THE

SOCIAL HARP

by

John G. McCurry

Edited by Daniel W. Patterson and John F. Garst

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FOREWORD

John Gordon McCurry's *The Social Harp* is one of the rarest of southern shape-note songsters. First published in 1855, it was reprinted in 1859 and 1868 with contents unchanged. The size of these runs is unknown, but few copies of any printing survive and all are in some degree defective. Three copies have found their way into American libraries. One printed in 1855 is at the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. Two others are in the George Pullen Jackson Collection of Southern Hymnody at the University of California in Los Angeles. Both were printed in 1858. The other known copies are in private hands. One dated 1859 was in the possession of Will H. Ruebush of Dayton, Virginia, but has disappeared, probably sold in an auction of his brother's effects. Mrs. Annabel Morris Buchanan of Paducah, Kentucky, owns two, from the first and the third printings. (She found one in Georgia, one in Knoxville, Tennessee.) There are two other known copies of the 1855 printing. The first is the property of the family of Mr. James D. Hawkins, Jr., of Arnoldsville, Georgia. The other is among the rare old songbooks in the collection of Robert W. John, professor of music at the University of Georgia, and came to him from William H. Robison, Jr., of Macon, the supervisor of music in the Bibb County school system.

The present edition of *The Social Harp* is a facsimile based on the 1855 printing. On no copy was the cover sufficiently intact to be reproduced, but for almost every page it was possible to choose between the two Georgia copies and photograph the clearer original. The
Hawkins book lacks only indices; the John copy, only indices and two other leaves. The Alphabetical Index and Metrical Index are preserved only in Mrs. Buchanan’s copy of the 1868 printing, the former in an imperfectly printed page. The editors are grateful to Mrs. Buchanan for providing copies of these pages. For permission to reproduce photographs we are indebted to the University of North Carolina Press and to the family of John W. Baker. Many residents of Hart County and members of the McCurry family obligingly an-
swered inquiries. Our chief indebtedness is to William H. Robison, Jr., and to the James D. Hawkins family, who kindly offered their books for photoduplication. To them the editors are especially grateful.

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INTRODUCTION

Pett thefe from the compositions of such Europeans as Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven provided the tunes that are the models of musical respectability in American hymnals. The pilfering took place in the early decades of the nineteenth century and was led by northern city men such as Lowell Mason of Boston and Thomas Hastings of New York. Their Puritan ancestors in the seventeenth century had banished professional choirs and instrumentalists from the churches and had reasserted singing for the worshipping congregation. In the New England backwoods, however, musical knowledge and skill declined. During the eighteenth century reformers tried to recover musical literacy and part singing by holding local "singing schools." These schools eventually bred a lively band of homespun composers who by 1800 had begun to draw upon or echo secular folk melodies and increasingly to give the tunes two-, three-, and four-part settings in which all the voices were strongly melodic, if harmonically unconventional. These singing masters found they could teach country singers to read music with ease if they printed it in a system that assigned the notes distinctive head-shapes for each degree of the scale. Their "shape-note" system spread rapidly southward and westward and became the trademark of hundreds of singing teachers and tune-smiths. The handiwork of these men, however, seemed to Lowell Mason and his genteel kind to be embarrassingly inferior to "scientific" and "correct" German models. They combated the native developments with vigor—and with considerable success. By 1853, when
George Pullen Jackson published his *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*, word of such a body of native religious music came as a surprise to most educated Americans, though Jackson documented not only the importance of the songs to early America but also their continued vitality in the rural South.

Forty years have passed since Jackson's book appeared. Gradually other scholars have followed him into the exploration of the white spiritual—most notably Edward D. Andrews investigating the Shaker spiritual, Don Yoder the bush-meeting songs of the Pennsylvania Dutch, and Irving Lowens the bibliographical history of early American tunebooks—but Jackson's first book and his four subsequent studies remain the most impressive exploration of the American white spiritual. His emphasis was upon recovering the history of the shape-note movement and upon reprinting tunes from the hymnals with documentation of their folk song ancestry. This was labor enough for one man. It is not, however, the final word even on his chosen branch of white religious folk song.

One impediment to the further study of shape-note spirituals has been the rarity of many of the songbooks. When Jackson wrote his study he had seen, for example, but a single mutilated copy of John Gordon McCurry's *The Social Harp*. This book, which he borrowed from Will Jue Bush of Dayton, Virginia, was dated 1859. Jackson later acquired two incomplete copies of an 1868 printing. Inferring from the dates of the compositions and of McCurry's preface, Jackson postulated a first edition of *The Social Harp* in 1855, but he never saw a copy. Even forty years after Jackson called a measure of attention to *The Social Harp* it has been possible to find only seven copies from any of the printings. Perhaps some additional books will yet come to light. The James revision of *The Sacred Harp* shows first-hand knowledge of *The Social Harp*. A branch of the McCurry family is said to have one, and in Hart County, Georgia, there are rumors of other families who have kept the old songster.

John Gordon McCurry passed his entire life in what is now Hart County.¹ He was born there in 1821, the

¹The account which follows is indebted to George Pullen Jackson's *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina
grandson of one of a band of Scotch-Irishmen who had brought their families down from North Carolina late in the eighteenth century. They settled on gently rolling land not many miles from the South Carolina border. In the early years there was danger from hostile Indians, and even in McCurry’s youth life in the county could have advanced little beyond the straitened conditions of a recently settled frontier. It was a region of small farmers whose chief crops were cotton, corn, wheat, and oats. Even as late as 1860 only twenty-three men in the county estimated their wealth at more than fifteen thousand dollars. Henry F. Chandler, who contributed seven pieces to The Social Harp, stood second in wealth in the county, with real and personal property he valued at thirty-six thousand dollars. He had six hundred acres of rich farm land on the Tugaloo River and sixteen slaves. Yet he and his five sons must have done most of their own farm labor, for only one of the slaves was an adult male. A photograph of Chandler’s home shows how far this was from being the plantation South. McCurry’s circumstances were much more modest. His total worth in 1860 was eighty-four hundred dollars. But even so he was among the more substantial men in the county. He had eight slaves—seven of them children—a farm of several hundred acres, proprietorship of a songbook, and perhaps by this time his own mill and cotton gin. In the U. S. Census of 1860 more than half of the 871 households in the county reported less than two thousand dollars in property. For McCurry and all his neighbors the Civil War brought a sharp fall from the small margin of comfort they had attained.

The sparseness of their means is brought home in one anecdote told about McCurry.¹ According to this story a man named Willy Jones received a summons to jury duty in Hartwell, the county seat six miles away. He

¹ Extracts by Martin Norman of Nahunta, Georgia, during an interview in April 1972. Mr. Norman has lived most of his ninety-six years near McCurry’s home. As a boy he saw McCurry, and he knew well many of McCurry’s relatives and neighbors. This story owes much to his clear memory and discriminating judgment.
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could not afford to take his mule from farm chores, so he canvassed his neighbors to find someone planning a trip to town. McCurry, when Jones approached him, said, "I'm on jury duty too. You can come with me." Jones promised to be waiting in the road when McCurry came by. The next morning he was astonished to see McCurry walking along toward him. "I thought you were going to Hartwell," Jones cried. "I am," answered McCurry. "You coming with me?"

The McCurrys were clearly people to make the most of their limited opportunities. One of John Gordon's older brothers served seven years as sheriff of Elbert County. When Hart County was formed from Elbert and Franklin counties in 1853, he did the first measuring and posting of public roads in Hart, and in 1863 he represented the county in the state legislature. John Gordon held less prominent offices. Over the years he served as a justice of the Inferior Court, as census taker, as president of the county's Democratic Club in the year it instituted party primary elections, and as vice president of the Hart County Agricultural Association.

