rule* can be laid down governing always the use of the fingers.

There are some very good executants who do without the aid of the third finger at all and some who can not command the absolute control of this member even with a very great amount of practice.

The following scale is fingered for the right hand. Supposing that the student has become familiar with the left hand fingering, as denoted in the previous example, he will now proceed to bring the thumb and two fingers of the right hand into active practical use by the practice of this scale, ascending and then descending, until it is performed with precision and accuracy.

In the foregoing example the thumb, first and second fingers of the right hand only are used, but as will be observed, the second finger is not relegated to the first string absolutely—for in rapid execution alternate use of the first, second, and sometimes the third finger, upon the first string is requisite.

For instance, in a quick movement, such as the rapid performance of the scale even, it is manifestly easier after having picked a note with the first finger on the second string, to follow by making the note on the first string with the second finger, and the succeeding note on same string with the first finger. In very rapid passages the three fingers may be utilized in this way upon the first string. The thumb may also be used to pick the second

string, as well as the third, with equal facility in many passages.

We will now follow with some exercises in the key of E major,—sometimes called the "Open Key" by banjo players—using the scale of one and two octaves for the purpose.

The following Example has the fingering for the left hand only—the figures under the notes standing for the fingers of the left hand to be used in stopping the strings on the frets, 0 signifying "open string."

For right hand fingering, make use of the first and second fingers on the first string alternately.

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Now, going further, we have the same scale written in two octaves, the figures, as in the previous example, denoting the left hand fingering only:

Now follows an Exercise on the same scale arranged so that it may be practiced in accurate Time, and in this example the proper fingering of the left hand is also given, with the remark that in picking the strings with the fingers and thumb of right hand the thumb may be used for the third and fifth strings and the first and second fingers for the first and second strings, using both the first and second fingers for the quick notes on the first string. It is also desirable to bring the third finger into requisition after the exercise has been thoroughly mastered with the use of only the first two fingers.

Common Time.

As a general rule, among banjo players, the keys of A, E and D major are the favorite keys for banjo music and are the keys most in use. A, being the "Natural key of the Banjo," and corresponding with the natural key of C on the pianoforte, is more in use than any other key among banjoists; indeed it is often possible to meet with banjo performers who play a few pieces in this key, but who are entirely unfamiliar with any other.

Now this key is closely related to two other keys, namely, E major, its *dominant*, and D major, its *subdominant*, and it often happens that a comparatively simple musical composition which has its first and last strains in the key of A, carries us, not only into its "relative minor" key, but frequently into those major keys mentioned as its near relatives. Hence, even a third rate banjo player should be familiar with those keys, practicing the scales and chords.

It is not within the scope of the present observations to deal with the twenty-four major and minor scales, and keys,—as that work will be found fully laid down in the first part of "THE AMERICAN BANJO SCHOOL," the present "OBSERVATIONS" being intended more particularly to supplement that work and to furnish the student with some details and information found to be lacking in that and other works.

In the following scale of D major, the fingering of left hand is denoted; the observations on right hand fingering already given applying equally to this example. It may be well to remark that although G \sharp on the third string is marked here for the little finger (fourth) of the left hand, yet if the third finger is preferred to it, there can be no objection. Those who have short fingers prefer the little finger—especially in chords.

Different banjo players of note have different methods of manipulating the strings with the fingers of the right hand in executing music in this, the Guitar style, so called; and it is an important thing for those who aspire to become performers and solo players, to practice the various methods of using the fingers of the right hand, until the manner of picking the strings best suited to each individual is arrived at.

Because one performer uses only two fingers and thumb in "picking," is no reason why an absolute rule should be laid down that his method is the only true one—for we may shortly find another who makes use of three

fingers and who renders the same music with greater ease and less "lost motion." Again we may discover a performer who makes use of only the first finger and thumb of right hand, and yet seems to have no little skill in execution.

It is not well, therefore, to follow either of the latter examples blindly, but to endeavor to train all the fingers to be of use—each in its proper place.

The object to be attained is the same in all cases. This object being to bring the greatest amount of musical expression from the instrument, and to do this with the least possible labor.

In order to accomplish this it is necessary for the student to become versed in the various manners of picking the strings and to philosophically consider for himself the relative value of each, not forgetting that he must consider his own particular temperament and take into consideration, to some degree at least, his physical constitution and natural musical capacity.

A rule can be safely set down that the little finger of the right hand, in picking, rests upon the Banjo-head near the bridge, and that the first and second fingers and thumb are used in nearly all picking of rapid passages. The third finger is then employed where it can best be utilized, in some passages constantly on the first string and in other passages not at all.

But no rule can be given that will absolutely govern the particular place upon the Banjo-head for the little finger to rest, (nor is it absolutely necessary in some cases to rest the finger at all); it being observed that the nearer to the bridge the strings are picked, the more acute will be the tone produced; and by moving the hand a short distance away from the bridge, the more melodious and full are the chords produced, until we have passed a certain limit, where the strings are found to be much easier to manipulate by reason of picking them farther from the nodes or points of vibration (the nut and bridge—or the frets at which the left hand stops the strings, and the bridge) and then the tone produced is found to be softer and much less acute.

These varied degrees of tone possible to produce on the instrument, place within our reach the power of giving much expression to our music, and without the aid of either loud or soft pedals.

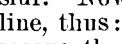
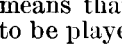
By training the musical ear and by training at the same time the hands to obey the will, and further by a just and systematic philosophical study of our instrument and its music, we can arrive at a correct judgment in musical conception and execution, and then instead of rendering only a few semi-barbarous tunes on the Banjo, we bring forth a higher class of music—proceeding thus until our favorite instrument has taken rank by the side of the harp and kindred instruments. The music is in our instrument, the Banjo, and this fact is being more and more acknowledged, as the instrument becomes known and understood.

THE "SNAP" AND "HAMMER SLUR."

