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A Dictionary of Musicians, from the Earliest Ages to the Present Time

The publisher John Sainsbury produced this biographical dictionary of musicians in 1824. The book, as he acknowledges on his title page, borrows from the previously published works of Choron and Fayolle (in French), Gerber (in German), Orloff (Russian, writing in French), and his two notable English predecessors, Dr Burney and Sir John Hawkins. The two-volume work contains a 'summary of the history of music', as well as biographies of varying lengths and memoirs of musicians. The range of the information provided is immense, including the most obscure as well as the most famous: fourteen pages on Mozart are followed by paragraphs on his wife Constanza and on the now completely forgotten B.F. Mozin, a French piano teacher and composer, while Beethoven is described when still living and composing, albeit afflicted by deafness. This work is a mine of information on musical life and perceptions of music history in the early nineteenth century.

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VOLUME 1

JOHN SAINSBURY



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A

DICTIONARY OF MUSICIANS,

FROM THE EARLIEST AGES TO THE PRESENT TIME.

COMPRISING

THE MOST IMPORTANT BIOGRAPHICAL CONTENTS

OF THE WORKS OF

GERBER, CHORON, AND FAYOLLE, COUNT ORLOFF, DR. BURNEY,
SIR JOHN HAWKINS, &c. &c.

TOGETHER WITH

UPWARDS OF A HUNDRED ORIGINAL MEMOIRS

OF THE MOST

Eminent living Musicians.

AND

A SUMMARY OF THE HISTORY OF MUSIC.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR SAINSBURY AND CO., SALISBURY-SQUARE,
FLEET-STREET;

AND SOLD BY LONGMAN, HURST, REBS, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN, PATER-
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NEW BOND-STREET; GOULDING, D'ALMAINE AND CO., SOHO-SQUARE;
CLEMENTI AND CO., CHEAPSIDE; AND ALL OTHER BOOK AND MUSIC SELLERS
IN THE KINGDOM.

1824.

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PREFATORY OBSERVATIONS.

TO those who are conversant with the German, Italian, and French languages, the publication of the present work may appear to a certain extent uncalled for; but to such musical amateurs and professors as have *not* this advantage, the compilers trust that their Dictionary will prove both useful and interesting. The “*Dictionnaire Historique des Musiciens*” of Mr. Fayolle appeared in the year 1811. It is, in many respects, very ably edited, and was decidedly a great improvement on the first edition of Gerber’s “*Historisch-Biographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler*,” which was published at Leipsic in 1791, in two volumes octavo; still, it is to be remarked of Mr. Fayolle’s work, as it concerns English readers, that hardly any mention is made of the most celebrated artists of this country; indeed, the claims of England to the slightest consideration in the annals of music, appear to have been overlooked both by Mr. Fayolle, and by Mr. Choron in his Summary of the Art. This deficiency may, in a great degree, be accounted for by the political division of the two countries, for many years preceding the publication of the *Dictionnaire Historique*; still the fact remains the same. In the year 1813, Mr. Gerber published a second edition of his *Lexicon der Tonkünstler*, in four volumes octavo; and this is certainly a work of high interest so far as respects the artists of Germany, but with regard to England it is again a blank; hardly a single article relating to British musicians having received even a verbal alteration from his first edition, though the second is swelled to

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more than double the length, by added details respecting the artists of other countries. Ten years having at length elapsed since the publication of Gerber's second edition, and intercourse with the continent being unrestrained during nine years of that period, the compilers of the present work, enthusiastic in their love of all that relates to the art, and having had personal experience of the neglect, they may almost say contempt, with which the advocacy of the comparative merits of modern English music is met in foreign society—the very names of such eminent professors as Samuel Webbe, Dr. Crotch, Wesley, sir George Smart, &c. &c. being very frequently unknown to foreigners who have occupied themselves with musical literature throughout their lives—disgusted with this prejudiced and ignorant appreciation of British talent, the compilers, who were, when abroad, in the habit of occasionally consulting Fayolle's Dictionary, as also Gerber's Lexicon, and had found that through their medium they became much more *au fait* to the merits of foreign artists, resolved to publish a work, on their return to England, embodying the most interesting contents of the French and German Dictionaries of Musicians, with such authentic biographical details as they could procure of British musicians up to the period of their publication. At that time the labour of such a book appeared to them light. They soothed themselves with the idea that it would be but the task of a few months. Long, however, before they had completed the half of their first volume, it was evident that they had underrated the trouble of their undertaking; the conjoined abridgement and translation of matter from as many as ten or twelve books in different languages, necessarily engrossing a considerable portion of time. At first, the compilers proposed to rewrite, or at least carefully to revise the style of such extracts as they should make from some of the older English publications, and especially from sir J. Hawkins's History of Music: this, however, they soon found to be incompatible with their completion of the work in less than double the

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time they were necessitated to limit themselves to; they have been, therefore, obliged to leave many negligences in writing unaltered; at the same time they promise that, should a second edition of the work be called for, the whole shall be carefully revised and corrected. Another difficulty the compilers have had to encounter, is the almost inconceivable trouble of collecting the biographies of living artists, chiefly from the multiplicity of the engagements of the most eminent professors, and their consequent inability to afford the time required to furnish such data as were required by the compilers of the Dictionary. This difficulty they found to be, occasionally, insuperable in the present edition; and a few very eminent names will consequently be found accompanied with much more concise notices than their comparative merit justly demands. In three instances only, however; out of above two hundred applications, the brevity of the article is attributable to unwillingness on the part of the professors, and one of these three arose from an excess of that modesty so often the attendant of true genius. To conclude, the compilers trust that their work, incomplete as it avowedly is, will be received by the profession as a pledge that to give due honour to the character of British artists, at the same time proving useful to them, has been the paramount object of the compilation, which, if it attain a second edition, will doubtless be more worthy of the cause it would advocate.

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SUMMARY

OF THE

HISTORY OF MUSIC,

BY ALEXANDRE CHORON,

(TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.)