His intelligence commanded the respect of his community. When Jackson visited Hart County in 1831, people still spoke of McCurry's ability to walk around a piece of land and tell with accuracy how many acres it contained. They said his skill as a tailor was such that people from miles around would bring him their homespun cloth to cut. One story told of his dreaming of a quilt pattern that could be cut so every piece would fit; in the morning he drew off the pattern in sand beside his house, and two-color "dream quilts" using it became popular in the community. At times the calls upon his knowledge and judgment became a nuisance to him. Jackson head of one farmer so engrossed in considering a horse-swap that he rode over at eleven one night and roused McCurry from sleep with his knocking. "Good evening, Mac," he exclaimed when McCurry opened his door, "I want you to tell me how old my horse is."
The reply was curt: "He's seventy-seven."

But there is more serious evidence that McCurry was a leading figure in his community. Mr. Norman tells, for example, that during the Civil War McCurry ar-
ranged in Hartwell for a post office box to be set up for his neighborhood. Each Saturday some one who was in town on business would bring back the mail to McCurry's house, where all who had kinsmen in the army would gather to hear the reading of letters from the front. When McCurry died in 1886, a memorial tribute in the Hartwell Sun stated that on public issues "many of the good citizens of his neighborhood watched closely the course he pursued, and when he established himself he always had a strong following." The editorial praised him as a man "endowed with fine reason, always keeping away from extremes." It said he differed from most men of his age in "keeping pace with the progress of the times." Upon all changes, however, he "looked thoughtfully and devoutly" in the conviction that "whenever transpired would have its effect in some way upon the peace and prosperity of the community in which he lived." The respect in which McCurry was held was voiced by his neighbors themselves in the affectionate name by which he was known, "Uncle Gordon."

The other Hart County men who contributed to McCurry's songbook seem to have been cut from much the same pattern as he. All were farmers: Henry F. Chandler, William C. Davis, Benjamin Stahaker, Edward R. White, and John Gordon's brother, Alexander W. McCurry. The others were not so prosperous as Chandler or even Gordon McCurry, but they had some prominence in the county. Chandler himself was Elbert County's representative in the state legislature in 1849-50 and in 1854 was chosen one of the five justices of the Inferior Court for Hart. In his later years he served as mayor of the town of Elberton. William C. Davis was surveyor for Elbert County in 1831 and upon the formation of Hart County served as surveyor there and as receiver of tax returns. Edward White was the first tax collector for Hart County and was elected to the legislature in 1865. Most were men with large families—Henry Chandler had eleven children and Edward White fifteen. Some of the sons followed their
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Of Chandler's five, four served in the Civil War. One was a lieutenant, one a captain, and one died at Gettysburg.

Other men associated with McCurry's book are more difficult to identify. Two listed on the rear cover as salesmen of the book were W. N. White, who owned a bookshop in Athens, two counties away, and John B. Watson, a farmer in adjacent Anderson County, South Carolina. But they contributed no compositions. One who did was Thomas Maxwell. There were two men of this name in the region, one a young schoolteacher in Elbert County and the other an elderly preacher, J. A. and J. F. Wade, according to one account, lived in South Carolina. Wade was a common name in Hart and Franklin counties, however, and census rolls list a half-dozen with initials that match those of McCurry's contributors. Many persons whose names occur in The Sacred Harp lived in west-central Georgia and were active in support of another songbook, The Sacred Harp.

Benjamin Franklin White and E. J. King were its editors. J. Tom White was B. F.'s nephew. James R. Turner, who taught singing in Georgia and Alabama for forty years, helped in a revision of The Sacred Harp in 1888. J. P. and H. S. Rees, who served as "traveling agents" for McCurry's book in the Columbus neighborhood, contributed many pieces to The Sacred Harp, as did Leonard P. Breedlove, Dr. Thomas W. Carter, and John Massengale. W. T. Power, who is named as McCurry's collaborator in the composition of one piece, was a member of the Chattahoochee Singing Convention, which still holds an annual singing from The Sacred Harp. Men such as A. N. Benton, J. M. Day, Silas W. Kay, and J. H. Moss were probably farmers in counties near Hart. Two anomalies among the contributors to The Sacred Harp are the Heritage brothers. Jason lived in New Jersey and Elphrey, who was the musician, in Philadelphia. Elphrey seems never to have published any collection of his own, and his palindromic hymns would hardly have appealed to McCurry if he had casually encountered them. The most likely
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explanation is that he had met Elphrey Heritage through his publisher, S. C. Collins of Philadelphia, and had some reason for feeling indebted to Heritage. Elphrey had composed one hymn “expressly for” J. B. Aiken’s *The Christian Minstrel*, published by Collins in 1846. William Hazen’s *The Heptameron Harp*, which has a preface written in Philadelphia and was published there in 1848 by the house of T. K. and P. G. Collins, includes five compositions by Elphrey Heritage. Others were also printed in *The Timbrel of Zion*, a songbook compiled by T. K. Collins, Jr., and issued by S. C. Collins in 1833.

McCory in 1888 told the singing teacher Aldine S. Kieffer that he had had “many difficulties in securing a publisher” and had a “thousand and one obstacles thrown in his pathway by those who looked on his efforts as visionary and vain.” It is possible that B. F. White led McCory to S. C. Collins, who had published *The Sacred Harp* in 1844 and had reprinted it as recently as 1854. McCory’s intention may even have been to complement *The Sacred Harp* by directing his own book less at the singing congregation than at the singing schools. This is probably the implication of the unusual structure he gave his book. Songbooks compiled by the men who held country singing schools had traditionally proclaimed on their title pages their suitability for both church worship and singing schools. The arrangement of their contents accommodated both uses. The title page of *The Sacred Harp*, for example, follows tradition in declaring the book “well adapted to churches of every denomination, singing schools, and private societies.” Its first section is comprised of “pieces used by worshipping assemblies” and its second of “pieces used in singing schools and societies.” Its third section contains odes and anthems, the showpieces with which pupils could exhibit proficiency in their faw-sollaws. McCory, in contrast, on his own title page subtly altered the conventional phrase to read “well adapted to all denominations. singing

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schools and private societies" (italics mine). He arranged his pieces in six sections, for the most part grouping together all those pieces having the same tonic —ones in the major first, then the minor. His final section, like those in earlier books, is reserved for anthems and other show pieces. McCurry's pedagogical concerns were strong. In his meeting with Kieffer, he spoke of his own early struggles to get "something of a musical education" and of his "early methods of teaching." He also showed Kieffer "several mechanical devices and inventions relating to the science of sound, and most notably one for measuring step and half-step into the scientific division of comma."

The contents of The Social Harp also demonstrate McCurry's particular desire to provide a useful book for the singing school. Editors of such songbooks frequently took the safe course of reproducing with few changes the introductions in earlier songsters. The observations on music that preface The Sacred Harp are, for example, to a considerable extent identical to those that had appeared in The Southern Harmony. In his own introduction McCurry claims with mock seriousness to be delivering himself of insights into the "science of music" that will "enlighten millions yet unborn," but he follows his predecessors fairly closely. The very turn of phrase with which he defines the semibreve can be found in The Southern Harmony, The Sacred Harp, The Missouri Harmony, and other earlier books. He does, however, appear to have revised the material he borrowed toward a presentation simpler for the pupil. The dialogue between Scholar and Master or Pupil and Teacher into which many earlier books had cast their instruction did not seem effective to McCurry, and he abandoned it. When sentences were long or distinctions fussy, he pruned. He also reconsidered some of the traditional dicta, as for example the statement in The Southern Harmony and The Missouri Harmony that "music set to the major or sharp key is generally sprightly and cheerful; whereas music set to the minor or flat key is pensive and melancholy." Citing texts of
pronounced character that had been set to both major and minor tunes, he rejected this view. His effort to tighten and clarify one of the rudiments of music presented in The Sacred Harp resulted in what must have been a minor mystery to his pupils. B. F. White’s presentation of the terms tonic, dominant, mediant, submediant, subdominant, supertonic, and leading tone had justified this ordering of the terms on the basis of their descent in “importance” or “value.” What caused these notes to vary in value he left unclear. The question intrigued McCurry, and he concluded that the tones were of varying “degrees of melody,” which he proceeded to define in precise values according to their “strength or quality.” One wonders if his dogmatic assertions embody a sense of the relative frequency of individual tones in tunes to which his taste responded.