There is some confusion among banjo players in regard to that particular style of fingering designated the

"snap," and not without good reason.

As will be explained in the following remarks, the passages intended to be executed partly with fingers of the left hand—which in the "snap" is done by pulling the string with a certain finger of this hand, instead of picking the string in the ordinary manner with a finger of the right hand—in some cases are so obscure that an inexperienced performer is puzzled, and at a loss to tell to a certainty just how the passages so marked are to be played.

In the following Example,—which is an extract from J. H. Lee's arrangement of the "Farewell Waltzes," by Lowthian,—we have an excellent illustration of the "snap," so written as to be readily confused with the slur. Now in the generality of musical notation a curved line, thus:  or , signifies a slur, or tie, and means that the notes over or under which it is placed are to be played or sung in a smooth and connected manner—in other words, the notes are to be slurred into one another and connected, as it were, without any decided accent on the separate notes. But in banjo music the same sign is used for an entirely different purpose, although sometimes it is used to designate the slur. It is quite common when writing the triplet, composed of three notes played in the time of two notes of the same kind, to place the slur over them; and it therefore becomes necessary for the banjoist to exercise his own judgment whether he will make use of the "snap" or not.

One can not always be guided entirely by the signs placed over the notes, particularly in passages so marked; for where one performer would prefer to make use of the "snap," thus utilizing both the right and left hands in execution, another performer would prefer to play the same passage entirely with the fingers of the right hand.

Although most writers on the Banjo make use of the old fashioned slur sign to denote "snapped" passages, the writer among the number; yet I am led to think that the manner of noting those passages adopted by Mr. Frank B. Converse, the well known writer, is preferable.

Mr. Converse makes use of a similar sign, curved in the opposite direction, and the figure denoting the proper finger of left hand to be used for the "snap," enclosed in the curve. I have often regretted that I did not adopt that method in my own writings, as I believe it is much less confusing.

The following is the extract from the waltz spoken of:—

"BASS TO B."



The musical notation consists of two staves of music in 3/4 time, key of D major. The first staff contains a sequence of notes with slurs and triplets. The second staff continues the melody with similar markings, including a triplet of eighth notes and a final cadence with a double bar line and repeat sign.

The foregoing may be executed without the use of the "snap" if desired, but some would prefer it, as indicated, with the snap.

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To illustrate:—The curved line around the triplet of F#, G# and F#, merely denotes that those three notes are to be played in a connected manner: the next slur mark connecting F# and E#, means that the second finger of left hand is used to “snap,”—that is, to pull the third string, while the first finger of left hand remains on the 1st fret on third string at E#. Thus, the note F# is picked with a finger of the right hand, and the following note, E#, is picked with the second finger of the left hand. The last three measures have a number of snapped notes as will readily be observed. The little finger from the note D snaps C#—the second finger snaps B—the first finger on A snaps G#, and the second finger on F# snaps E, the open third string.

The next Example is part of an old Jig by Buckley. Here we have an excellent illustration in quite a rapid



Properly speaking, slurred passages should be played in a connected manner, as has been said; whereas “snapped” passages in banjo music are to be played in directly the opposite way—in *staccato*, or a detached manner. It seems strange when we think that a sign used to represent *legato* passages, originally, should now be

movement, of the “hammer slur,” or vibration slur, and the “snap.”

In passages such as are illustrated in the following example, the snap could scarcely be done away with. Beginning with A, the bass string open, the following note, C#, is produced by a quick slapping of the second or fourth finger of the left hand on the same string at the 4th fret. Those who possess small and weak fingers will find it no easy thing to accomplish, and after a few attempts to produce a good substantial C# with the little finger, will doubtless make another trial, this time using the second finger. Such passages require practice. Let the student try the piece over several times. The time will be found a little peculiar, but it will prove excellent practice.

All the slur marks in descending passages—like from D to B—A to G#—and F# to E, are to be snapped.

used to denote its opposite, *staccato*, but such is the fact.

In some of the older music for the banjo, written several years ago, it is not unusual to find passages of which the following is an example.



It will be noticed that the third note in the example, B, has a sort of inverted bracket over it, which contains the figure 2.

The meaning of this is as follows:—The first two notes, A, are picked in the usual manner with a finger of the right hand, and the note B, the first string open, is to be sounded by pulling that string with the second finger of the left hand. I believe this way of noting music has almost entirely gone out of date. Unless the passage to be played is very rapid, such a method of

handling the strings is quite useless; the note so marked being just as easy to execute with the first, second, or third right-hand finger.

As already said, the object to be attained is to get music out of the instrument by the best methods. All who are studying the Banjo have that aim in view. The discarding of obsolete and useless methods and complications, and the goal to be reached without useless waste of time or force.



LEFT HAND POSITIONS.

It is important that the banjo student should early in his practice acquire a proper use of the left hand, as has been previously remarked. Not only is it very necessary for him to acquire a true system of fingering for rapid "runs," up and down the scale; but also in chords, in the various keys and changes. An awkward position of the left hand, caused by an improper fingering, is always an impediment to the performer, and causes also a waste of strength that is not likely to occur when a proper use of the hand and fingers has been acquired and practiced. As it is just as easy to acquire the proper method of fingering at the start, as to proceed blindly and without method, it is strongly recommended that the pupil observe these brief remarks on "position fingering," and endeavor to apply them understandingly.

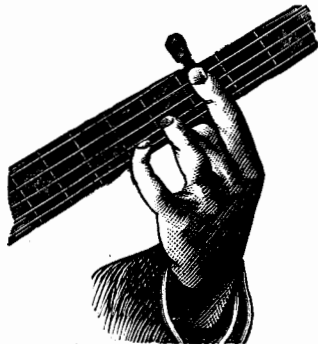
Take, for instance, the following chord of D Major, which is, of course, the subdominant chord in the key of A major.



