

No. 72

Ten Cents

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S. S. STEWARTS BANJO & GUITAR JOURNAL

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Frauds and Humbugs in the Banjo Business.
Heads, Strings and Pegs.
"Testimonials."
Attention and Memory.
Reminiscences of a Banjo Player, (eleventh letter).
Hylarion on Banjo Music.

The Banjo World.
Correspondents Column.
Guitar Notes.
Remarks on the Banjo Fingerboard, the Chromatic Scale, Tuning, Fretting, etc.
"New Fad in Music."

MUSIC

- ✓ STARLIGHT POLKA, Banjo and Guitar Frey
- ✓ ROY'S FAVORITE WALTZ, Guitar and Mandolin Frey
- ✓ COLUMBIA REEL, Banjo Buck
- ✓ SWEET REVERIE, Serenade, Guitar Frey
- ✓ BOTSIE WALTZ, Banjo Catlin

PUBLISHED SIX TIMES A YEAR BY

S. S. STEWART

Nos. 221 and 223 Church Street, Philadelphia, Penna.

LATEST ITEMS.

One Albert C. Fairbanks, of more or less repute as a banjo manufacturer and dealer in patent rubber goods, whose headquarters are located in Boston, has been in town recently, endeavoring to dispose of some of his wares to Wananaker, of the Grand Depot.

It is alleged that Albert declares that the inland work on his "banjo" is vastly superior to Stewart's, and his boy is paid only \$5.00 per week for doing it.

Probably this is the reason that so much inland work falls out of that particular make of instrument.

If our friend could only induce the public to view him with his eyes, instead of their own, how rich he would grow; but as it now is, he is certainly on the wane.

Wananaker's is just the place for banjos; that's the place to look for bargains and everything but playing cards.

Well Albert, rest thou in peace; thou didst once hope to have been champion, but alas! thy fond hopes were blasted.

A. A. Farland, of Pittsburgh, said to be the greatest solo banjost of the day, will likely perform at Stewart and Armstrong's Prize Banjo Club Concert, at the Academy of Music Philadelphia, Pa., on the 14th of January next.

Farland is a scientific player and does not depend upon a piano player for effects, as most of the so-called "banjo soloists" of the day. Those who want to hear the best of banjo playing should take care to secure seats for this concert at least two weeks in advance.

A complete announcement of the concert with list of prices, to be awarded will be given in No. 73 of the Journal, which will be issued about December 1st.

Chas. W. St. Cross, of London, Eng., was lately in town. Charley has been traveling through Europe, and the Stewart banjo, purchased by him in Boston, Mass., in 1884, has been with him in all his travels. Banjoists of Charley's integrity, gentlemanly deportment and artistic temperament are scarce.

A. D. Grover, of the Boston Ideal Club, uses the Stewart banjo and banjeurine, all reports to the contrary notwithstanding. The heavy metal rim machine, that Mr. Grover was induced for a brief season to wrestle with, has been laid on the shelf, useless as a musical instrument.

Louis T. Romero, the renowned guitarist, will accept pupils on the guitar and mandolin. Address 20 Music Hall, Boston, Mass.

Charley St. Cross says: "Banjo music means sudden death to cholera germs. We were on the only steamer arriving during twenty days that had not even a suspicious case on board."

BANJO AND GUITAR TEACHERS.

Cards of two lines will be inserted under this heading at one dollar per year; five line cards two dollars per year. Terms invariably in advance.

M. KOLANDER, teacher of Banjo, Guitar and Mandolin. Send 40 cents for "Golden Waltz" and 50 cents for "Bass Solo" Parlor, for Banjo. Send for catalogue. 1322 Market Street, San Francisco, Cal.

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STEPHEN SHEPARD, Banjo, Guitar, and Mandolin. Publisher of "Goldie & Shepherd's" Progressive Studies" for the Banjo, also Short Study for Banjo, Guitar and Mandolin. Send for Catalogue. 54 East Main Street, Paterson, N. J.

JOHN C. FOLWELL, Banjo, Guitar and Violin, 212 Erie Street, Camden, N. J.

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ALFRED A. FARLAND, Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar, Verner Building, Pittsburgh, Pa. "National Parade March," and "The Banjo Favorites" (both for Banjo), sent free to any address. Enclose stamp. Address as above.

FRANK SIMPSON, Jr., Banjo Teacher, 69 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, Scotland.

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OTTO H. ALBRECHT, Banjo and Guitar, 50 North Thirtieth Street, Philadelphia, Pa. Just out—Gaiety Polka, two Banjos and Guitar, 45c. Pretty Banjo's Choice, two Banjos and Guitar, 35c. Send stamp for sample copies of Albrecht's Studies for Banjo and Guitar's Studies for Guitar.

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PROF. D. MANSFIELD, Banjo Orchestra, Banjo & Guitar Music, 1705 Market Street, San Francisco, Cal.

RICHARD M. TYRRELL, Banjo, Guitar and Arranging for Clubs, 213 6th Street, New York City.

W. E. STRATTON, Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar, Room 40, P. O. Block, Lowell, Mass.

J. F. ROACH, Banjo, Guitar and Mandolin, 34 Cutter Street, Cincinnati, Ohio.

B. F. WILLIAMS, Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar, 155 E. Market Street, Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

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and Stamped upon the S. S. Stewart Banjo, is registered at the U. S. Patent Office. BE SURE, when you purchase a STEWART BANJO, that it has this trade-mark upon it.

S. S. STEWART'S BANJO AND GUITAR JOURNAL

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October and November, 1892.

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221 and 223 Church Street, Philadelphia, Penna

SUBSCRIPTION, FIFTY CENTS A YEAR, WITH PREMIUM.
SINGLE COPY, TEN CENTS.

FRAUDS AND HUMBUGS IN THE BANJO BUSINESS.

IT IS WELL TO MAKE ONE'S SELF FAMILIAR WITH THEM.

The following is an extract from a letter from Mr. Edwin Thomas Gaze, of Melbourne, Australia, dated July 20, 1892, which reached the publisher of the *Journal*, Sept. 1:

"Having on several occasions been asked to assist my friends in selecting banjos, I have been astonished to find the market here stocked with very ordinary or inferior instruments bearing your name, while the prices asked for them are very high; and the further I look into this matter the more I become convinced that the majority of these instruments are not your make at all, the importers simply trading on your reputation. If this is the case, I shall be doing you a service by calling your attention to it, and will ask you to kindly inform me in return, how I may guard against imposition in future.

"There are several tradesmen and teachers here who profess to be 'agents for Stewart' or 'importers of Stewart Banjos' and one of them has just opened a consignment of different sizes, which are a rather different make to the usual kind, inasmuch as they have no inner hoop of wood, but merely the metal, and this is carried out under the head about an inch or an inch and a half. These are, like many others with a wooden lining to the hoop, branded on the bar that goes under the head.

(Stewart Pha. Stewart), and I shall be glad to hear from you whether this is your trade mark or not. If not, whether you make the all metal hoop as described, and what is your opinion of them? It would be a great blow to me to find I had paid for a Stewart and got something else. As the matter stands now, I am not sure whether, among all I have seen and the few I have bought, a single one of them is your own make."

Such banjos as mentioned above, it is needless to say, are **frauds**.

Stewart does not manufacture any **solid metal rim banjos**, and the very fact that such banjos are stamped "**Stewart**," instead of **S. S. Stewart**, is a sure mark of the humbug. Every genuine S. S. Stewart banjo is stamped with the full name, and

has its individual number also stamped upon it, thus blocking the way to fraud.

Not only this, but each banjo made in recent years bears S. S. Stewart's registered trade mark, which is well known to all who use the Stewart banjo, and whose name is legion.

It seems pitiable that banjo manufacturers and dealers, even in places so remote as Australia, should sink to such a level as to perpetrate such frauds. Yet, such it appears is the case. Of course, had not the genuine Stewart banjo a great reputation, it would not be imitated. This, in one sense, is flattering to the instruments made by S. S. Stewart, but there is no sense of flattery in it for those who have been swindled in buying the fraudulent banjos.

An individual signing himself Moe, (doubtless forgetting to put in the l before the e), a resident of the "Windy City," writes a letter to a banjo maker in his neighborhood, which was duly published, in which the following language is used:

"*****"Although such a thing is hardly necessary, as the——banjos are too well known to need any recommendation, and it is not necessary for you to publish a 'journal' telling about the 'great I am' constantly to keep——banjos before the public."

Isn't that rich? M-o-e writes it, and m-o-e, according to Webster, means "to make a distortion of the fact in ridicule; to mock." Perhaps Moe is only the writer's "personnel" name; in that case he has jumped into a rather poor one, and made a mistake in leaving out the l before the e. Perhaps it may not be necessary for the banjo maker alluded to to publish a journal. If not, it is a good thing, as he does not possess sufficient ability to write even a fair business letter, and would have rather a hard time to find material to fill a journal should he attempt to publish one.

Then again, it may be true that he is too well known to need a journal, or too well known to secure subscribers should he publish one.

It is one thing to be well known and quite another thing to be well and favorably known.

Spite and malice are accompaniments to the ignorant, ungoverned mind, but it is a poor plan to write letters such as Moe's,

which show the little sneaking petty spite on the face of them, and which do not deceive an intelligent public.

One would scarcely think that a large and responsible musical instrument manufacturing house like Lyon & Healy of Chicago, would stoop to imitation. But read the following; it is an extract from a letter received by us, from a gentleman of undoubted standing, but whose name for the present we withhold.

"The writer noticed in last issue of *Journal*, a communication stating that Lyon & Healy, of Chicago, were making a banjo, which was an exact counterpart of the Stewart banjo. We wish to say on this subject that the writer's statement is true, and that Lyon & Healy were furnished with a sample Stewart by a Denver music house, and the writer was in Lyon & Healy's factory after the banjo had been expressed to them, and saw the same banjo taken apart, and each part being duplicated as carefully as human skill and machinery could make it. The gentleman in charge of the factory explained that Lyon & Healy had been to several hundred dollars expense in getting new machinery, in order to imitate the Stewart. This is absolutely true, however incredible it may seem, and would be an easy matter to prove if necessary."

We do not think there is any doubt as to the above, but what success has the firm met with in their efforts to make banjos like the Stewart?

C. S. Mattison, a well-known teacher in San Antonio, Texas, wrote some time ago: "A local dealer is pushing the Lyon & Healy banjo, which is a fine imitation of yours in appearance, but they left out the tone."

Geo. F. Gellenbeck, a well-known teacher, in Omaha, Neb., writes: "Hospé does not handle your banjos any more. Lyon & Healy are making a banjo for him, called the 'Hospé Professional,' and it is the exact counterpart of yours in appearance, but they were so elated in producing such a perfect copy that they forgot to put the tone into it."

From this it appears that the Lyon & Healy banjos, made in imitation of Stewart's, are like the cheap trade fiddles bearing

the names of some ancient Cremona violin maker. As musical instruments they are a failure, but answer very nicely as toys for children.

The very fact of a manufacturing firm should cause a banjo to be taken apart with the idea of making others like it, is enough to show that such concern has no knowledge of *principles*, but is working only with *effects*.

The fact that Lyon & Healy have gone to this trouble and expense, shows that they not only recognize the Stewart banjo as much superior to their own or any other make, but that they see in it a model worthy of their imitation.

But nothing is accomplished in that way. A man may take a violin or guitar apart and endeavor to make one just like it, but he does not always get the same tone.

Another may see a handsome painting, and endeavor to make cheap copies of it, but the knowing ones smile on the imitation and "wink the other eye."

Is it not flattering to the Stewart banjo to be held up as an article worthy of so much consideration?

Take, for instance, the Martin guitar, (the C. F. Martin & Co.). It has stood the test of time, and imitators have passed away.

There is Senor Romero, the great artist, who uses the Martin guitar, and yet Lyon & Healy publish a testimonial from him, which no doubt has sold many guitars for them. To the certain personal knowledge of the writer, Romero uses the Martin, and if the Martin guitar was not superior to Lyon & Healy's, he would not use it.

It must be very humiliating to Lyon & Healy, and all such makers, after going to so much trouble, to find their goods rank only as second or third class among first-class performers, but the mechanic who is employed for hire to copy the work of another can never succeed, in a musical sense, any more than a person without an appreciation for music can become an artist by employing a teacher.