Doubtless of more use to his pupils were the directions for writing down and harmonizing tunes, a feature probably suggested by Hauser’s similar comments. McCurry’s recommendations are a résumé of some of the distinctive methods of this school of composers. The melody is to be cast in the first line above the bass. To it one adds the bass, placing the notes “a proper distance from the tenor,” avoiding intervals of seconds, sevenths, and ninths. Then one writes the treble, following essentially the same rule. Bass and treble should not have “the same turn,” and in writing the bass, one must not “take all the good ground from the treble.” Clearly McCurry would have agreed with Hauser’s comment that one should “make each part so good a melody that it will charm even when sung by itself.” Most significantly McCurry shows no concern for triads or harmonic progressions. In an article citing McCurry’s instructions and his setting of “Parting Friends,” Charles Seeger pointed out that the resultant harmonic style is “outrageously heterodox” in its use of parallel fifths, octaves, and unisons, of parallel fourths between outer voices or between upper voices without a third in the bass, of unprepared and unresolved dissonances, of cadences on the first degree, and of crossing voices. Seeger believed
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this style to be both intentional and appropriate, arguing that its tendency toward dyadic harmony derived from the high proportion of pentatonic tunes in the shape-note collections where this style is found. This harmonic approach and its relation to folk tune modes in The Sacred Harp, The Southern Harmony, and The New Harp of Columbia has been documented further by Dorothy D. Horn. What is true of those books is equally true of The Sacred Harp. Its abundance of hexatonic and pentatonic tunes was the feature that most impressed Jackson.

The music which McCurry selected for the body of his anthology suggests even more strongly than its introduction or its general arrangement a wish to appeal to his singing-school clients. Into The Southern Harmony and The Sacred Harp strays an occasional secular and sentimental piece such as Thomas Moore’s “Leg-
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dent Washington and has been recovered at least once from oral tradition. "Buonaparte," a song more widely known as "The Isle of St. Helena," celebrates the emperor's fall in 1815. Several other pieces come from the venerable tradition of the criminal's farewell. One of these, "Marion," although it is not reported in G. Malcolm Law's checklists of broadside ballads, probably has a long history and is but a shadow of its original self. A nineteenth-century specimen from the same tradition is "John Aikin's Farewell." Jackson was told in Hart County that this song was occasioned by a murder and execution in Clarksville, Georgia. This may be false, for the text is also found on a "song ballad" handwritten about 1820 in Johnston County, North Carolina. A bad end seems likely too for the speaker in "Marion"; McCurry apparently dressed up the text, but the song still flirts with the pleasures of vagabondage commended by its secular original. One last piece, "Singing School," salutes the scholars who would assemble under the tall oak. Doubtless McCurry knew many of his selections to be among their favorites and expected the scholars to find delight as they sat "a singing law, sol, fa.

The inclusion of these secular pieces, however, does not indicate irreverence on McCurry's part or that of his associates. All that we learn of them reveals an outlook lighted by the Protestant fervor of their time and place. McCurry's Scotch-Irish family had traditionally been Presbyterian. The backwoods American in the early nineteenth century, however, found the Calvinist dependence on election less convincing and satisfying than the active efforts to attain salvation then being urged by more evangelical denominations. Many Presbyterians fell away to the Baptists and Methodists, and Calvinist Baptists shifted to Arminian grounds and adopted revivalism and foreign missions. We know that both McCurry and an older brother left the Presbyterians for the Missionary Baptists. His younger brother
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Alexander became "a consistent member of the Methodist Church" to the day of his death, and his will directed his executors to abide by his verbal agreement with the "church of the colored people," insuring them of free use of a meetinghouse on his land and of water to drink, "provided they keep good order." The other contributors to The Social Harp seem also to have been devout. E. R. White was a member of McCurry's church, and Henry F. Chandler was a lifelong Baptist and raised two sons to be ministers.

John McCurry clearly sought to live by his lights. He was known as a peacemaker. According to Mr. Norman, McCurry customarily offered himself as a go-between when neighbors had a falling-out and strove to bring them back into harmony. He was a man of charity. Since his own marriage was childless, he took in and raised at least four orphans. He put his resources in the service of the "Church Militant." On one occasion McCurry attended a revival near Gainesville, Georgia, and met there a preacher named Fore, to whom he took a great liking. The man was not in good health, so McCurry invited him home to stay until he recovered. When it was later discovered that the minister was seriously ill with consumption, McCurry built a house for him and his family two or three hundred yards from his own and supported them. Preacher Fore planted in McCurry a desire for the neighborhood to have its own Baptist church. McCurry proposed to Willy Jones that the two donate several acres of land. McCurry then hired two young men to build the church, having them live in his house while they worked. Fore, on his death bed, had the happiness of hearing the sounds of their labor as they cleared the pine forest and laid the foundation. His funeral service was conducted within the still uncompleted foundations. McCurry himself was also in a few years to be buried in the yard of the Baptist Church.

The tone of the songs in The Social Harp, though slightly more secular than that of other collections, is...
still in keeping with McCurry’s beliefs. When including a love song like “The Drowsy Sleeper” he printed only the opening stanza, which in the context of his book seems an exhortation to the sluggish soul rather than the call of a young lover outside his sweetheart’s window. Other of the secular songs imply or preach morals consonant with evangelical Protestantism. “Buonaparte” surveys the downfall of one who made unrighteous use of power, “Jolly Soldier” celebrates a war that Baptists had cause to regard as fought on behalf of religious liberty. “John Adkin’s Farewell” appropriates the tune of “Rye Whiskey” for a warning against the evils of drink. In John McCurry’s adaptation “The Beggars” commemorates, probably for the only time in its long history, the China missions. At the least such songs could be regarded as innocent recreation; most of the remaining texts in McCurry’s songbook are explicitly religious.

Like other shape-note editors he reprinted many successful pieces from earlier collections. Apparently he had several books to draw upon, but his chief source was The Sacred Harp. One-hundred and seven of the pieces he printed had previously appeared in its pages. The contents of The Sacred Harp overlap those of The Southern Harmony and The Hesperian Harp. Fifty-four of McCurry’s choices had been included in all three books, but he selected only two pieces that The Southern Harmony alone had printed and only nine from The Hesperian Harp as against twenty-eight peculiar to The Sacred Harp. A few of the older pieces, such as Douglass’s “Deep Spring,” came from some still earlier songsters. They were among McCurry’s large selection of long-popular hymns, fusing-tunes, and anthems. Twenty-two that he picked had, for example, been used by Ananias Davison in his Kentucky Harmony in the late 1810s, and most of these had by that time been long in print. All these songs drawn by McCurry from other shape-note songbooks were certainly regarded as appropriate for singing schools, and probably most of them were also used in church services.

Half of the two hundred twenty-two selections in The Sacred Harp had not appeared in other books, and
McCurry specifically claimed authorship of most of these for himself or some member of his circle. Except for the seven for which Elphrey Heritage is to blame, these pieces were deeply rooted in the music of the camp meeting and the revival. Some of them, like “Parting Friends” or “Bowers,” McCurry acknowledges taking up from the singing of a friend. Other songs like “Weeping Mary” are settings of spirituals that circulated widely in oral tradition and, if the simplicity of diction and syntax is a safe guide, did not originate in print. When McCurry and his friends were themselves making a new pairing of folk tune and familiar hymn text, they frequently took the further step of adding a rousing chorus to the Watts or Wesley quatrains or slipping in a refrain between its lines. These are patterns that Jackson showed to have developed in the spirited group singing of the camp meetings.

McCurry’s lifetime camp meetings were strongly supported in Hart County. It is not surprising to find in his book two settings of the verse

I’ll pitch my tent on this camp ground
And give old Satan another round.

The popular note is resoundingly struck in The Social Harp. Jackson said of it, “If ever a book grew out of its native soil, that book was McCurry’s Social Harp.”

One puzzle that remains is why its contents gained little attention from later shape-note editors and singers. The chief reason is that, like many another good old songbook, McCurry’s The Social Harp was the victim of a shift in popular taste after the Civil War. Adeline S. Kieffer, who was active as shape-note publisher and singing master in the later years, registered his sense of the change of style in an essay in The Musical Million in 1883. Southern songbooks of the years between 1840 and 1860, he said, were “full of strange, weird and yet beautiful written ballads, a they rise.”

