

## LOAN COLLECTION.

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### Instruments in which the Sound is produced by the Vibration of Strings or Wires.

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#### HARPS.

HARPS are probably the most ancient instruments in which the sound is produced by the vibration of strings, for apart from the fact that the oldest Chinese work on music, "The Scholar's Lute," contains representations of instruments of harp character, representations are also found painted in the frescos of tombs as ancient as those of Rameses III., who reigned over Egypt about 1250 B.C. These Egyptian instruments are so elegant, shewing that they must have travelled a long way from the prototypes, and probably taken a long time about it, 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 moments, 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 more closely they approach our Harp.

The Harp is mentioned in the Old Testament, but modern research has failed to discover the exact form of the Biblical instrument, whose Hebrew name was the "Kinnor." We are told that Tubal Cain made one, and that Laban the Syrian and David were expert players, indeed, it is recorded, that the latter was so skilled a performer that Saul, before whom he was playing, showed his intense appreciation of the shepherd poet's efforts, by throwing his javelin at him. Music has been known to produce similar effects even in modern times, especially that class of the art which is produced by the peripatetic representatives of the musicians of Italy and Germany.

Early in the century, when members of the fair sex loved to show a well-moulded arm, the harp, which gives endless opportunities for this, was very generally played; now-a-days our "new women" prefer to display other limbs, with the result that down goes the popularity of the harp, and up rises the use of the false calf.

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 F. J. HORNIMAN, ESQ.,

- No. 1. "Megoum," or Alligator harp. In the form of a crocodile. Three Tuning pegs. Burmese.
- No. 2. Indian Harp, from Mysore.

#### LENT BY J. G. MORLEY, ESQ.,

- No. 3. TRIPLÉ WELSH HARP, by John Richards, of Llanrwst; date about 1775. Innocent of pedals and mechanism, but is chromatic by means of three parallel rows of strings; twenty-one strings in the octave. The two outer rows of seven each are synonyms. The seven strings of the middle row give the semitones. Total number of strings, 98. A Welsh Harper always holds his harp over the left shoulder, and plays treble strings with left hand.

- No. 4. OLD FRENCH HARP, "Hook" mechanism. Two pedals only. Very limited modulating powers. Seven strings in the octave. Five out of the seven strings have only one sound, the other two strings two sounds. Probably about 1720.
- No. 5. FRENCH HARP, by Naderman of Paris; dated 1771. "Hook" mechanism. Improved modulating powers. Seven pedals. Seven strings in the octave; every one of them has two sounds.
- No. 6. FRENCH HARP, by Cousineau of Paris. "Crutch" mechanism; dated about 1780. Seven strings in the octave; every string has two sounds. Limited modulating powers, same as in the Naderman Harp. Improvement consists only in the string being held firmer and not being displaced by the pedal from the plane of the other strings. (This M. Cousineau afterwards made the first Double-action Harp in the year 1782. It is fully described by L'Abbé Roussier. It had seven strings in the octave, each string capable of giving three different sounds, the flat, the natural, the and the sharp; hence unlimited modulating powers.)
- No. 7. ERARD'S SINGLE-ACTION HARP, *Fork* mechanism. Superior to Naderman's, and simpler than Cousineau's; about the year 1800. Seven strings in the octave, each string having two sounds.
- No. 8. ERARD'S DOUBLE-ACTION HARP, *Grecian* model, first brought out in the year 1811. Seven strings in the octave, each string has three sounds—flat, natural, and sharp. Mechanism is much simpler than that of Cousineau's Double-action made twenty-nine years earlier, and attains the same result, viz., unlimited power of modulating.
- No. 9. ERARD'S DOUBLE-ACTION HARP, *Gothic* model, brought out in 1835. Is merely an enlargement of the Grecian Harp, differing from it only in small details. This remains the model in general use, and on sale to the present day, 1894.
- No. 10. IRISH PORTABLE HARP, made by Egan, of Dublin, about the year 1820. Seven strings in the octave, each string has two sounds. Seven ivory buttons, moved by fingers, produce the same results as the seven pedals of the Single-action Harp.

No. 11. DOUBLE-ACTION HARP, made by Dizi, about 1825. It has two special features—the neck is of iron and unbreakable ; the strings and the mechanism are all placed between the two plates instead of outside.

Dizi's object is to avert the side strain which is present in all other Harps ; by his arrangement the strings, the centre of the pillar, the centre of the neck, and the centre of the body, are all in the same plane.

Whatever advantages may have been gained by this method are over-balanced by the great difficulties of stringing and regulating.

All the above have been repaired in the workshops of Mr. J. Geo. Morley.

## VIOLINS.

By the term Violin is meant all stringed instruments played with a bow, the sound being produced from the 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 ( $\Delta$ ) 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 this instrument appears to have been the first played by means of a bow. The *rotta* does not however seem to have superseded the *psalterion* which afterwards became the dulcimer of the middle ages, but appears to have existed side by side. As time went on it was found that the shape