Greed for gain seems to occupy the entire minds of certain manufacturers, and there is no sense of honor in their business operations. Capital—money—is a very good thing to have; but money alone will not do everything, as some of our large "musical" jobbing houses and manufacturers will yet find out.

Not long ago a party purchased a banjo in New York City, upon which the words "Stewart Professional" were engraved on a German silver plate. Of course it was not an S. S. Stewart banjo; in fact it was such a veritable "tub," that no banjo player could possibly have been deceived with it.



This trade mark, which is registered in the U. S. Patent Office, is now stamped upon all first grade Stewart banjos, as well as the words S. S. Stewart, Philada., and each instrument has its individual number,

so that those who want genuine Stewart banjos need not be deceived unless they choose to be.

The S. S. Stewart banjo is the result of a natural musical gift acting in connection with hard work and perseverance in experimenting. These instruments were introduced to the public several years ago, by the late Horace Weston, the greatest banjo player that ever lived. This fact is generally known to banjo players of the day.

These banjos cannot be successfully imitated by manufacturers possessing no natural musical gift, and without love for the instrument. Such persons think only of getting money, and leave no stone unturned to control everything in their line of business possible.

Although money may be gained in such ways, an artistic success is impossible; and such banjos made in imitation of the Stewart, can never be classed as other than second or third rate instruments, on a par with the cheap fiddles, some of which bear the names of great masters, but of which only an occasional one is good for anything as a musical instrument.

"Enthusiasm."

"Enthusiasm is an exaggeration."

Passionate zeal promotes the telling of more than the truth and often tends to the overriding of sound judgment.

Enthusiasts as a rule are successful, as the energy expended usually results in the attainment of that absolute requirement for the application of sound judgment, to-wit, experience.

The quality of applying sound judgment is to the novice, in his devotion to any art, pursuit or pastime, an exception to the rule, seldom experienced.

The enthusiast is usually young and with advancing years, only, does he acquire the habit of moderation.

Listen as the successful man relates the early episodes of his life, and though he may at times look with something approaching ridicule at the never ceasing efforts of his followers, his frank confession will show that he has passed through the same ordeal. He has plodded on, kept his nose to the grindstone, and very, very seldom, except by a long continued condition of enthusiasm do we hear of success.

Let readers but examine the results as applied to themselves or their friends and the truth will be seen. Enthusiasm being a necessary adjunct to success, it will become those who have passed through its meshes, to scoff at those who are within its toils.

Post-graduates can make full allowance for the exaggerating condition of enthusiasm, knowing that the subsequent condition of sound and moderate judgment, as a natural consequence, will follow.

An enthusiast is often termed a "crank," while a "crank" is very frequently admitted "clever."

To a "banjo crank" be considerate. His enthusiasm will more than likely bring the posterior condition requisite to his being placed in one of the niches awaiting occupancy by the future "banjo lights."

Be enthusiastic.

GIBBS.

An Opportunity to Secure Good Music and Instruction Very Cheaply.

BACK NUMBERS WHICH MAY BE HAD.

Correspondents frequently wish knowing how many back numbers of the *Journal* can be had. We have made a careful examination of all stock on hand, and the following is a list of such numbers as we have on hand, and which we now offer at half price—that is, five cents a copy.

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April and May	1887
June and July	1887
October and November	1887
January	1888
February and March	1888
April and May	1888
June and July	1888
August and September	1888
October and November	1888
January	1889
February and March	1889
April and May	1889
June and July	1889
August and September	1889
October and November	1889
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April and May	1891
October and November	1891
April and May	1892

We will mail the entire 32 numbers to any address on receipt of \$1.50, postage free.

S. S. STEWART, Publisher, Phila.

NOTE THIS!

A certain banjo manufacturer in a western city has recently issued a banjo price-list, in which a letter of recommendation from E. M. Hall, the well-known banjoist, is given great prominence.

Those who have purchased the pamphlet will please notice that the *date of said letter is omitted*. The following letter from E. M. Hall to S. S. Stewart should be noted:

Pendleton, Oregon, Oct. 14, 1891.

My Dear Stewart:—Your letter and the *Journal* received. Many thanks for same. The Presentation Banjo is still in good condition and is admired by every one who sees it, as a work of art.

The longer I use your instruments the more I am satisfied that too much cannot be said in their praise. They are certainly the very best banjos made, and you know that I have used a great many different makes in my time. It is unnecessary for me to tell you this, however, as it is universally known that Stewart is King.

Your old friend,

E. M. HALL.


To Subscribers.

Subscribers should write their names and addresses very plainly, and be sure to notify us of any change in address at any time.

Please bear in mind that every number of the Journal sent out costs two cents for postage, and every copy that is not delivered, on account of wrong address, or for any other reason, costs us two cents additional for return postage. Notwithstanding this, we, once in a while, find those among our subscribers who do not give such trifling matters a thought; they let the Journal go out to an address from which they have removed, and let it come back to the publisher who pays the postage each way, then with thoughtless cheek, the same persons will write for another copy to be sent to their new address, and thus the postage has run up to six cents for one delivery. We therefore call attention to the following:

NOTICE

Subscribers to the *Journal* who are constantly moving about and changing their address are notified that we cannot assume the responsibility of delivery of the *Journal* in such cases.

 We require one month's notice in every case where the address on our subscription list is to be changed.

Those writing for information about the *Journal* should have the courtesy to enclose stamp for reply, if they expect to have their letters answered.

We cannot take subscriptions from traveling parties unless they have the paper sent to one permanent address.

S. S. STEWART PUBLISHER

224 and 223 Church Street, - Philadelphia, Pa.

TO BANJO TEACHERS.

Stewart's Complete American Banjo School, new edition, in board covers, now ready and complete up to date is offered as a special premium to banjo teachers and students for

TEN NEW SUBSCRIBERS

to the *Banjo and Guitar Journal*.

This work—"The Complete American Banjo School"—in board covers, as recently revised, is the most complete work on the banjo ever published, and no teacher of the banjo can afford to be without it.

On receipt of ten new names for the *Journal*, with \$5.00 to pay for ten yearly subscriptions to the same, we will send this book as a premium, by mail, postage paid, to any part of the U. S. or England.

Each subscriber will, of course, receive his own individual premium, consisting of any one of the following named books:

The Banjo and Guitar Music Album.

The Guitarist's Delight.

Port Folio of Banjo Music or the Chart of Banjo Fingerboard, called "The Banjoist's Assistant."

Every subscriber may "take his pick" from the above-named premiums, and this

will not interfere with the Special Premium Book now offered for ten subscriptions.

This offer is made for a limited time only. Teachers who do not wake up until six months after this offer is published will not be "in it."

Müller's Twisted Silk Strings for the Banjo: OR SILK COMPOSITION STRINGS.

These strings should not be confounded with any of the cheaper French silk strings made for the Banjo. Since the Müller strings were introduced to the Banjo playing public, many imitations have made their appearance, which is a great compliment to the original article.

The prices of Müller's Twisted Silk Strings, are as follows:

Single String, either 1st or 2d . . .	15c.
One Dozen Strings . . .	\$1.50
Box of Thirty Strings . . .	3.00
Third Strings . . .	each, 20c.

These strings cannot be had at a lower price than above, the import duty being 50 per cent. Beware of imitations. The Müller Twisted Silk Strings are put up, each bundle of thirty strings, in an oblong box—each string being in a separate envelope, and having the name printed upon it.

These strings are a great advantage to Banjo players in moist climates or in damp weather.

For the fifth string on the Banjo we prefer the ordinary gut string such as we sell at \$1.00 per dozen, or ten cents each, using the twisted silk first, second and third strings. We will furnish a bundle of (30) gut first and fifth strings for \$2.00.

Strings sent by mail on receipt of price. It is always cheaper in the long run to purchase strings by the bundle. By so doing the percentage of false strings is much lessened in cost.

S. S. STEWART, 223 Church Street, - Philadelphia, Pa.

Wanted—To find another musical periodical to equal in value for the money, *Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal*.

Wanted—To exhibit the discoverer of such a musical periodical.

Wanted—To see the musical periodical published in the interest of any other instrument than the Banjo that equals in any way *Stewart's Journal*.

"Heads, Strings and Pegs."

It is well known that during the months of warm and muggy weather, the trials of players on stringed instruments are most severe, and probably no other instrument than the Banjo—by reason of its "make up"—is more subject to the influence of meteorological changes. Of course, it must be expected that so sensitive a substance as that which composes the head, will be liable to change in the quality which is requisite, viz: "tightness," by reason of great moisture or dryness. This difficulty cannot well be avoided.

Though I have never tried the experiment, perhaps the rubbing of a small quantity of oil on the head of the Banjo, as recommended in "Observations on the Banjo and Banjo playing," might prove efficacious, by causing the moisture to condense on the surface of the head in tiny globules, instead of penetrating the skin and producing that flabby softness which is so detrimental to the tone of a Banjo.

The application of oil might produce the result anticipated, but it does not seem possible that it could be anyway permanent: as by reason of the moisture in the atmosphere, evaporation of these globules would not be so rapid as their formation. Still it is scarcely to be expected that sufficient condensation will take place to form the head into a miniature "marsh," and though the instrument with a moist head cannot possibly sound well, for this evil there seems no prevention; so, as far as the head is concerned, the Banjoist must "grin and bear it."

The difficulty as applied to strings, is greatly reduced by using those composed of silk fibres instead of gut. The nature of their preparation is, to moisture, much more impermeable than those made from gut, and as the absolutely necessary quality of *even thickness* is much better regulated by the greater application of mechanical means, a much truer string is produced.

To come across a false silk string is a rarity—while to find a true gut string is about in the opposite ratio.

Leaving this feature even out of the question, it is as a "moist weather" string that the silk "holds the palm," and the student who feels discouraged by the poor tone and constant "on-tuning" of his instrument should not fail to try them. Another feature that must be attended to, is that the strings must be well regulated as to relative thickness. If you have a very thin First string, then must the Second be in proper proportion, and vice versa; if the First is somewhat thick, so must be the Second. This matter is of course well known to the expert, but as the inexperienced player reads the *Journal* for "points," it is hoped that by giving attention to this, some little degree of satisfaction may be gained.

It will likewise be readily understood that to produce even tones, the Fifth string must be of the same thickness and quality as the First.

This condition of regulated thickness is necessary, by reason that if the First string be of the same thickness as the Second, it follows that to produce the increased height of tone, it must be strained to a greater degree, and to produce even strength of tones on the alternate strings, would require a variance of fingering scarcely possible.

Attention to such details will give a much more satisfactory result, and at times we feel "out of tune" with our instruments, it might be well to "Look around" and if in all respects the Banjo seems "O. K.," then let us blame ourselves, and not the instrument. It cannot speak, else it might often find fault with its treatment.

Now then for pegs. I have tried both

patent and plain, and shall vote every time for the plain old-fashioned peg.

If handled properly, they are quite as secure and as easily tuned as any patent peg at present on the market. As to how to handle them, full instructions are given and illustrated in "Observations." Of course, as pointed out in that article, the peg and peg hole must be properly constructed and tapered to a nicety.

By the use of the plain pegs a great saving in strings will be secured, as the small metal barrel of the patent pegs seem to have a tendency to cut the strings at that point. Should a larger barrel, composed of Celluloid or Ivory, be used in conjunction with the patent peg, a better result might be attained.

With the plain pegs, the string invariably breaks where worn against the frets, and when a string had done good service we cannot find fault with its breaking.

So much for Heads, Strings and Pegs.

HYLARION.

"Testimonials."

Did you ever come across a maker of musical instruments who did not display numerous letters from performers of greater or less repute, in which were set forth the high merit of this or that particular make of instrument, and not infrequently the same writer will be found attesting to the superior merit of at least half a dozen different makers, and even setting forth that they use this or that instrument exclusively? Let any person interested but inquire into the matter and they will surely find that it is so.

Well, how does it come about?

Personally I can well understand that the novice who has never come in contact with any other than the one instrument he plays, will, in his self satisfaction, write a most glowing tribute to the maker of his pet.

But it can surely be that only with the one idea of "gulling the public," will the manufacturer publish such letters.