Many performers, instead of fingering with the first, third and fourth fingers, use the first, second and third. Now, on a small Banjo, or on the Banjeaurine, that fingering will answer very well; but on a Banjo of the ordinary size the hand will not be in an easy position unless the third and fourth fingers are used (on the second and first strings) for the notes D and F#.

The following engraving is a fair representation of the position of the left hand in making this chord.

The first finger makes the barré at 5th fret, producing D and A, on the fourth and third strings; then the third finger stops the second string at the 6th fret for the octave D, and the highest note, which is F#, is produced on the first string at the 7th fret, with the little finger.



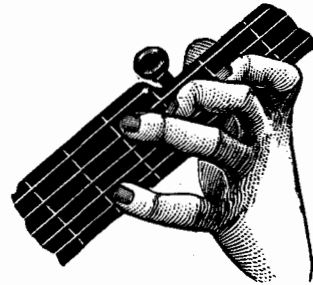
It will be found that this is a much easier position for the hand than the position spoken of, where the little finger is not used.

Again, where a change in fingering is necessitated,—such as changing from that chord to the following, a *diminished seventh*,—it is much easier to change when the fingers are used as above recommended.



This change of fingering is frequently rendered necessary in playing in the "natural key of the Banjo," and in using the fingers as indicated here the little finger can remain on the first string at the 7th fret, making the note F#, which causes less effort, than to be obliged to use another finger than was originally at that fret; and this alone aids ease and rapidity of motion.

The following wood engraving, also from a photograph, is a very fair illustration of the manner of fingering this position.



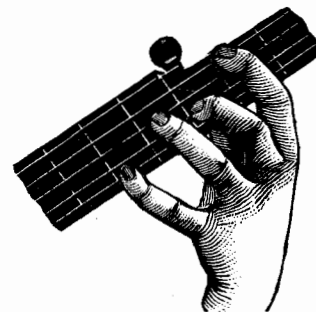
The hand here is said to be in the "4th position," because the first finger is at the 4th fret; and this rule will be followed always in designating the different positions of the left hand.

The following chord, also in the "4th pos.," is one that may be met with in playing in the key of B major (5 sharps), it being the dominant chord of that key. It is also apt to be met with in playing in other keys,—in compositions that have modulations to any extent.



Sometimes the lowest note, C#, is omitted in writing this chord for the banjo, which is done to make it easier to handle. When this note is omitted it is a very easy matter to finger the three notes with the first, second and little fingers. But there is one objection to the omission of the lower C#, in this position, and the objection is a strong one. When the triad, composed of the three upper notes alone is played, the bass string is left to itself to jar and disturb the harmony; but when it is stopped at the 4th fret the harmony is increased and the power of the chord thereby greatly augmented.

The following illustration shows the position of the fingers in producing this chord.



In some compositions which are performed with the "elevated bass string"—designated "Bass to B"—where the fourth string is tuned a full tone above its ordinary

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pitch,—this same chord is generally written with its fundamental note underneath, as in the following example :



This chord is very easily fingered when the bass string is "tuned to B," because the lowest note, F#, is then found at the 7th fret, on the bass string; (the fourth string) but the chord written in this position cannot be fingered with the bass string tuned to "A," in the ordinary manner.

In playing in the key of E major, the dominant seventh chord, which is expressed thus :



is quite easy to finger, using the second finger to cover the third and fourth strings at the 2d fret, and placing the first finger on the second string at the 1st fret. Or, if preferred, the second finger may be used for the fourth string, 2d fret, and the third finger, on third string, 2d fret, which answers the same purpose.

But when the chord is written as shown in the following example :

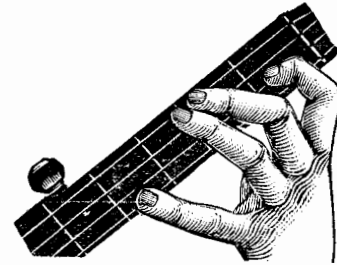


then a greater stretch of fingering is necessary, and it is not unusual to hear the pupil complain that he cannot reach his little finger out so as to produce the note D (#) at the 4th fret. This difficulty, however, disappears as soon as the pupil has learned to place his hand in a proper position. In this chord the second finger makes the notes B and F, by covering the fourth and third strings at 2d fret; the first finger makes A on the second string at 1st fret; and the little finger is used to stop the first string at the 4th fret to make D. Now, if the hand is held in just such a position as it would be in making the simple chord of A in the "first position," it is not to be expected that the little finger will extend itself far enough—especially on a Banjo of large size—to stop the string at the 4th fret with ease; but by bringing the hand more from under the neck the notes are all to be had without discomfort, especially after a little practice.

The following illustration shows the manner of placing the fingers to make the chord spoken of.

Of course, neither wood cuts or photographs will do for a pupil what a *competent personal instructor* can do in pointing out the proper position of the hand and fingers in any case whatever; but there are some ardent admirers of the banjo who can not find in their locality a competent person to instruct them or give them the points they require, and for such these articles are mainly intended, there never having been any thing of the kind published previous to this work.

The wood engravings of "position fingering," etc., are made from the photographic negatives, taken by Mr. Chas. N. Gorton, at the private residence of the writer, and are believed to be as perfect representations of the different positions as can be got with a camera.

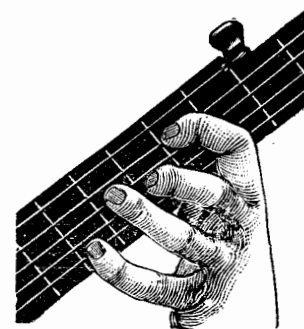


The chord of A major in the 8th pos., with the bass string open as the fundamental note, is sometimes, in leading banjo parts of a composition written for two or more instruments, changed to the chord shown in the following example, having the dominant note of the chord as the lowest note, and when so written it is done for effect.