The Harp has many singers also in the ballad singing not infrequent in the church before the the...
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beautiful melodies, the vast proportion of which are written in the minor scale. The harmonies, if they may be called such, do not conform to any of the present rules, and the melodies are of such a nature that indeed they cannot be harmonized according to present theories.

The rejection of this earlier body of music doubtless has complex causes. In part it reflects the country singers’ delight in novelty, a trait which shows itself also in their gradual abandonment of secular folksong in favor of the products of the minstrel show, the music hall, and tin pan alley. In part it is owing to the increasing influence of the trained, genteel town musician—an influence that shows even in Kieffer’s article on McCurry, where he writes of the “sterling melodies” in The Social Harp “with their crude harmonies.” One clue, however, to another important cause of the rejection lies in the change of format in shape-note publications. The oblong shape typical in the years before the Civil War was required for printing each of the three or four voices of the settings on a separate staff for easy reading. After the Civil War the oblong gives way to a vertical format as the four staves are reduced to two, on which all four parts are printed. Clearly churches and individuals were now buying the new mass-produced pianos and organs, and the songbooks had to accommodate the instrumentalists. The settings themselves rapidly followed suit. Even when one of the earlier pieces was reprinted it was usually revised with the pleasure of the singer sacrificed to the ineptitude of the pianist. The tune was shifted to the top line, and the melodic qualities of the other parts were discarded in favor of simple chording.

Where country habits held strong, the singers adopted the gospel songbooks printed in shape notes by such publishers as Ruebush and Kieffer, Showalter, or Vaughn. In these books the tunes continued at times to echo folk traditions, and the responding voices in the settings may perhaps be reminiscent of patterns in the earlier fuging tunes and anthems. The singers continued to perform music with their old gusto and volume and stringent vocal quality. In Hart County both John B.
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Vaughn of Bowman, Georgia, and Kieffer of Virginia were holding singing schools and selling their new-style songbooks by the 1860s. Kieffer was the more ambitious. In November 1861 he and "Professor" T. C. Hayes held a four-week "Normal Music School" in Hartwell with fees of six dollars for tuition and nine dollars for board. Newspaper announcements enthusiastically endorsed their project, urging singers to attend en masse "come what will—hard times, short crops, or anything else." 1 With such encouragement the new songbooks swept the field. When the thirteenth annual Hart County Singing Convention was held for three days in November 1867, the newspaper reminded singers to bring four of the new books: The National Singer, Work and Worship, Good Tidings, and Zion Songster. Singings in this tradition lasted in Hart County until some time after 1947, when Mr. P. C. Ebright held his last singing school. 2 In neighboring Banks and Elbert counties singing conventions still meet. But McCurry's songbook has long since been forgotten.

In regions where one of the old songbooks maintains its popularity, as The Sacred Harp does in Alabama and western Georgia, it has received continuing support and leadership proudly passed down as a family tradition. McCurry himself, however, seems not to have worked hard to keep his own book alive. Jackson, writing before he learned of an 1898 printing of The Sacred Harp, assumed that an "affection of the voice" from which he was told McCurry suffered in later years prevented him from holding singing schools and pushing his book. This may in part be true. News items in the Hartwell Sun show that by the 1880s the leading figure in Hart County singing circles was not McCurry but W. V. Vickery. But more importantly McCurry himself seems to have been receptive to the new trends. Kieffer, in his account of an evening spent in McCurry's home in 1882, says that after singing some of the old Sacred Harp pieces the company passed on to newer books: Singing School Tribute, Sweet Fields of Eden, and Gower's Melodies composed and arranged for the Sacred Harp organists.

Even of the songs they love most, McCurry wrote in his life:

1 Hartwell Sun, 1st November 1867, p. 3.
2 Information kindly provided by his son, Mr. Alton C. Ebright; in an interview in Hartwell in April 1971.
and *Crown of Praise*. All their singing was accompanied by McCurry’s “small parlor organ.” Perhaps their accompanist was Clarence Brown, a boy whom McCurry raised and whom he trained in music. Brown was to become the song leader for Bio Baptist Church and its organist.

Even if McCurry’s book did not long have a following, one would expect its best pieces to have continued their life in some of the more conservative shape-note songsters. It is true that his book has its weaknesses. He printed pieces like “Heaven Born Soldiers” in which the words are ineptly fitted to the music. He and his contributors sometimes gave faulty barring to their tunes. McCurry’s own settings also are never as effective as the best in the shape-note tradition—such compositions as “Wondrous Love” or “Condescension” or “The Finest Flower.” McCurry usually weakened his bass lines, for example, by stereotyped, unmelodic cadences. But the settings that he and his friends made are lean, taut, and of a piece with their tunes, and they had an excellent ear for folk melody. *The Social Harp* is a rich treasury of folk tunes, many of them—like “Masgrove” and “Zion’s Walls”—of great beauty. The folk song antecedents of these melodies are listed in George Pullen Jackson’s various books. (Page references to his discussions are included in the “Index of Composers and Arrangers” at the rear of this reprint.)

In spite of their quality few of the original pieces in *The Social Harp* were incorporated into the significant southern shape-note hymnals. William Hauser’s *The Olive Leaf* (1916) has no piece by McCurry or from his book. C. H. Cayce’s *The Good Old Songs*, published in 1933 and now in its twenty-seventh edition, has only “Raymond.” The 1938 revision of William Walker’s *The Christian Harmony* includes only four: J. A. Wade’s “O Save,” McCurry’s “Raymond,” his “Kay,” and the arrangement of “A Home in Heaven” on which he and Silas W. Kay collaborated. “Singing School” was printed in at least one of its earlier editions. The largest number of reprints from *The Social Harp* occurred in *The Sacred Harp*. Its 1860 edition used “A Home in Heaven,” but attributed it to W. W. Parks and M. H.
INTRODUCTION

Thomas. In the 1870 edition of The Sacred Harp two other Social Harp pieces were added: "Brethren Pray" and "Father Land," retitled "Pray, Brethren, Pray" and "Fatherland." Except for a note that the treble part of "Pray, Brethren, Pray" is by U. G. Wood, these are unattributed in The Sacred Harp. Borrowings from The Social Harp were greatest in Joseph S. James's Original Sacred Harp of 1911, an edition which included the pieces named above together with "River of Jordan," "Good-By," "Raymond," "Singing School," and "Oh Save," the latter under the title "Save, Mighty Lord." All these were rearranged for the Original Sacred Harp, but The Social Harp and its composers are directly acknowledged. The Denson revisions of the Original Sacred Harp (1936, 1960, 1966, and 1971) deleted "A Home in Heaven," "River of Jordan," "Good-By," and "Singing School."

"Raymond" alone has become a great favorite. The Directory and Minutes of Annual Sacred Harp Singings states that in the 250 sessions reported in 1969 "Raymond" stood eleventh in frequency of performance. It is not, however, the only good piece in The Social Harp. For his chapters "The Fasola Folk," and "Re-}

wals and Camp Meetings" in America's Music Gilbert Chase went to The Social Harp for five of his musical examples; only The Southern Harmony provided him with more. Aaron Copland in Old American Songs, Second Set, gave an arrangement of one of the Social Harp tunes. An even broader appreciation of the shape-note compositions was expressed by Charles Seeger: "Personally, I would as soon change the tunes as change the settings. . . . There is a rigorous, spare, disciplined beauty in the choral writing that is all the more to be prized for having been conceived in the 'backwoods' for which many professional musicians have such scorn, and in the face of the determined opposition of sophisticated zealots in no small number, from Lowell

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Mason down to those of this very day." The editors of this reprint do not "feel satisfied" that the complete and original versions of the *Social Harp* pieces should "lie hidden in mystery for ages yet to come." With modesty the equal of his, we trust that through this edition many of John Gordon McCurry's spiritual songs will delight "millions yet unborn."

