

# THE COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT.

I have sworn upon the Altar of God, eternal hostility to every form of Tyranny over the Mind of Man.—Thomas Jefferson.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY H. WEBB.

Volume IV.

BLOOMSBURG, COLUMBIA COUNTY, PA. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 1840.

Number 21.

OFFICE OF THE DEMOCRAT,  
OPPOSITE ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, MAIN-ST.

## TERMS:

The COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT will be published every Saturday morning, at TWO DOLLARS per annum, payable half yearly in advance, or Two Dollars Fifty Cents, if not paid within the year. No subscription will be taken for a shorter period than six months; nor any discontinuance permitted, until all arrearages are discharged.

ADVERTISEMENTS not exceeding a square will be conspicuously inserted at One Dollar for the first three insertions, and Twenty-five cents for every subsequent insertion. A liberal discount made to those who advertise by the year. LETTERS addressed on business, must be post paid.

## COMMUNICATION.

For the Columbia Democrat.

### VOCAL MUSIC.

There is nothing on earth, upon which a truly virtuous and great mind can look with greater pleasure, than upon the rapid march of intelligence. The arts and sciences are fast hastening toward perfection, and the world is becoming astonished at its own ingenuity.

As the arts and sciences are being carried forward with an astonishing rapidity, not a few have given their attention to the composition of poetry, both profane, and sacred. This style is so pleasing to human nature, & represents any important event with a more greater force, than if thousands, and even to employ the minds of ten thousands.

Among the various classes of poetic compositions, that which is addressed to the Supreme Being is the most important, and should claim our serious attention—their numbers are copious, and their circulation extensive. They may not only be found in every family, but almost every child is taught to read them. But alas! where is the appropriate music which should always accompany these beautiful lines, which are classed so high, and held so dear! Is it unimportant that they should be attended with any? What on the face of the globe, tends more to soften the heart, sooth the mind, enrapture the soul, and refine the feelings, than strains of well executed, intelligent, sacred vocal music.

It is not a science of modern origin; it was employed by the morning stars in exalting the fame of their Creator, when he first called the earth out of its chaotic state. Triumphant strains were also sung by the angelic host on the plains of Bethlehem, when he announced their birth of our Saviour.

All pious and good people have ever held vocal music as an important branch of public worship; and all we now complain of, is its present rude state among an enlightened people; and because it has not kept pace with the other sciences of the day, which have been so generally disseminated among us. That it should, and hereafter will, occupy a place among the parts of an accomplished education, is the opinion of more than one of our illustrious generation.

It is true that we hear vocal music in every direction, in almost every family, and certainly in every church; but witness its degraded character in most places throughout our own section of the country. In visiting its various churches, we seldom ever hear any thing else than a very small number of old and worn out tunes, which by their perpetual and universal use, and the rude manner in which they are executed, are rendered loush, and disgusting, to every person of musical acquirements; and unedifying, and uninteresting, to every hearer: to which may be added a set of senseless choruses and tunes, still used by many, which not unfrequently cause persons of musical taste to blush.

Now for the reasons why these things are so. One great reason is, because our country has been flooded with books of the

lowest stamp. Their compilers knowing little or nothing more about music than every common vocalist should know, not able even to examine any books that were not issued in patent notes. Hence their tastes have bordered upon vulgarity, and their means of access to good works and authors entirely cut off, while the productions of scientific vocalists have been confined to the better educated portions of our country. And that all things might conform together, we have been imposed upon by a set of teachers although deficient in that knowledge of the science which is requisite to impart the necessary information: knowing but little, and teaching nothing. In this order of things, the condition of the science would not be improved, though it were taught for ten thousand years in succession. The vulgarity of the books and teachers have produced indifference and neglect in the people, and our singing-schools have become little else than places of disgraceful gatherings; no one caring whether he acquired any information or not.

It is a universal practice among these teachers to begin their schools with singing, and end them with singing; and never more than a few times in the course of the school pretend to lay before them any rules, and many will be attendants for several quarters and not as much as know the different quantities of time belonging to the several notes.

It has been thought by many, that but a slight knowledge of the elements was necessary for ordinary purposes, whereas a considerable information and practice is necessary, before a person can acquire the habit of striking any sound in a piece of strange music according to the notes before him. Moreover, to have a knowledge of the different notes, is not sufficient to direct a person to keep correct time, for we even notice deficiencies in many who are called good teachers. It is in fact one of the greatest difficulties to overcome, and requires great pains, and persevering diligence in teachers, if they wish their school to excel in this department; and with the greatest care and perseverance, it is scarcely possible to attain the object, unless some instrument be used to mark the time, from which they cannot vary.

Since the education of the young, seems to be an object to which greater attention is paid in our own section of the country, than in former years, we may begin to entertain a lively hope, that the way is opening for this accomplishing science; for it is never taught with effect to the ignorant.