This chord is in the 7th pos., as the first finger falls at the 7th fret on the fourth string to produce the note E,—the third finger is used to make C on the third string, the second finger for E on the second string, and the little finger for A on the first string.

The following cut will illustrate the fingering of this chord, which is similar to that of the chord of F#, previously illustrated.

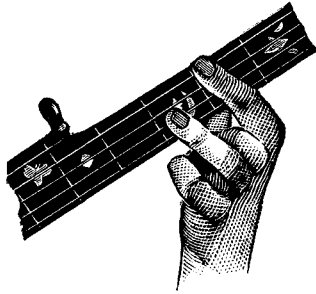


The chord of B minor, which is also the supertonic chord of A major, and which in banjo music is written thus :



is produced as a "Barré chord" in 2d position. The first finger covering the fourth and third strings at 2d fret produce the two lowest notes, B and F; and the third finger covering the second and first strings at 3d fret, produces the remaining notes, B and D.

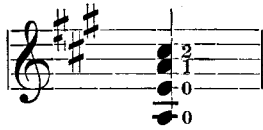
The following illustration will show the manner of stopping the strings for this chord.



When any of the strings are stopped at the 12th fret, which lies mid-way between the nut and the bridge, the note produced will sound an octave higher than the open string.

The term *Barré* is a French word and signifies a temporary nut or cap-da-astro. The abbreviation "Bar." is used to represent the word *Barré*.

In stopping the strings for the chord of A, in the "natural key of the Banjo," as in the following example,



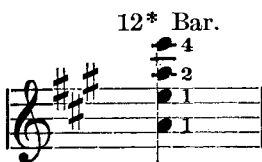
it is only necessary to use two fingers—for the notes A and C—for the remaining notes, E and A, represent the two "open strings" which produce those notes without having to be stopped with the fingers.

Now, we will suppose that the same chord is wanted, *one octave higher*. Then we will have the chord as expressed in the following example—and produced at the 12th position.

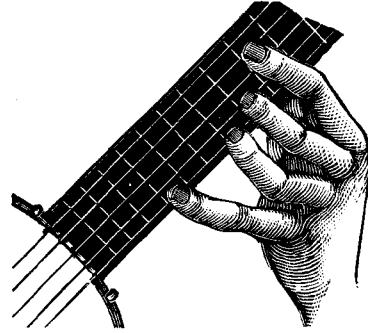


Here A and E are an octave higher than in the chord in the 1st position, and not having the nut at the end of the fingerboard, as in that position, we are obliged to create a temporary nut by means of the *Barré*. The first finger is placed across the four strings at the 12th fret and the A and C are got on the second and first strings respectively by use of the first and second fingers. Here we pursue a different method of fingering from that deemed advisable in the lower positions where the frets are further apart:—instead of using the third and fourth fingers, as were used in the "5th pos. bar." we use the second and third fingers, because, as has been said, the frets as we approach nearer to the banjo rim are much closer together; and also for still another reason do we deem it advisable to finger in this manner.

Sometimes the following chord will be used—



when it will be necessary to make the note E on the first string, at the 17th fret, at the same time holding the same position of the other fingers in the chord as explained. When this chord is taken the fingers will assume the position as shown in the following illustration.



The time was—and only a few years ago—when to be able to play "barré chords" on a Banjo was considered a great accomplishment by many would be banjoists. Then was the time when there were few books of instruction for the instrument and still fewer teachers. In those days, when a person wished to acquire a knowledge of banjo playing he was obliged to get the knowledge he sought as best he could; and to many who were ignorant of the principles of music the *barré* was something that frequently assumed a sort of scare-crow shape in their minds and gave them an idea that there was some great mystery about it that was beyond the understanding of most men and that a little of it would go a great way.

The "simple-method fake," and the teacher who played "by ear," could not explain the simple principle on which barré chords were constructed, or if they could do so, they doubtless found it more of an immediate profit not to do so; and so for a time the aspiring banjoist was often a volume of unconscious ignorance, and he and his banjo were ostracized from musical society,—not only on account of a non-understanding of the barré chords, but on account of a profound ignorance of every thing pertaining to the musical capabilities of the instrument he espoused. Good books and a better class of teachers have gradually changed this order of things, and neither the "barre chord" or "change of key" will in the least bother the banjoist of the present day, nor destroy the placidity of his countenance.

As the 12th fret lies mid-way between the nut and the bridge, it follows that the length of string from the nut to the 12th fret is the same as from the 12th fret to the bridge. Hence, the following rule may be laid down. All the positions that are made on the banjo fingerboard between the nut and 12th fret, are possible to be repeated from the 12th fret to the end of the fingerboard, or as far as there are frets upon which to produce them. All notes produced on the strings from the 12th fret upwards (towards the banjo bridge) will be an octave higher than those produced from the nut upwards (towards the 12th fret). The term "up" or "upwards" must here be understood as signifying *ascending the scale*: whether the banjo neck is pointed upwards or downwards in this understanding has nothing to do with it. When I speak of going upwards, in this work, let it be understood in a musical sense only.

Having acquired all the principal positions on the fingerboard, from or between the nut and the 12th fret, the pupil has only to consider the 12th fret as the nut, and from that point produce the same chords in the next

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octave—from the 12th fret upwards—as far as he has frets upon his instrument to work with; remembering that *the notes thus produced are the same—only an octave higher*—as those he has learned previously. At the same time, he will remember the observations on fingering, using the fingers best adapted to the chords he uses. In Barré chords, where the frets are furthest apart, different fingering will be used from where the frets are close together. From the nut towards the 12th fret the frets will be twice as far apart as from the 12th fret towards the rim.