It is not the intention of the author, of the following sketch to comprise in it strictures on every department of the musical art, a labour which would lead far beyond the limits assigned to this preliminary discourse, but simply to give an abstract of the modern European system of music, considered in its essential and constituent parts, which comprehend the laws of sounds or of notes ; rhythm ; *séméiotechnie*, or the system of musical characters ; and, lastly, composition, which is so closely allied to the former subjects, that it would be difficult to divide them without a diminution of perspicuity and interest. I shall treat then, in the most summary manner, of all these compartments together ; and this union will be the more easy, as the progress of these different subjects is simultaneous, and is often comprised in the writings of the same author. Although no great improvement is effected in any art suddenly, and without much previous thought and consideration, and though every such discovery is introduced in so gradual a manner, as to be hardly perceptible, yet there are periods when accumulated observations, and wants generally felt, lead men who are happily organized, or placed in favourable circumstances, to seize on more extensive views of a subject, and to create more powerful methods of arriving at a knowledge of it, the superiority of which soon becomes generally experienced, and eventually leads the habits and ideas of the whole mass of mankind in a new direction. These rare moments, which are, however, renewed at intervals, form what is called *periods*. They are more or less remarkable, according as the object attained is more or less important. Whenever they have occurred, and whatever may have been the system of ideas that has occasioned them, they may always be traced to and classed under one of those periods, which are regarded as *principal*, and are therefore designated by the term *age*. Five of these *principal periods* may

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be distinguished, namely, that of formation, developement, progress towards perfection, permanence, and decline. In the subject I am now about to treat, the three first *principal periods* of the musical art, namely, its formation, developement, and progress towards perfection, are those I shall have occasion to consider. The existing state of things appears to *me* to belong to the fourth or permanent period; but I do not feel authorized to speak on that subject, lest I should be taxed with establishing myself as arbiter, and with undertaking to appreciate immaturely the merits of those of whom posterity alone will have the right to judge.

First Æra.—Origin and Formation of the Modern System of Music.

Music, as well as all other arts, is chiefly derived from the ancients; and as it is remarked of the French language, that it is merely a corruption or derivation from that of the Greeks and Romans, so it may equally be observed of modern music, that it is only a corruption or derivation from that of the same people, who probably owed *their* knowledge of the art to other nations still more ancient. I do not wish to intimate by this remark, that had the Greeks and Romans never existed, language, arts, or music had never been known, as some persons appear to imagine. Nature bestows on all the human race the same faculties; but, supposing the whole race of mankind were endowed in the same proportion with these faculties, which is certainly very doubtful, all are not placed in equally favourable circumstances for the developement of their talents; thus, if a backward race of people unite or associate with a more enlightened race, mixed systems are naturally formed in every branch of knowledge. This is precisely what occurred in Europe in the early centuries of the Christian æra, when whole nations of barbarians invaded and overspread the Roman empire. How this amalgamation was accomplished is indeed a question worthy the pen of the most able writer; and the discussion of which would probably require an extent of detail that the limits of this sketch will not permit. In tracing the origin and formation of the modern system, I find four principal periods, of which I must, successively, take a short survey: 1. antiquity; 2. the introduction of chanting in the Christian churches; 3. the Ambrosian and Gregorian constitution; and 4. the invasion of the barbarians.

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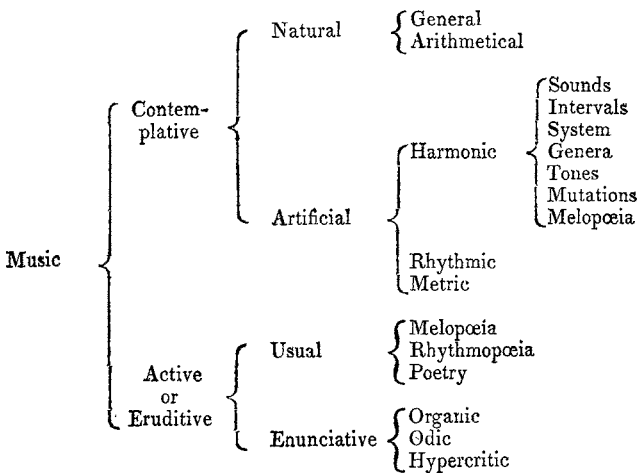
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Of Antiquity.

Although there remain to us many works on the music of the ancients, still the obscurity which prevails in them, their contradictory assertions, and, above all, the want of models, have precluded the possibility of our having any very distinct and decided ideas on the subject. According to Aristides Quintilianus, who has certainly left us the most complete treatise that now exists on the music of the ancients, some authors of his time defined music to be the art of singing; and all that relates to it; others, the contemplative and active art of perfect and organic singing; others, the art of the beautiful in sounds and movements. As to Quintilianus himself, he looks upon the following exposition of music as the most correct, namely, that it is the art of the beautiful in bodies and movements, (*ἡμῶσις τῆς πρεπούτου ἐν σώμασι καὶ κινήσεσιν.*) This is a very general definition; though little so, in comparison to some authors, who affirm music to be the universal science. Quintilianus, however, afterwards designs to reduce his definition of music to the study of the voice and accompanying action. To give a further idea of his doctrine, I shall here demonstrate some of the principal divisions of it, from which I have formed the following table, adding a few observations of my own.

Table of the Principal Divisions of Music, according to Aristides Quintilianus.

The author divides music into contemplative and active. The

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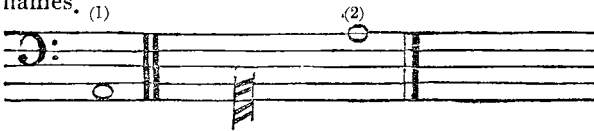
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former lays down the principles, and searches the causes ; the latter applies and employs them. In the foregoing table, we are alone interested in that subdivision of contemplative music, which the author has designated artificial ; this treats of harmony, of rhythm, and of metre, to which subjects he devotes the first book of his treatise. By the word “harmony,” in the meaning of which all modern authors agree, the ancients understood what the French call intonation, or arrangement of the sounds of the system. Keeping in view this distinction in the ancient signification of the word “harmony,” we may proceed to observe, that Quintilianus understood the division of the three genera with which we are acquainted ; that is to say, the diatonic genus, the chromatic, and the enharmonic. The diatonic genus, in a space of two octaves and a half, comprised the interval between the *la* below our bass clef, (example 1) and the *re* on the fifth line, above our soprano clef, (example 2) being the full extent of a man’s voice: it contained eighteen strings or notes, which had separate names. (1)



The following example shows how these notes, beginning at the second, were divided into tetrachords, that is to say, assemblages of four notes succeeding each other by a progression of one semitone and two tones.



