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INTRODUCTION.

Every musical note has two essential qualities, *Intonation* or *Tune*, and *Measure* or *Time*. *Intonation* or *Tune* signifies the *pitch* of musical notes; that is, their relative gravity and acuteness. *Measure* or *Time* relates to their duration or length.

The performance *in Tune and Time* of Music not previously known, is termed when done with the Voice, *Singing at Sight*; if with an Instrument, *Playing at Sight*. The phrase, *Reading Music*, applies in both cases.

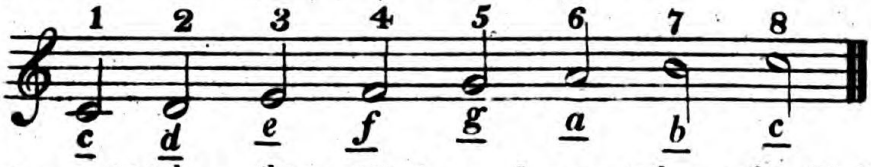
To conceive and sing a melody represented by musical characters, without need of recourse to an Instrument, is a power so few possess that it is generally thought extremely difficult to be obtained. Our Notation, tho' admirable in most respects, is yet the chief obstacle encountered by the vocal student who desires *to read music*. The very same characters will, in different circumstances, represent different intervals. For instance, the intervals are not the same in the following examples, altho' the notes are precisely similar.

To this branch of the subject, *Intonation or Tune*, the following observations and examples are devoted, and it is hoped that the method proposed will remove in a great degree the confusion and intricacy usually experienced. *Time* is a thing of comparative facility, and is treated at full length in so many elementary publications of easy access, that its consideration is here omitted.

The following preparatory information is essential to those who desire to attain the power of *Singing at Sight*.

There are two species of Key in modern music, called the *Major* & the *Minor Modes*.

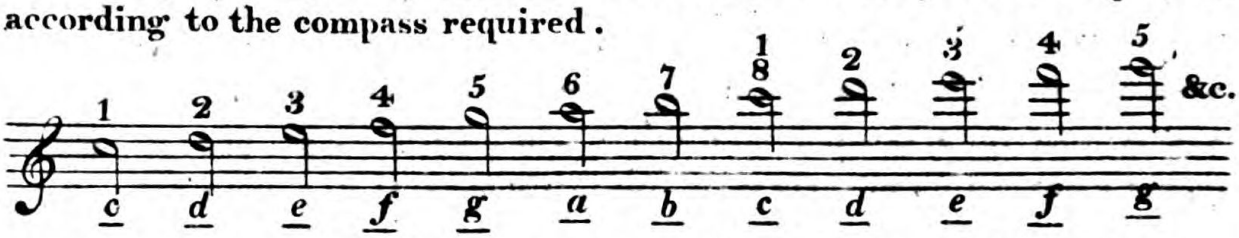
The following *Scale*, or series of notes, represents the nature of the *Major Mode*.



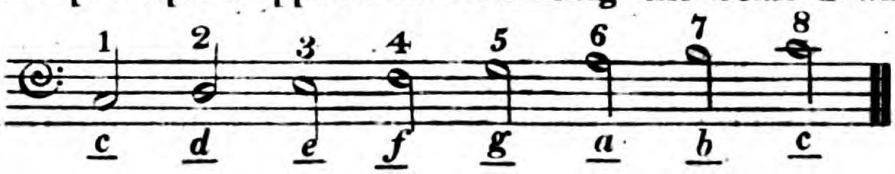
Btween *e* and *f* (3rd and 4th), and between *b* and *c* (7th and 8th), the interval in each case is a *Semitone*, the other successive notes are separated by the interval of a *Wholetone*. The first note of this series, *c* is called the *Keynote* or *Tonic*.

Music formed of these notes or their octaves, and regulated according to certain established principles, is said to be *in the Key of C Major*.

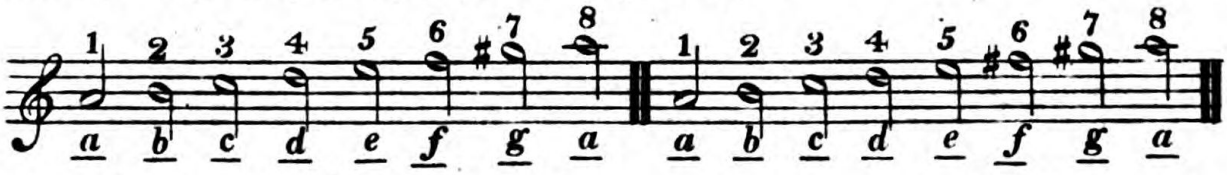
Commenceing at the 8th. note, and ascending to the 8th. above it, a similar series is produced, and the same names are retained. This process is repeated according to the compass required.



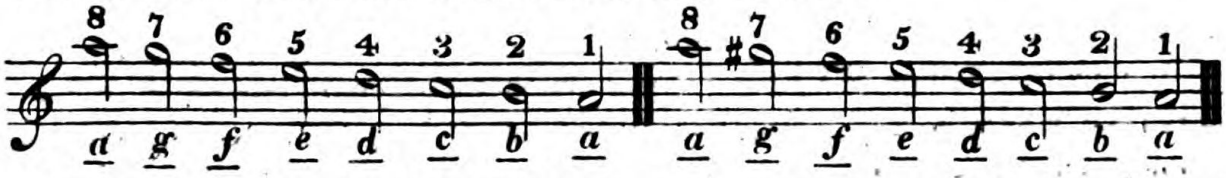
The same principle is applied in extending the Scale downwards.



If we take the sixth note of the Scale of C Major and ascend by the successive degrees to the 8th. note above, altering one or two notes according to circumstances, the *Minor Mode* is produced.



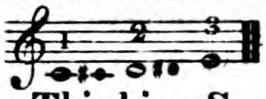
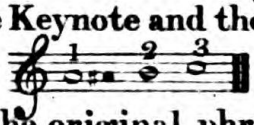
In descending, the notes are the same as in the *Major Mode*, except in certain cases where one note is sometimes altered.



The arrangement of the Wholetones and Semitones, it will be seen, differs from that existing in the Major Mode.

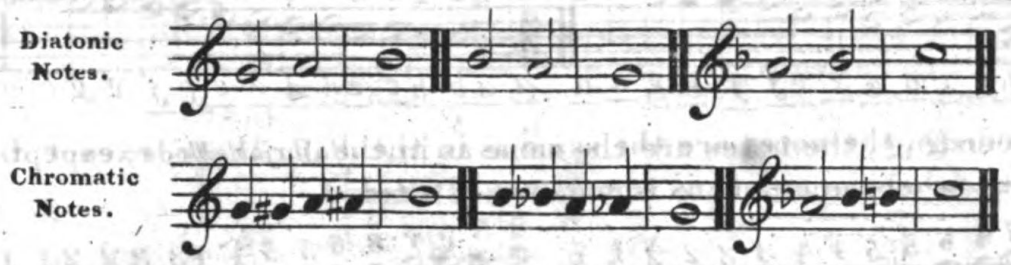
When no accidental alterations take place in the Minor Mode, the Semitones are between the 2nd. *and* 3rd. and the 5th. *and* 6th. In the Major they are always between the 3rd. *and* 4th, and the 7th. *and* 8th.

The first note of this Minor Scale is called the *Keynote* or *Tonic*; and music is said to be *in the Key of A Minor*, when the materials are drawn from this series of notes, or their octaves according to certain laws established in the art.

The terms *Major* and *Minor* refer to the nature of the *third note* of the Scale. In the Major Mode there are two Wholetones, constituting a *Major* 3d. between the Keynote and the Third  In the Minor Mode the interval between the Keynote and the Third is a Semitone less, and is thence called a *Minor* 3rd.  We at present say, "a Major Key," "a Minor Key," in place of the original phrases, "a Key with a Major 3d." "a Key with a Minor 3d.

These two Keys, C Major and A Minor, are the models upon which all the other Keys are constructed. Every Major Key is the same as C Major in the arrangement of its constituent sounds; and every Minor Key in the same way is similar to A Minor. In fact it may be said that *there are but two Keys in music*, the Major and the Minor. The importance of a perfect knowledge of the constitution of these two primitive Keys, C Major and A Minor, is therefore evident; and whoever seeks to obtain the power of *Singing at Sight*, should begin by studying them with great attention. These Keys once well understood, all the rest will be acquired with facility.

The general name of *Diatonic* is given to the Major and Minor Scales, which consist of Wholetones and Semitones intermixed. *Chromatic notes* are those introduced between *Diatonic notes*, for the purpose of dividing the Wholetones in the Major and Minor Scales into Semitones. They are represented by placing accidental Sharps, Flats, or Naturals, before Diatonic notes.



Accidental Sharps, Flats, or Naturals, do not always indicate Chromatic notes. When the Key changes in the course of a Piece, those new Diatonic notes which are not to be found in the original Key require accidentals.