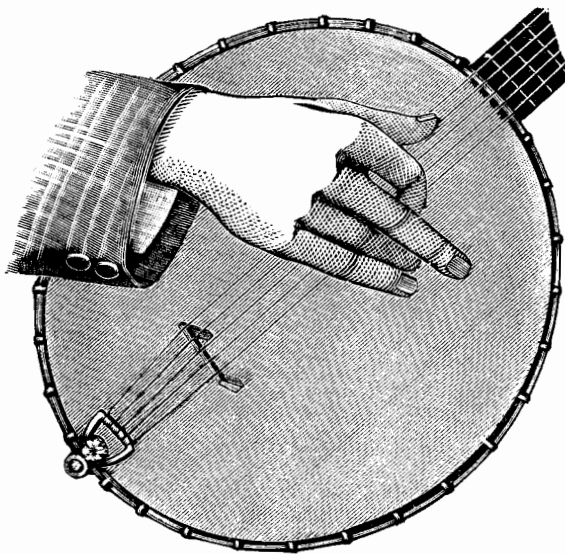
THE TREMOLO MOVEMENT.

In playing or executing the *tremolo* movement,—which is one of the most expressive and beautiful movements in banjo playing,—the right fore-arm rests upon the rim of the Banjo, and the second, or third, finger rests lightly

upon the banjo-head. This serves as a complete support to the hand. The index finger of right hand is used to produce the *tremolo*, which is mostly performed upon the first string; the second and third strings being occasionally used, however,—although, as far as practicable, melodies which can be produced entirely upon the first string are preferred, because it is much easier to manage the *tremolo* on this string alone, than upon any of the inner strings; there being no impediment to the oscillating movement of the finger on this string.

To produce the *tremolo*, the finger oscillates rapidly, but gently, over this string,—barely touching the string,—and taking care not to give sufficient pressure with the tip of the finger on the string to interfere with its rapid motion, to and fro.

Beautiful expression may be produced in this manner of execution, but it requires a great deal of practice.



The above wood engraving which is made from a photographic negative, taken from the instrument in the hands of the writer, by Mr. C. N. Gorton, shows the position of the right hand in the *tremolo movement*, although it may be said that the bend in the finger is somewhat exaggerated in the cut; the true position of this finger being nearly perpendicular.

The thumb of right hand should, of course, be free to pick the strings used in connection with the *tremolo*, as an accompaniment to the melody; for the perfected *tremolo* movement is really a double movement—expressing the melody in *tremolo* style, together with an accompaniment, executed with the thumb, upon the strings not in use for the *tremolo*.

Sometimes the *tremolo* is performed upon more than one string at a time—sometimes on two strings, sometimes

upon three, or four,—and in such cases the thumb notes, or accompaniment part, is omitted. This is generally done, in certain passages, for expression; also used in Banjo Clubs, and in playing various combinations of instruments.

In playing the *tremolo* on a single string, such as may be used in “Home, Sweet Home,” and other melodies, together with the accompanying thumb notes, the fore-arm rests upon the banjo-rim as shown in the engraving, and it is quite unnecessary, not to say awkward, to elevate the arm from this position.

But in producing the movement upon, say, three strings, so as to form chords, the arm may well be raised from the rim, as much more muscular force is required for such movements.

A movement written like the following example (No. 1)—

EXAMPLE NO. 1. (*Tremolo, as written.*)



will be really played, or expressed, as shown in Example No. 2.

EXAMPLE NO. 2. (*Tremolo, as expressed.*)

The finger, moving in a rapid oscillatory manner upon the string, will produce the notes about as expressed in the second example, when playing the previous example in *tremolo*. The notes, however, are expressed in the *tremolo* movement in a sort of continuous slur; there being no stops between the notes, as the finger must keep up its continuous trill. Practice will enable the pupil to give expression to his music; rendering the tones soft or loud, as desired; and in increasing and diminishing the volume of sound produced, by the manner of operating the finger, viz.—increased pressure and lessened pressure on the string.

It is well to keep the nail of the first finger of right hand trimmed quite close, in order to prevent its interference with the free movement of the finger upon the string. A hard-finger end is an advantage, and the hard finger-end may be obtained by continuous practice in picking the strings. A thimble for tremolo playing is unnecessary—in fact, greatly diminishes the power of expression, and the writer has never found it of any use

whatever, for this style of execution.

The notes expressed in "Example No. 2," may also be played in the regular picking style, using the first and second fingers alternately. When done rapidly a *tremolo* is produced in this way; but it is not applicable to all pieces, like the original *tremolo* movement as above illustrated.

The pupil may now take the following example in *tremolo* playing and endeavor to apply the remarks laid down to it. For this example the first strain only, of the piece is used—not having space for the entire composition. This melody, it is true, looks at first glance rather complicated, but will soon become simple enough, if the pupil will set to work to analyze it.

All the notes having the stems turned upwards are to be executed with the first finger, in *tremolo*. All the notes with stems turned downwards are to be picked with the thumb, forming an accompaniment to the melody.

"FLOWER SONG."

By Gustav Lange. Op. 31.

Lento, con espressione, legato.

Tremolo.

Note.—It is not always the case that the abbreviation "*tr*" for *tremolo*, is placed over the notes. The mere notice that the movement is to be played "*tremolo*," or that word, placed at the beginning of the strain, is deemed sufficient in most cases. In violin music "*tr*" would be understood as an abbreviation for *trill*, which is quite a different thing.

It may be well, before proceeding further, to explain some of the signs and abbreviations found in the above example.

A sign, thus: *, stands for "position," and refers always to the left hand fingering; the "position" of which is taken from the fret at which the first finger rests.

For illustration, take the second measure: we have the 10*, 8*, 6*, 5* and 1*, all contained in that one measure. The first finger on D, and the little finger on B, is in the 10th position. The second finger on C, and the little finger on A, is in the 8th position. It is true that, in this case, the first finger does not fall upon any fret; but the hand is in such position that the first finger would fall naturally at the 8th fret, if there was a note to be made there. The first finger on D, and the second finger on F, is in the 6th position. The E, at 5th fret, may be made with the first finger, but it is better to stop the note with second finger, at same time bringing the first finger down at the same fret on second string, as this will prevent the harmony being disturbed by the open string jarring; so we call this "5th position," after which, we



STROKE TREMOLO MOVEMENT.