Daniel W. Patterson

*Sozert, p. 448.*
THE

SOCIAL HARP,

A COLLECTION OF
TUNES, ODES, ANTHEMS, AND SET PIECES,
SELECTED FROM VARIOUS AUTHORS;
TOGETHER WITH
MUCH NEW MUSIC NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED;
SUITED TO ALL METRES, AND WELL ADAPTED TO ALL DENOMINATIONS, SINGING-SCHOOLS, AND PRIVATE SOCIETIES.

WITH A
FULL EXPOSITION OF THE RUDIMENTS OF MUSIC.

AND THE
ART OF MUSICAL COMPOSITION SO SIMPLIFIED THAT THE MOST UNLEARNED PERSON CAN COMPREHEND IT WITH THE UTMOSt FACULTY.

BY JOHN G. MCCURRY.

PHILADELPHIA
PUBLISHED BY T. K. COLLINS, JR., No. 8 NORTH SIXTH STREET,
FOR THE PROPRIETOR, JOHN G. MCCURRY.
1855.
PREFACE.

This apology offered for adding still another music book to the many already before the public is, that there is an increasing demand for new music, and a book better adapted to the wants of Singing Societies, all Christian denominations, and the Churches in the South and West more especially. Another reason is, that the Author having different views upon the science of music from those published in other works, did not feel satisfied that they should lie hidden in mystery for ages yet to come, while, by an exposition of them, he may enlighten millions yet unborn. Having taught music for the last fourteen years, and finding it so difficult to teach from any of the books now in use, for the want of several examples, which will be found in this work; these, with many other reasons, have induced the Author to compile the present volume.

Many efforts have been made, and are still making, to gratify the public taste with a collection of church music; none but those who have undertaken the task know how difficult it is to accomplish. Neither time nor labor has been spared by the compiler of this volume to render it, in every respect, well adapted to the wants of the public.

The Social Harp is divided into six parts, classified in the following order, viz: Each part (except the sixth part) commences with tunes in the major key, followed by tunes in the minor, keyed on the same letter. Part I. contains tunes in the key of A. Part II. contains tunes in the key of B. Part III. contains tunes in the key of C. Part IV. contains tunes in the key of D. Part V. is made up of tunes in various keys. Part VI. is made up of anthems and set pieces. The arrangement will be found very convenient for teachers. In conclusion, this work is presented to the public with a sincere desire that it may advance the interests of the Church militant, and also those of the Church triumphant.

JOHN G. MCCURRY.
EDITOR'S PREFACE.

The practice of Sacred Music being in itself so agreeable and noble, a strong inducement is presented to those persons who take delight in hearing or singing in this pleasing exercise, to commence the study of the art: but, as words cannot of themselves express sounds, notes have been invented for this purpose; yet few, comparatively, are able to attain any considerable proficiency in this science without the help of a master. To assist the ideas of the pupil, and ease the labor of the teacher, the following summary of the first principles of Vocal Music has been compiled, and pains have been taken to render the subject as easy of comprehension as possible. There will be found in the Rudiments presented, many new features (not found in any other work), that are entirely original with the Author. Having given the most prominent and essential directions necessary for studying Vocal Music, our limits forbid any enlargement on many interesting particulars, very necessary to be understood by the Choirister, Leader, or private singer.

Should it be deemed requisite to make some additions to this compendium at a future time, the Editor will have much pleasure in receiving such further suggestions as may occur to him, or may be recommended by his musical friends. Meantime, it is hoped this brief Manual may prove useful and acceptable to those for whom it was designed. This work contains a greater amount of new music than was ever before published in one volume.

Many thanks to the several individuals who have so kindly contributed to the pages of this Volume. Their interesting productions, we trust, will be properly appreciated.

THE EDITOR.
RUDIMENTS OF MUSIC.

GENERAL REMARKS.

MUSIC is said to be a succession of pleasing sounds. As a science, it teaches the just disposition of sounds, and as an art, it enables us to express them with facility and advantage. Music is written upon five parallel lines, including the spaces between them, which is called a stave. These lines and spaces are represented by the first seven letters in the alphabet, A, B, C, D, E, F, and G. These letters also represent the seven sounds that belong to each key-note in music.

The following scale will show, at a view, the proportion one note bears to another:

- Semibreve
- Minim
- Crotchet
- Quaver

EXAMPLES OF NOTES THAT DIVERGE IN TIME.

These six kinds of notes are proportioned according to the modes of time, and measure notes.
RUDIMENTS OF MUSIC.

The semibreve - is now the longest note used. It is white, without a stem, and is the measure-note, and guides all the others.

The minim - is one half the length of a semibreve, is white, and has a stem to it.

The crotchet - is half the length of a minim, has a black head and is straight.

The quaver - is half the length of a crotchet, and has a black head, and one turn to the stem.

The semiquaver - is but half the length of a quaver, and has two turns to the stem.

The demisemiquaver - is but half the length of a semiquaver, and has three turns to the stem.

There are seven modes of time used in this book: those of Common, two of Triple, and two of Compound. There are several classes of each mode of time, the explanation of which will be seen in the following examples:

The first mode of Common Time is known by a figure 4 placed over a figure 4. It has a minim for a measure-note, sung in the time of three seconds to the measure; two beats—one down, and the other up.

The second mode of Common Time is known by a figure 4 placed over a figure 2. It has a semibreve for a measure-note, sung in the time of two seconds to the measure; two beats—one down, and the other up.

The third mode of Common Time is known by a figure 2 placed over a figure 4. It has a quaver for a measure-note, sung in the time of one and a half seconds to the measure; two beats—one down, and the other up.

The first mode of Triple Time is known by a figure 3 placed over a figure 3. It has a minim for a measure-note, sung in the time of three seconds to the measure; three beats—two down, and the other up.

The second mode of Triple Time is known by a figure 3 placed over a figure 2. It has a crotchet for a measure-note, sung in the time of two seconds to the measure; three beats—two down, and the other up.

The first mode of Compound Time is known by a figure 6 placed over a figure 6. It has a minim for a measure-note, sung in the time of two and a half seconds to the measure; three beats—one down, and the other up.

The second mode of Compound Time is known by a figure 6 placed over a figure 3. It has a crotchet for a measure-note, sung in the time of one and a half seconds to the measure; two beats—one down, and the other up.

The Shift is for lines, with their spaces, on which all musical characters are written. Time lines and spaces are counted from the lower line upward, and each line and space is called a degree.
RUDIMENTS OF MUSIC.

A double bar shows that the preceding part of the piece should be repeated.

A close shows the end of a tune or anthem.

A dot, or point of addition, at the right of a note, or rest, adds to it a half of its length, and if placed by the first note in the measure, it diminishes from the succeeding part of the measure by reducing the next note to a smaller denomination. If placed by the second note, it reduces the preceding note to a smaller denomination. Thus:

The point never extends its influence out of the measure in which it is placed.

A breve shows how many parts are to be performed at the same time. The order of the parts is as follows:

The first, or lower part, is called Bass; the second, Tenor. If these parts are used, the third is called Counter, and the fourth, Top. This is placed over or under any number of notes, shows that they must be sung to one syllable.

The staff is divided into equal parts by single bars, according to the modes of time. Thus,
A figure 3, placed over or under any three notes, shows that they are to be sung in the time of two of the same denomination without a figure.

Notes of suspension are any number of notes, on the same line or space, joined together with a slur. The first note is the only note named, but sounding the time of all the others, giving the accent at its usual place in the measure, as in the following example:

F flat F natural G natural

Suspense, or suspended notes, are notes set out of their usual place, in the measure, in common time, having half the time in the middle, as a misstep between two complete, or a crotchet between two quavers. Half of a measure may be dispensed by placing a quaver before a pointed crotchet; or, in compound time, a crotchet before a minim. Example:

C sharp F natural G natural

The Clef is a character placed at the beginning of every line, to determine the situation of the letters upon the staff, and is made thus:

When the F clef is used at the beginning of a time, it shows that F is on the fourth line, and is used in present placing the letters on the staff at the first part of every time. The G clef places G upon the second line of the staff, as used instead of placing the letters at the beginning of the time. The G clef places G upon the middle line of the staff in modern music it is but seldom used.