It may easily be conceived that either of these notes might be the final one of an air, which would give so many modes, i. e. keys, each mode being superior or inferior, according as the air either extended *above* the key note, or as the key note occupied the centre. Every note was represented by a particular mark, according to the mode and genus. I should here observe, that each genus introduced a number of new notes, which notes were represented by different marks, varying with each mode, thus forming an almost endless vocabulary ; and as, in the formation of these marks or signs, analogy was in no way attended to, nothing could possibly be more confused,

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and the study of music became, of course, extremely difficult. As to rhythm and metre, music was entirely subservient, in these respects, to poetry. Musical composition, it seems nearly certain, was, at the time we are speaking of, exclusively confined to vocal pieces; for the ancient authors never speak of composition, unless in treating of the *vocal* part of that science, and it is impossible to discover in their productions one single precept relative to the use of intervals as harmonics, nor a single passage clearly proving that they were in the habit of using that style of composition. We may therefore conclude, that the ancients were unacquainted with *our* harmony; whilst another decisive argument, in favour of this statement, is derivable from our positive knowledge of the origin and progress of the modern harmonic art. This I shall endeavour to prove in a succeeding part of the present introductory discourse.

First Centuries of the Christian Æra.

Music, very generally cultivated by the Greeks, was equally esteemed by the Romans, in the reigns of some of their first emperors; some of whom, particularly Caligula and Nero, piqued themselves upon excelling in this art, and on obtaining the public prizes for it. “What a pity to kill so good a musician!” exclaimed Nero, when about to stab himself, that he might escape the ignominious death with which he was menaced. It is well known that he kept five thousand musicians at his own expense. After his death they were all expelled the city; and music, which under his reign had enjoyed the greatest encouragement, from that moment sensibly declined. But what it particularly concerns us to remark is, the influence that music received from its admission into the religious ceremonies of the first Christians, who alone have transmitted to us *all* the ancient practical music with which we are acquainted. It is well known that, in their assemblies, every person present joined in chanting the different parts of the liturgy, that is to say, the hymns and psalms, &c. This chanting must, of necessity, have been of the most simple and easy description, being sung in chorus, without any preparation, by people who, generally speaking, had not the least idea of music, and who professed also, in every thing, to observe the greatest simplicity. Another cause which, no doubt, contributed to denaturalize the ancient music, was the manner in which it was first set, in Chris-

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tian churches, to a semi-barbarous *prose*, or to still more barbarous poetry. The result was, that the rhythm of their music being derived solely from the words, it retained but a slight impression of any sort of measure, and was generally drawled out in slow and unequal time, to a language without harmony. Nevertheless, even in this state of degradation, it still retained some constituent rules, and a certain variety in its changes and character, which rendered it capable of being applied to other kinds of performances.

St. Ambrose's and St. Gregory's Institution of the Ecclesiastical Chant.

During the four first centuries of the Christian church, the state of music is not known with precision. The principles were, at the expiration of that time, probably still the same as from the beginning, at least if we may judge from a treatise of St. Augustine; but it appears that the practice of ecclesiastical chanting was then falling into great confusion, which induced St. Ambrose, who was consecrated archbishop of Milan in 374, to undertake to give a fixed constitution to church music. These two holy fathers were, as their works prove, great amateurs of the art; and we still possess, in the Latin church, both the music and words of a piece of their composition, which is admired even to the present time, and has met with a success equalling that of the chef-d'œuvres of more modern masters; I allude to the celebrated canticle of the "*Te Deum*." We have no other specimen of St. Ambrose's peculiar constitution of the chant; and, indeed, on examining the chants of the Milanese church, we find no obvious difference from that of other churches. It appears, however, that St. Ambrose actually left some degree of musical rhythm, in which, however, pope Gregory, who flourished two hundred years after, far surpassed him. (See the article GREGORY in this Dictionary.) We need not repeat what we have there stated, and shall only observe, that with the intention of simplifying music, St. Gregory substituted the Roman letters in place of the more complicated Greek notes. By A, B, C, D, E, F, G, he designated the seven notes of the lower octave, (octave grave) which begins at *la*; and by a, b, c, d, e, f, g, those of the higher octave, (l'octave supérieur); and by the same letters doubled, the third octave. He applied himself likewise to the completion of the ritual, which he made

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up of select pieces, chosen from the best remains of antiquity. As the result of these various labours, he formed the system known by the name of the *Roman or Gregorian Chant*, which is used to this day, precisely in the form in which it was then established. Not satisfied with having formed this code of musical doctrine, he maintained and propagated it, by the establishment of a school for young orphans, who were brought up as singers for the different Christian churches.

The Invasion of the Barbarians.

To enable us to continue the history of music with some regularity, it is requisite to notice those nations who will soon be found to act a principal part in the history. Long previous to the period of which we have been speaking, that is to say, in the time of the Roman republic, and during the whole duration of the Roman empire, that nation was disturbed by the irruptions of swarms of barbarians. Whilst the government continued wise and vigorous, these attempts were easily repelled; but when, with the children of Theodosius, cowardice and imbecility mounted the throne, the barbarians found but few obstacles to oppose them, and, inundating whole provinces of the empire, soon reduced them to submission. At the commencement of the fifth century, the Goths ravaged Italy; Rome was taken and sacked by Alaric. The Vandals, traversing Gaul and Spain, penetrated into Africa, the Huns into Italy, and the Franks, under Pharamond, made themselves masters, in 493, of the northern part of Gaul, which entire country his successors soon afterwards got possession of. In 476, Odoacre, king of the Herules, overturned the western empire; soon after which he was taken prisoner and killed in Ravenna, by order of Theodoric, who founded, in 493, the kingdom of the Goths in Italy. It may easily be imagined, that, in the midst of such revolutions, the arts were entirely neglected, amongst which music suffered greatly; so that, at the commencement of the sixth century, when the whole western empire was become barbarous, its music was entirely reduced to the chants of the church, and the national songs of these barbarians. But the Goths who settled in Italy cultivated the arts, and soon began to imitate the enlightened manners of the people whom they had subdued. From that time the Roman school of music shone with