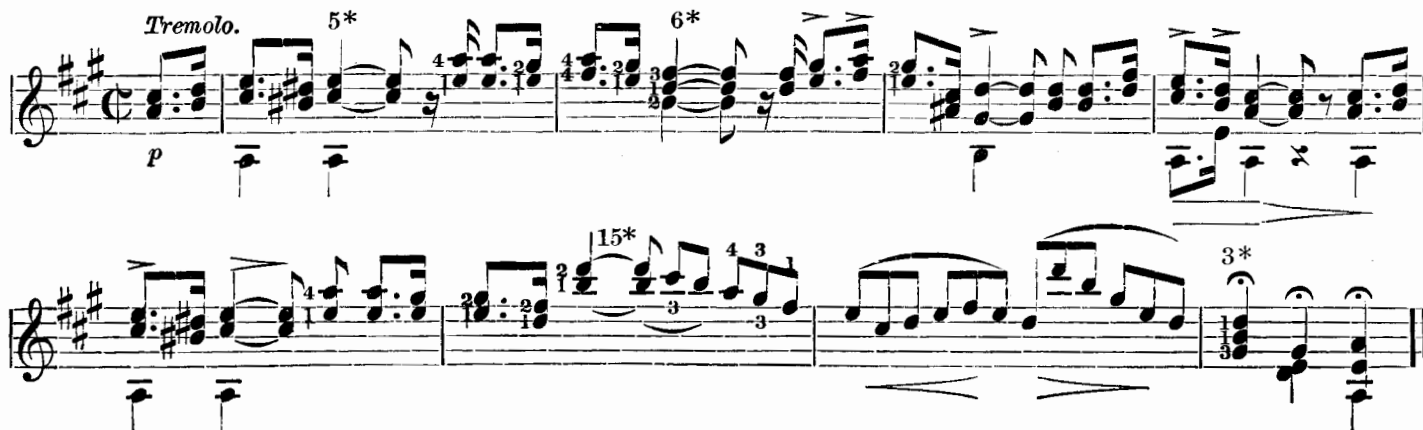


The following arrangement, "Hear Me, Norma," makes an excellent example for *tremolo* playing. It is expressive and well adapted to the Banjo. It will be seen that nearly all of the melody is written in double notes, which are to be performed *tremolo*, with the first finger. All the notes with stems pointing upwards are to be played *tremolo*, and the few notes having stems turned

downwards are to be picked with the thumb, as usual.

The *tremolo* exercises so far given are deemed sufficient to give the pupil a complete insight into this style of banjo playing; indeed, it may be said that if the pupil will practice the exercises in *tremolo* here given, until proficient in them, he will find what remains to be acquired quite an easy task.

HEAR ME, NORMA.



THE OLD AND THE NEW BANJO.

Banjo music has so changed in general character during the last few years that one who was unfamiliar with the instrument and its performers would scarcely realize the great change for the better that has taken place.

There is an old melody that was sung years ago by minstrel performers, as a Banjo song, called "Stop dat Knockin'," or "Susey Brown." It used to be "thumped" in the key of E on the Banjo, and the introduction to the song was played with a thimble, in about the style found in the following example.

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“STOP DAT KNOCKIN’.”

STROKE STYLE.

One would hardly recognize in the foregoing old style thumping tune the melody as it is played to-day.

The following is an arrangement of the melody—complete, with exception of chorus—for playing in the tremolo style.

All the notes with stems turned upwards are trilled,

or played *tremolo*, with the first finger. The notes having stems turned downwards are to be picked with the thumb, and serve as an accompaniment to the melody, which should be performed with expression.

The example here given may be used either as an introduction to the song, in singing, or as an instrumental solo, by itself. It is considered quite effective.

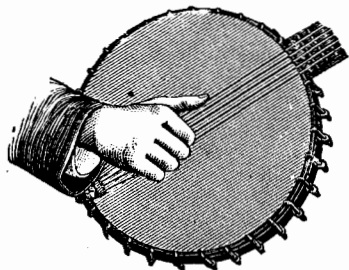
“STOP THAT KNOCKING.”

MODERN BANJO SOLO.

"STROKE PLAYING."

In the old fashioned stroke, or thimble playing, spoken of previously, no rest, or support, of the hand—by placing the little finger upon the banjo-head—is required. The strings are struck downwards, towards the head, with the nail of the first finger, or with the "banjo-thimble," which is used upon that finger. The thumb is also used, mainly to pick the fifth string, but also on the other strings, as occasion may require.

The position of the right hand in thimble, or stroke, playing is illustrated in the following wood engraving.



The position of the hand in playing the "stroke tremolo," previously mentioned, is almost identical; the only difference being that the thumb in that movement would not be found resting upon the fifth string, as shown in the cut.

