

Musical taste among the people would soon begin to decay, and the music of the masters, no longer accessible because too difficult, would gradually be forgotten. The audiences who used to enjoy opera and oratorio, concert and musical soirées, would constantly decrease, and in the end, poor Mr. Gounod, unknown and alone, would reap the full reward of his hasty letter.

The young lady (or gentleman) of to-day who loves music is a much more important personage than Mr. Gounod seems willing to admit. It is much better for all concerned, Mr. Gounod included, that she should be allowed to persevere her musical studies as devotedly as possible, rather than slight them and waste her time with "as little as possible"—that is, superficial—piano practice.

We know that there are many distinct classes of amateurs as to degree of ability, taste and genuine talent, those of the higher degrees comparing favorably with able professional musicians.

But even the least able of amateurs is deserving of consideration. The young lady who during the earlier stages of her musical experience, thought "The Maiden's Prayer" sublime, soon learned to aspire after something better. Thus love and taste for music, beginning with the lowest round of the ladder, rise higher and disseminate in each coming generation, until its love and fullest comprehension become universal.

Then will the time have come for the appreciation of good music!

Hence, it would be unwise to accept Mr. Gounod's advice to the young lady music lover of the period.—ROBERT GOLDBECK, in *The Etude*.

#### DO NORTH GERMANS SING IN TUNE?

**D**URING his stay in Berlin, Mr. Kingston became convinced that the Prussians, with all their love and all their just appreciation of fine music, have no ear for singing, being alike unable to sing in tune themselves and careless as to the singing in tune of others. Our own observations on this painful subject would lead us rather to say that the Prussians like to hear the right note, but do not trouble themselves about the quality of the tone. Roughness, combined with accuracy, is certainly tolerated by them both in vocal and instrumental performances; originally, perhaps, because they could get nothing better; then, after a time, because they had become used to it and did not mind. Mr. Kingston, however, is supported in his view that the North Germans, and indeed, the Germans generally, do not and cannot sing in tune, by no less an authority than Richard Wagner, who, apart from his character as composer, must, during a long experience as musical conductor, have had abundant opportunities of forming an opinion on the subject. After pointing out that "from a physiological point of view the Germans lack the true methodical voice gift," Wagner, in the true spirit of paradox, proceeds to argue that to this defect may be ascribed "the mighty influence that, for a century past, Germany has exercised upon the development of music; inasmuch as the creative force of a people exerts itself in the direction in which nature has been a niggard of her gifts to it, rather than in that

indicating lavish liberality on her part." A simpler and more natural explanation of the "mighty influence exercised by Germany upon the development of music" would be that, lacking voices, she has turned to instruments, and over the realm of instrumental music (as a glance at the programme of any high-class concert will show), Germany reigns unquestioned and supreme.—*Music and Manners*.

#### VIOLINS OLD AND NEW.

HOW THEY ARE AFFECTED BY THE HOT WEATHER.

**T**HIS is just the kind of weather to write, talk and play the violin (in your mind). It is a little better weather for the old violins than for the new. The old fiddles are accustomed to this kind of weather, and can stand it, having become well seasoned, you know, for the last two or three hundred years, away down in sunny Italy, where the summers are generally warm and pleasant and enjoyable if there is no cholera about. And these same old "Cremona" fids just enjoy this hot wave; they are all aglow. Just take this one out of its silk-lined quarters, and see how it glistens and sparkles. The varnish, which is of various rich shades of amber, brown, golden, orange, cherry red and golden brown, looks for all the world as if it was just poured over the instrument melting hot, looking, and in fact, actually is, soft and sticky, although they have seen over 200 years of service; they must be very carefully handled in such weather. But the tones are all right. This hot, damp weather does not trouble the tone of the "Cremona." It is just as pure, as limpid, and as sweet as ever, and more so, if anything; the soft, rich coating of this rare old varnish is so thoroughly incorporated into the old wood that dampness affects it but little. It is only the strings that are seriously affected, and they will snap, especially the E, and occasionally a good G will fail, which is the most serious thing about the whole matter in this glorious climate, as sampled in the past few days hereabouts. The resin on the bow takes a peculiar hold or bite in such weather, and one can just immensely enjoy his Strad. or Amati in this warm, pleasant air—as well, or even better than cold, foggy or disagreeable seasons.

Everything considered, this is genuine "Cremona" weather. Take that old "Stainer" there which is getting to be pretty well advanced. Let's see! Mozart used to rasp away on it years and years ago, and it must have sounded pretty well then. On examination and referring to its history, we find it was whittled out away back in the year 1659, and even the ancient "Stainer" does not sound very badly in this weather, seeing it's covered over literally with some of Amati's best amber varnish. Then there is that newcomer, the new member of the family, which has just found its way across the water to join its companions. That, too, has got on its warm weather coat, and looks like one of those lovely rare ripe peaches—such color, and so waxy and rich—the weather suits it exactly. Then there is that fine old "Lupot" of the French school. Here is the masterpiece of the French Stradivarius, a perfect beauty, and one of the most perfect known, covered with that same soft, rich, lustrous varnish, scarcely inferior to that of Stradivarius himself. Even this