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renewed lustre; and about the same time we find Clovis, king of France, requesting Theodoric to send him a musician. Theodoric, wishing to please the king, sent him the singer Aicorède, who had been selected as the best by the learned Boëthius, whom Theodoric afterwards caused to be beheaded. "On the arrival of this musician and instrumental performer," observes William du Peyrat, in his researches on the king of France's chapel, "Clovis's priests and singers formed themselves after his style, and sang with greater gentleness and sweetness; having, also, learnt to perform on various instruments, this great monarch used them ever after at divine service; which practice was continued under all his successors to the end of that generation: thus, it appears, music was much in use at the courts of our first sovereigns." The Roman chant was first introduced into England by the monk St. Augustine, (whom St. Gregory had commissioned to preach the Christian religion in this country, about the year 590) and some few years later was propagated in Germany by St. Boniface of Mentz, who is considered as the apostle of that country. Amongst so many different nations, the national taste tended, of course, sooner or later, to corrupt and denaturalize the primitive purity of the Roman chant. With regard to France, we have a positive confirmation of this fact by an ancient anecdote, inserted in the annals of the Franks, and which occurred under the reign of Charlemagne. This prince being at Rome in 787, to celebrate the festival of Easter, a quarrel arose whilst he was there between the Roman and French singers; the latter affirming their singing to be superior to that of the former, who in their turn accused the French of having corrupted the Gregorian chant. The dispute was carried before the emperor, who decided it by the following question: "Declare to us," said that prince to his singers, "which is most pure, water drawn from its source, or that which is taken from a distant stream?" "Water from the source," replied the singers. "Well, then," said the emperor, "return to the original source of St. Gregory, of whom you have evidently corrupted the chant." The prince then requested the pope to give him some singers, who would correct the defects of the French singers. The pope immediately deputed two very learned singers, named Theodore and Benoit, to undertake this office, and gave them antiphonaries noted by St. Gregory himself. One of these singers the emperor placed at Soissons and the other at Metz, commanding all the French

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singers to correct their books from theirs, and to learn singing as well as instrumental accompaniment of them. Though this command met with some obstacles from the obstinacy or incapacity of the various singers, yet the Roman chant which Charlemagne thus established in France, continued generally in use till the commencement of the eighteenth century; about which time the French bishops took it in their heads to reform the liturgy, and consequently the church music. This attempt succeeded, though, with regard to chanting, its effects were deplorable; for being now left almost entirely to the management of ignorant people, devoid of taste, and even, at times, to illiterate schoolmasters, they substituted for the Roman chant, which, notwithstanding its extreme simplicity, had always retained some sort of rhythm, they substituted, I repeat, a slovenly and insipid style of church music, which indeed had little more of singing than the name. I must here avow the wish that at the next reformation of the French liturgy, which it appears is to take place sooner or later, the Roman plain-chant may be substituted for these miserable compositions, and reestablished in those rights of which it should never have been deprived. It was about the same period, that is to say, in the reign of Pepin, father of Charlemagne, that organs were first introduced in the west. In 757, the emperor of the east (Constantine Copronymus) sent one to that prince, who presented it to the church of St. Corneille, at Compiègne. They soon became universally used in the churches of France, Italy, and England. The organ was at that time very little understood, and was exclusively confined to the performance of the *regal*, which is now no longer known; though its introduction is not the less remarkable, from the influence which this instrument has at all times possessed over the progress of the art, as we shall presently perceive.

Second Æra.—Development of the Modern System.

We have now noticed in what manner the *mélange* of the musical ideas of barbarous nations with the remains of Grecian music gave birth to the modern system, and shall next proceed to observe the gradual development of this system. This development may be traced to three principal periods: first, the creation of the gamut or scale, and of modern notation; secondly, the invention of modern rhythm; and thirdly, the determining of the value of notes,

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and of the rules of counterpoint. To these same periods may be traced the origin and progress of composition : we shall therefore discuss them simultaneously, as we originally intended.

Invention of the Gamut and Origin of Counterpoint.

The invention of the gamut presupposes a certain degree of progress in the musical system, in the same manner that the alphabet conveys the preliminary idea of the existence of a language. I make this remark that the scale of music may not be confounded with the *system*, which might otherwise easily be the case. It was in the commencement of the eleventh century, in the year 1022, that the musical scale first took the form which it now retains. This reformation was chiefly owing to Guido, a Benedictine monk of the monastery of Pomposa, born about 990, at Arezzo, a little town of Tuscany; for which reason he is commonly called in France, Guy d'Arezzo. Duly to appreciate the talents of this celebrated man, we should recall to mind what we have already said in regard to the tetrachords of the Greeks, and the reform of St. Gregory; and we should know that, in the intervening time between the death of that great pontiff and the period of which we are now speaking, many attempts were made to improve musical notation. Indeed, it may easily be conceived, that letters placed on syllables, to indicate sounds, could not be quickly understood; it was therefore found necessary to seek some more intelligible method. That which most naturally occurred was, to place the letters at different degrees of height from each other, analogous to the elevation or depression of the voice, and to mark these degrees in a more accurate manner by means of parallel lines. This was the method employed before Guy, and he only simplified and regulated it. Instead of repeating the letter, Guy merely wrote it at the commencement of the line, and, whenever it afterwards occurred, simply put a dot in its place. Shortly after, he rendered this still plainer, by placing dots in the intervals of the lines; using these intervals to denote degrees, by which he reduced the distances from one note to another, and made the scale much easier to perform at sight. Guy likewise added to the ancient system a bass note answering to *sol*, on the first line of the clef Fa : he designated this note by the *gamma* of the Greeks, (Γ) and it is from this sign that the series of sounds in the system take their name of

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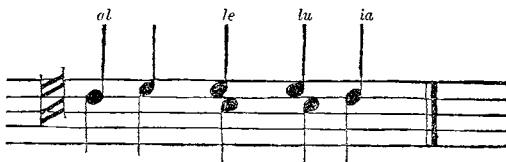
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gamut. To these inventions he added another; that of counting by hexachords instead of tetrachords, and of designating by the syllables, *ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la*, the *major* hexachord, upon whatever degree of the system it was placed: this was the foundation of his method of solmisation, which, however, it would be tedious to explain here. The invention of counterpoint is likewise attributed to him, though without any foundation. It is true he was one of the first who wrote on the subject, but he was not the inventor: for though this art had made little progress, still it was known before Guy's time, and the following was its real origin.