In the performance of some Marches, Quicksteps, etc., this style is very advantageous; as the tone produced from the Banjo, by striking the strings downwards, with the thimble, can be made much more powerful and penetrating than is possible in picking the strings,—either upwards or sideways,—with the bare finger-ends. It stands to reason, that the vibrations of the strings, being conducted to the head through the bridge, will be much more forcible when the string is struck downwards, than when plucked, or pulled, in the opposite direction; and that the *acuteness* of the sound produced will be augmented by the string being struck with a firm metallic substance, more or

less elastic, than if struck or plucked with a soft pad, like the finger-tip. Good players are aware of this, and you will find that an experienced banjo player, in playing in the guitar style, or picking, uses his thumb, on the bass string, particularly, as far as possible for a downward stroke of that string. The novice can, without much loss of time, readily experiment a little for himself and find out whether his bass string, for example, sounds best with an upward pluck on the string, or with a downward blow, or sharp pick, downwards, towards the head. In fact, the plucking of the string upwards always causes more or less of a slapping noise—sometimes the string being caused to strike against the frets or fingerboard, by reason of its being pulled upwards, and having to rebound again—and thus vibrating backwards and forwards. If the string is struck downward, it, of course, must vibrate in the same direction; but the downward blow does not cause so much of the slapping sound, because, in the first place, the downward blow causes a more decided and acute tone, and in pulling the string upwards, it is always pulled further away from its position than should be the case. Hence, it becomes necessary for the young banjoist to study from the beginning to produce a full and clear tone, and to endeavor to get the fullest quantity of musical tone from his instrument, and, at the same time, the best *quality* of tone possible to produce. In either style of playing, whether stroke or picking, it is necessary to understand certain principles upon which banjo music must be based. Stroke, or thimble playing, not being in use to any great extent to-day,—and few teachers of the present time being qualified to give instruction in that branch,—coupled with the fact that the guitar style, or picking, is deemed, by far, the more elegant and refined, as well as the most practicable,—leads me to confine my observations in the present articles mostly to the latter; but the "stroke style" cannot be permitted to pass entirely without notice.

The following example in stroke playing will be found quite a good exercise for the student. It is played with a thimble, and the thumb is used only for the fifth string. The first two notes, B and E, are struck with the thimble, and the four notes that follow are executed by sliding the thimble over the necessary strings, which is followed by the note, E, plucked with the thumb. The exercise should be practiced in accurate time and the accented notes given full force.

STROKE EXERCISE.

No. 1.

Tempo di March.

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Next, we have another stroke exercise, in the old plantation style. This starts out with a "roll," or slide of the the thimble over the four strings, and is so simple as not to require special comment.

As in the previous example, the thumb is used only for the fifth string. It should be practiced rather slowly until learned, and then may be practiced in quicker time.

STROKE EXERCISE.

No. 2.



In striking the strings with the thimble, where the notes are accented, it is customary to bring the end of the thumb against the outer edge of the fore-finger, or against the thimble, to serve as a support, or brace, to that finger; otherwise the natural suppleness of the finger-joint will

prevent a sharp, decisive blow being given the string—which is necessary if the note is to be acute.

In the following exercise (No. 3), the thumb is used for all notes, marked X, besides being used, of course, for the fifth string.

STROKE EXERCISE.

No. 3.



We will now leave "stroke playing" for the present, and proceed with other interesting generalities.

THE HANDLING OF THE PEGS.

In tuning the banjo, it is necessary in order to obtain a certain command of the pegs, to understand certain principles.

There are several different kinds of "patent pegs" for Banjos, in use to-day, which may be operated by any novice; as all that is necessary is to possess sufficient strength to turn them, either one way or the other. But as the majority of instruments possess the old fashioned pegs, and as it is not to be supposed that the use of them will ever be entirely superseded, it is deemed advisable to give a few hints on the *proper handling of the pegs*, by which the strings of a banjo are tuned.

Banjo pegs,—sometimes called keys,—are made of ebony, rosewood, box, maple, or other hard and durable woods; also of bone, ivory and celluloid. The ebony and

celluloid pegs are more in use to-day than any other kind. Bone and ivory pegs are easily broken and are therefore undesirable. Rosewood is a very excellent wood for this purpose, on account of its containing a natural oil, which renders pegs made of that wood to hold better than most any other kind. But for some reason rosewood has never come into general use for pegs, and there are few made of that material; the ebony pegs taking precedence. Celluloid, or imitation ivory, also makes a most satisfactory peg, and a great many of them are in use.

The Banjo pegs should be of a perfect taper, and the holes for their reception, in the banjo scroll, should be tapered with a reamer, so as to exactly fit the peg, and then there will be an even bearing on the peg on all sides. If the taper is true in both instances, what little wear in the hole is occasioned by a few years use will not make any important difference, provided the pegs have been left sufficiently long to allow of their being pushed further upwards. Should the holes become, in course of time, too

large, they may be bored out and a bushing of wood inserted, after which they should be re-drilled and again reamed out to the proper taper.

If the pegs are a perfect fit to the tapered holes, and are at the same time true and straight, there is little chance of their slipping out of place in tuning the strings, providing they are properly handled.

Sometimes a drop of oil is necessary, rubbed upon the peg, together with a little chalk, and then carefully wiped off with a bit of paper; but the rubbing of rosin upon the pegs is not recommended.

There is a "knack" in handling the pegs that every banjo player does not possess. For instance, in tuning the first string; take hold of the peg, in a manner similar to that represented in the following engraving.



The first finger, pressing on the upper portion of the scroll, immediately over the peg being operated, will cause the peg to be held in place as it is being turned. This is very simple, and it is, at the same time, a good thing to know. The other strings,—the three remaining pegs of the scroll,—may be operated in a similar manner.

How often we see banjo players, in turning the pegs, to tune their instruments, go about it as though they had undertaken an arduous task. Finding the peg will not remain in place when they have turned it around enough to tighten the string, they proceed to grasp the neck, near its base, with the right hand, and then with the left, again give the peg a tremendous boost to drive it home;—only to find that the string is further out of tune than before. Then, perhaps, they reach up with the right hand, and grasping the neck firmly in the middle, to brace it, or themselves, for the awful work,—they give the peg another turn and another shove upwards. Such methods are entirely wrong and are not only an unnecessary trouble to the performer, but are often, as I shall shortly explain, a great injury to the instrument.