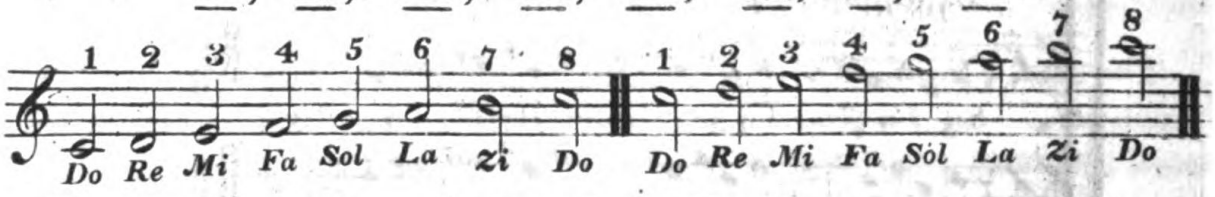
From hence it follows that musical notes are presented to the eye in three different points of view: – 1, as parts of the Scale of the Key in which the Piece commences, – 2, as parts of a new Scale when a *Modulation* (or change of Key) takes place, – and 3, as Chromatic notes standing between the Diatonic notes of the original Key, or of the new Key introduced by Modulation. This obvious division of the subject into three branches will be observed in the following pages. The first will be treated more at length than the others, and it should be studied with particular care. *Chromatic alterations*, and *Changes of Key* will only confuse and unsettle the student's ideas, if entered upon before some facility of reading in the primitive Keys be attained.

The Scale (Major & Minor) described in the Introduction, may be considered as an Alphabet furnishing the materials with which Music is composed.

In this book the Minor Scale is viewed as a derivative from, or attendant upon, the Major Scale; and the latter is therefore chosen as the medium of conveying the writer's principle. The Key of C Major being the model upon which all the other Major Keys are formed, the first examples are given in that Key.

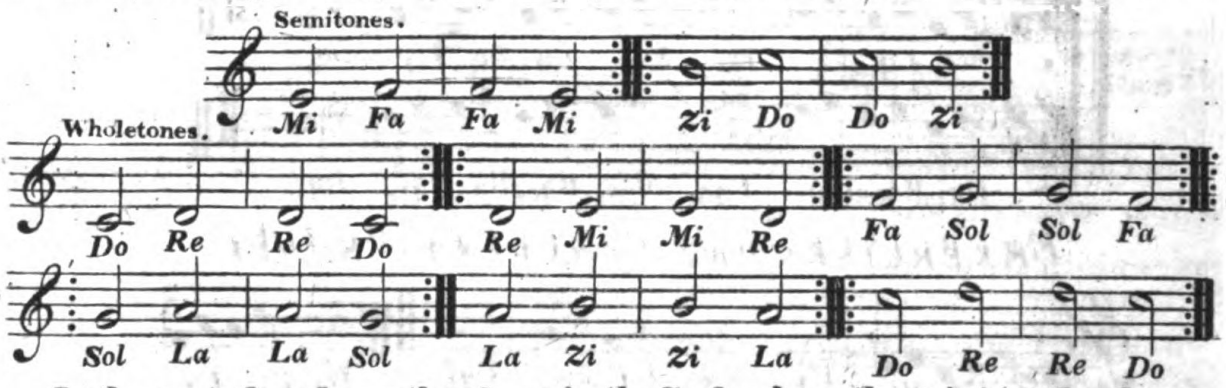
The degrees of the Scale, according to the plan here proposed, will be designated by the syllables,

Do, *Re*, *Mi*, *Fa*, *Sol*, *La*, *Zi*,* *Do*.

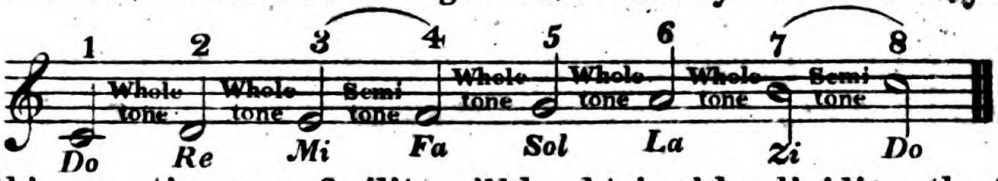


The syllables, with the particular notes to which they are applied, should be so imprinted in the memory, that when any two of these syllables occur to the mind, the proper interval between them may at once suggest itself *by association*. The value of this precept will be comprehended when we proceed beyond the Key of C Major.

To begin, practice the Wholetones and Semitones separately, in order to obtain a clear and accurate perception of their difference. Sing every note in the following examples with the syllable attached to it.



In the next place, learn the places in the Scale where those intervals always occur, and endeavour to fix their right order indelibly on the memory.

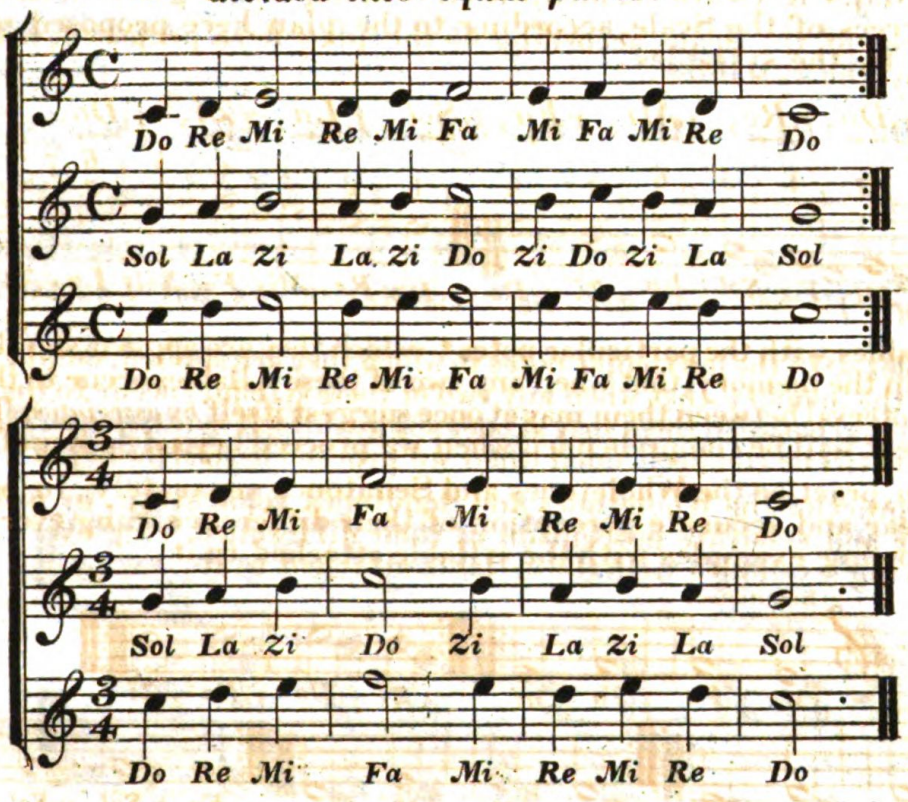


In this operation some facility will be obtained by dividing the Scale into two equal parts of four notes in each. It will be seen that these two parts are precisely similar in the order of the constituent intervals: consequently if one be known, the other is also.

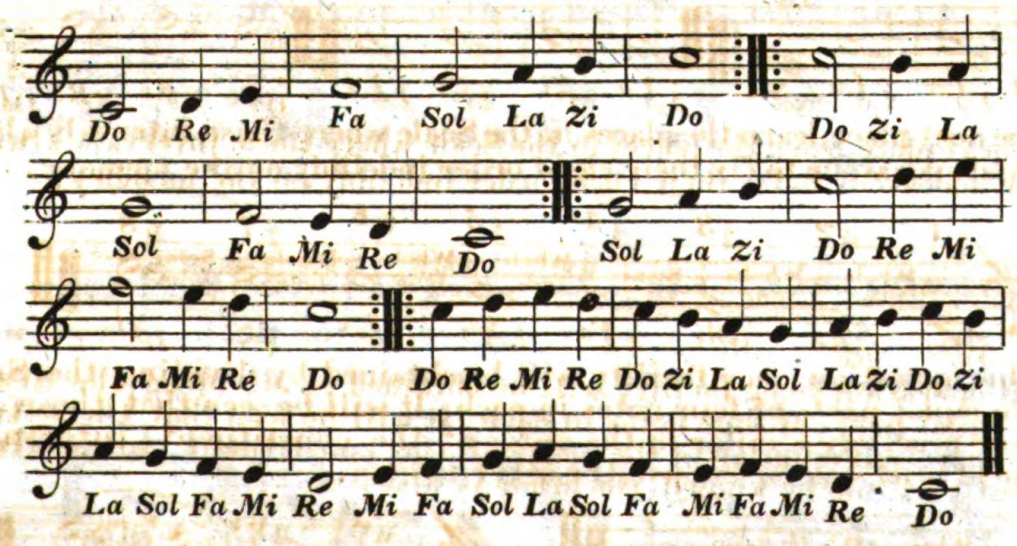
* The Syllable *Si*, in ordinary use by singers, is pronounced like the letter *C*. To avoid the confusion that may arise, *Zi* is here substituted.

Observe, that in each series of four notes, the third note has the vowel *i* in the attending syllable, and the first the vowel *o*. Every means should be employed to assist the memory, and create association of ideas.

EXERCISES on the SCALE, divided into equal parts.



EXERCISES on the COMPLETE SCALE.