Yet the blame must not be laid at the maker's door entirely, for surely had the reputable performer his own good name in consideration, he would not be guilty of contradictory recommendations, distributed indiscriminately. It can scarcely be expected, yet it would be highly commendable to a manufacturer, if one could be found who would refuse to publish any but exclusive and bona fide recommendations. To the "letter distributing musician" no words are necessary, and if his recommendations are but considered as "for value received," the inference is but the result of his own actions. The same applies to musical publications, and if we would judge of either, the only helpmate and recommendation that will be found of any real merit, will be experience.

To be candid, the comments above have been prompted by the perusal of numerous banjo catalogues and publications pertaining thereto, and though the system is not confined to our instrument, but exists in endless phases, 'tis a pity 'tis so. VERA.

For S. S. Stewart's Journal.

Attention and Memory.

An amusing instance of diverted attention came under my observation last Easter. At that time children are fond of colored Easter eggs. My youngest son Jason was taking his daily practice on the banjo. I noticed more than an unusual diverted attention. At all once he exclaimed, "O Papa, you just ought to see the eggs that mamma has colored for us." I recognized at a glance the intense interest he had for the eggs, and the folly of my attempting to divert it until after the climax. I shortly dismissed him, carefully keeping from him the cause. The hope of reward often creates interest and strict attention, and this method is often resorted to by teachers. Recently school boards have investigated the subject of shorter hours for study. No one can accomplish much unless he can concentrate his attention and hold it there until the subject sought is obtained. The length of time that children can give attention varies from five to fifteen minutes; this can be extended as age is attained, until three or four times that amount of time can be judiciously consumed in intense interest and study. This differs greatly in individuals. Disturbing causes sometimes divert attention and are very disagreeable. Remenyi, the violin virtuoso, while performing with intense concentration of thought and soul expression, abruptly ceased playing and opened his eyes, which are always closed while playing, and in a fit of ill-temper demanded his manager to remove a mother and her crying child, accompanying this with the threat of instant removal of his manager should such an occurrence be repeated. The attention that "Blind Tom" can give to a selection of music while being played for him, and his wonderful reproduction on the piano is the most wonderful development of God's greatest gift to mankind. While at Topeka I conversed with him and listened attentively to his description of Horace Weston's playing and his wonderful S. S. Stewart banjo that he laughingly said was "out of his sight," but "strictly in it" for his hearing purposes. Thousands are incapable of concentration of thought or steady attention to intellectual pursuits. These people are just as happy and successful in life, and far more so than those that go to the other extreme of study and exertion on a given subject. The true method of success in this life, is to study our individual capacities and those entrusted to our care and demand only such labors as can be performed and assimilated. Julius Caesar had a wonderful command of his memory and attention. He was capable of dictating seven different letters to seven secretaries at one time. There are movements now for the banjo that any Caesar could find use for all the powers he could muster up before he could master. I have often noticed the wonderful effect produced by errors while practising. Errors made twice in succession momentarily establish themselves and an extra exertion on the part of the performer to erase them and establish the correct method is required. Thousands fall right at this period of their studies, lacking courage and confidence in themselves. To

me it has always been a great pleasure to assist those who are overshadowed by dark clouds, by pointing to them the silver lining that surely comes after every storm. I am convinced that this is the highest age of progression the world has ever known, and that while the banjo having been the cause of so much pleasure in the homes of music loving people, its usefulness will still be extended as the wonderful capabilities of the instrument are better understood. No student of the banjo should confine himself to new studies unless feeling in good health and spirit, simply from the fact that work performed under such conditions and the memories registered in the brain for future use are not intense in their reflection. Overpractice is worse still: happily we have only a few cases of the latter, the first instances are frequent and the final results are a failure, or in other words music produced by musicians, trained subject to such condition, are lacking of expression, but while feeling bad it is often the case that a player desires to play and not confine himself to deep study, but no harm can be done in such cases by playing selections that are perfectly familiar. The benefits derived by such practices are many. A banjo player once told me how he became a player. He had often commenced and as often quit, his attention being attracted to pursuits that came easier. He met with an accident of a broken leg, which confined him to the house for weeks; he called for his banjo and practised from morning till night. His attendants became wild with his noisy practice, but in time he passed the dreary drudgery of the rudiments and continued thereafter and rapidly became an expert performer. So it is in this life, we are slaves to circumstances, subject to their inexorable demands of their seeming caprices. As the banjo season commences with this issue of the Journal, which always comes laden with good things for banjists, we sincerely wish that circumstances will deal kindly with the fraternity and that the shadow of the boom which the banjo is now enjoying may never grow less. GEO. H. HUGHES, North Topeka, Kan.

"Vestigia nulla retrorsum."

Of a truth the above can be said of Stewart's Journal. There are no backward footsteps. Look over your earlier numbers and though the pages will scintillate and give forth flashes of bright music and reading matter, they are overpowered and quite shadowed by the superiority of the later issues. And it's all "Stewart."

And why should it not be so?

Do the readers find any evidence, from any other source, of more able and painstaking efforts for the elevation and improvement of the instrument? Not only as a music producer of superior merit, but as a "handler of the pen" does he assert himself, and if, as is pointed out in the Journal, its publication is due to his liberality, whose name has a better right to adorn its pages?

We get all the benefit of many, many hours labor and outlay beyond the receipts, for thirty eight cents actually returned, and surely no one could look for or expect more.

VERA.

Reminiscences of a Banjo Player

(ELEVENTH LETTER)

—BY A. BAUR—

A banjo teacher who has the welfare of the instrument at heart should be willing to impart his knowledge, to others at what he would consider his services to be worth. There may be times when he may be obliged to do a great deal of work for nothing, but to a man who has a desire to assist in elevating the instrument, a gratuitous lesson now and then will be a source of pleasure and a relief from the monotony of always keeping in the same rut. "Variety is the spice of life." I have often met persons whose desire to learn to play upon the banjo was sincere. But they lacked the means to pay for instruction. In some instances they were supplied with ordinarily good banjos. In a few instances with very fine instruments, the presents of friends, but far more often they would have such instruments as their meagre purses afforded. When I found such persons sincere in their desire to learn the banjo, I took the utmost pains to assist them to the best of my ability. One instance is fresh in my mind. I was in a music store trying a banjo when a young man stepped up to me and inquired if my name was Baur, at the same time giving me his name. He told me that for several years the height of his ambition was to become a banjo teacher, but unfortunately he was entirely ignorant as to musical notation. This was not his worst trouble, however; his salary which was small was barely enough to support several members of his family who were dependent upon him for support. I replied to him that my time was entirely taken up during the day, but if he could come to my residence every evening immediately after tea, I would give him what time I could spare and see what could be done. As remuneration for my services, he could pay me when he became able. He came that same evening and I started him on the rudiments. I gave him a lesson nearly every evening (Sundays excepted) for a year. I then sent him pupils that I was too busy to take myself. By close attention to business and hard study he made rapid strides towards success. That young man has for at least six years been a successful banjo teacher, making more money in one month now than he formerly did at clerking in a year. In a short time after beginning to teach he was able to pay me for my work and has now a very snug bank account. Were I to mention his name he would be recognized by dozens of readers who have played his compositions for the banjo. I never in my life knew a banjo player or teacher to lose anything by being pleasant and willing to exchange ideas with others. As I have before stated, I have met so called champions who would not play for a person unless all doors were double locked and windows closed for fear some one would steal their pieces. If you ever meet a man of this kind set him down as an ignoramus, whose scanty knowledge is but skin deep and whose friendship is a drawback to any one desiring the advancement and healthy improvement of the banjo as a musical instrument. I have often found it beneficial

to change banjos; a person who plays continually upon one instrument often feels like having a change as it were. No matter how good an instrument you may have, if a change is made to an inferior instrument it will be an incentive to the player to take up the old one again and practice so much harder, and this reminds me that in 1880 I got a banjo from Stewart which I had in use several years, as it was a large instrument I played upon it more than any other that I had. After a time though, I became tired, the same tone seemed to grow monotonous. I had a smaller Stewart and took it up and began using it. The change was a relief, and whenever I took up the large one it seemed as if the tone was much sweeter than I had ever imagined it to be. While upon this subject I want to say, about a month ago I got a new banjo from Stewart a "Universal Favorite." It is the sweetest and at the same time the sharpest toned banjo I ever had the pleasure of owning. The workmanship is simply perfection itself. I could not state the exact number, but am safe in saying that I have in my time owned several hundred banjos; this last one beats them all. Fifteen minutes after I took it out of the box I would not have taken one hundred dollars for it. Now money could not buy it from me. I like it so well that it worries me to lay it aside at night. For several years I have used nothing else but the Stewart banjo (notwithstanding the fact that I am advertised by other makers as using their banjos), and sort of flattered myself that he never made as good a banjo as this last one and never will make another like it. I suppose he will though, he is always doing something to surprise his customers.

In a recent number of Kate Field's *Washington*, Anna L. Williams wrote an article on the "Origin of the Banjo." She is evidently very much taken with the modern banjo and writes her "Origin of the Banjo" entirely from hearsay. As a writer of fiction Anna may rank among the best, but as an authority on the banjo she doesn't amount to a "row of pins" or a "hill of beans." She begins her article by saying:

"Over half a century ago in the town of Banjarmasin in the Dutch East Indies, near the coast of Java, a negro native of the place—with the love of music which his race universally possesses, desiring an instrument to accompany his voice, conceived the following: Taking a cheese box and crossing it with goat or sheep skin, he ran a handle through it, then using violin strings, which were tuned to the first, third, fifth and eighth notes of an octave, he gave it the name of 'banjo,' from the first two syllables in the name of his native town. No banjo of this time is known to be in existence, but from descriptions handed down they must have been very rude instruments."

These preliminary remarks are certainly enough to convince any old time banjo player who has watched the progress of the banjo, that the lady is mistaken and through ignorance has been led to write an article on a subject of which she has not the remotest idea. In the first place, the first two syllables of Banjoemas are not pronounced "Banjo," but Ban-yoo. The whole name being pronounced Ban-yoo-mas, the last syllable being properly spelled, maas. This town is a Dutch residency on the south-east

coast of Java. If the banjo was invented in the Island of Java, in the town of Banjoemas by a negro, why is it that it found its way to a far distant country like America and was never heard of in near by places until introduced by American banjo players? Another strong point against the name having been originated in the manner stated, is the fact that no one ever heard a southern negro call the instrument anything but a "banjer" as I have in former letters stated. I have been in many southern states and made it my business to look up "darkey" banjo players. In all my wanderings I always heard the word banjer and not banjo. As regards tuning, the first, third, fifth and eighth of an octave would indicate the third, second, first and fifth strings, leaving out the fourth or bass string. Years ago, say thirty or forty, I heard old banjo players say that the original or rather the banjos they first saw, had only four strings. Most of them remembered when the banjo had no short fifth or "Buzz" string, which was added about the time the banjo was first used by a troupe of negro impersonators, when that was hard to tell. William Whitlock was one of the first, if not the very first banjo player of whom we have any account. Something over twenty-five years ago I saw one of his very first banjos. It had a fifth string. Whitlock began using the banjo in public between the years 1835 and 1839. The banjo I saw was one he had used in those years. It was a tack head and had a fifth string. I judge from this that it was long before Whitlock's time that the fifth string was put on the banjo. If the banjo had no fifth string as is stated in the "Origin of the Banjo," how could it have been tuned to the first, third, fifth and eighth of an octave? I leave it to my readers to solve the problem.

If we credit the southern negro with having invented or originated the banjo, why not make it plain. If I were to work out the riddle, I would do so in the following manner. On the Island of Borneo opposite the Island of Java, there is a mining, manufacturing and capital town located on the Banjer River and called Banjoemassin. It could at least be maintained that the banjo was invented in this town because the negroes call it a "Banjer" and Webster says "Banjo," also Banjer, corrupted from Bandore, a three stringed instrument invented by Pan the God of Shepherds, guardian of bees and patron of fishing and fowling, half man and half beast. I suspect that Anna L. Williams chanced to go to glance at an atlas and happened to see the name Banjoemas, jumped at the conclusion that the banjo must have originated there. We must admit that the origin of the banjo is vague, but that it is an ancient instrument, I have not the least doubt. I have seen illustrations of a number of ancient musical instruments which would not require much of a stretch of the imagination to take as a starting point for the modern banjo.