The short string (fifth string) peg is easily managed. The banjo neck may be allowed to rest against the left knee, if the performer is a man; but if a woman, it is

more genteel to handle the peg in the manner shown in the following illustration. The manner of holding the peg in position, and thereby controlling it, will be readily understood from this:



In handling the pegs, as in every thing else, there is a right and a wrong way. With the exception of what has been written and published by the writer of the present article, it is exceedingly doubtful if any thing bearing upon this subject has ever been given to the banjo playing public. And if the student is not instructed in these details, how is he to learn? Some few, it is true, possess a natural adaptability, which enables them to learn many of these points by a sort of instinct, as it were; but with the majority it is largely the other way.

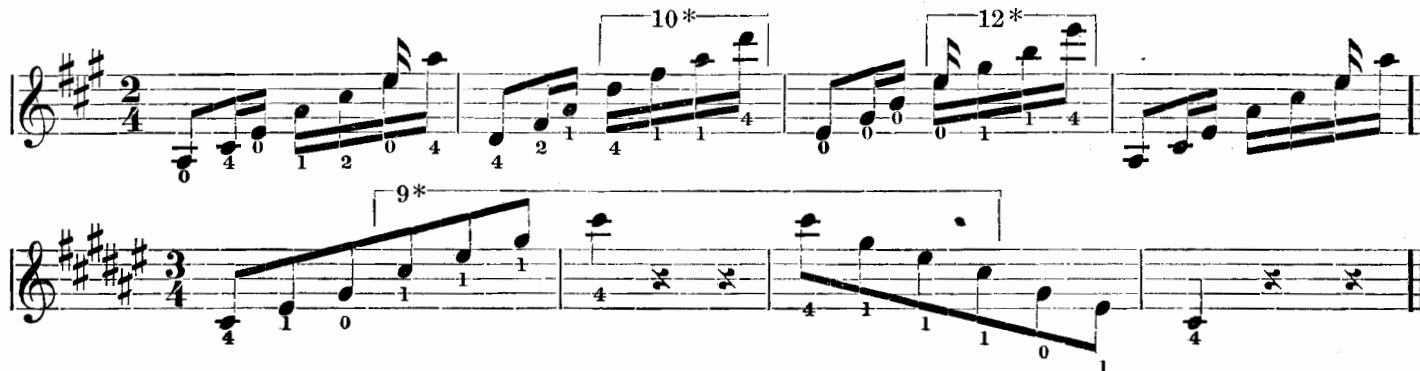
THE BANJO BRIDGE.

Years ago, when the Banjo was a clumsy affair,—and before banjo playing had become an art, as it is to-day,—it was customary to use a very large bridge, and to have plenty of room to work around the strings.

The following wood cut is an exact representation of a banjo bridge used many years ago. The bridge, from which this illustration was made, has been in the possession of the noted writer of banjo music, Mr. Albert Baur, for about twenty-eight years.



It was on an old banjo which had been out of use for several years. This bridge measures as follows: 3½ inches long at bottom—2¼ inches at top—¾ of an inch high. It will be seen that there is a great deal of waste of material in it, the feet spreading out considerably more than was ever necessary to hold up the strings. Fancy a performer now-a-days executing passages like the following with such a bridge; or playing a tremolo on all the strings at the same time.



BRYN MAWR SCHOTTISCHE, FOR THE BANJO.

By THOS. J. ARMSTRONG.

Moderato.

Banjo. *f* *mf*

2 Pos.....

1 *f* *mf*

3 Pos..... 4 Pos.....

1 Pos..... 2 Pos..... *p*

1 2 *f* *ff* *FINE.*

D.S. al Fine.

Trio. *Dolce.* *p*

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of notes and rests. A first ending bracket labeled '1' spans the final two measures, which end with a double bar line and repeat dots. A second ending bracket labeled '2' spans the final two measures, which end with a double bar line and repeat dots. Dynamics include *p* and *f*.

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps, 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of notes and rests. A first ending bracket labeled '5 Pos.' spans the first two measures. A second ending bracket labeled '3 Pos.' spans the last two measures. Dynamics include *f*.

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps, 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of notes and rests. Dynamics include *p*.

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps, 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of notes and rests. A first ending bracket labeled '1' spans the final two measures. A second ending bracket labeled '2' spans the final two measures. Dynamics include *f*.

Musical staff 5: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps, 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of notes and rests. A first ending bracket labeled '2 Pos.' spans the first two measures. Dynamics include *f* and *mf*.

Musical staff 6: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps, 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of notes and rests. Dynamics include *f*.

Musical staff 7: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps, 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of notes and rests. A first ending bracket labeled '1' spans the final two measures. A second ending bracket labeled '2' spans the final two measures. Dynamics include *mf* and *f*. The piece concludes with the word 'FINE.' and a double bar line.

"COMPANY C" MARCH.

FOR THE GUITAR.

By E. H. FREY.

The musical score is written for guitar in 6/8 time. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first staff is marked with a forte *f* dynamic and includes a melodic line with triplets and a bass line with chords. The second staff continues the accompaniment with chords and triplets. The third and fourth staves show further development of the accompaniment. The fifth staff is the first of a double bar system, marked with a first ending bracket and ending with a repeat sign. The sixth staff is the second ending, marked with a second ending bracket and ending with a repeat sign. The seventh staff concludes the piece with a melody and accompaniment, marked with a mezzo-forte *mf* dynamic.

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. Contains a series of chords and eighth notes.

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. Continuation of the previous staff.

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. Includes first and second endings.

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, 3/8 time signature. Labeled "Trio." with a forte "f" dynamic marking.

Musical staff 5: Treble clef, 3/8 time signature. Includes fingerings 3, 2, 1, 2.

Musical staff 6: Treble clef, 3/8 time signature. Includes fingerings 1, 2, 1, 2, 3, 1, 0, 2.

Musical staff 7: Treble clef, 3/8 time signature. Includes fingerings 3, 2, 3, 1, 2.

Musical staff 8: Treble clef, 3/8 time signature. Includes "7th Fret." marking and first/second endings.

"Company C" March.