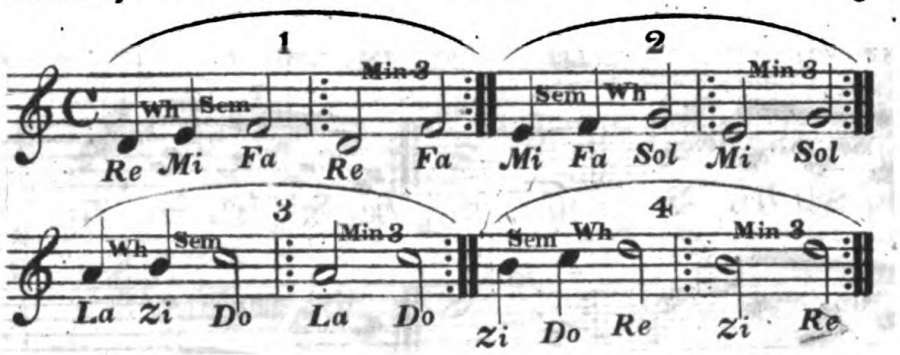
It would now greatly conduce to the improvement of the Student, to construct and practise various sorts of passages consisting of the notes of the Scale of C Major, ascending and descending gradually, like those above given; at the same time carefully adding the proper syllables. The act of writing fixes the attention, upon which the memory in most things depends.

The next step is to those Intervals produced by the omission of one or more notes of the Scale: as, the *Third*, *Fourth*, *Fifth*, *Sixth*, *Seventh*, *Eighth*, &c. Without introducing any note foreign to the Key of C Major, we find two species of each of those Intervals, the Eighth excepted, which is always the same, if not altered by an accidental Sharp or Flat. The *Minor Second* or Semitone, and the *Major Second* or Wholetone, have been given in the preceding examples: they arise in the gradual succession of the notes of the Scale.

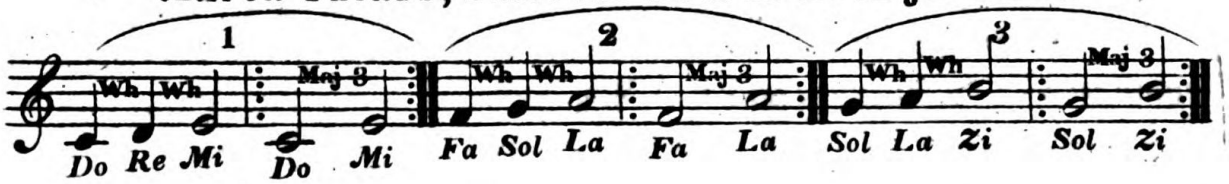
The Minor Third consists of two notes at the distance of a Wholetone and a Semitone: the interval of two Wholetones produces *the Major Third*.

In the Study of these and the other wider Intervals, prove the accuracy of each Interval by first singing the intermediate notes as well as the extremes.

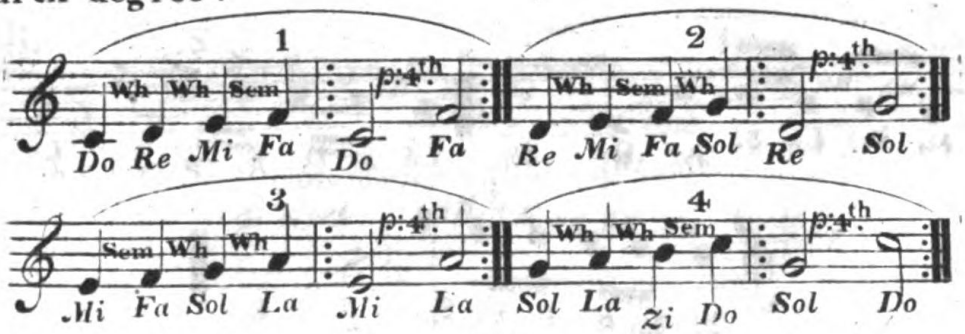
Minor Thirds, The Interval occurs four times in the Major Scale.

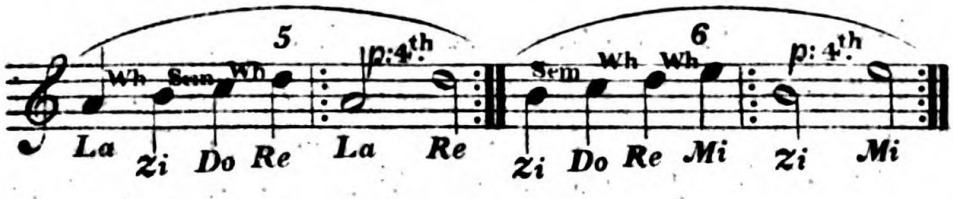


Major Thirds, There are three in the Major Scale.

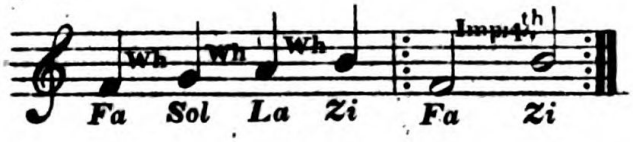


The Perfect Fourth is an Interval equal to two Wholetones and a Semitone. It is found on every degree of the Scale, except on Fa, the fourth degree.

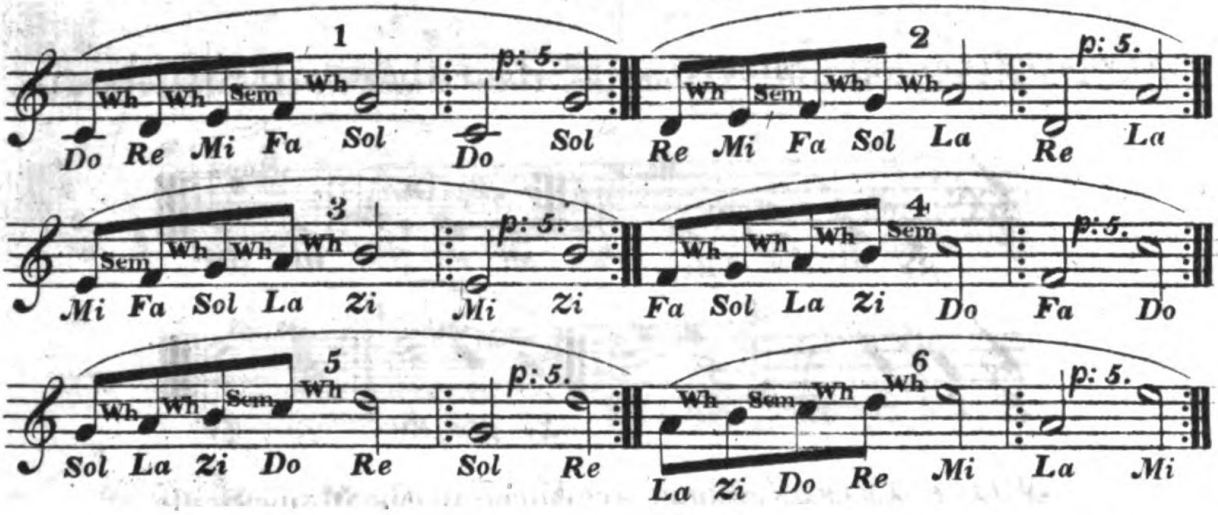




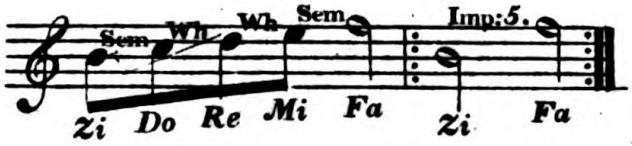
The Imperfect Fourth comprises three Wholetones. It is only found on the fourth degree of the Scale.



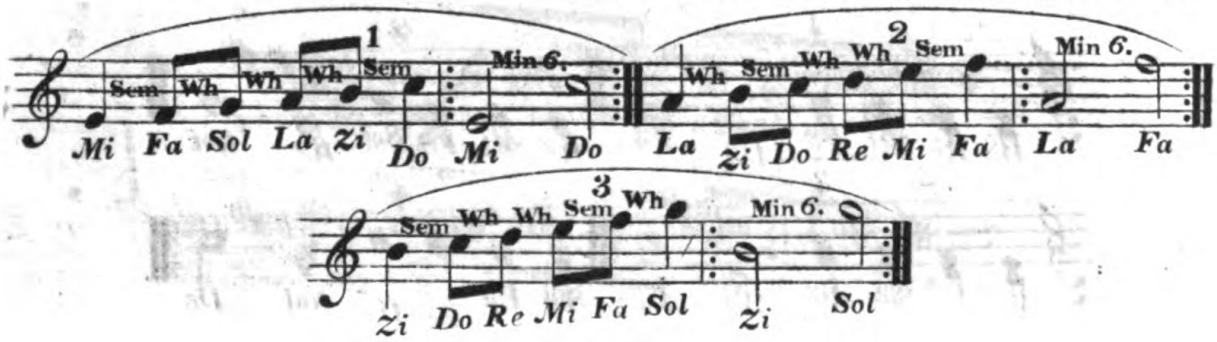
The Perfect Fifth comprises an Interval equal to one Semitone and three Wholetones. It takes place on six degrees of the Scale.