The "Origin of the Banjo" goes on to say:

"As the years passed improvements were made, but only in a slight degree. Throughout the southern

states banjos became as plentiful as pickaninnies, and negroes could be found on any plantation who could make the banjo talk."

This is all bosh. If the banjo originated with the plantation darkey and they were such excellent performers, why do we not find at least some trace of them now? Any person who will take the trouble to inquire will find that there are from ten to twenty guitar players to every negro banjo player in the south, while the proportion of violin players is at least double that number.

In the "Origin of the Banjo," the writer speaks of a

Very skillful and artistic player named Sweeney as being the first banjo player to visit London. The Sweeney mentioned was Joe Sweeney, a banjoist of note of that day, but who, if living to-day, would not be considered even a mediocre player. I think its very doubtful if Sweeney visited London for the purpose of advertising himself as a banjo player; his forte was as a violin player and an all round performer on the minstrel stage. If Sweeney visited Europe at all in the early days of minstrelsy, he must have done so with George Christy's Minstrels, as that was the first troupe that ever visited England. During the war of rebellion Joe Sweeney was attached to the staff of General J. E. B. Stewart, the celebrated Confederate cavalry general, who, from all accounts, was a rollicking devil-may-care sort of fellow, who was very fond of the banjo. It is said of him that when in camp he sang to Sweeney's accompaniment on the banjo. Sweeney was generally known throughout the army of northern Virginia as "General Stewart's banjo player." Stewart was killed at the battle of Yellow Tavern, in Virginia, in May, 1864. Nothing is known of Sweeney's whereabouts from that time until the close of the war in April, 1865, but I have always understood that he died either a short time before, or after the close of the war. His home was on a farm adjoining that on which General Lee surrendered the Confederate Army to General Grant, in April, 1865. I met a man in 1883 who was born and grew up on a farm in close proximity to the one on which Sweeney lived. As I was very much interested in anything pertaining to the life of the one time great banjo player, I tried to learn all I could concerning his movements prior to his death, but was disappointed, for the reason that my informant could give me no information concerning Sweeney after the war began, except that he was a "right smart banjo player" before the war.

The writer of the "Origin of the Banjo" also says:

"Night after night London crowded the hall, and among them, Sir Robert Peel could be seen with stately head, gravely keeping time to songs which set the people wild. Mr. Greville has said that the airs became familiar in fashionable circles, and around many a piano were gathered sons and daughters of wealth, all joining in the strains of 'I'll Bet My Money on the Bob-tailed Nag.' The songs, however, were nothing compared to the banjoists. Mr. Pell, the original 'bones' was admired, but the piano players were idolized. Men forgot the cares of business or state while listening to the tum-tum of the banjo."

According to this there must have been

more than one banjo player. The writer certainly shows a lack of information if nothing more. At that time such a thing as a banjo duel, or a combination of banjo with other instruments or even a banjo solo with accompaniments of any kind was never dreamed of. The orchestra leaders and accompanists of that time knew they could "vamp" along with the banjo, but never thought of doing so, and a combination of banjoists with any one troupe is an innovation of very recent years. I imagine that what set the English audiences to keeping time with the music, was the rendering of Stephen C. Foster's songs, such as "Swanee River," "Lucy Neal," "Old Kentucky Home," "Old Black Joe," and other songs of this popular writer, which were at that time filling the people's hearts.

Frank B. Converse visited England some time during the sixties and met with flattering success.

Charlie Dobson went there at a later period, and from all accounts, could not have been as successful. If I remember right, he and Levy, the cornetist, were billed to appear at the same theatre. Levy declined to play on the same stage where a banjo was tolerated, and made some slighting remark concerning our favorite instrument. This coming to the ears of Dobson, he assaulted Levy right on the stage, for which he was arrested. I cannot vouch for the truth of this, as it is only hearsay, but Charley Dobson has told me himself that he "plugged" Levy for making disparaging remarks about the banjo. "Origin of the Banjo" also says: "In a clever performer's hands, the banjo seems capable of doing everything: bells chime, waters ripple, winds blow, birds sing, and many other pleasant ideas are evoked; but it will never do for romance, its very name is against it; whether from association or not, we cannot connect romance and the banjo. The writer is evidently prejudiced against the instrument, and probably has never heard anything better than a 'plantation nigger' or a Simple Method crank try to 'juggle' the instrument. Certainly she cannot have listened to an artist rendering the same music upon the banjo that can be played upon any known treble instrument. A finished player upon the banjo can render the same music on his instrument and with as much feeling and expression as if it is played upon the violin, flute, clarinet, or any other instrument using the treble clef.

The writer of the article in question also informs her readers that

"The neck is now made with frets similar to the guitar, and the circular head is covered with a fine calfskin, which is tightly held by a large number of clamps with screws attached. These tighten the skin and assist in giving a more sonorous tone. This science has improved the rough toy instrument of more than half a century ago, until it is hardly inferior in style or tone to its near relative, the guitar."

I cannot for the life of me see what science has to do with "a large number of clamps with screws attached." Any ordinary factory workman can put on "clamps with screws" without number. The banjo that the writer of the "Origin of the Banjo" saw previous to writing the article, must

have been one of the thirty-eight or fifty-two bracket factory "tubs" that are being so extensively advertised, and whose only merit is the number of brackets they contain. All in all, the article is rather favorable to the banjo, but if Anna L. Williams is willing to be convinced that romance can be connected with the banjo, let her visit the ware-room of friend Stewart and look over the elegant sweet toned banjos she will there find. If she does not acknowledge that the tone of a good banjo is equal to that of any known musical instrument, I shall miss my guess greatly."

In conclusion she says:

"The prices are rather large for good banjos; I have seen one rated as high as one hundred and fifty dollars, though part of the price was due to the lavish use of pearl and silver in its decoration."

No doubt she would be surprised to hear that I have seen a banjo that cost eight hundred and fifty dollars, and there was not much ornamentation about it either. The brackets, hooks and nuts were of sterling silver, while the ornamentation was of eighteen karat gold, with which the rim and finger-board were elaborately inlaid. I have seen others ranging in price from one hundred to five hundred dollars, but I must say that nearly all of them were made by and for cranks, who had no more idea of how a good banjo should be constructed than most of us have of flying. As regards tone, nearly all of these very high priced instruments that I saw were dismal failures, and not to be compared with some ten dollar Stewart banjos that I have seen and heard. The only object the makers of these elaborate instruments seemed to be to make a very fine appearing instrument. In their efforts to attain success in the matter of making a costly instrument, they lost sight entirely of the more important essential, tone.

RACE BETWEEN BANJEURINE AND GUITAR.

Mr. C. S. Vail, Blockton, Ala., writes:—

"My little Banjeurine still gives satisfaction. It has been tested by some expert violinists and they can say nothing against it. I played it Sunday with a concert size Guitar that was strung with all the wire possible to get on it, and you can bet I held my own, and when we had finished the man who played the Guitar was all tired out, and I laughed at him until he got mad; then I told him to get an instrument like mine and he would not have to work his liver out, and the boys all agreed with me."

It seems that the above was a race between the big brown mare, *Guitar*, and the little gray horse, *Banjeurine*. It was "neck and neck" for a while, but at last the little gray horse came in ahead. It also appears that the jockey who rode the big brown mare was all "broke up" when the contest was over.

BANJO CLUBS

Be sure to read announcement of the Second Annual Prize Banjo and Guitar Concert, to be given at the Academy of Music, Philadelphia, Pa., on Saturday Evening, January 14th, 1893.

This will be the finest Banjo Concert ever given in Philadelphia or any other city. Stewart and Armstrong, Managers. Tickets will be sold one month in advance.

great deal of hard practice to acquire the amount of skill he possesses and that you must not expect to equal his performance if you are, by comparison, but a novice.

When you are alone, how does your playing sound? Judge of your progress by that, as there are few exceptions found to the fact that a beginner generally finds his fingers tied and his banjo out of tune when he attempts to play before auditors. I think almost every sensitive person, and to be a good musician one must be sensitive, has experienced this. In most cases this gradually wears away and the sensitiveness, but the effect produced, and the time comes when the larger the audience, the more inspired the playing.

There now, I had just got on to a strain of thought that might have kept me writing all night, when "bang" goes a banjo head, and there yet a good musician, but having the quality of sensitiveness, I will take it as an omen that I had better stop. I sincerely hope that I do not weary the readers of the *Journal* by my twaddle. If you are disposed to think that the pages might be used to better advantage and will only so hint to our editor, I think he has the ability to so convey to me without hurting my "sensitive nature."

HYLARION.

C. S. Mattison, of San Antonio, Texas, writes as follows:

"Allow me to enter my protest against the abuse of the tremolo so prevalent with some of our best performers. While being very beautiful and effective in the hands of a talented performer, and enabling the rendering of pieces here-to-for considered beyond the capacity of the instrument, yet some performers will persist in rendering these pieces in large halls and promiscuous gatherings, where the effect is nearly entirely lost, and I have noticed those who have taken up the tremolo of late years, lose that beautiful staccato touch and accent for which this instrument is so greatly celebrated; and although we are allowed great latitude in time, some so murder it that in time they are unable to render a legitimate piece creditably. De Beriot, in his great work on the Violin, warns against striving after effect, to the exclusion of legitimate performance."

We do not altogether endorse our correspondent's views, as expressed in above communication, but wish to give every performer a chance to express his convictions. It appears to us that it is not likely that tremolo playing will detract from the execution of other styles, unless a performer devotes himself to that movement, and practices it more than the others. "Practice makes perfect," it is said. So lack of practice has the opposite tendency.

The tremolo movement on a good Banjo of sympathetic tone, is the most beautiful movement obtainable on that instrument; but one must use judgment, as to when such movement is practicable. It is not deemed practicable on a very damp or mucky night, for then a Banjo is not in the best condition.

There are persons among all classes of society who will run into extremes, and of course the tremolo movement among banjo players may come under this, but with such people there is little to be offered protest, they will play until they play themselves out.

TWO GOOD "TEACHING PIECES"

Louisiana Hoedown, - - - 25 cts.
Alabama Echoes, - - - 25 cts.

Both by T. J. ARMSTRONG

It is doubtful if any two pieces of Banjo Music can be found to equal these for teaching purposes. Each has a part for second Banjo and furnish just the material required for pupils in the first course of lessons.

They have a pretty melody and are not difficult in any way.

Teachers who desire easy and attractive music for their young pupils should obtain copies of the above.

S. S. STEWART, Publisher



Following in the wake of dealers in cheap "stenciled pianos," we have them who are trying the same thing with the Guitar; that is, they purchase Guitars and have their name stamped on them as the makers, or else some trade mark or fictitious name of their own device. There are several reputable guitar manufacturers in the United States, who manufacture and sell a reliable Guitar, and there is no use in taking risks with unknown manufacturers. We have among the reliable guitar manufacturers, C. F. Martin & Co., who sell through Zochisch & Sons, New York; J. C. Haynes & Co., Boston, Mass.; J. Howard Foote, New York, (proprietor of the Bini Guitar); Lyon & Healy, Chicago, (manufacturers of the "Washburn Guitar"), also other manufacturers of reputation.

The C. F. Martin & Co. Guitars are the best known Guitars, and probably the most reliable. For over fifty years have these Guitars held their position, and we think there is nothing better made. But the Martin is a light built Guitar and will not stand being knocked about, or strung with steel wire strings. Fretted and other good artists play the Martin Guitar, but such performers understand full well how to take proper care of an instrument, and the delicately constructed Guitar in such hands is not in much danger of getting out of order.

The "Washburn Guitar" of Lyon & Healy's manufacture, is a stronger built instrument than the Martin, and not so sensitive.

The mention of the Bruno Guitar should not be omitted, this make being held in good repute by many performers. The manufacturers are C. Bruno & Son, New York City.

Then there is the Stratton Guitar, manufactured by John F. Stratton & Son, 43 Walker street, New York; and Genunder, the noted violin maker, it is said, has lately begun the manufacture of Guitars.

This goodly number of Guitar manufacturers now in the field, coupled with the increasing number of "stencilers," is evidence in itself that the Guitar is gaining in popularity and increasing in use.