We can conceive of no plan better calculated to augment the interests of this department of science, than the formation of a society. Though not such a society as we have frequently seen formed, composed of each, and every one, that would but consent to have their names entered; for we have never seen them prove beneficial, but always terminated after a very short period, without the least improvement. But we would say, let a competent instructor be employed for a length of time sufficient that a number attain considerable proficiency in vocal music, so as to pass a certain examination, requiring them to answer certain questions, and perform certain exercises of the voice, which shall be superintended by the president and other officers of the society, and directed by the constitution; and admit new members no faster than they attain this certain degree, which will preserve the society pure, and enable it to perform its music without being annoyed with imperfect sounds, and distraction of time. The names of the remainder, who are under instructions, might be registered in the society as candidate members, but not allowed to enjoy the privileges of those in full membership. Another class might also be added, composed of such as have heretofore made advances in music, but who cannot be depended upon to attend all the meetings of the society, which class might be denominated honorary members.

A society formed upon such principles, would prove a powerful stimulus to awa-

ken the energies of others, after they would strive to gain that information which would carry them into full membership. If such means and ways were resorted to, our churches would no longer be disgraced with vulgar and harmonious music, and society in general would be rendered pleasant and agreeable, and refinement would be greatly advanced.

In addition to the foregoing, we will give a detail of a system of teaching vocal music, in which the author has followed the most approved, teachers in part, and added several important parts which are original, and well calculated to produce the desired effect. The preparation consist of scales of degrees, a pendulum, a pamphlet, and a pestalozzian book.

The pamphlet contains a concise explanation of the elements of vocal music, designed to prompt the memory between the lectures, which are given from examples in the pestalozzian book; which consists of examples and tunes, painted in white, and very large, on black cotton cloths, which are sewed together along one edge, and suspended so as to be seen by the whole school, and also that when done with what is contained on one page, that leaf can be thrown behind by throwing it over the top, which will bring another to view. &c.

The pamphlet is intended for the pupils each to have a copy, and is divided into 13 lessons. The arrangements are new, but the contents are drawn from the works of Boston.

### FIRST LESSON AND EXAMPLE.

The diatonic scale, consists of seven primary sounds of degrees, five whole tones and two semi [half] tones.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

The sounds are numbered from the bottom upwards.

An interval is the distance between any two sounds.

The interval from 1 to 8, from 2 to 2, from 3 to 3, &c. is called an octave.

No. 1 is called the key or tonic.

No. 8 is the same in nature, the difference consisting only in the pitch.

In ascending above 8, we must call it 1, and ascend towards 8 again.

In descending below 1, we must call it 8, and descend towards 1 again.

The principal sounds are 1, 3, 5, and 8.

The semi-tones are situated between 3 and 4, and 7 and 8.

The syllables are applied to the Nos. of the scale as follows: 1 fa, 2 sol, 3 la, 4 fa, 5 sol, 6 la, 7 mi, 8 fa.

Every note, in all music, belongs to one of these numbers; and it is an object of vast importance, to have their different natures so ingrafted in the mind, as to be able to give the sound of either one, as soon as the number is given out. Hence, after all the questions are answered, we begin by taking a certain sound for No. 1; then lead them up by degrees to No. 3, and let them sound 3 several times, until it becomes well fixed in the ear; then alternate 1, 3, several times. We next lead them up by degrees to 5, and alternate 1, 5; then to 8 in like manner.—These are termed the principal sounds, upon which all regular tunes commence and end, and must be dwelt upon; until the pupils can in every case give the sound, as soon as the teacher gives out the number. After the principal sounds become familiar, the intermediate sounds are added in like manner.—Lessons of figures are also prepared in the pestalozzian book, varying the order of the numbers in every advantageous manner, and are intended to be dwelt upon occasionally for a length of time, or until a perfect knowledge of the nature of each number of the scale is acquired. For this purpose, several tunes in the pestalozzian book are prepared with figures at the top, which represent the

number of each note, and are first sung without regard to time. This practice will enable the pupils, when singing strange music, to give every note its proper sound with ease and certainty.

Another exercise, similar to parsing, consists in going the numbers, letters, divisions of the measures, quantities of the notes, &c. measure by measure.

The principal order pursued in the school consists in taking one lesson on one evening and giving a full and satisfactory explanation, after which a course of questions are to be answered from the print in the pamphlet; to give an idea what questions will be asked on the next evening; and with the aid of the pamphlet, they will be prepared by the next evening to answer the questions with the pamphlet closed; when an explanation on another lesson takes place. This order is calculated to rivet the contents of each lecture much more firmly in the mind, than the usual order of pursuing the inductive plan of Pestalozzi.

In order that the great difficulties in getting a school to keep good time may be obviated, a weight attached to a cord, in such a manner, that it may produce a quick or slow motion, is suspended before the music. It is perhaps not generally known, that the vibrations of such a motion occupy equal time; or that it will describe its longest arc in the same time that it describes its shorter arcs. The advantage of this particular can be imagined by those who have had trials of teaching without.

The scales consist of two, the one lettered, and the other numbered, and by comparing the two, will be shown all the variations and changes which take place in the keys, modes, flats, sharps, and naturals.