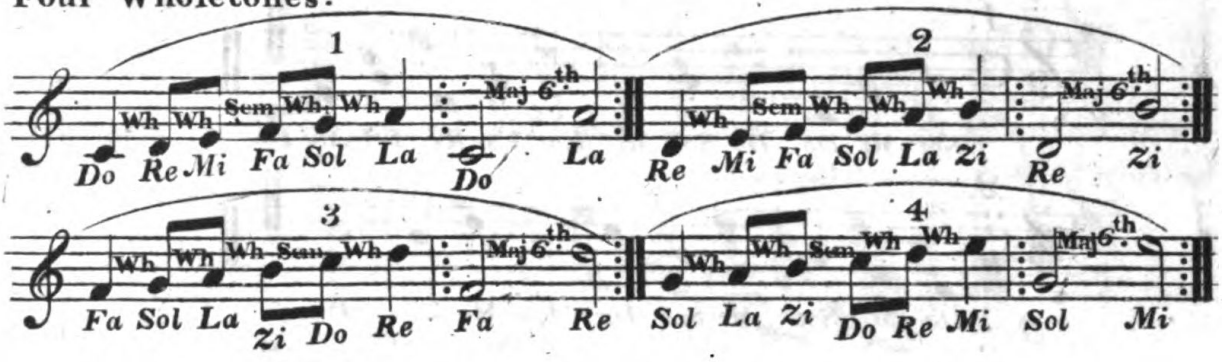
The Imperfect Fifth is a Semitone less than the Perfect Fifth, being equal to two Semitones and two Wholetones.



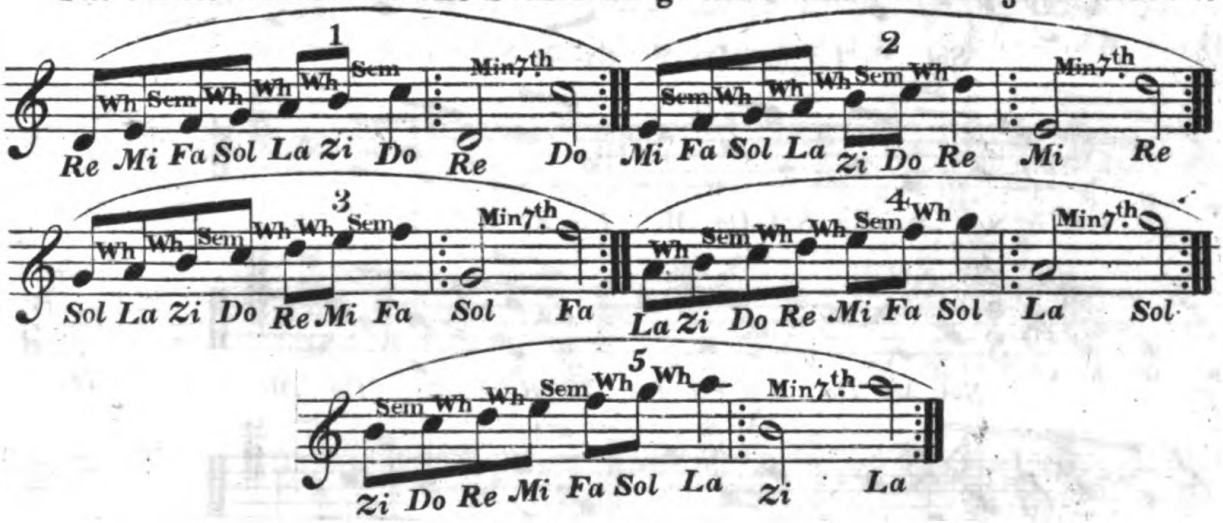
The Minor Sixth is equal to two Semitones and three Wholetones.



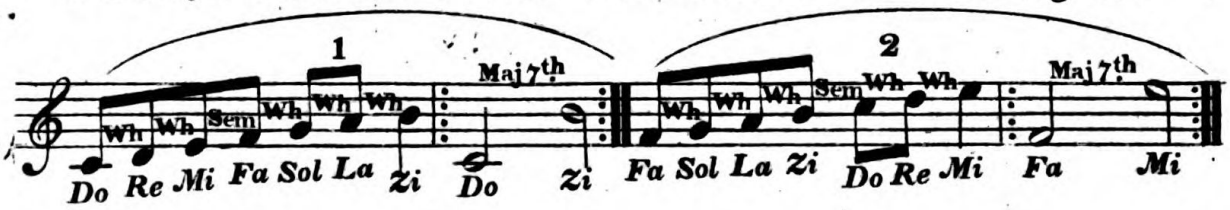
The Major Sixth contains a Semitone more, or one Semitone and Four Wholetones.



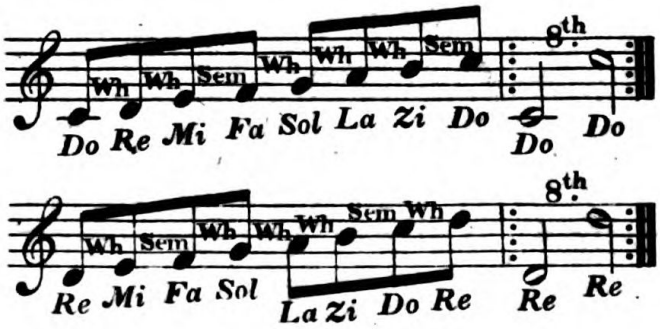
The Minor Seventh **is one Semitone greater than the Major Sixth.**



The Major Seventh **is but one Semitone less than the Eighth.**

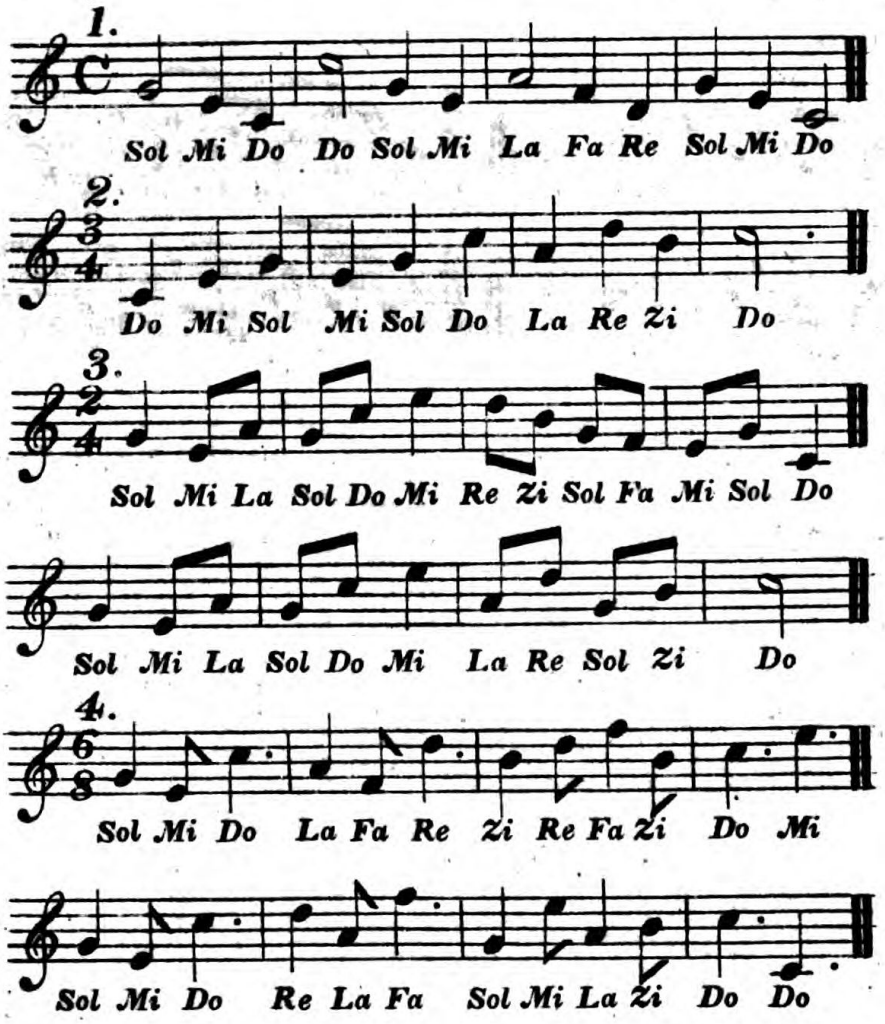


The Eighth, **or** ***Octave***, **is the same on every degree of the Scale, and comprizes two Semitones and five Wholetones.**