Editor of Banjo and Guitar Journal.

Dear Sir:—In the last issue, No. 71, you make the query: "Why do not the guitar manufacturers 'stick the Notes?' I have often wondered why the 'Guitar Notes' of the Journal did not reach more becoming proportions, and it seems to me that the Guitar players who read the Journal could profitably display some interest in their instrument through the Journal."

Doubtless many of your subscribers play both the Banjo and Guitar, and the instruments are so closely allied that the players of the Banjo would be interested in Guitar notes, as I am in Banjo notes, although I do not play this instrument, and to start the Journal I would like to express some opinions on strings for the Guitar, allowing all who wish, to disagree with me believing that a discussion would be profitable and interesting to both Banjo and Guitar players.

In an instructor I once used, the Authors after having told how to strum the instrument with silk and gut strings, said that some cranks used steel strings, and that a guitar would be an instrument fit for persons of such a depraved taste. In the article on the Guitar in the "New American Cyclopædia" the writer says: "In France and England it was once in considerable repute as a solo instrument, but its limited capacity and monotony of tone have brought it into disfavor except as an instrument of accompaniment."

How to avoid this "monotony of tone" is the question, granting that said monotony exists, as I do. My cure is the wire string E, B and G. I use silk Bass strings. The E and B the silver wire. The G a wrapped wire string. My reasons are:—

First—You can get a louder, softer and clearer tone than from Gut strings.

Second—The strings are easier to press to the finger-board and also easier to pick with the right hand.

Third—The strings are affected less by the condition of the atmosphere than are the Gut strings.

Fourth—The strings being capable of producing louder and, I think, softer tones, you have a greater range for giving expression to your music, and avoiding that "monotony of tone."

Fifth—You get a better long or sustained note and can make a much better solo.

Sixth—It takes a more accurate ear to tune, so that the chords in the several keys will sound true, thus training the ear.

Trusting to improve the voice, I concede that the Gut strings are superior, but for solo playing I think the wire strings preferable for the above reasons. By holding the right hand and picking near the twelfth fret, you get as sweet a tone as is possible to get from the instrument, and with wire strings you can get much better harmonics. I think the popularity of the Mandolin is a proof that wire strings are not an abomination, as some writers would have them. Truly, wire strings are harder on the instrument, but mine tunes to Concert pitch very readily. I have never known an instrument to be injured by their use.

To those using Gut strings and wishing to try wire strings, I would say that a wire string should be used several days before it will lose its "twang" and be satisfactory.

Trusting that this will be interesting to those who even disagree with the opinions here set forth, I will submit the floor.

S. H. VOYLES.

We give space to the foregoing communication, from Mr. S. H. Voyles, of Crandall, Indiana, and shall be pleased to admit communications from other correspondents, on this or similar subjects. Although we do not personally agree with the writer on the adaptability of wire strings to the guitar, we believe each player entitled to express his own opinion. It seems to us that a comparison of the stringing of the Banjo and Guitar is hardly fair—the strings of the former being picked with a very flexible point of tortoise shell and the latter being picked with the soft fleshy finger ends.

EDITOR.

Mrs. Cora Davis the well known Guitar teacher of Terre Haute, Indiana, called recently, during a pleasure trip east. Mrs. Davis expresses interest in the Guitar, Banjo and Mandolin, very active in her city. Interest in either of these instruments seems to awaken a renewed interest in the others.

Mrs. Mollie J. Rollston, Guitar teacher, of Springfield, Mo., has lately taken up the Banjo.

Mrs. Cora R. Fracker, of Iowa City, Iowa, has published several of her latest compositions for the Guitar, Banjo and Mandolin, which are "Star whistles" (revue) and "In the Twilight" (descriptive).

JUST ISSUED

New Music for Mandolin and Guitar with Piano Accompaniment

By E. H. FREY

Price, - - - - 40 cents
For Mandolin and Guitar alone, 25 cts.
Piano Accompaniment, . . . 20 cts.

This is a very attractive Waltz by a favorite writer for these instruments, and promises to become very popular. Also,

PARACHUTE GALOP FOR MANDOLIN AND GUITAR

By E. H. FREY

Price, - - - - 25 cents

Another excellent composition

S. S. STEWART, Publisher, Philadelphia, Pa.



Paul Herfurth, Cambridgeport, Mass., has issued an excellent arrangement of Armstrong's Love and Beauty Waltzes for the Zither, which he sells at 40 cents.

W. E. Adams, of Melbourne, Australia, writes:

"Your variations on the *Carnival of Venice* are good, and Miss Secor must be very clever indeed, to write such a piano part. I rehearsed it with a prominent pianist here recently, and we played it at an entertainment. I need not tell you it was a great success and was encored and secured a good notice in one of our society papers. For, encore I played Horace Weston's "Best Schottische."

Mrs. B. A. Son, of Utica, N. Y., is as hard a worker for the banjo as we know of.

Geo. Stannard and Harry Corning, "Entertainers," may be engaged by addressing 24 West Lafayette street, Trenton N. J.

A club has been formed in Little Rock, Arkansas, called the "Washburn Club," C. S. Minter, Leader and Teacher.

L. D. Burford, Portland, Oregon, writes:

"I received the Miller silk strings from you about one week ago, and to my satisfaction find them far superior to any gut string made. It is strange that banjists are so slow in finding out such a fact."

Frank W. Walton, Altoona, Pa., writes:

"The Pony Concert Banjo ordered of you came safely, and after a thorough test it has been pronounced by all who have seen it and that know a first class article, to be an exceptionally fine instrument. I would like also to state that there is a good opportunity in Altoona for a first class teacher, for guitar and banjo. Should you know of one who is on the outlook you can refer him to Frank Morrow, Tyrope, Pa., who left a very promising class here to go to Harrisburg."

Wesley Bailey, Helena, Mont., writes:

"The Thoroughbred Banjo, ordered some time ago was duly received. The banjo certainly possesses a very superior quality of tone, and is not lacking at all in finish."

Geo. H. Hughes, of North Topeka, Kan., writes: that Jesse S. Langston has returned to that place, and is giving instructions on the banjo, and will organize a Banjo Club.

William Sullivan, of Montreal, Canada, has been spending the summer at Cacouna. He writes, under date of Aug. 14th—"We gave a concert last night for the benefit of Orchestra and had a large house—full to the door. But I must say that the banjo took the lead. I played Armstrong's Love and Beauty Waltzes with piano accompaniment, with Prof. Wallace. I tell you we got an ovation, and played four encores. Every one in the Hotel was struck with that waltz. They say that they thought it was the finest waltz ever heard on the banjo. After the concert a great many people wanted to see my banjo. They wanted to know who was the maker and I told them to look inside the rim and they would see S. S. Stewart, Philadelphia, Pa. All the musicians here are delighted with the banjo."

The Imperial Quartette Concert Co., of Boston, may be engaged by addressing 179 Tremont street.

The Alma B., M. and G. Club, of Williamsport, Pa., is an organization of recent origin, composed of the leading string talent of that city. Under the direction of A. P. Salmon the club is making a good reputation.

Walter J. Stent, of Sydney, N. S. W., Australia, is still passing the banjo makes the front there. He has lately imported a Bass Banjo for his "American Banjo Club," and will have all the American novelties for that organization. There can be no doubt that the banjo is making headway in Australia, and will become more and more popular.

Hosea Easton, a cousin of the late Horace Weston, is playing in the different Australian cities, and from what we hear of him, judge him to be an excellent performer.

Henry A. Jones, Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, writing recently says:

"The Thoroughbred Banjo I ordered from you arrived all right and is just what I expected it to be—a dandy."

Prof. Will Church, Jackson, Mich., writes:

"The Thoroughbred Banjo arrived O. K. The workmanship is exquisite; the tone deep, rich, mellow and sympathetic, sparkling, brilliant and powerful. I find that the Thoroughbred Banjo far better than you claim it to be."

Mrs. D. A. Doufour, the well known Washington teacher, made a pleasant call at this office recently.

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

"I think that last year's subscription (price 50 cents) a very paying investment, having helped me out a great many times when in doubt. I have heard it said: 'Oh well, it is all Stewart,' and as to that remark I have this much to say. I have been playing the banjo constantly for the past eighteen years, having started out when I was only twelve years old, on an old cheese box with only four brackets and violin E for a first string etc.

I have had experience with the Cole, Fairbanks and Cole, Monarch, the Dobson Bell, the Dobson clock back, hump back, and many others, etc. Numerous to mention, until about four years ago, when my time and attention was given to the Stewart Banjo (the best and only in existence as far as my judgment goes, at any rate) and it has only been in the last two years that I have taken up the *American Banjo School*; journal and other publications of yours and upon my word of honor, I wish to say that I have progressed more in the last two years with the aid of the *Journal* (the banjists' best friend) and other good works of yours, than I did in all those sixteen years of working in the dark, and for that reason, I do not care whether it is all Stewart, all Smith or all Jones, just as long as it continues to come as in the past, brimfull and running over with information that every banjist so much needs.

I feel confident you will do your part in sending six dollars worth (that is six numbers) I mean during the coming year, and therefore I am willing to work overtime to earn that big 50 cents to pay for that six dollars worth. Will gladly do all I can to help the *Journal* and Banjo World at large for it is by exchanging ideas that we know as little as we do now about the banjo, as a musical instrument. I believe there is no limit as to what can be brought out of the banjo. The more I use, the firmer I am in the belief that the banjo has lived in the door to King violin, and we are just beginning to find it out.

I practice every day of my life from two to eight hours. I am fully aware of the fact how little I know about the wonderful instrument, the 'banjo.' Not long since I played Armstrong's Love and Beauty Waltzes for a party of friends (some talented musicians). I believe had a pin been dropped anywhere in the room, it would have been heard, so close was the attention given me from beginning to end of that beautiful composition. I will not attempt to repeat the compliments Love and Beauty Waltzes received from that little gathering, but will say they were very complimentary to Mr. Armstrong, and the best effort of his life."

O. H. Albrecht has removed from 241 N. Eighth street, to 50 N. Thirteenth street, Philadelphia.

We had a pleasant letter from our old friend E. M. Hall recently. He has been travelling in the far West again. Speaking of his fine Stewart Banjo, he writes—"I had the banjo on exhibition in Frisco and it was much admired. I met a great many banjists and they all praised the instrument."

Daniel Acker, Wilkesbarre, Pa., is still pushing onward.

The Boston Ideal Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Club, has been filling a few engagements in Canada, during the summer. The club will take to the road again some time this fall. The boys say they had a delightful summer.

J. H. Jennings, of Providence, R. I., has reorganized the Palma B., M. and G. Club for the season.

Chas. F. Graeber, San Francisco, Cal., likes the Journal very much indeed and would not be without it, and this seems to be the general verdict of every teacher in the land, the "simple method fake," being, of course, excepted.

Miss E. Le Besque, New Orleans, La., writes:

"As I am at leisure thought I would write you a few lines and tell you a little about my banjo. Every one that sees my Stewart Banjo is delighted with it. For tone and finish its equal cannot be surpassed and it certainly merits all you could say in its praise. I would not use any other but the Stewart now, as I find it to be the best made. The banjo is all the rage here and without my 'jo I really couldn't have half the fun that I have.'"

The Miller twisted silk string for the banjo costs 20 cents. One of these strings will out last any 25 cent "Artis' string," and is much stronger. With the bass string of the banjo in playing chords. The twisted silk string as a third string for the banjo does away at once with all the old trouble of *false third strings*; and combines durability with excellence of tone. But be sure you get the right string when you order. Don't buy cheap French silk string and waste time in using it. The French silk string "isn't in it."

James F. Roach, Cincinnati, O., writes:

"We expect to have a very busy time the coming season. There will be many clubs getting ready for the Winter entertainments, and my own club of thirty-seven members will play with the Exeter minstrels, at least once a week for the next seven months."

Thomas R. Scott, business manager, Temple B. and G. Club, Providence, R. I., announces the third season of this club.

Miss Addie Skeels, Cincinnati, O., writes that the outlook for the season is very encouraging. People are returning to the city and new clubs are forming. Miss Skeels has organized a large Club of Banjos, Guitars, Zithers, Harps, etc., for social entertainments.