The repeat ὴ ὴ shows that the music is to be repeated from is to the next ὴ ὴ, double bar or close.

The phrase ὴ ὴ shows that the preceding words are to be repeated. Thus, Halbdolg: ὴ ὴ.

The figures 1 and 2, at the end of a strain or time, show that the note of notes under note or notes under 1 the second time, but if the second time is marked by a slur, both are sounded the second time. When sections are used at the end of a time, they show what part of a note is to be read the first time; and the second time the whole note. Example:

F sharp set before a note, shows that the note is to be sounded a half note lower than its line or space represents.

A sharp set before a note, shows that the note is to be sounded a half note higher than that line or space represents.

A natural set before a note, previously made flat or sharp, restores it to its primitive sound.

Where accidentals flat and sharp occur in music, it so happens that the sound falls between two sounds; and if the composer takes the sound above, as should place a 3. But, if below, a sharp.
RUDIMENTS OF MUSIC.

There are seven sounds belonging to each key-note in music, and these sounds are expressed by four syllables, -me, far, side, law,- three of which represent two sounds each, viz., far, side, and law. The syllable no represents one sound only. That syllable having but one place in the octave which is between law and far, is made the governing note in transposition. The notes appear on the staff, according to the F staff, in the following order, without the aid of flats or sharps. Thus:

By the use of flats and sharps the octaves may be changed, as in the following examples:

The notes appear on the staff in the following order, according to the F staff:

By the use of one flat. Thus:

By the use of two flats. Thus:

By the use of three flats. Thus:

By the use of one sharp. Thus:

By the use of two sharps. Thus:

By the use of three sharps. Thus:

The notes appear on the staff in the following order, according to the G staff:

By the use of one flat. Thus:

By the use of two flats. Thus:

By the use of three flats. Thus:

By the use of one sharp. Thus:

By the use of two sharps. Thus:

By the use of three sharps. Thus:
RUDIMENTS OF MUSIC.

These are transpositions, with the one without flat or sharp, where the note on each letter of the octave; although either sharp or flat will transpose the note through the whole octave—both have been used, either through ignorance or for the purpose of keeping the science of music in obscurity. Some writers have ceased to use the one letter was sharpened first, and another flat next. This is quite a difficult and absurd undertaking; for there is no reason why F should be first sharpened or E flattened, only from blind tradition, which never has any meaning in this and many other mysteries in the science of music. I say mystery, for it has proved to be such heresy; but for the sake of all generally I will solve this, with many other points, which have proven to former generations quite mysteries.

Transposition is literal to that piece of music to which it belongs; sharp and flat are, or ought to be, used merely to show the natural place for the key, tune, or mode. A flat or sharp placed at the beginning of a piece, has no influence over the leading notes whatever, but is placed there to show what is natural. The keys govern the whole measure, and one is to be used in each key, whether that be in a major or minor one. If those flats and sharps be not on the letter that belongs, there is no use for the sharps and flats, by placing the sharp or flat on the letter that belongs, would show the place for all, as well as those characters called flats and sharps.

OF ACCENT.

Accent is a stress of voice or emphasis on one part of a sentence, clause, or measure, more than another. In the two first modes of common time the accent is on the first and second parts of the measure, or on the first part of each half of the measure. In the third mode of common time the accent falls on the first part of the measure; if divided into four parts, the accent is on the same as on the two preceding modes. Compound time is generally divided into six parts, and the accent falls on the first and fourth parts of the measure. In common time the first note in a measure is accented. The figures, which are used to express the accent, are to be used singly. The under figure shows how many parts the sentence is divided into, and the upper figure shows how many parts of the same all a measure, etc.;
RUDIMENTS OF MUSIC.

2 over 2 (\(\frac{2}{2}\)) means two minims in a measure; 4 over 4 (\(\frac{4}{4}\)) shows the measure is divided into four parts, and four parts fill a measure. 2 over 4 (\(\frac{2}{4}\)) shows the measure is divided into four parts, and two parts fill a measure; and so of all the modes of times expressed by figures.

Further Explanation of the several Modes of Time as indicated on page 6.

The several modes of time are governed by the metre. Elevens are adapted to compound times, or to common times, when the measure is divided into three parts, having half the time of the second part in the other half, leaving the accent on the first part of the measure. Elevens are measured by six minims, six minims to six minims, and one to finish on, leaving none to be divided; divide them into three equal parts, we have three minims to three eighths, and the accent being on the first syllable of each part, consequently the stress cannot be performed in any mode of time measured by even numbers. Compound times that is divided into three parts is partially coincided with compound time.

When compound time is divided into four parts, having two minims of the measure in the first and third parts, and one minim in the second and fourth parts, the poetry is divided by two, and the same poetry can be applied to it as is applied to common time—that is, divided by two. Eights may be applied to compound time when the poetry is measured by threes. Taking the first and last syllables of the measure in the second and third parts, and one minim of the measure in the first and fourth parts, the poetry is divided by two, and the same poetry can be applied to it as is applied to compound time. There are two movements of triple time in which the poetry is measured by the metre. One is, where the measure is divided into two parts, it will not admit the same metre that is done when divided into three parts; when divided into two parts, any poetry that is measured by two will apply to it. All poetry is measured by two or three. Elevens are measured by threes. Elevens are somewhat measured by threes; at others, by twos. Common Minims, Long Minims, Short Minims, Eights and Sixteens, Stanza and Strophe, are all measured by twos. Others, ariettes, and septiques, have no general rules of measurement.

EXPLANATION OF KEYS.

There are seven sounds belonging to each key note in music. The keynote is the father of all sounds, and each musical key to the keynote for its strength, quality, and location; therefore no sound can be correctly sounded without first sounding the keynote. The keynote is the groundwork of every tone; it answers the same purpose to a tone that is all done to a house. You raise the sail, and the whole ship is raised, each leg being the same distance as if they were before the foundation was raised. So raise the key of a tune, and the whole time is raised, each sound being the same distance from the keynote that they were before the keynote was raised. E.g., place the major key on A, the lower line, and the octave above, and place the key on A, and the octave above, and the whole scale is raised. Examples:
RUDIMENTS OF MUSIC.

A tone is the distance from one sound to the next above, or below, or in other words, the space between two adjacent sounds. The semitone, or half-tone, is the same, only the space is half as wide when the distance occurs as it is otherwise. By referring to the first figure, you will see that the space between these four and four is not as wide as between four and five, or five and six, or six and seven, or seven, of the major key. The seventh and eighth form another sensation, and this is one reason why some tones are in the major and others in the minor key. The third, sixth, and seventh sounds of the major key is a half-tone higher than the same sounds of the minor key. But some writers say that minor-keyed tones are applied in poetry that is serene, peaceful, and sentimental; and major-keyed tones are applied in poetry that is animating, rapid, and cheerful. But I differ with these writers. If that be true, why is the good old hymn, "O! when shall I see Jesus," applied to tunes in the minor and major keys? Why was the hymn, "Lord, what a thougthless wretch was I," applied to Hymnstar in the major, and also to Te Deum in the minor key? And the hymn called "Earth, Help Us," applied to different tunes, two of which are in the major key, and two in the minor? This proves at once that the keys are independent characters. The reason why tones are in different keys is that there are seven sounds belonging to each key note in a major, and each sound is different in strength and quality. The major key is the strongest sound in the diatonic scale, and is given in the minor system for itself, and withdrawn that power at any time. There are some tones that no man can tell whether they are major or minor-keyed, e.g., refer to "Minister Farewell," "Shirley Island," "Ain't Got a Party," the bass in the minor key is partially compared to the major all the time, for instance, the seventh sound in the minor key is as good a sound as there is in the reason why, is because it is in the major fifth, and is partially compared to the major fifth. The minor third is a good sound, and is the major third. If you will refer to the second figure, you will see that from the minor third to the fifth is probably one of the intervals from the key to the third in the major key. Consequently, my opinion is that the keys are independent characters, especially the minor key.