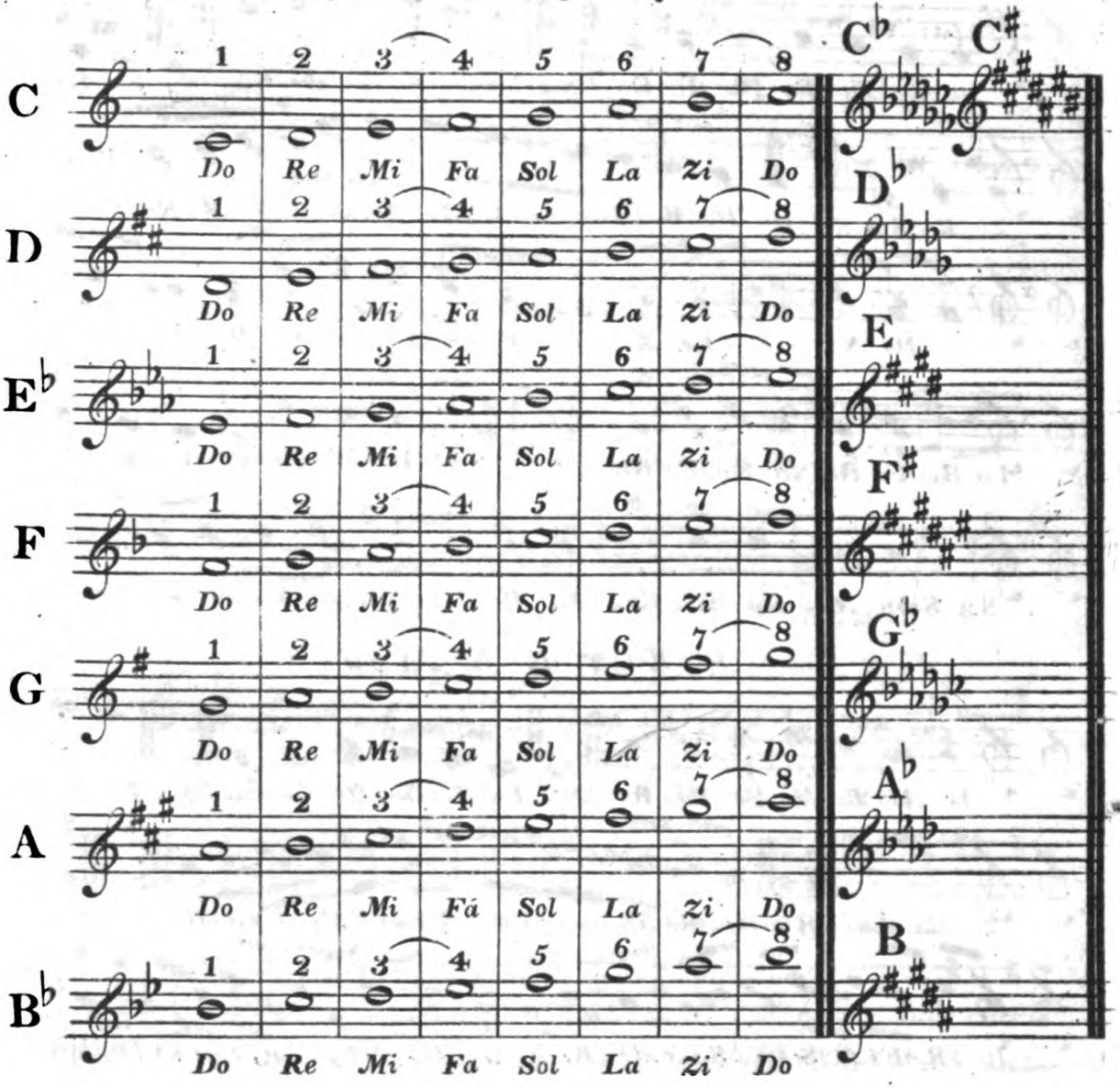
&c. &c.

Here follow a few Exercises upon the Intervals.



When the Key of C Major has been carefully studied on the plan here recommended, the Keys with Sharps or Flats at the Clef may be commenced. The syllables *Do*, *Re*, *Mi*, *Fa*, *Sol*, *La*, *Zi*, will no longer be approprated to *C*, *D*, *E*, *F*, *G*, *A*, *B*. To the Keynote, in whatever Major Key the music may be, the syllable *Do* will be applied; the second of the Scale will be *Re*, the third, *Mi*; &c. It has been said in the Introduction that all the Major Keys are alike in their construction; and the Student will now find that as soon as he knows the Keynote and applies the syllables to that and the other notes of the Scale, any difficulty which he anticipated from the array of Flats and Sharps at the Clef has really no existence; he sings every Scale as easily as the first he learned.

The following Table, which will be found valuable for reference, exhibits the perfect uniformity of all the Major Keys.

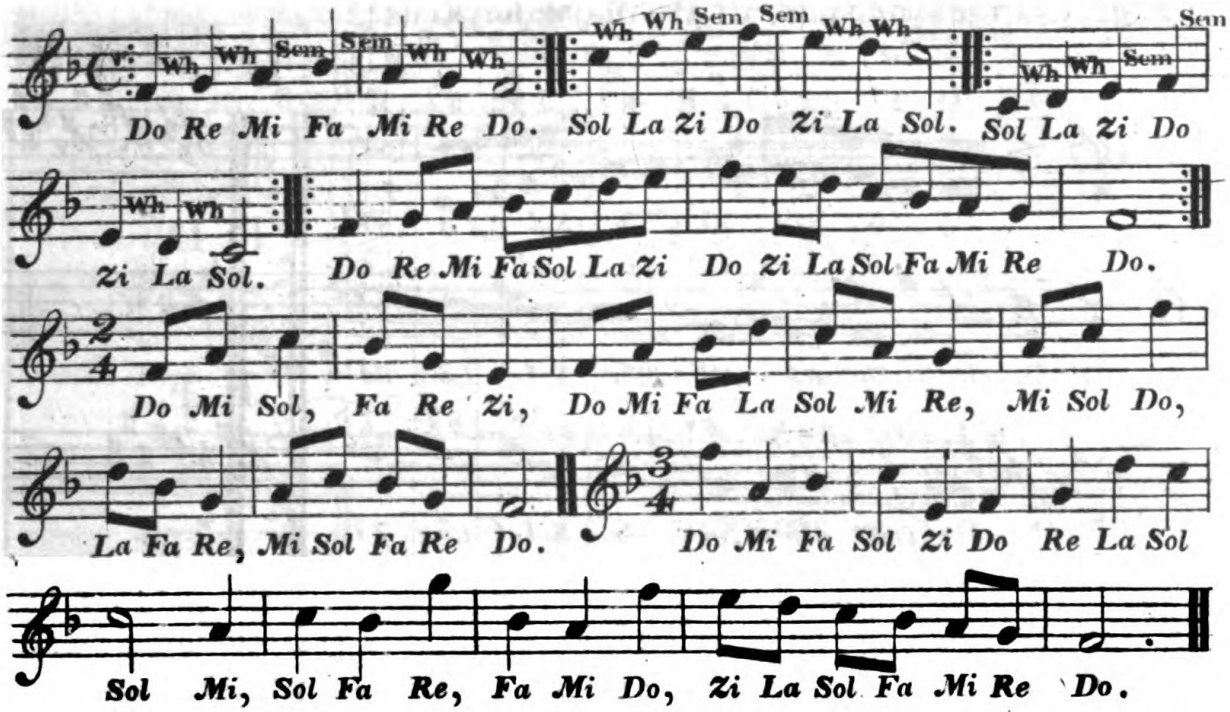


The Clef with or without the attending Sharps and Flats, is called *the Signature*. **The Signatures at the beginning of the above Staves are the most usual, but those at the end are sometimes used. They only raise or lower the Scale a Semitone, and make no alteration in the arrangement of the Intervals.**

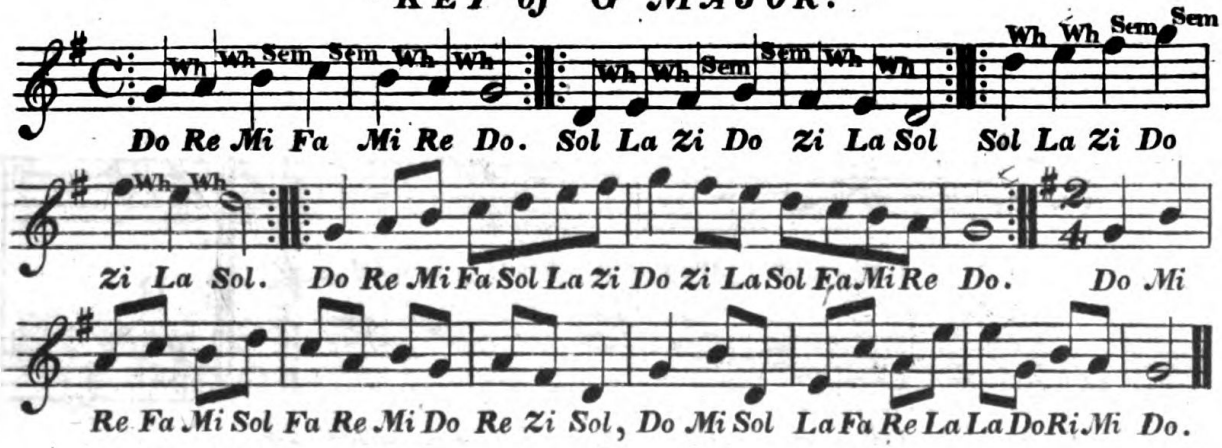
The Student should now learn what Major Key is indicated by each Signature. The preceding Table will supply the means of doing that. He has then to familiarize himself with the application of the syllables in the various Keys. The following examples will give general ideas on this point, which must be followed up and extended by industry and observation.

EXERCISES on the SCALES and INTERVALS.