Harry M. Friend, Newburgh, N. Y., writes:

"The Newburgh Banjo Club, a young organization, will give a concert in the Academy of Music shortly. I have bought it from W. J. Dyer & Bro., of this city. It is one of your No. 3 *Champion*. I am not particular about fancy work, but this is such a fine instrument that I took fancy work and all thanked my stars that nobody got there before I did."

Edwin S. Davis, St. Paul, Minn., writes:

"I spoke to you some time since about a banjo—a good one. I have found it and it is a *bird* and no mistake. I have bought it from W. J. Dyer & Bro., of this city. It is one of your No. 3 *Champion*. I am not particular about fancy work, but this is such a fine instrument that I took fancy work and all thanked my stars that nobody got there before I did."

Gatty Jones, banjoist, is teaching in the Conservatory of Music, Jacksonville, Ill.

John P. Griffith, Salem, Va., writes:

"Have you an illustrated method for the Guitar, similar to the one published for the Banjo? If so, please send a copy to my address, when I will return by return mail."

No, there is no book like Stewart's Banjo book published for the Guitar. The Guitar men have not awakened yet; you can imagine where the banjo would have been by this time if Stewart hadn't started things up. Even now when a person wishes to learn the guitar he is obliged to search around lively for a teacher, as such professors are backward about keeping their names before the public. No matter, in a few years something may be done.

Geo. B. Ross, the well known banjo teacher, has taken a trip to Europe, but is expected home in October.

Mr. John Davis, Springfield, Mass., writes that he has his hours for banjo lessons filled out for many months to come. Mr. Davis must have a great many pupils for he keeps ordering Stewart's book, "The American School," right along.

H. O. Newton, played the banjo at a reception at Andrews' House Hall, So. Paris, Me., recently.

L. Martin, banjo teacher, has returned from Europe.

Henry Meyers, banjo, guitar and zither teacher, is very busy, at his rooms in the Haseltine Building. He says this will doubtless be a very prosperous season.

H. W. Harper, Oshkosh, Wis., has his Arion Banjo Orchestra re-organized for the Winter season, and is holding regular rehearsals.

Frank S. Morrow, banjo teacher, is now located in Harrisburg, Pa. He writes under date of September 12th, as follows:

"The banjo is making a great hit—quite a number of persons are talking of giving up the guitar to study the banjo. All the banjos we use in our club are of your make. I have the Harrisburg Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Club under my charge. It is composed of the following: Geo. Roberts, J. E. Gibbs, Harry Keller, Jas. Messereau, Harry Vance, Chas. Etter, Harry Houtz and Frank Hutchison."

All the leading clubs now have Stewart Bass Banjos: They sound "great."

F. M. Plaque, Vincennes, Ind., writes:

"Enclosed you will find fifty cents for another year's subscription to the *Journal*. I am having good success here in teaching banjo and guitar. There was not a banjo player in the town until I came, just one month ago. Scarcely any one knew what a banjo was, but since I came here I have awakened them a great deal, by playing my banjo with piano, such pieces as your 'Carnival of Venice,' Weston's 'Seek no Further' March, 'Wayfarer Waltz,' &c., that are charming to our lovers of music. I now have a class of some twenty-five pupils, mostly ladies."

William Sullivan has returned to Montreal, where he has "many pupils." He gave a concert recently, where he introduced a banjo club, composed of the following: William Lyall and C. E. Howard, banjos; G. Rodden and J. Garbett, mandolins; and William Rodden, guitar.

The club made quite a hit. The banjo playing of Mr. Sullivan was a surprise to many, so brilliant was his execution.

Van Dusen Bros., of Battle Creek, Mich., have issued their banjo and guitar club prospectus for the fall and winter. The following point is well made: "Our selections are from the best composers, and they are not confined to the difficult, classical music, so much as to the simple, sweet strains which win the hearts of all before whom we play." W. O. Van Dusen is manager.

R. W. Devereux, master of all instruments, has returned from his vacation.

F. W. Reamer, Seattle, Wash., says he is in a very thrifty little place, and it takes kindly to the banjo. In fact, the people of Seattle settle down to the banjo as naturally as a duck takes to the water. The Stewart banjos are very popular in Seattle, says Mr. Reamer, and a banjo and guitar club is now being formed.

D. C. Everest, Banjo and violin teacher, may be addressed 1128 Walnut Street, Philadelphia.

The Müller twisted silk banjo *third string is true* and blends beautifully with the bass string. Price, 20 cents each.

A correspondent signing herself "Chicago Young Lady," wishes to have the following question answered in the *Journal*:

1. "Is a harmonica a practical instrument for accompanying a banjo?"

2. Are there any harmonicas manufactured for this purpose?"

The letter comes in just as our firm is being closed for the press, and therefore the answer is more brief than would otherwise be the case.

We suppose the mouth harmonica is meant. It is no instrument at all, but merely a toy. Having no chromatic scale, it is unfit to use as a musical instrument. There are none made for the purpose spoken of, and we sincerely hope there never will be.

Dr. A. M. Purdy, of Mystic, Conn., is an enthusiast on the banjo.

—JUST PUBLISHED—

"MEDLEY • OVERTURE"

—By E. H. FREY—

For the following combination of instruments: two Mandolins (first and second), two Guitars and Banjo. Here we have a very fine arrangement for these five instruments, introducing the well-known melodies, "Stephanie Gavotte" and "Anvil Polka," together with original melodies by Mr. Frey.

Price, complete for the five instruments, - Sixty Cents

The above can also be used for *three or four* instruments if desired, that is, the first Guitar part and Banjo part can either or both be omitted and the piece used with splendid effect for two Mandolins and Guitar, with or without Banjo accompaniment.

—S. S. STEWART—

Publisher

221 and 223 Church Street, Philad'a, Pa.

NEW MUSIC

Published by S. S. Stewart.

The Most Successful of T. J. Armstrong's Musical Compositions.

"Love and Beauty Waltzes"

For Banjo and Piano 75 cts.

For Banjo alone 40 cts.

For Banjo Club, complete in six parts, \$1.40

The above named has made a great hit. It has been performed by leading players and clubs in various parts of the United States, and always met with success. The Banjo solo with Piano accompaniment is particularly "catchy," and bound to remain a favorite for a long time to come.

There are yet hundreds of banjo players who have not heard "Love and Beauty," and to such we will say, do not delay in securing copies for your individual use and for your banjo clubs.

Owing to popular demand, we have just issued

"Love and Beauty" for banjo clubs, as follows:

—Banjeaurine, First and Second Banjos, Piccolo Banjo, Guitar and Mandolin. Leading part 40 cents, each of the other parts 20 cents. The Banjeaurine plays leading part. Two Banjeaurines should be used when possible, for the leading part, and the Guitar part may be doubled if desired. The Mandolin part is intended to be used where the club has a performer on that instrument, and it can be omitted if the club has no Mandolin player.

The solo part, used in the Banjo solo, and Banjo and Piano arrangement, is the same part that is used for Banjeaurine in the club arrangement.

Banjo organizations in ordering this selection, should bear this in mind. In using the solo part for Banjo, the Piano part of course is published in the regular way of tuning—that is, the Banjo plays in "E" and the Piano in "G"; hence, the Piano part cannot be used if the principal part is played on the Banjeaurine, as this instrument is tuned a *fourth higher* than the ordinary Banjo.

The club parts, as arranged by Mr. Armstrong, and now published for the first time, have been played with great success by our leading banjo clubs in Philadelphia, and we confidently recommend this arrangement to all banjo organizations, and predict for it the leading place on the programs of 1892 and 1893.

Grand Banjo Concert

We take pleasure in announcing to Banjo, Guitar and Mandolin Clubs, that the Grand Banjo, Guitar and Mandolin Concert promised for the coming winter will be given at the ACADEMY OF MUSIC, Philadelphia, on the evening of January 14th, 1893, (Saturday evening). The date has been fixed so far in advance in order to give all clubs desiring to take part plenty of time for preparation, and in order to avoid conflict with any other concerts such clubs may have in view.

At this concert there will be several valuable prizes offered to competing clubs. Those clubs that took part in the concert last January, at Association Hall, will understand the plan, and full information will be given in the next number of the *Journal* (December 1st). The management intends to make the list of prizes more full and complete than last year, and render the entertainment as complete in every detail as it is possible to make it.

Thos. J. Armstrong, musical director, requests managers of clubs to communicate with him, at his office, 418 North Sixth Street, or in care of the publisher of the *Journal*, as it is desired that a grand combination of from fifty to one hundred banjos, guitars and mandolins may be had to render an opening overture.

PAUL ENO.

Mr. Eno has returned to the city, and will resume instruction on Banjo and Guitar at No. 1411 Chestnut street, the rooms formerly occupied by Mr. Ross, who is now in Europe, and who expects to make his headquarters in Chicago during the World's Fair. Mr. Eno will give special attention to the banjo, although he will also take some pupils on guitar, and attend to the arranging of music for banjo, guitar and mandolin clubs. Mr. Eno will also keep an assortment of Stewart banjos on hand, for sale and display.

MECHANICS' FAIR, BOSTON.

Messrs. J. C. Haynes & Co., will display some S. S. Stewart Banjos at the fair, held in that city during October and November. Look for them.

The following proprietary medicine advertisement has been going the rounds of the daily papers lately. We never heard of Prof. Weitzel, as a banjoist, but suppose "anything goes" with patent medicine ads.

NEW FAD IN MUSIC

How the Taste Changes in Things Musical. Society Ladies Enthusiastic Over the New Musical Craze

His Chief Exponent's Interesting Talk in Regard to Himself

The fashion in music is all running toward the banjo this season. Thousands of girls and women in fashionable society, to say nothing of the men, have taken up the banjo as the popular musical instrument of the day. The "thrum-thrum" of fair fingers is heard on every hand.

Prof. Henry C. Weitzel, one of the greatest musicians this century has produced, occupies the undisputed position of the best banjo player in the world. Visited at his home, 841 South Canton street, Baltimore, Md., the great exponent of the banjo was found full of enthusiasm for his beloved instrument. And in his hands the music is indeed beautiful—wonderful.

The great professor, as everybody knows, was most seriously sick for a time, but his thousands of admirers will be glad to learn that he has completely recovered his health.

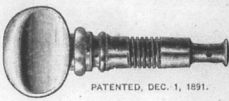
When approached in regard to the banjo, he spoke in raptures concerning his recovery, for he considers his restoration to health little short of a miracle, as he had well nigh lost hope of ever being well again.

"I suffered severely," he said, "with indigestion, nervous prostration and palpitation of the heart. I had spells of weakness come over me so that my legs would give way and I would be forced to leave my work. In fact I was in a bad fix, and my nerves were in a very serious condition. I now thank God that I got some of Dr. Greene's Nerve Blood and nerve remedy—got the best medicine at last after trifling with many doctors, who did me no good. I am using my second bottle, and it certainly beats all the medicine I ever saw. I tell you I feel like another man."

None of Prof. Weitzel's friends ever expected to see him well again, and his restoration to health is a great triumph for Dr. Greene's Nerve Blood and nerve remedy. It certainly does cure the sick. It makes them strong and well. Besides, it has the great virtue of being a perfectly harmless remedy, as it is purely vegetable. Although sold by druggists for \$1.00, it is not a patent medicine in the ordinary sense of the word, but is the discovery and prescription of the great specialist in nervous and chronic diseases, Dr. Greene, of 35 West Fourteenth Street, New York City, who gives consultation and advice free to the sick and suffering, either personally if you call at his office, or by letter if you write him about your case.

Sufferers from disease should use his wonderful discovery, which so remarkably restored Prof. Weitzel to health and strength.

The Universal Key for Banjos



This peg is a great improvement over anything of the kind heretofore invented or manufactured for the purpose of a peg or key for tuning the strings of a banjo. Being without washers or clamps on either top or bottom, it does not mar the appearance of the banjo peg head, and does not detract from the appearance of any illaid work which may be upon the banjo scroll.

The advantages of this key are that it may be fitted to any ordinary peg hole that has previously been made for the ordinary ebony or ivory peg. The taper is the same as found in the celluloid banjo peg in common use.