There are seven sounds in music, and each sound differs in quality and strength. The strength of a sound depends upon the portion of melody there is in it. The stronger the sound, the better its quality. Sounds differ in strength and quality in the following order:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Stronger</td>
<td>Better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>Weaker</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures above show the number of each sound, and the figures below show the degree of melody in each sound. No. 1 has eight degrees of melody in it. The next sound in strength and quality is the fifth, which has seven and a half degrees of melody, and is at the greatest distance from the key or No. 1. The third has seven degrees of melody and is at the greatest distance from the two strongest sounds, and is equal to strength and quality. The sixth has six and a half degrees of melody, and is next in strength and quality. The fourth has six degrees of melody, and is next in strength and quality. The second has five and a half degrees of melody, and is next in strength and quality. The second is the most simple sound in the octave, and has about five degrees of melody.

OF INTERVALS.

An interval is the distance from one sound to another in the diatonic scale. There are seven intervals ascending from each degree in the diatonic scale, and these intervals are divided by seconds, thirds, fourths, fifths, sixths, sevenths, and eightths. In counting intervals, commence on the lower degree, and count upward. In counting an interval composed of three degrees, i.e., from A to C--A is one, B is two, C is three, or an interval composed of five degrees, i.e., from F to C--F is one, G is two, A is three, B is four, C is five. See the following example:

The following scales will show at one view the forty-nine intervals:
RUDIMENTS OF MUSIC.

The following is an example of all the intervals ascending from each note in the octave. No. 1 is the key note to every correct piece of music, and determines the location and quality of all the sounds in the octave. The first column contains all the intervals ascending from No. 1; the second from No. 2; the third from No. 3; the fourth from No. 4; the fifth from No. 5; the sixth from No. 6; the seventh from No. 7. You see there are seven intervals on each staff, and seven in each column. The first column contains all sounds, ascending from different sounds; the second the thirds; the third the fourths; the fourth the fifths; the fifth the sixths; the sixth the sevenths; and the seventh the octaves. There are seven intervals of each denomination, which make forty-three to be observed in composition.

HARMONY AND COMPOSITION.

The first thing to be observed in composition is the leading notes of a tune; viz., the key note, or No. 1, and the fifths are the leading notes of every tune. The key is first to be found, then if the base runs to the key above, and the key is the lowest note, the key should be placed in the base. If the key is the highest note in the base, the key note should be placed in the base. This is the rule if your voice is above the key. If your voice is below the key, you must find the highest and lowest note, and place them in the base. In case of a tune having the same key above and below, you must play the base in the upper part of the tune; e.g., look at the base of "Ninety-Fifth," you can see it has the key on the base; A, the highest key note is on the base. There are some tunes having the same key in the base, the key note should be placed on E, and if a base runs a fourth above, the key should be placed on G. After you have written your base, do not construct your bass by placing your notes a proper distance from the note, but useful always not to place any note within one degree of the corresponding note in the other part, or within seven degrees, it being within one degree of the octave. Also avoid ninths, as they have the same effect as seconds and sevenths. Any two pairs of the same notes will make an agreeable sound, you may place notes in such if you are proper. The intervals that produce harmony, (when sounded together) are thirds, fourths, fifths, sixths, and octaves, or unisons.

These that produce a disagreeable sound are seconds, sixths, and ninths. Any sound may be used in composition, except the sounds on two adjoining letters; viz., a note on A in the base, and one on B in the treble, cannot be used at the same time. In writing music, you must keep the measure even in each part, so that you can tell which note you are trying to place one to harmonize with. When writing music, you must keep the measure even in each part, so that you can tell which note you are trying to place one to harmonize with. Be careful not to let the treble have the same note with the base, for it is very injurious, if not ruinous, to any piece of music. Any very grave voice is the chief thing in making good music. If the treble runs high, let the base take a medium position, and if the base takes the same position, the treble should take a medium position; if the treble runs too low, let the base run too high, and if the base runs too high, let the treble run too low. Try to have the base run no higher than the second space of the base staff, and if it is lower than the second space of the base staff, run it as low as you can.

When the base is properly keyed, when the treble is properly keyed. When the base is properly keyed, when the treble is properly keyed, when the base is properly keyed, and when the treble is properly keyed. To have a tune properly keyed, you must find the base line, and place all the notes in the base. The notes in the base should not be placed too high above or too low below the base line.
RUDIMENTS OF MUSIC.

RULES FOR BEATING TIME.

The Time of a musical piece is divided, by bars drawn across the staves, into equal parts, called Measures. Each Measure is again divided, by a motion of the hand, into Beats. When a Measure is commenced, the Beats must be regular in their close, giving all the notes their relative values or duration, in order to regulate the time accurately, every singer is required to observe the Beats and Accents necessary in each measure. As a general rule for beating time, the motion of the hand indicates the number of beats required in all kinds of measures—always down on the first part of the measure, and up in the last part. For the three measures of Common Time, the Beats divide the Time and Measure into two equal parts. The first part of the hand forms the accent, and the second part should be the last part of the measure, and not on the first part. For Triple Time, the hand should fall upon the second beat of the measure, and not on the first part of the latter half of the measure. For Triple Time, the hand should fall upon the second beat of the measure, and not on the second beat of the hand fall again, and, for the third beat, raise the hand up.

See, in the following Scale of Notes, where the Semitones are indicated by a star (*).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eight Notes</th>
<th>Major Key</th>
<th>Eight Notes</th>
<th>Minor Key</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 2 1 2 1 2</td>
<td>+ + i + +</td>
<td>1 2 2 1 2 1 2</td>
<td>+ + i + +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 1 2 1 2 2</td>
<td>+ + i + +</td>
<td>1 2 2 1 2 1 2</td>
<td>+ + i + +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 1 2 1 2 2</td>
<td>+ + i + +</td>
<td>1 2 2 1 2 1 2</td>
<td>+ + i + +</td>
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<td>+ + i + +</td>
<td>1 2 2 1 2 1 2</td>
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Diction of Musical Terms.

Adagio, very slow; the first mode in common time.
Allora, literally, quick; the third mode in common time.
Anent, a stress of the voice on a particular note or syllable.
Air, the tender part; the solicitation of a piece of music.
All, high above the stars.
All's, all, high counter.
Appassionato, between a slow and a slow.
Affettuoso, tender; affecting; mournful; plaintive.
Adagio, moderately.
Bars, the parts of music; graves; columns.
Bassoon, a kind of wind instrument for bass.
Bass Veil, a large, or bass fiddle.
Brevity, an entire note, or equal to two semibreves.
Canzoniere, drone or passive voice; song.
Chant, to sing pieces.
Choral, a concord; proportional vibrations.
Chorus, all the parts together.
Chords, combinations of particular sounds or degrees.
Common, a small part, as 1, 4, 3, 2, 5, 4, etc., of a tone.
Composed, to make tunes, or set music for music.
Concert, many singers or instruments together.
Concerto, in high treble performed in a distinct voice.
Couplet, both ornamented together in the same manner.
Consequent, increasing in sounds, etc.
De Cuius, or D. C., to return and close with the first strain.
Dissociate, the grunt, or inflammation of music.
Design, an octave; an eighth degree.
Dissolution, discord; disagreement.
Duet, two parts only moving together.
Doubling, diminishing in sound; becoming louder.
Forte, or F., loud or strong.
Forte, or F., the parts of music following each other in succession.
Grave, the slow, or fortissimo of music.
Grave, full, great; complete; pleasing.
Grave, slow; solemn; mournful; most slow.
Graves, a direct.
Harps, a pleasing union of sounds.