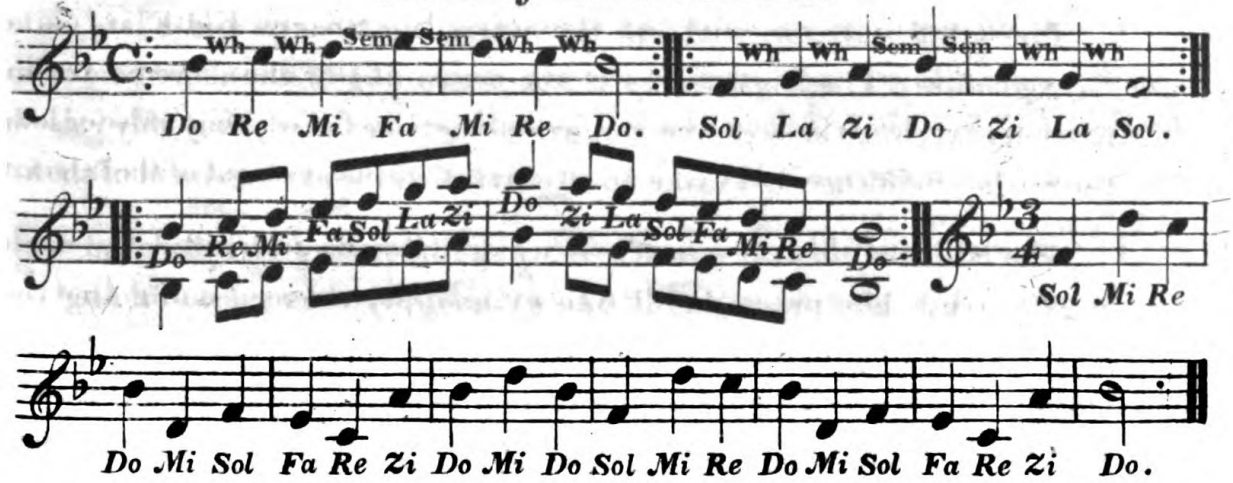
KEY of F MAJOR.



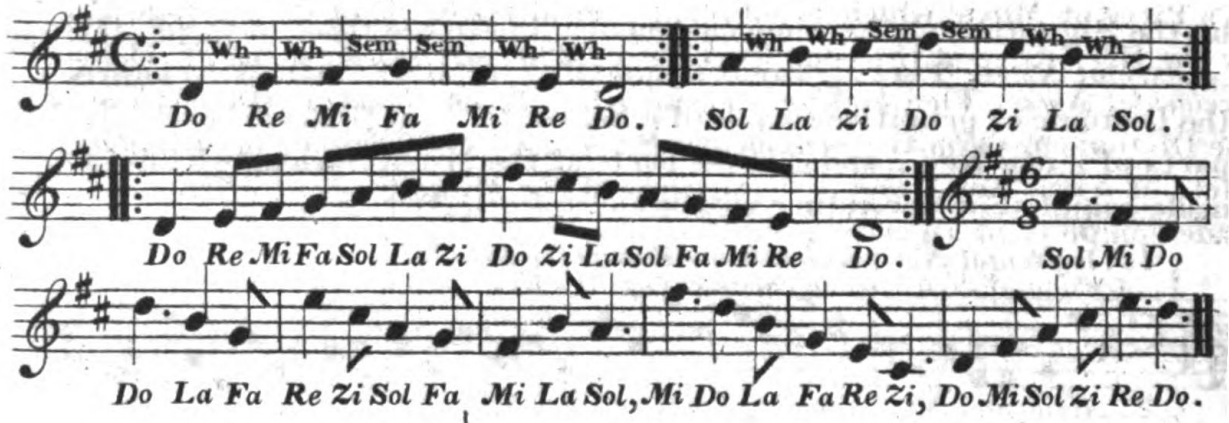
KEY of G MAJOR.



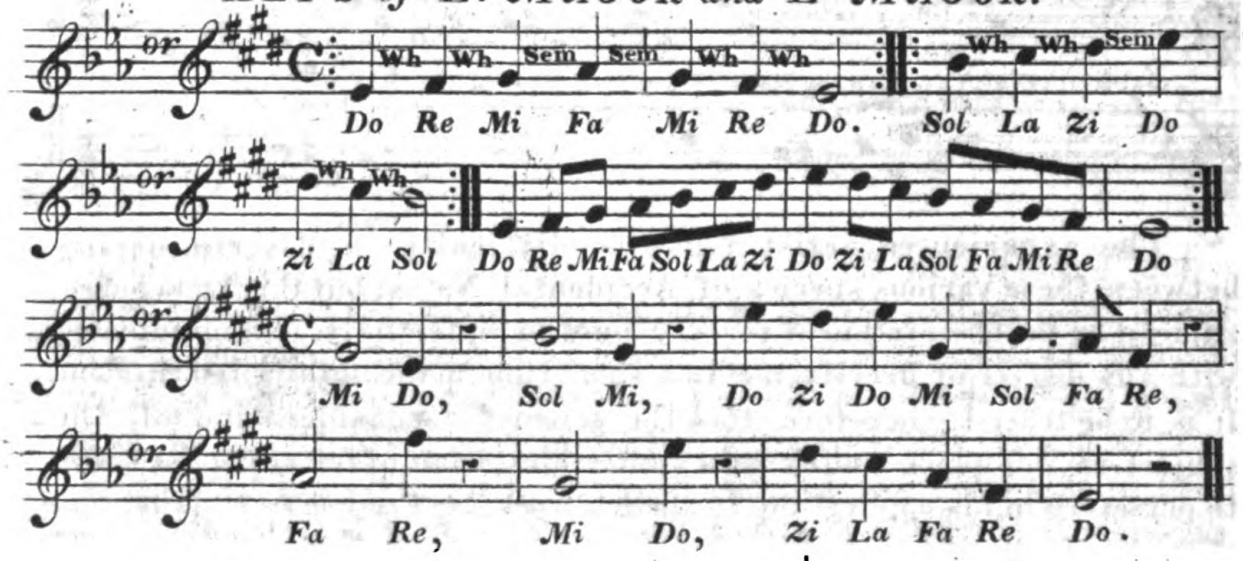
KEY of B♭ MAJOR.



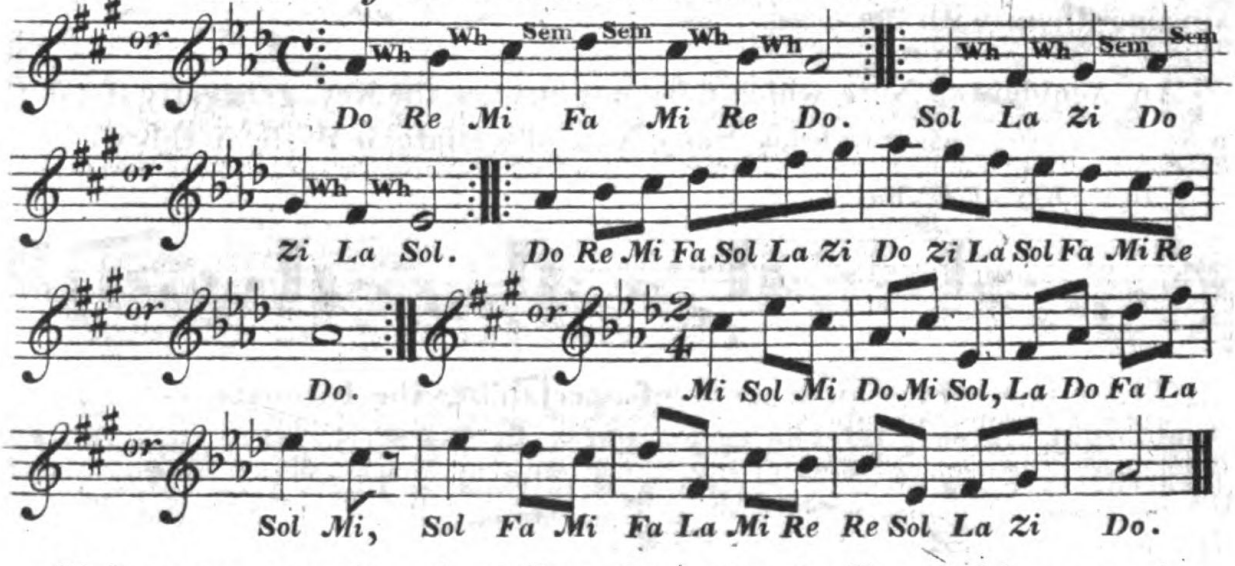
KEY of D MAJOR.



KEYS of E♭ MAJOR and E MAJOR.



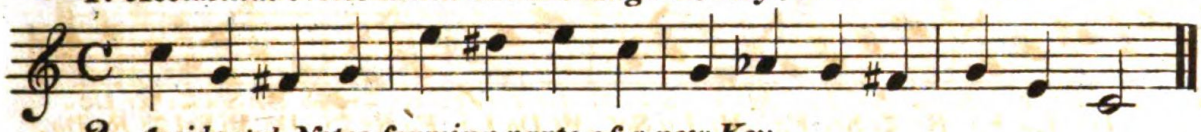
KEYS of A MAJOR and A♭ MAJOR.