When once fitted and adjusted the peg will stay whichever way it is turned, does not slip, and requires no screwing up at any time after it has been fitted. The following

—DIRECTIONS—

for fitting the pegs must be observed:

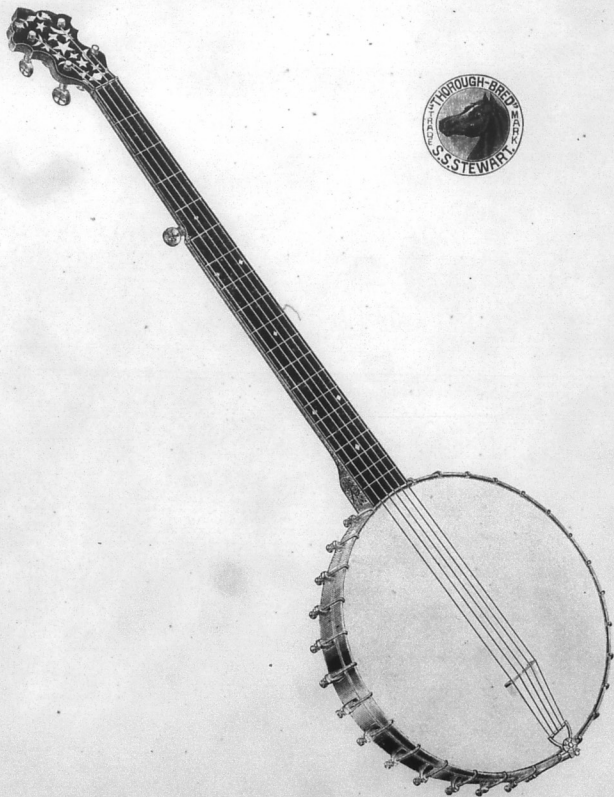
Insert a small pin through the hole in the threaded nut; this pin going through will connect the nut with the stem. Then place the peg in the hole of the banjo (which must be tapered to fit), and turn until sufficiently tight; then remove the pin and the nut will remain stationary and the key will turn with little pressure.

Care must be taken not to get the key too tight, as the tapered part of the key acts as a wedge, and does not require to be very tight.

In short, the pegs should be nicely fitted, not forced, and they will be found to work satisfactorily.

The "old-fashioned" ebony pegs are quite good enough for a banjo player who is experienced in working such pegs, and the plain old-fashioned pegs are equally as good as any for tuning purposes, when the same are correctly tapered and accurately fitted to the tapered holes, after a person has become accustomed to handling them. But it requires practice to learn to handle the old-fashioned pegs properly without inconvenience; hence the improved patent pegs or "Universal Key" are a great thing for the beginner who is not expert in tuning the strings of his banjo. The price for a full set of the Universal Keys for banjo is \$2.00.

These keys will be put in any Stewart Banjo, from \$35.00 upward, without extra charge; they will also be put in all Stewart's banjeaurines without extra charge. When customers desire them put in banjos of a lower price than \$35.00, the charge will be \$1.00 extra, over and above the price of the banjo.

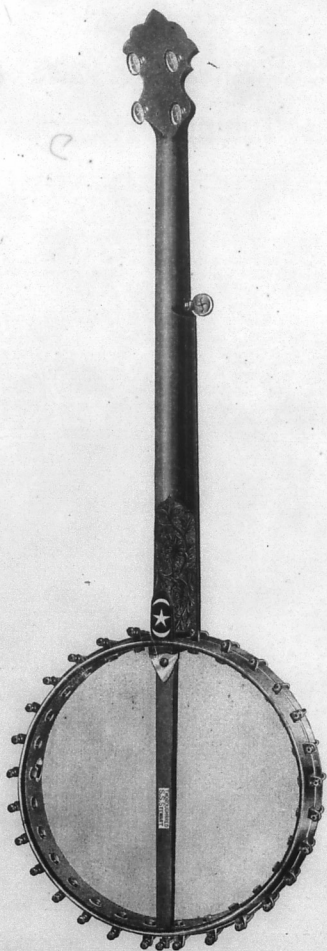


The S. S. Stewart "Thoroughbred" Banjo

11½ INCH RIM

FACE VIEW

Send for Descriptive Price List



The S. S. Stewart "Thoroughbred" Banjo

—BACK VIEW—

Remarks on the Banjo-Fingerboard, the Chromatic Scale, Tuning, Fretting, etc.

By S. S. STEWART.

Too much importance can scarcely be attached to the matter of accurate tuning of a stringed instrument, whether the instrument be a Piano, Harp, Guitar, Violin, Mandolin or a Banjo.

In the Harp we have an instrument that is easily affected by atmospheric changes, by reason of its large number of sensitive gut strings. In the Violin we find the strings are much shorter, and on account of not being subjected to the picking or plucking process, to any extent, when being played upon, do not get so readily out of tune.

The Guitar requires more careful and more frequent tuning than a violin, and the Harp more than either. The Banjo, by reason of its length of string, and on account of the great amount of handling of the strings,—picking, striking, stopping the strings at the frets, etc.,—as well as on account of the natural sensitiveness of its strings, is liable to be put out of tune frequently during a performance, and the banjoist who is not skilled in manipulating the pegs of his instrument, by which the strings are quickly tightened or loosened, is surely lacking in one important feature of his art.

Skill in tuning a Banjo depends somewhat upon a "good musical ear," quickness of movement, and naturally, upon a certain amount of experience and practice, which is not to be acquired in a day or a week.

I will not, in this article, speak of the necessity of having the right kind of pegs, fitted properly to the tapered holes, as that matter has been spoken of in detail in "OBSERVATIONS ON THE BANJO AND BANJO PLAYING," recently given to the public.

I wish now to say a few words on the subject of TUNING, and to embrace within those remarks the subject of fretting—the fretting scale of the Banjo, the effect of false strings, etc.

It is not unusual to hear dealers and agents for the sale of some particular banjo or guitar, put forth the claim for the instruments they sell that the *scale is absolutely true and correct*—in other words, the perfect register of the frets is guaranteed.

Now, there is no such thing as an absolutely perfect fret board on the Banjo, and I will now endeavor to analyze and demonstrate this subject to the satisfaction of the reader. First, permit me to quote from a very valuable work, published some years ago, called *The Music of Nature*, by William Gardiner. In Chapter XLV, beginning on page 428, is found the following:

"To tune an instrument, is to increase or diminish the tension of the strings, so as to make them accord with a given tone. In tuning the violin, we put the second string in unison with the note A upon the piano-forte, and then tune the first string to a perfect fifth above it; afterwards, the third to a fifth below it, and the fourth to a fifth below that, forming the notes, G, D,

A, and E. In doing this, the ear has to listen to that sweet blending of the sounds, which it will easily catch as the strings come into tune. To tune a piano-forte, much greater skill is required, as all the notes upon that instrument are to be produced from the note we commence with. In this operation we have to contend with a circumstance, that seems to be at variance with a known law of nature. To explain this, it will be necessary to make the following remarks.

If we stop a violin string mid-way between the nut and the bridge, either half of the string will sound the *octave above* to the whole string; and if we vibrate two-thirds of the string, this portion will sound the fifth above to the whole string. The same law applies to wind instruments and all sounding bodies. A pipe fifteen inches long (no matter the bore) will sound the octave above to one that is thirty inches long; and twenty inches, being two-thirds of thirty, will sound the fifth above. Upon such simple facts we might have supposed the musical scale to be founded; but when we come to tune a piano-forte, and raise the fifths one upon another, to our surprise we find the last note C, *too sharp* for the C we set out with. This inexplicable difficulty no one has attempted to solve; the Deity seems to have left it in an unfinished state, to show his inscrutable power."

Nowadays, one would scarcely attribute the difficulty in tuning, spoken of, to the cause it is charged to in the work from which the above quotation is taken. Such explanations are in keeping with old time theologistic speculations and ideas, but we should rather attribute the seeming "inexplicable difficulty" to man's imperfect understanding of natural laws and to imperfect hearing.

It appears to be a natural failing in the ear, to tune fifths in music sharper than they should be. This fact may serve also as a reminder to ourselves to *temper* our acts as we do our fifths, and to maintain and cultivate an evenly balanced temperament in ourselves as well as our instruments. The fret-board of the Banjo, is, of course, constructed upon the same principle, as the fret-board of the Guitar or any instrument of the kind. The laws that govern vibrating strings, govern the strings whether the instrument they are attached to be a Banjo, Guitar, Mandolin, or other instrument.

Years ago, when the *raised fret* was little used on a Banjo, it was not a matter of any great importance to have a perfectly "tempered" fretting scale for that instrument—and the inlaid frets were far, far indeed, from anything like accuracy, and anything that approximated perfection was not even thought of.

Now, as Banjos are constructed almost entirely with raised frets, it becomes at once necessary to come as near to a perfect fretting scale, for each sized instrument, as is possible with our present knowledge of music and musical sounds.

THE FRETTING SCALE.

The plan of making the divisions for the frets, in common use, is by consecutive eightieths, as spoken of in *The Banjo Philosophically*. This is done by dividing the length of string—the exact distance from the *nut* to the *bridge*—in two equal parts, and setting the position for the

12th fret. Then taking one ninth the distance from the nut to the 12th fret—or one eighteenth the distance from nut to bridge—as the distance from the nut to the first fret. The distance from the first fret to the bridge is then measured and one eighteenth of that length is taken as the position for the second fret—or as the distance from the first to the second fret, and so continued.

It is much easier to lay the scale off by geometric progression, of course, than to make all the divisions separately, and this plan is generally preferred.

The only trouble lies in the fact that the 18th is not absolutely the right distance from the nut to the first fret;—for having proceeded until the positions for eleven frets have been secured, it is found that the next division does not bring us directly to the point established in the beginning as the position for the *twelfth* fret—one half the line. Hence, it now becomes necessary to dispose in some way of this difference. One way to do this is to make a new line for the 12th fret and then to make the corresponding difference in the distance to the bridge, in order that the 12th fret may still represent one half the string. Thus, we have a fretting scale that is far from being perfect, if worked out on this line.

The question then arises, is there not a more accurate method and one by which the modern Banjo can be fretted in a less imperfect manner? For the Banjo is making

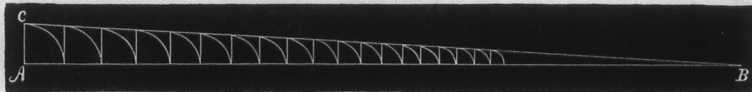
rapid strides in its advancement, and banjo music is becoming a prominent feature of musical entertainments.

Laying aside, for the time being, the question of faulty strings—necks out of line, with consequently faulty finger-boards, etc.,—the matter of an almost perfectly correct fret-board can be satisfactorily adjusted.

For a long time I made constant experiment in this direction, and was for a time puzzled somewhat over the matter. At length having arrived at a plan of placing the distances for the frets, which I consider much nearer perfection than the old plan, I will now give the same to my readers.

Having ascertained the exact distance from the nut to the first fret—having established the exact length to cut off from the 1st fret to the bridge of the Banjo—it is not a difficult matter to establish the positions of all the remaining frets.

To establish the position for the 1st fret, take the exact length of vibrating string, (the distance from nut to bridge,) and divide by 1.05946, using decimal fractions. This will give the exact length to cut off from the bridge to the 1st fret—subtracting this from the full length will give the distance from the nut to 1st fret, of course. Now, having established this position, it is only necessary to follow out the scale, by geometric progression, and we have the fret-board diagram very complete, and as nearly accurate as it is possible to make it.



The accompanying diagram will give, in condensed form, the plan for making the divisions of the scale, as spoken of.

A perfectly straight line, the length of the Banjo from nut to bridge, is to be drawn on paper. At the left extremity of this line, raise a perpendicular, at right angles, of the exact distance from the nut to the 1st fret. Then draw a line from point C to B. This point, B, is the bridge line, and, of course, at that point, the fretting would naturally cease—or run out—were it possible to continue the fretting scale the entire length of the line representing the vibrating string.

After having set the dividers for the line A, C, and pointed off for the 1st fret, they are to be again set, after another perpendicular line has been accurately drawn at that point, to line C, B, and at right angles with line A, B.

The process is thus continued until as many frets have been marked off as desired. The line from A to B is the one afterwards used to mark the fret positions upon the fingerboard, or wood pattern.