It is well known, that the law of copy rights interferes in bringing into one compilation all the best tunes throughout the country, for which reason this pestalozzian book is well calculated to be pregnant with interest. It will afford an opportunity of bringing before a school all the best tunes that are not contained in any other good work, in reference to which it is framed.—The present pestalozzian book is commended with a number of original pieces, which will be submitted at any time for examination and trial, by any scientific vocalists of good taste. There has also been composed to the moravian hymn, an additional part, calculated to render that beautiful tune much more interesting and useful.

The tunes are prepared in patent notes, notwithstanding most good teachers object to them. The author is of opinion that the simplest and most comprehensive forms are always the best provided they are taught systematically. The low condition of vocal music in such sections where the patent notes are used, is to be attributed to the vulgarity of the books, and teachers, and not to the forms of the notes.

This pestalozzian book is calculated to be sufficient for one quarter, after which the school should use Mason's sacred harp or ecclectic harmony, which was issued in patent notes, contrary to the wishes of the authors, but which stands unrivaled by any other work ever issued from the press.

WM. KAHLER.

From the Democratic Standard.

### THE LATE MURDER TRIAL.

A brief, but faithful account of the late trial and condemnation of Robert McConaughy, for the murder of the family of John Brown of Comwell township, Huntingdon county.

This trial came before the Huntingdon County Court at its last term. Judge Burnside presided, Messrs. Gwin and Taylor appeared for the commonwealth, and Messrs. Bell, Calvin and Wilson for the defendant, the defendant's counsel being appointed by the Court. The trial began on Wednesday morning, and the testimony closed about six o'clock, P. M. the following Tuesday. The indictment consisted of six or seven counts, charging him with the murder of Rosanna Brown, John Brown, Elizabeth Brown, Jacob Brown, George Brown, and David

Brown, and an assault, with intent to murder, John Brown, the father of the children named, and the husband of Rosanna Brown.

About seventy witnesses were examined, and after the testimony had been summed up, Judge Burnside delivered his charge to the Jury, and in such a brief sketch as this is designed to be, that address cannot be expected in full; it however sustained the high and honorable reputation he has so long held. It embraced a full and clear view of all the evidence, and the bearing which that evidence had upon the case; he defined the nature of circumstantial evidence, and how far that evidence was deserving of credit by a Jury; he agreed with the learned Counsel for the defendant, on the danger of this kind of evidence, and yet maintained the principle, that when the several circumstances were of such a kind as to connect and strengthen each other, and to present an unbroken whole, it was the best kind of testimony; he admitted that many of the circumstances offered as proof in the case then before them were weak and in themselves insufficient to convict the prisoner, but that, when viewed as a whole, the several circumstances proved his guilt from the manner in which the whole transaction was performed. It appeared impossible that any one could have done it, unless they were intimate in the family, and acquainted with the premises; he who took the children but on different pretences, Elizabeth and Jacob for berries, and George and David to hunt, must have been intimate in the family and had the confidence of the children. The prisoner had this knowledge; had this confidence. He then referred to the other testimony, the testimony of Mr. Brown, proving the identity of McConaughy, when he fired at Brown; the testimony of the brothers and others, proving the falsehoods by which McConaughy allured the oldest son home on the fatal day; the contradictory accounts relative to the way passed that day, and closed with an appeal to the Jury, that whatever were their impressions, they should fearlessly do their duty. The Jury retired for about three quarters of an hour, and came into court with a verdict of guilty of murder in the first degree. The prisoner heard the sentence, and dropped his head and wept like a child; but they were the tears of the trembling coward, not of the penitent, for the next morning he ordered his best friends out of his prison room when they called to see him, and accused them of swearing away his life.

Here follows a condensed view of all the circumstances of this horrid butchery, as disclosed by the testimony:  
On the 30th of May last, early in the morning Robert McConaughy left his home [about one hundred yards from his father-in-law's Mr. Brown,] to go to his mother's on Jacks mountain, about two miles off—his wife and children went with him—they reached there about half past 5 o'clock in the morning, and got their breakfast. Two of Robert's brothers having left for a grubbing frolic, at Michael McConaughy's, a brother, living in Hare Valley; that after breakfast Robert left there, and until near sundown was not seen by any one in the neighborhood, unless by the murdered; that on the day before the murder he went to Mr. Crofters, where John Brown the eldest son was living, and told John that if he would come home the next day, and bring ten dollars with him, old Mr. Brown would let John have a Col; that it was well known to McConaughy, that John had long been wanting to buy that Colt from his father, and consequently that he could tell John nothing which was better calculated to get him home; that John wanted to defer coming home until Sunday, but Robert told him he would not get seeing the old man, that on the fatal day of the murder, old Mr. Brown left Mauida Furnace, where he had been working all the week, and after passing several persons and places, all which was fully and clearly proved, he reached home about five o'clock in the afternoon having parted with a boy who came from the Furnace with him, until within three-