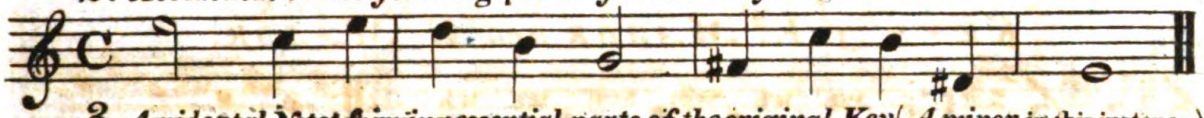
It is unnecessary to extend these Exercises to Keys with a greater number of Flats and Sharps. They are very rarely met with in Vocal Music, and the Student should now assist himself in the reading of any piece in which the same Key is maintained without Modulation.

We have now to direct our attention to Notes introduced in the course of a Piece of Music, which do not form part of the Scale of the Key indicated by the Signature at the commencement. There are three sorts of these *Accidental Notes*. They appear occasionally – 1st, as *Chromatic Notes* between the Diatonic or primitive sounds of a Scale – 2ndly, as Diatonic or primitive parts of a new Key – and 3rdly, as parts of the Minor Scale, which cannot be made complete in ascending without *Accidental Notes*.

1. Accidental Notes which do not change the Key.



2. Accidental Notes forming parts of a new Key.

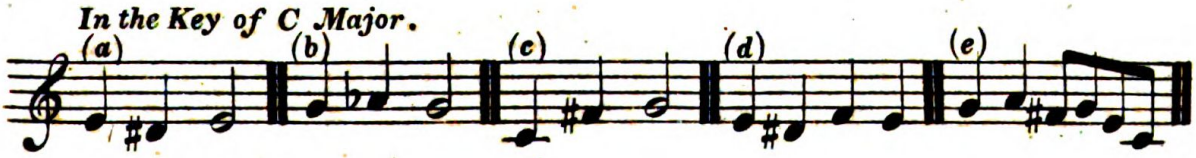


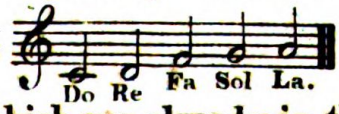
3. Accidental Notes forming essential parts of the original Key (A minor in this instance.)

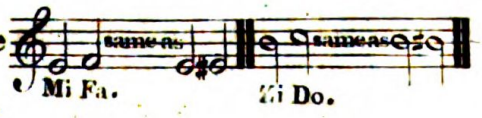
The experienced artist finds no difficulty in discriminating between these various species of Accidental Notes; but this knowledge, attained by the observation of years, cannot be effectually communicated with any degree of brevity, nor in a short time, to the uninitiated Student. It is to be feared, therefore, that the scientific consideration of the subject in this place would rather deter him, than offer any inducement to persevere in his application. In another work, "*An Essay on the Discrimination of the Key in Music*," the writer has given a complete information on the *Accidental Notes*. All that is here proposed, is to give a simple method of singing them with accuracy.

An Accidental Note which does not change the Key, generally stands *a Semitone either above or below* Some Note of a Diatonic Scale; in this way:

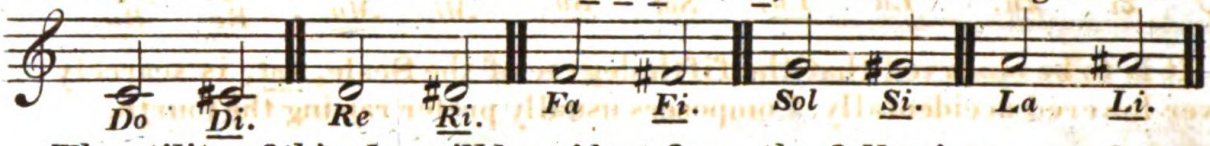
In the Key of C Major.



There is a very simple means of ascertaining the Intonation of such Accidental Notes. Of the seven notes in the Scale, there are only five that are *accidentally* raised a Semitone. These five Notes are the following: 

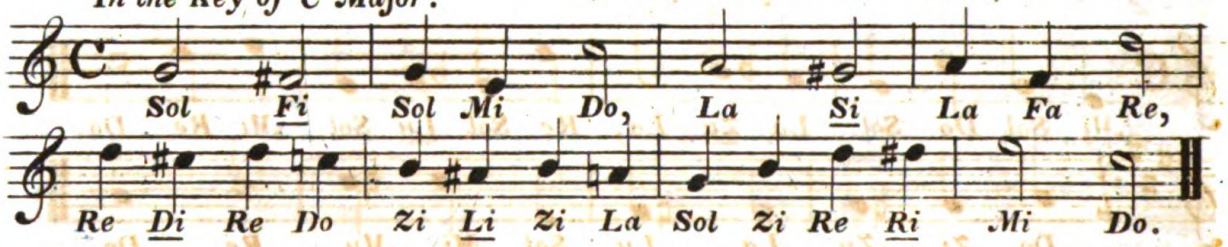
If we raise the other two, they only become notes which are already in the Scale 

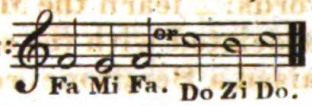
Now if the Student has well studied the rules and examples already given, he will find that the syllables *Mi* and *Zi* habitually lead him to sing the interval of a Semitone, if the passage be gradually ascending. The idea of a Semitone is associated with that of the vowel *i* in those syllables. Taking advantage of this association, when we meet with a note accidentally raised a semitone, let us change the vowel of the syllable which belongs to that note as a primitive part of the Scale, from *o*, *a*, *e*, into *i*,* in the following manner.



The utility of this plan will be evident from the following examples.

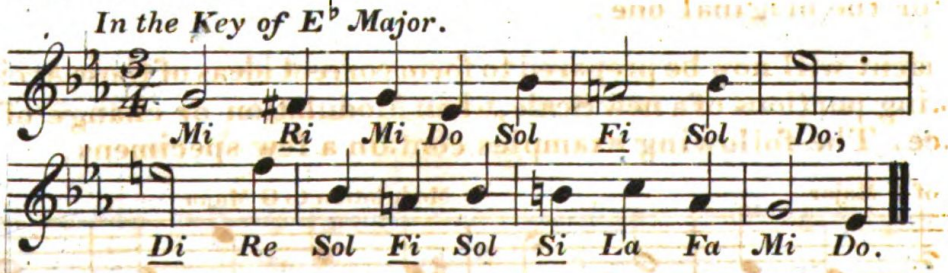
In the Key of C Major.



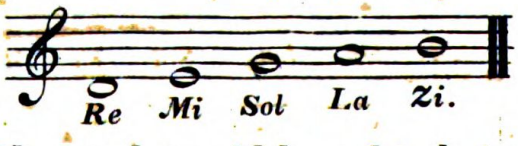
In all these cases of the Semitone produced by an Accidental Note, imitate the interval already familiarized to the Ear and Voice by its occurrence in the Scale between *Mi and Fa*, and *Zi and Do*. For instance, the Semitone here is precisely the same as the following: 

In Keys with Flats at the Clef, Naturals are used to alter the Notes made Flat in the Scale.

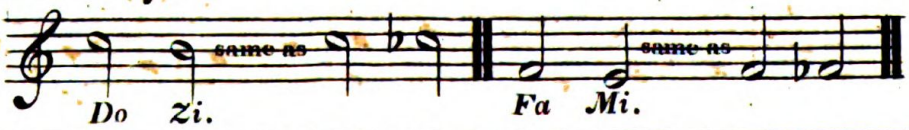
In the Key of E♭ Major.



There are also but five notes of the Scale that admit of being accidentally lowered a Semitone.

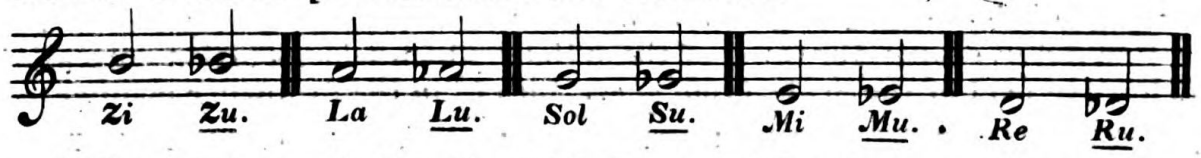


The other two, if lowered, would be only changed to notes found in the Scale already.



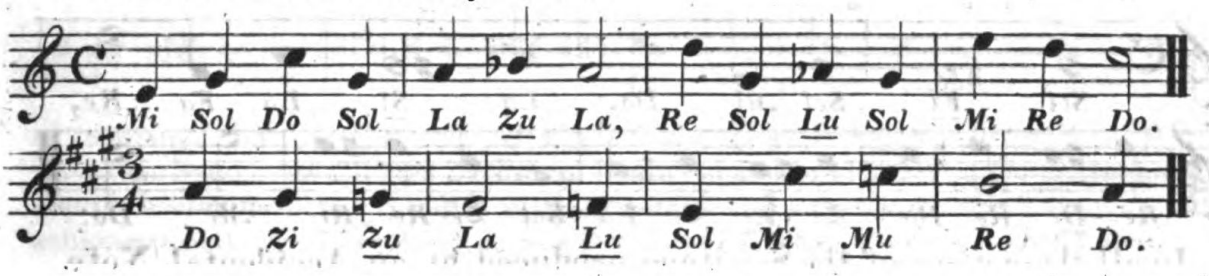
*Note. All the vowels employed are pronounced as they are in the Italian language: *a* as in *father*, *e* as *ei* in *veil*, *i* as in *machine*, *o* as in *more*, *u* as *oo* in *cool*.