It is perhaps unnecessary to state that the lines should be made with perfect accuracy, for anything like a correct result, and that needle pointed dividers and the proper thing in the shape of a straight edge, etc., must be used.

The line for the 12th fret should measure one half that of the line at A, C, at the beginning—this being one half the distance between the two lines, in proportion to the original line from A to C, and one half the length of the original line upon which we are working.

At the point B, the distance between the lines becomes extinct, and therefore the lines must converge to a point, as exactly as possible. This rule, will, I think, if properly followed out, give very good results, and better satisfaction than the plan in general use, of consecutive divisions by eighteenthths. It may not be absolutely perfect, but is about as near to a true gauge, I believe, as has been arrived at. I will now speak of other factors in relation to the fretting scale, and how it is that "perfection" can not be reasonably expected in this department.

FALSE STRINGS.

One of the worst factors to be contended with in banjo playing, and in the accurate adjustment of a Banjo, is *false strings*. Strings that are really false—uneven in thickness, or thicker in one part than another, can not be used at all, if one wishes an accurate register of musical tones on his instrument.

A string in vibrating, sounds not only as a whole, but also sub-divides itself, as it were, producing what are called overtones, or harmonics, and these overtones combine with and form part of the original tone—the mingled and blending tones forming one perfect tone.

Now, when a string is *uneven* in thickness between the points of vibration, or nodes, the overtones produced by it are imperfect—or entirely wanting, and it follows that the tones produced from such a string must either be entirely lacking in musical quality, or else register, when the string is stopped at the frets, out of tune. A string that is badly *false*, can not be perfectly tuned, even as an "open" string,

4

saying nothing of the register of its tones when it is stopped at the frets.

When a string is of equal *thickness* and *density* throughout—between the nut and bridge—the 12th fret, midway between the bridge and nut, will register the octave of the string in its fundamental tone, or as it sounds “open.” But when a string is false, through uneven thickness or unequal density, it is impossible to produce the octave at the 12th fret, and if the string is of very faulty construction it is impossible to produce the octave at any other fret—or by moving the bridge.

The “nodal points”—or the points between which a string vibrates,—are, if the open string, the nut and the bridge. (By “open string,” is meant, of course, the string when not stopped at the frets.) When stopped at any fret, the nodal points are that fret and the bridge.

Now, a string may be slightly false—just false enough to cause it to sound a little “off” in some of the “positions” on the Banjo—and yet not so bad that the average performer cares to discard the string—particularly if the class of music he performs is not of that sort which requires much “position fingering” of chords.

With strings that are “a little false” no fret-board can register perfectly correct tones.

When in Boston, Mass., not long ago, Mr. G. W. Bowers showed me a new invention of his, for rendering strings that are slightly false, usable on the Guitar and Banjo. The Guitar bridge, patented by him, is unique. It consists of a bridge, having, instead of the usual fret in one line for the strings to rest on—parallel with the nut—a set of small movable rests, so that the length of each vibrating string may be slightly altered—making the distance from the nut to bridge either longer or shorter, as desired. The inventor claimed that even with the best strings, the six strings of the guitar did not register the octaves perfectly at the 12th fret; and that by adjusting the lengths, with his improved bridge, he succeeded in getting perfect octaves on all of the strings at the 12th fret.

A similar contrivance was also adapted to the Banjo—in a bridge having four feet, and possessing somewhat the appearance of a miniature bedstead.

* * * * *

The falseness of gut strings frequently present freaks in similar sound hard to base any calculation upon, and it is needless to say that when a string is so badly faulty in tone that the open note—and its harmonic tones—are found to be confused and unclear—no variation of the bridge will do any good and no perfect intonation is possible.

In the manufacture of the gut string, the material used is from the intestines of young lambs. The “Russian gut” string is made from material brought to Germany or Italy from Russia, and the lambs in that country furnish a material that is tougher than any other, and less fatty. This material is split into thin strips, which have the appearance of thin slivers of paper. Now the German string is made from these strips after they have been re-split into very fine threads; but the Italian strings are made from much wider strips of material, and it follows that the Italian strings are more apt to be *false* than the German.

Of late, strings composed of twisted silk have been introduced, in place of the gut strings, and, in the opinion of the writer, the gut strings now in use on the Banjo will

in course of time be superseded by those of silk, because while it is almost impossible to manufacture gut strings that are of perfectly even thickness from end to end, it is possible to do so with the silk strings, and although not so elastic as the gut, the silk strings are true in tone and not so readily affected by damp weather,—a great point in their favor.

In bringing the Banjo of ordinary dimensions into tune, it is customary to begin with either the *third* or *fourth* string,—which ever the performer prefers,—and after putting that string in accurate tune with the piano, or tuning pipe, we proceed to tune the remaining strings, as follows:

As written for Banjo.



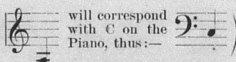
When tuned to play with Piano, sound



The second string is tuned a third higher than the third string—the first string is then tuned a fifth higher than the third string, and the short string an octave higher: thus we have the first, third, fifth an octave of the note started with, as shown in the above example,—if we begin with the third string. Then we have only to tune the fourth string a fifth below the third string.

Or if we start with the fourth string, and tune that string first, we will then tune the third string a fifth

(The fourth string of the Banjo noted A, thus:—



will correspond with C on the Piano, thus:—

higher, and proceed to tune the remaining strings as explained.

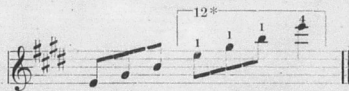
The beginner will soon discover that although he has apparently put the strings in tune, yet when he proceeds to test his instrument it is not in perfect tune. Then the tuning must be gone over, and the process continued until the strings have been fully stretched and more readily “stand in tune.” Playing upon the instrument—the moisture from the fingers, the pulling and striking of the strings, etc.—will soon cause one or more of the strings to go out of tune again,—or to become flat in pitch,—which is very bothersome to the beginner, but, which is unavoidable, save through an acquired dexterity in tuning,—a training of the ear, and an expertness in rapid and accurate handling of the instrument, which will come with experience and practice.

Varying degrees of heat and cold will always affect a stringed instrument, and it is impossible to construct a Banjo that will not be thus affected: hence, the performer must show his individual mastery of the instrument, by

causing it to be kept in tune during a performance under unfavorable conditions—a thing which is easier talked of than readily accomplished, sometimes.

But the performer, at the same time, has this encouragement:—If the Banjo were very easy to *play really well*, and very easy to maintain in first-class playing condition, so many would play on it, that it would soon become unattractive, and would then become of little account. But, because it is difficult to play well, and because it is no easy matter to keep the instrument in perfect tune during a prolonged performance, gives those who succeed in mastering the instrument a great advantage over the many inferior performers. A good performer will thus excite the admiration of even the hundreds of inferior players with whom he is liable to come in contact. It is because *you* can do this thing *well*, which many others can not do well, that makes it worth your time and talents, and becomes a credit to you as a performer. That which every body can do is not worth doing at all.

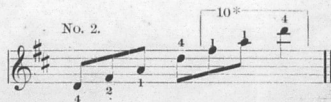
It will often be noticed, in trying a Banjo—in playing the following passage—that the tones do not appear to be perfectly true even when the strings have been separately



tested at the 12th fret and found true, and the bridge in the proper place on the banjo-head. This may arise from the vibration of the fourth or bass string, being heard to a certain extent with the notes of the chord to which it

does not belong: or, the slight change in the *tension* of the strings in pressing them down to the fingerboard may occasion a slight deviation from the tones mathematically designated to the frets.

In passages, such as the following example, a slight difference is noticeable in playing the same passage in different positions: Sometimes the notes will appear perfectly true when played as indicated in Example No. 1, and imperfect when played as in Example No. 2, (more particularly referring to the last three notes in the example.)

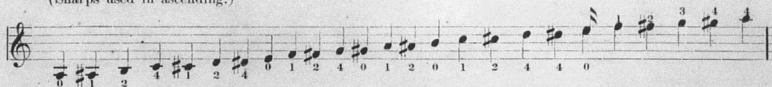


This difficulty is accounted for in the difference in tension exerted upon the strings of different thickness in different positions on the banjo fingerboard.

Thus, absolute perfection in tuning and fretting the Banjo is shown not yet to have been reached, and the desire of the writer of this and other articles, has been to aid to some extent towards arriving at a point in this direction that will be nearer to the goal than has been reached heretofore.

CHROMATIC SCALE FOR THE BANJO.—Two Octaves.

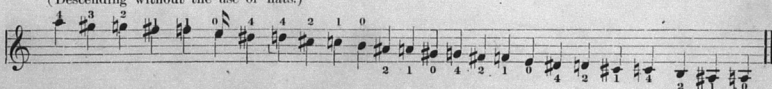
(Sharps used in ascending.)



(Flats used in descending.)



(Descending without the use of flats.)



STARLIGHT POLKA.

DUET FOR BANJO AND GUITAR.

E. H. FREY.

Banjo.

Guitar.

p

FINE.

The musical score is arranged in five systems, each with a piano (P) part on the left and a guitar (G) part on the right. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 2/4. The score includes various musical notations such as treble and bass clefs, notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *p* (piano). The first system consists of five measures. The second system includes first and second endings, with a *p* marking in the guitar part. The third system consists of five measures. The fourth system consists of five measures. The fifth system includes first and second endings, with a *D.C.* (Da Capo) marking in the guitar part. The score concludes with a double bar line.

Starlight Polka.

ROY'S FAVORITE WALTZ.

FOR GUITAR AND MANDOLIN.

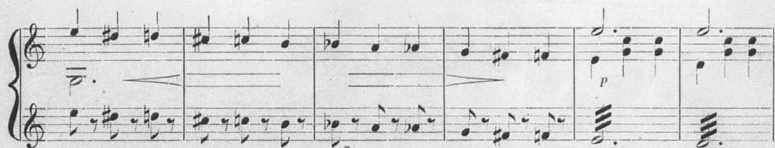
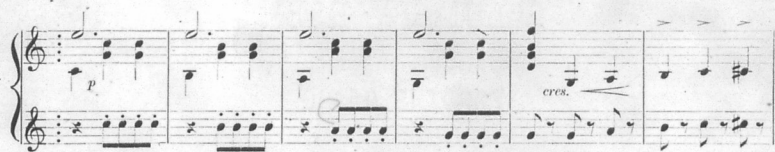
Tune 6th string of Guitar to G.

By E. H. FREY.

Frets. 10..... 12..... 10..... 7..... 3.

Guitar.

Mandolin.



COLUMBIA REEL

FOR THE BANJO.

R. E. BUCK. 1

Banjo. *Allegretto.*

mf

f

mf

1 2 3 1 3 1 0

1 2

"SWEET REVERIE," SERENADE. FOR THE GUITAR.

E. H. FREY.

Andante con moto.

Guitar.

p

Bar. 7. 5.

rit.

1 2

FINE.

cres.

p

cres.

Bar. 7. 5.

rall. dolce.

rit.

f *p*

Bar. 7. 5.

p

dim.

rit.

1 2

D. C. al Fine.

"BOTSIE" WALTZ.

FOR THE BANJO.

M. J. CATLIN.

WALTZ.

INTRODUCTION.

Banjo.

The musical score is written for a single melodic line on a banjo, indicated by the 'Banjo.' label. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into an 'INTRODUCTION.' and a 'WALTZ.' section. The introduction consists of two measures. The waltz section follows, marked with a repeat sign and a key signature change to two sharps (D major). The waltz section includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings like 'rit.' (ritardando) and 'a tempo'. The piece concludes with a 'FINE.' marking and a double bar line. The initials 'D. C.' (Da Capo) are written at the end of the score.

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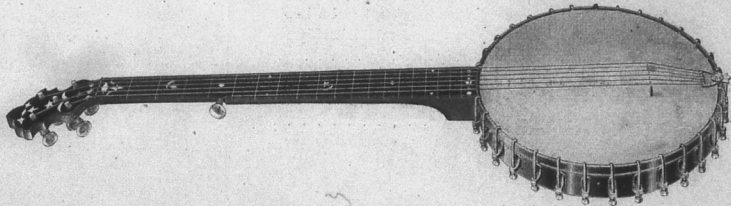
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Yours Respectfully,

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