Hermaphrodite, a mixture of harmony; a musician.
Hesitation, having six lines in a verse.
Hesitation, or Hes, a kind of wind instrument.
Ipsissima, a hymn or song.
Immersion, giving the pitch or key of a tone.
Interval, the distance between two degrees or sounds.
Interval, light and soft.
Key, the most permanent sound of the voice or instrument.
Key, the principal or leading note of each species.
Large, one degree quicker than the second mode in common time.
Lasso, the difference between major and minor.
Largo, slow.
Major, the sharp key; the fourth; third; high; cheerful.
Major chord, an interval having more semitones than a minor chord of the same degrees.
Melody, in low treble performed in a man's voice.
Mensural, certain proportions of time, etc.
Mensural, to regulate sounds; to sing in a pleasing manner.
Music, the art of music; the study of music.
Musical, in music; to make music for music.
Musical, a pleasing sound; one of the liberal sciences.
Musical, continuing, like thoroughbass.
Musical, the plural of music.
Musical, the string that is sounded in a musical instrument.
Overtone, the largest of all musical instruments.
Overture, a sort of song, spoken, consisting of a melody.
Pianissimo, or P. N., directs the performer to sing soft; a kind of instrument.
Pianoforte, for use in each instrumental.
Piano, a small instrument for proving sounds.
Solo, one part alone.
Sonnata, loud and harmonious.
Symphony, a piece of music without words, which the instrument plays while the vocalist sings.
Soprano, cut off; dissipated; cut off from the usual order.
Soprano, notes placed in the same degree in one position.
Sonata, or S., a tune like a shake or roll.
Transposition, the changing the place of the key note.
Tract, a tune in three parts.
Fugato, a sort of music, 16th above a bass viol.
THE SOCIAL HARP.

PART I.

OLD HUNDRED.  L. M.

O come, loud anthems let us sing, Loud thanks to our Almighty King; For we our voices high should raise, When our salvation's Rock we praise.
18  

GLORIOUS NEWS.  8, 76.  JOHN G. McCURSTY, 1848.

Cross the stream of glory. Turn my heart to sing thy praise. And we'll land in glory. For we're bound to heaven.

Because of every mercy. Never against. Call for songs of tender praise.

And we'll land in glory. And be safe for evermore.


Oh, hear his all important cry. Lord Jesus, saviour! Down now and say your sorrow die. On the cross. On the cross.
MANDAVILLE.  L. M. D.  JOHN G. McCURRY, 1864.

Lord, what a tangled wretch was I. To see the wicked placed on high. To merrily, and merrily, and merrily, To pride, and riches of honor, altars.

But, oh, their end, their end.

But, oh, their end, their dreadful end. Thy sanctuary taught me so; Thy sanctuary taught me so; Thy sanctuary taught me so.

On slippery rocks I see them stand, And fiery billows roll below.

On slippery rocks I see them stand, And fiery billows roll below.
GO ON.

J. A. & J. F. WADE, 1853.

Oh may I worthy prove to see, The mansion in full pres- en- ty, Go on, go on, William meet again, On the bright browers of glory.

HEAVENLY KING.

A. W. McCurry.

Child of the heavenly King, When we get to heaven we will part no more, Friend, hear you well, Friend, hear you well. When we get to heaven we will part no more.
RIVER OF JORDAN.  L. M.  JOHN G. McCURRY, 1853.  21

1.  see my all in heaven be gone, Happy, O happy, He whom I fix my hope upon, Happy is the Lord.  We'll cross the River of Jordan, Happy, O happy, We'll cross the River of Jordan, Happy, O happy, We'll cross the River of Jordan, Happy, O happy.

2.  The way the holy prophet went, The road that leads from punishment; The King's highway of holiness, I'll go, for all his paths are peace.

3.  This is the way I long have sought, And mean't I were I found it not; My goal a burden long had borne, Because I was not saved from sin.

4.  The more I strive against the power, I fill the weight and quell the more; Till last I heard my Saviour say, "Come hither, seek, I AM THE WAY."

5.  Let glad I come, and there, Meet Lamb, Shall take me to the throne I am; Nothing but sin have I to give, Nothing but love shall I receive.

6.  Thus will I walk upon the road, What a dear portion I have found, I'll print to thy redeeming blood, And say, "Behold the Lamb of God!"
PART II.

THE WEARY SOULS. C. M.  Zion Songster, p. 117.  J. T. WATT.

Ye weary, heavy laden souls, Who are oppressed and bowed, That'\'s chilling wind and toasting sun, And storms surrounding you, And waters deep and cold, Take courage and be bold.

(58)
SWEET RIVERS.  C. M.  Baptist Harmony, p. 468.  Moor.

Sweet al-vore of re-deem-ing love, Let just be-fore mine eye;
And I the pic-ture of a fair, I'd trun these al-vores fly;
I'll rise es-pect-ful to my part,

With joy cut-stig the wind, I'll cross our Jer-ri's ster-niz waves, And leave the world be- hind.
NEW FAREWELL

C. M. D.

Wm. C. Davis, 1854.

Our cheerful voices let us raise, And sing a parting song; Although I'm with you now, my friends, I can't be with you long.

For I must go and leave you all, It fills my heart with pain; Although we part, perhaps, in tears, I hope we'll meet again.
A HOME IN HEAVEN.  Set piece.  

JOHN G. McCURRY & SILAS W. KAY.

A home in heaven, what a joyful thought, as the poor man tills in the world by day; His hours appear slow, and with

......

 Angels drive, From his home below to his home in heaven. From his home, etc.
TEDIOUS HOURS.  88.  WM. C. DAVIS, 1853.

The millerman's not stiles but sire,
The fields suite so want to look gay,
But when I am happy in him
December's so pleasant as May.

He name yields the sweetest perfume,
And sweeter than most his voice;
His presence dispels my griefs,
And makes all withal his delight;
I should, were he always there,
Have nothing to wish or to fear.
No mortal so happy as I,
My summer would last all the year.
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Ninety-Year Psalm 125

* The Alphabetic and Metrical Indexes have been reset and corrected for the 1974 edition. [Eds.]
GOOD-BY. Concluded.

1. On Bunker Hill's bloody field
A soldier, dying, fell
The ominous hour, near at hand;
I stood not by the man.
He called his comrade to his side,
For earth he said he was to die
A few brief words to bid him farewell,
And then he fell and died.

2. But tell the one now parted,
That sorrowful of his hour
Upon this bloody battle field
I stood not by the man.

3. My father, remember, you will tell,
About the bloody scene,
Yet I was not there in the field,
But stood by my side.
Yet I was not there in the field,
Yet I was not there in the field.

4. My mother's face is with me now,
Her voice is on my ear,
As near as from her hand I drew
The blade, when they bid me die.
When, oh, when you in your heart
The battle of this day
Speak softly, remember, softly speak,
What you may have to say.

5. Speak not to by in hurried words,
The bidding comes too near,
The words of life will soon be spoken,
Oh, remember, have a thought.
No, I did not stand in the war,
And tell her that she died.

6. But, remember, there's one I love
Over once would look again,
She lives upon the sleeping hill
Nor overlooks the scene,
Yet I can hear still
On the mountain, when I shall never more,
The voice with love is memory's voice,
To gather wild flowers.

7. Tell her when death was on my brow,
And life ending at
Her face, her form, her parting words,
Were near to me then,
Tell her to weep no more,
Tell her, a soldier say,
And that I know she thought of me,
Some termed miles away.

Abbeville
A Home is
Alabama
Albany
Albion
Amherst
Amsterdam
Antioch
A Wonder

Balltown
Bangor
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McCurry normally indicates personal knowledge of the authorship of a selection by printing the author’s full name and a date. When he gives a full name without a date, he is usually reprinting a piece composed originally for The Sacred Harp. From this book or others he also drew many older compositions whose authorship was then—and often still is—obscure. These customarily bear no attribution at all or only the last name of the composer. Where it has been possible to supplement or correct McCurry’s information with either an attribution established by Jackson or a traditional ascription found in the songbooks of Wyeth, Davison, Walker, White, or Hauser, this is given in brackets. In parentheses after the title of a piece the following set of symbols is used (a) to show an earlier printing of the piece in any of the three major Deep South songsters and (b) to give a page reference to Jackson’s discussion of the tune’s folksong analogues.

A .......... George Pullen Jackson, Another Sheaf of White Spirituals (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1958)


S .......... Spiritual Folk-Songs of Early America (Locust Valley, N. Y.: J. J. Augustin, 1937)


Sach ...... Benjamin Franklin White and E. J. King, The Sacred Harp, facsimile of
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