We have now no means of assisting the Student by association, but we may apply the sound of the vowel *u* pronounced as *oo* in *cool*, instead of the original vowel sounds, when we want to distinguish Notes accidentally lowered from the primitive Notes of the Scale.



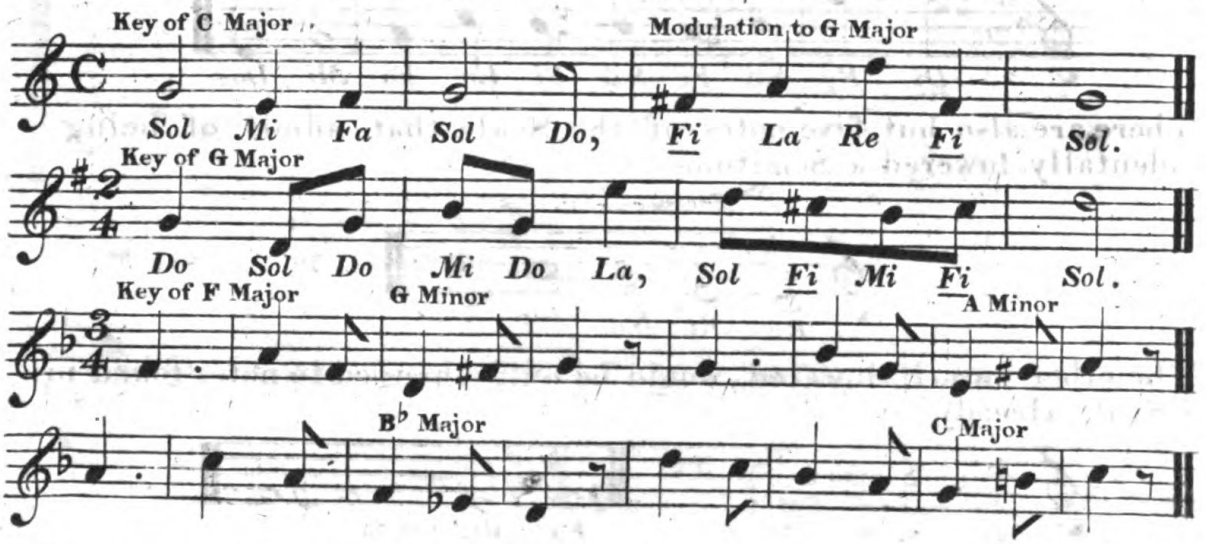
It is to be observed that the fifth degree of the Scale, *Sol*, is scarcely ever lowered accidentally. Composers usually prefer raising the fourth,

The course to be followed in this case, is similar to that recommended where Notes are accidentally raised.



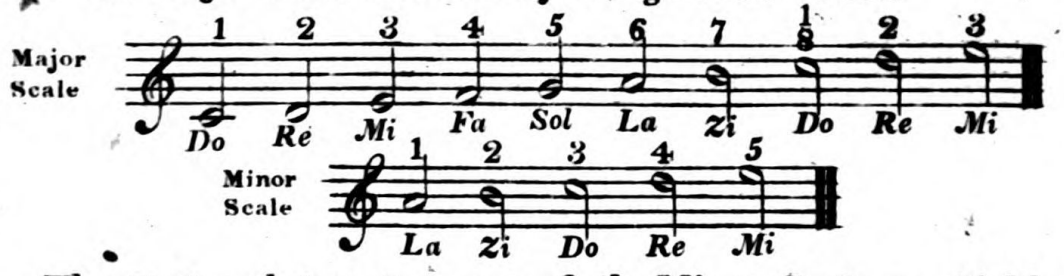
The entire plan for assisting to read at sight may be summed up in a few words: – learn the Major Scale, with the syllables *Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Zi*, associated with the seven degrees of the Scale; – when any note is accidentally raised a Semitone, retain the initial consonant and substitute the vowel *i* in place of the original vowel; – when a note is lowered a Semitone accidentally, in the same way retain the consonant, but substitute the vowel *u* for the original one.

The Student will now be prepared to form correct ideas of those Accidental Notes making portions of a new Scale, when Modulation or change of Key takes place. The following examples contain a few specimens.



We shall conclude with some observations on the Minor Keys. Their formation has been already described in the Introduction.

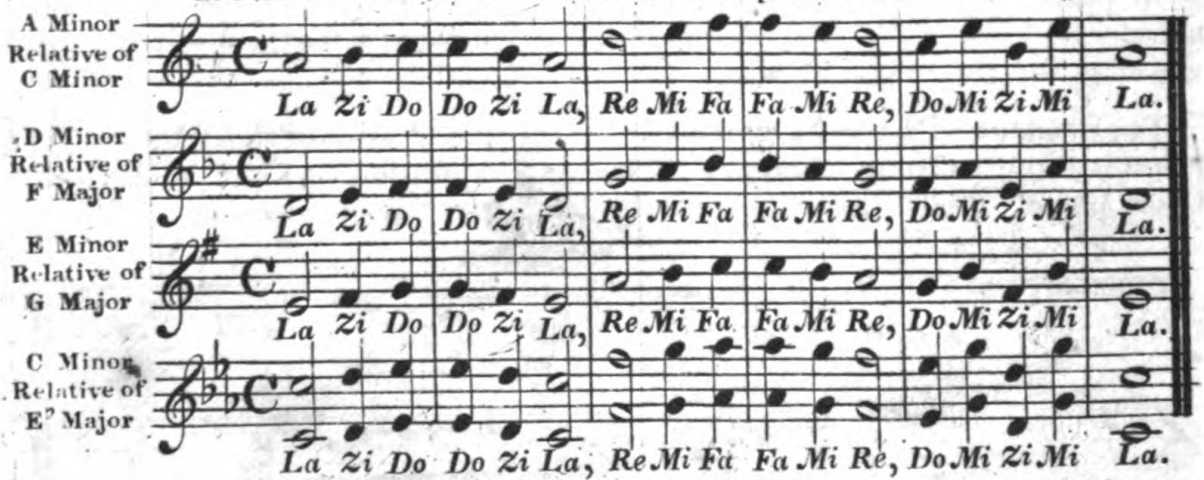
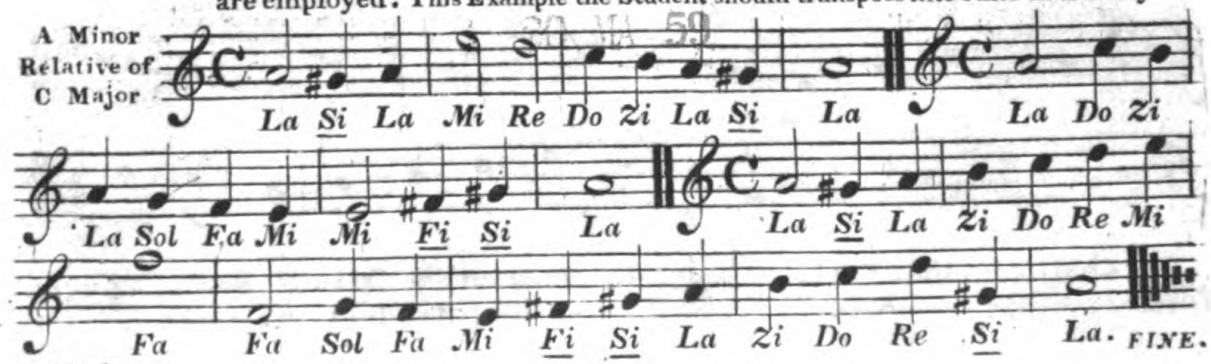
Every Minor Key is said to be the *Relative* of a certain Major Key. For instance, the Key of *A Minor* is the Relative of *C Major*. The same Signature serves for both; neither requiring Sharps or Flats at the Clef. A Major Key and its Relative Minor are always indicated by the same Signature. The Sixth degree of the Major Scale is the note at which the Relative Minor Scale commences. The succeding degrees are borrowed from the Major Scale without any change as far as *Mi*.



The *Sixth* and *Seventh degrees* of the Minor Scale are liable to be *accidentally* raised a Semitone.

The Seventh degree is *always* raised in ascending, and *sometimes* in descending. The Sixth degree is raised or not in ascending according to the intention of the composer; but in descending it is very seldom raised. Ample information on these points is given in the author's "*Essay on the Discrimination of the Key in Music*;" and a few examples are here presented to the Student, which will render his ear and eye accustomed to melody in the Minor Mode. The syllables used in the Major Scale are to be applied to the same notes in the Relative Minor, of which the Keynote is uniformly *La*.

EXAMPLES in the *MINOR MODE* in which the Intervals in common with the *MAJOR MODE* are preserved.



EXAMPLE in the *MINOR MODE* in which the *ACCIDENTAL NOTES* are employed. This Example the Student should transpose into other Minor Keys.