

INSTRUMENTS IN WHICH THE SOUND IS PRODUCED BY THE VIBRATION OF STRINGS OR WIRES.

HARPS.

Of instruments in which the sound is produced by the vibration of strings, the most ancient are the Harps, representations of which are found painted in the frescos of tombs as ancient as those of Rameses III., who reigned over Egypt about 1250, B.C. These instruments are so elegant, that, in a measure, they may be compared with those of our own day. The Assyrian bas reliefs of Nimroud, etc., show that the Harp was constantly used by that nation; both the Egyptian and Assyrian Harp have no front pillar, and in this they resemble the modern Oriental Harps. It will be seen that in all probability the Harp originally consisted of a string bending an elastic stick, and this is to a certain extent proved by the custom of certain primitive tribes of the present day. For instance, the Damaras, a tribe of South West Africa, use their bow as a musical instrument, when in their lighter movements they give themselves up to pleasure. They tighten the string nearly in the middle by means of a leathern thong, and thus obtain two sounds. Neighbouring tribes attach a gourd hollowed and open at the top to the bow, and thus form a sound board. Other tribes again have still further improved on this, and have not only provided a sound board of sonorous wood, but have added more than one string. In short, the more improved we find these contrivances, the closer they approach our Harp.

Efforts have been made to add a keyboard to the Harp, and thus enable pianoforte players to perform upon it, but the attempts have been seldom thoroughly successful, the effect produced being rather that of a bad Piano than a good Harp.

LENT BY J. MORLEY, ESQ., SOUTH KENSINGTON.

No. 114. IRISH HARP, by Egan. Speciality—Curved pillar, 7 finger knobs in place of pedals.

No. 115. A WELSH TRIPLE HARP, by Richards, A.D., 1774. Speciality—complete chromatic scale, although without pedals.

- No. 116. A FRENCH HARP, by Nadermann, A.D., 1771. Speciality—small size; hook action; one of the earliest of the pedal Harps.
- No. 117. FRENCH HARP, by Cousineau, who was the first maker of a Double-action, immediate predecessor of Erard's fork-action.
- No. 118. DIZI'S HARP, with neck of iron, unbreakable. Speciality—avoidance of the one-sided pull of the strings. Strings are in same plane as the centre of pillar, centre of belly, and centre of neck.
- No. 119. ERARD'S GRECIAN MODEL HARP, double action. A.D., 1815.
- No. 120. ERARD'S GOTHIC MODEL HARP, double action. A.D., 1835, to present day.
- No. 121. LIGHT'S "DITAL" HARP, combination of Harp with Guitar.
- No. 122. A newly invented "PORTABLE" HARP, combination of Banjo and Harp.
- No. 123. Erard's child's size PEDAL HARP, speciality. Single action on five notes, double action on D and A.

VIOLINS.

By the term violin is meant all stringed instruments played with a bow, the sound being produced from the vibration of the strings caused by the friction of the bow communicating with the air, the power being increased by means of the two vibrating plates of the instrument, generally called the back and the belly, connected with each other by the sound post, and with the strings by means of the bridge. It is uncertain as to when the musicians of long ago discovered the use of the bow, but the probability is that both the Egyptians and the Ninevites may have had some idea of it, for amongst the Assyrian sculptures and the Egyptian hieroglyphics are found representations of an instrument which was struck by a rod or plectrum, and which is evidently the ancestor of the *psalterion*. This last-named instrument in shape was like the Greek Delta (Δ) and had ten strings; it was at first used in connection with religious worship, but was soon adopted by secular musicians who altered its shape, rounding the corners and adding more strings; it was then called the *rotta*, and