We just now observed, that the organ was introduced into France in the year 757, and soon became universal in the churches of the west. It was directly used as an accompaniment to the voice. This accompaniment was at first entirely in unison; but the facility with which several sounds could be distinguished at once, occasioned the remark, that, among the various union of sounds, many were agreeable to the ear. The minor third was one of the first remarked for its pleasing harmony, and was therefore generally used, though only at the close of an air, as we shall perceive from the following example:



and this method was called *organizing*. There were likewise many other methods; for instance, holding on the sound of the organ on some note below the chant or singing part, or playing the air a fourth below or a fifth above, and frequently both together, which last was called *double organization*. Soon after, this method was adopted in singing without the organ; and from thence the terms *descant*, meaning double chant, *triple, quadruple, medius, motet, quintet, quartet*, &c., all of which preceded the term *counterpoint*. An uninterrupted series of authors anterior to Guy, as Notker, Remi of Auxerre, Hucbald, and Odon de Cluny, testify the origin and progress of this art, and historically demonstrate its being a modern invention, totally unknown to the ancients. Their writings, as well as those of Guy and of J. Coton, (his commentator) are to be found in the valuable collection which the prince abbé Gerbert published under the title of “*Scriptores Ecclesiastici de Musica Sacra potissimum, &c.*”

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The Invention of Modern Rhythm.

As the plain-chant consisted of notes of equal value, and as, up to the period of which we have been speaking, it was the only music studied by the learned, rhythm was never mentioned, for being almost entirely null, it could not be considered an object of speculation. From that time, either from the circumstance of profane music, which contained a more distinct rhythm, having risen to a greater degree of importance, or from musicians having begun to feel the necessity of stricter time when the organ and voice moved together, it is certain that this branch of the art began more fully to be considered. The first author who wrote on the subject was *Franco*, called by some Franco of Cologne, and by others Franco of Paris. This author, whose birthplace it appears was uncertain, was supposed to have been a scholar of the cathedral of Liege in 1066; that is to say, in the year in which William duke of Normandy conquered England, and introduced into this country, which was still in a state of barbarism, the germ of manners and civilisation. Before Franco, many attempts at the improvement of this part of the musical art had been made, as he himself affirms; but it appears he was decidedly the first who reduced into a system the rules respecting rhythm, which had been established before his time, also extending and correcting them: this entitles him, at least, to be considered as the first classical author on the subject, if not the inventor, and as the source from whence, for some time, all subsequent authors resorted for information. The whole of Franco's work, entitled "*Franconis Musica et Cantus Mensurabilis*," is inserted in the collection of M. Gerbert. It contains an introduction and thirteen chapters: the ten first, with the exception of the second, are on rhythm; the second and three last relate to descant. Without entering into the details of the work, I shall endeavour to give an adequate conception of his doctrine. Measured music, which he considers far superior to plain music, he describes as a chant measured by long and short intervals of time; these intervals of time being expressed either by the voice or by rests. The subsequent details clearly prove, that the organ and organization were the origin of musical rhythm. He distinguishes three degrees of time, the long, the breve, and the semibreve. The long may be divided into the perfect, imperfect, or double. It is perfect when

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in the time of three or triple; for, says the pious doctor, three is the most perfect number, being the emblem of the holy Trinity, and it is imperfect when in the time of two: the double is unnecessary to explain. There are also two kinds of breves, which, however, he does not describe. The semibreve is major or minor. The forms of the notes are as follows: the long, ; the double long, ; the breve, ; and the semibreve, . Besides their own proper value, they have many accidental properties, which, for the sake of brevity, must here remain unnoticed. He indicates, also, the mark of relative rests or pauses. He then proceeds to distinguish five modes, or elements of rhythm: the first mode contains longs, or a long followed by a breve; the second a long preceded by a breve; the third a long and two breves; the fourth two breves and a long; and, finally, the fifth, composed of two semibreves and two breves. These are the elements of his rhythmopœia. With regard to descant, he defines it to be the union of several melodies, concordant with each other, and composed of different figures: he distinguishes four species of descant, namely; simple, prolate, (*prolatus*) truncate, (*truncatus*) and copulate. To these four species belong consonances and dissonances. There are three kinds of consonances, the perfect, imperfect, and middling. The first kind consists of those of which the sounds can hardly be separately distinguished, as in the octave and unison; the second, where the sounds are perfectly distinct, as in the major and minor third; the middling consonance includes the fifth and fourth. Dissonances are of two kinds, perfect and imperfect: the perfect are the semitone, the tritone, and the major or minor third with the fifth; the imperfect are the major and minor third. He speaks afterwards of the use of consonances, and points out some rules, which however are difficult to understand, on account of the imperfection of the examples. An obvious progress is nevertheless visible in these examples, in which we particularly remark the use of the major or minor sixth between two octaves: this is the first example of the kind to be found in the records of the art.



