

GOTTSCHALK'S VIEWS REGARDING BEETHOVEN'S SONATAS

[The following letter has special interest to the readers of THE MUSICIAN as it expresses the views of one who knew thoroughly the idiom of the piano.—EDITOR.]

IN a letter from Dr. William Mason to a friend of mine, referring to Gottschalk's capabilities as a pianist, he writes, as follows: —

"I know how well he played Bach and the classics, and I have never heard his playing of Chopin's *Fantaisie* in F minor equaled. He told me, however, during one of our conversations, that he felt that Beethoven could not write for the pianoforte, or at least, that his pianoforte writing was not his strong point, as the sonatas were not written in accordance with the nature of the instrument. In other words, were not idiomatic.

"I was quite in agreement with him on this point. I remember his saying that a movement of one of the sonatas was an exception to this criticism, and this was the slow movement of the *Sonata Pathétique*. I felt very much as he did on this subject, and the opinion I then entertained has only been confirmed after the lapse of time. We were generally in agreement on musical matters."

Since the above letter was written, I have noticed in musical magazines similar expressions of opinion from other prominent musicians, and during the visit of De Pachmann to this city last spring, he likewise personally expressed to me his own views on the subject.

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