After Franco, music remained in the same state, particularly with regard to harmony, for more than a century; which may be attributed

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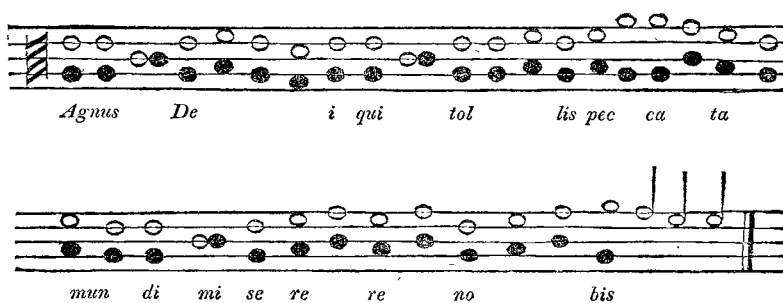
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to the crusades taking place about that time, and so completely occupying the attention of all Europe. I shall therefore merely mention, in a cursory manner, Walter Odington, a Benedictine monk of Eversham, in England, who flourished in 1240, and whose work, "*De Speculatione Musicæ*," is only a commentary on the doctrine of Franco, enriched with a few developements relative to time. As much may be said with regard to the work of another English author, Robert of Handlo, entitled "*Regulæ cum maximis Magistri Franconis, cum Additionibus aliorum Musicorum, compilatæ per R. de H.*," dated 1326. To give, however, some idea of the composition of that time, I shall here cite a specimen taken from a manuscript of the thirteenth century.



This descant was composed on the following rule: "Those who chant, should remark if the chant ascends or descends. If it ascends, the double note is sung; if it descends, the fifth note."

Towards the close of the thirteenth century, we find another commentator on Franco, far more interesting than the before-mentioned, and who, in some respects, may be styled an inventor. This was Marchetti, of Padua, author of several works, particularly one on plain-chant, bearing date, Verona, 1274. He must have written this work when very young, for we have another of his, on measured music, dedicated to Robert, king of Naples; and this prince reigned from 1309 to 1344. We find by these writings, that, at this period, they had admitted a new degree of subdivision of time, by adding a fourth to the three before-mentioned times or values, namely, the *minim*. Descant had also advanced a little; and about this time, chromatic passages were first used. The following are specimens.

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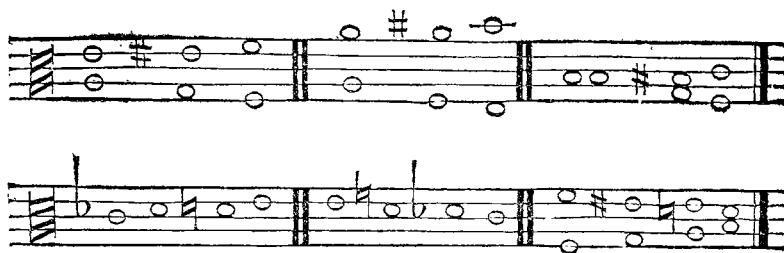
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The author gives the theory of them, and treats of chromatic and enharmonic genera at some length. In short, it is evident the art had then sensibly advanced. This remark is confirmed by the writings of John de Muris, doctor of the Sarbonne, who some say was an Englishman, others, a Parisian, and others again, a Norman; the latter of which is most probable. He was long looked upon as the author of all the inventions we have been mentioning, particularly of rhythm and the form of notes; and would most probably still have been considered so, if the researches of M. Gerbert and Dr. Burney had not proved the contrary. It even appears he did not considerably aid the advancement of musical notation; in regard to harmony, however, we are much indebted to him. The impropriety of making two consecutive perfect consonances by similar movement, was first suggested in his writings; as were many other precepts relating to the succession of intervals, which are observed to this day. We also find in his works, for the first time, the term *counterpoint* used instead of *descant*. It would appear that, about this time, there was a great variety of opinions respecting the rules of counterpoint, for the doctor complains of the continual changes in the art of music; and about the same period, that is to say in the year 1322, pope John XXII. issued a bull, forbidding the use of the descant in churches, it having degenerated into abuses, and having no longer any fixed principles. It is believed that John of Muris was still living in the year 1345. He, as well as Franco, had many commentators; amongst whom were Philip de Vitry, of whom little more is known than the name, and Prodoscimo de Beldomando, of Padua, who was a professor of music in that town in the year 1422, but whose writings are now lost. From the thirteenth century to the close of the fifteenth, there is a complete vacancy in the history of counterpoint. It is generally supposed that no vestige now

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remains of the compositions of that period. But Mr. Perne, of Paris, has discovered, amongst the manuscripts of the royal library of France, some sufficiently important materials to authorize the hope that this interval may yet be filled up.

Fixation of the System of the Values of Notes, and of the Principles of Counterpoint.

Towards the close of the fourteenth century, the rhythmical feet, as determined by Franco, began to be abandoned, and as many sounds were introduced into the measure or metre, as the subdivision of the different orders of notes at that time would permit. New forms or figures now became necessary to represent new values of time ; these were formed towards the close of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century. Not that we discover any traces of their origin in the writings of that period, nor does Prodosimo, who wrote in 1412, mention them ; but we find them not only instituted, but fixed and regulated, in authors of rather a later date, particularly in the writings of John Tinctor, who was first chapel-master to Ferdinand, king of Naples, and subsequently canon and doctor at Nivelles, in Brabant ; he must therefore have lived in the second half of the fifteenth century. This author left many musical works ; amongst which is his dictionary of music, the first ever formed. He published it under the title “ *Definitorium terminorum Musicae*,” the best possible title for a dictionary ; as these sort of works should be simply collections of definitions, and not alphabetical treatises. The doctrine we find in John Tinctor is much better developed in the works of Franchino Gafforio. This writer forms, in truth, a memorable epoch in the history of music, as well by the extent as the stability of his doctrine. He was born at Lodi in 1451, and was named, in 1484, chapel-master of the cathedral at Milan, and professor at the public school of music, founded in that town by L. Sforce. Of the works he left, or rather, with which we are now acquainted, the most valuable is that entitled “ *Pratica Musica*,” printed at Milan in 1496, and one of the first musical treatises ever published by means of the press. It is divided into four books. The first treats of harmony, that is to say, intonation, for at that time the word harmony possessed the same signification as with the ancients ; the second treats of measured chant ; the third of counterpoint ; and

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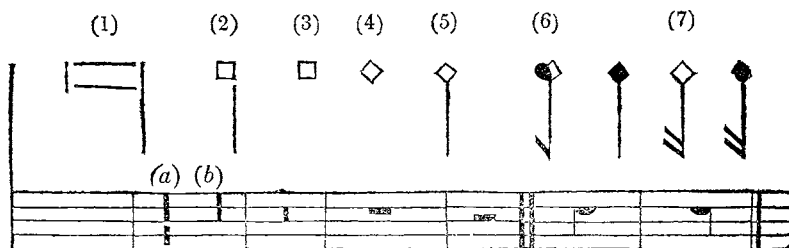
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the fourth of musical proportions. The second and third are the only books interesting to us, the first containing nothing new. As to the value of notes, Gafforio considers five as essential, which are the five principal notes, and their corresponding rests, namely, the maxim, (1); the long, (2); the breve, (3); the semibreve, (4); and the minim, (5). There are likewise lesser figures, as the semi-minim (6), and the minor semi-minim (7). Each of these have also a corresponding rest; the long has two rests, one denoting perfection (a), the other imperfection (b).



The relation these notes bear one to the other, is denoted by different terms. The relation of the maxim with the long is called the *major mode*, that of the long with the breve, *minor mode*, that of the breve with the semibreve is called *time*, lastly, that of the semibreve with the minim, *prolation*. At rather a more remote period, this prolation was styled minor prolation, and the relation of the minim to the semi-minim, major prolation. Each of these relations may be perfect or imperfect, that is to say, triple or double; and that *quoties* is designated by different signs. Besides this, these relations are perfectly independent of each other, which occasions innumerable combinations. The most generally used, as we find from Glareanus, were first, those in which all the relations are double; secondly, that in which all are doubled, except time: these correspond, the first to our common time of two, and the second to our measure in triple time, using figures of double value; the remainder are included in our compound measures, with a similar modification. Here then the system of values is fixed, if we except some slight modifications, of which we shall presently have to speak. The third book of Gafforio is divided into fifteen chapters. The two first treating, in a general manner, of counterpoint and its different kinds; the third containing eight rules on the succession of consonances, which rules are much the same as those in use at the present day; the fourth

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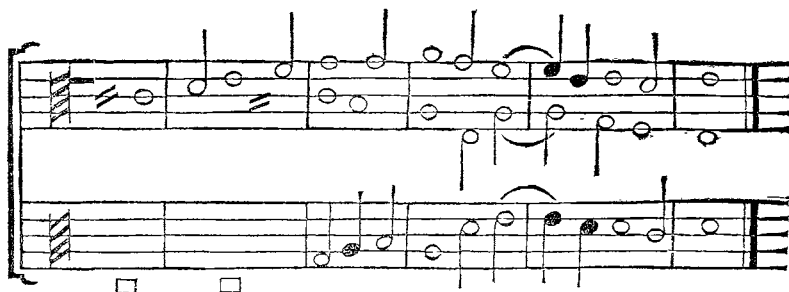
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chapter is on dissonances, and plainly proves that they employed those intervals in the time of the writer,



but with much circumspection, not longer than for the value of a minim, in passages and by syncope, and even this very rarely. Upon this point, he cites various composers who made use of them without any scruple, as Dunstable, Binchois, Dufay, Brasart, &c. ; and concludes by agreeing that many of these intervals may be used with propriety. The fifth and sixth chapters are on fourths, and show how they were at that time used ; the seventh treats of sixths and thirds ; the remaining chapters relate to the arrangement of the different parts. The last but one is remarkable for a singular specimen of a piece, entirely composed of discords ; it used to be chanted on the eve of the festival *des Morts*, in the church of Milan, and was called "*Litaniæ Mortuorum Discordantes*." The following is a verse of it.



Gafforio remarks with great truth, that it is totally in opposition to good sense, and to every description of good taste. Satisfied with laying down general precepts, Gafforio avoids all details with regard to the form of musical pieces, or to the composers of his time. We find, however, from J. Tinctor, that, at that time, canons were used, and were termed fugues ; even enigmatical canons were known. We also observe the division of music into spiritual and profane ; the former called *motet*, the latter *cantilena*. The collections of that period, and others of rather a later date, offer a choice of compositions, and display the talents of some composers still worthy of our investigation. We shall now, therefore, turn our attention to this

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point, resuming events from an earlier period. We have previously seen, that when the invasions of northern nations had completed the final destruction and dismemberment of the western empire, music was reduced to the ecclesiastical chant and the national songs of the barbarians; to which may be added those of the nation whom they had conquered. The first distinction between the severe and ideal style is here easily perceived. A collection of popular songs of the middle age, mostly composed by the troubadours, successors of the ancient bards, or by priests and musicians of the same period, such as Raoul de Concy, Thibaut, count of Champagne, and others, will give a correct notion of the ideal style; whilst as to the severe style, it was confined to plain-chant and the counterpoints composed on it. At the period, however, to which we now allude, counterpoint rapidly advanced; the invention of canons soon leading to that of fugues, and many other artificial compositions: the revolution was indeed so sudden and complete, that the art of composition appeared entirely new. According to the testimony of ancient writers, the composers who appear to have acted the principal part in this revolution were, first, J. Dunstable, an Englishman, who died in 1453 or 1458, and who, from the resemblance of the name, has been often mistaken for St. Dunstan, who flourished in the eleventh century; and next, his contemporaries in France, Dufay and Binchois. These were immediately succeeded by Ockenheim, Busnois, Regis, and Caron. This is Tinctor's account, who also wrongly attributes the invention of measured chant to J. Dunstable; in which mistake he has been followed by Seb. Heyden, who wrote in 1537, and subsequently by J. Nucius, who joins to Ockenheim, Busnois, &c. many other composers, as Josquin de Pres, H. Isaac, L. Senfel, B. Ducis, &c.: these last, however, are of posterior date. It is believed that the compositions of Dufay and Busnois are now extinct, as well as those of Regis, Caron, and Binchois, who flourished at the commencement and middle of the fifteenth century. Of that period, we have but one canon, in six parts, which is rather a good composition, and may be found in Dr. Burney's History of Music, vol. ii. p. 405; many works, however, still remain of the ancient masters of the Flemish and French schools, who flourished about 1480, and subsequently. These two schools were at that time highly renowned. According to Guichardin and others, the Flemish was the more ancient of the two, and furnished all Europe with singers and composers. Amongst the most

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celebrated of the Flemish masters, were James Obrecht or Hobrecht, J. Ockenheim, and, above all, Josquin de Pres. The earliest of these three was Obrecht, music-master to the celebrated Erasmus ; he was born in 1467, and, it is said, had such facility in composition, that in one night he composed a beautiful mass : this appears an amazing effort of genius, when we reflect on the extraordinary difficulty of his compositions. He lived towards the close of the fifteenth century. John Ockenheim was a composer of rather later date ; he composed a mass for nine choirs and thirty-six parts, replete with artificial passages. The celebrated Josquin de Pres was his pupil, who was unanimously regarded by his contemporaries as the best composer of his time. Of this celebrated man we have still various pieces which evince the most profound knowledge of his art. He was a singer at Rome, and subsequently chapel-master to Louis XII. of France ; he died about the year 1520. After him, we may place Pierre de la Rue, B. Ducis, and other composers, who, up to Orlando de Lassus, maintained the glory of the Flemish school. The ancient French school was likewise very celebrated ; its principal composer was Ant. Bromel, a pupil of Ockenheim, and contemporary of Josquin. We remark, likewise, Fevini of Orleans ; J. Mouton, chapel-master to Francis I. ; Arcadelt, Verdelot, L'Heritier, Goudimel, and others that I cannot here enumerate. In Germany, about the same period, we find H. Finck, H. Isaac, L. Senfel, and others. The collections of Peutingger, Bodenschaft, and several more, make known the names and works of above two hundred composers, who flourished between the years 1450 and 1580, or thereabouts, and to whom fugues and the most difficult compositions were mere diversions, which they wrote with the greatest ease and correctness. The *Dodecachordon* of Glareanus contains a selection of chef-d'œuvres of the ablest of these masters, sufficient to gratify the curiosity of any reader. I propose, myself, to devote one of the parts of my collection of classical music to these works, thus rendering due homage to the memory of these patriarchs of harmony.

Third Æra.—Perfecting of the Modern System.

The æra which we have now attained, is certainly the most important of all, being the goal and result of the preceding. It appears to offer to our notice, the permanency of various parts of

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the art, as well of those which regard the foundation of the system, as of those that relate to the different kinds of musical composition. In fact, when we see doctrines, established without any variation for nearly three centuries, being considered as fundamental principles ; when we see chef-d'œuvres admired for an equal length of time, and regarded as impossible, I will not say to be eclipsed, but even to be equalled ; it may with reason be supposed, that, in many points, the art has attained the utmost limits of perfection, and that if it does not now remain stationary at the same point, it can only recede, unless indeed the whole system were to experience a complete revolution, equal to that which has already taken place with the music of the ancients. To proceed with regularity, I must divide this article into two parts. In the first I shall speak of the art itself, and its progress, without any express allusion to the individuals or nations who contributed to its advancement ; in the second part I shall consider the question in an opposite point of view, and allude at some length to the schools and individuals.

[*First Part.—Of the Art itself.*

What we have to say with regard to the art itself, must be discussed under two principal heads, namely, the musical system, properly so called, and the different styles of composition : this will be the substance of the two following sections.

First Section.—Of the Musical System.

Amongst the various combinations which resulted from the perfection or imperfection of the ancient modes, themes, and prolations, there is one which, according to Glareanus and other authors, was at all times the most prevalent ; I mean that one, in which all the values of the notes were imperfect, that is to say, in a double or sub-double ratio. After a time, this combination became so general, that it was in some sort exclusive, and was regarded as the foundation of all the musical relations. To this first simplification of the system of values, various modifications succeeded, which were brought about by the use of *bars*. As far as I can discover, bars were first introduced by composers who were desirous to render their calculation of corresponding values easier, and therefore hit on the idea of enclosing, within the same fixed space, as many notes of the score as

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would agree with one note of great duration, such as a maxim or a long ; thus, in the origin of bar writing, they only drew a bar at every eighth or every fourth measure. The works published in 1600 are printed in this manner, and are the first known with any kind of bars, which were not very generally adopted till about one hundred years after. The distance between the bars was in time diminished, till they enclosed but one measure, as in the present day ; the only exception now being in the *à capella* time, namely, in two semibreves, with a quick movement, when the bars are still marked only every second measure, to avoid their too frequent repetition : this time is, however, rarely used, except in Italy, the French and German composers having mostly submitted this measure also to the prevailing custom. The introduction of bars with their gradual increase, has produced the natural result of bringing into disuse notes of great value, and at the present period the note of highest value is the semibreve, if we except the breve in *capella* time. As for the round and the maxim they are now no longer known, except by the learned. But in lieu of these the moderns have wonderfully multiplied the diminished notes, by forming crotchets, quavers, semiquavers, &c. which are now very common, though formerly they were scarcely known, except in instrumental music, and then but rarely. The form of these notes has likewise sustained an alteration, though scarcely worth noticing. Formerly, the head of the note was square ; towards the middle of the seventeenth century they were formed round, or of an inclined oval ; and in the course of one hundred years the round became universal, and is the form retained up to the present time. Rhythm, as we have previously seen, has sustained but slight variation ; but it has been quite the reverse with sounds, and consequently with harmony and counterpoint. Till the close of the fifteenth century, the degenerated tones of the Greeks, as preserved in the chant of the Roman church, served, not only as a foundation to ecclesiastical chanting, and to the works of composers who endeavoured to harmonize those chants, or to compose according to that system, but various profane songs of that time, which we still possess, and some of which are to this day popular, appear to have partaken of the ecclesiastical modes. In the course of the sixteenth century, however, a movement appeared, which led the art to that state of perfection to which it has now attained. To dispel whatever may appear vague or obscure in this remark, it is necessary to