

This mirth-making singer, too, is true, is faithful, and claims to be ranked among the unselfish and the heroic.

George Eliot has indeed shown us to what noble ends self-sacrifice can be directed, and the beauty of it, and how it stands out against the repulsive, ignoble image of the seeker after self-aggrandizement. So strongly has this impressed me, that I feel I may be called to account for having disappointed some of you by not having advanced opinions relative to the perfectness of her lines, to the merits of her scene painting, to the realistic portrayal of Spanish character, and to many other points left untouched upon, or at any rate hardly alluded to in this paper. I claim your indulgence, having acted according to my light in dealing with that which most impressed me in the work, and in endeavouring to draw you to concentrated attention upon it.

For others be it to say whether George Eliot has properly delineated the Spanish life of the age portrayed. She can rest on her laurels at any rate for having more than nobly depicted the workings of noble minds; she has shown how the true can suffer, can sorrow and endure; how the sense of duty can overcome obstacle after obstacle, and leave work in the world to be done by those who unsupported by it would have succumbed to their misfortunes. Parental love, filial love, true lasting love between man and woman, are all exquisitely portrayed in this poem, and so are self-sacrifice and self-abnegation.

THE HARP, ANCIENT AND MODERN,

WITH NOTICES OF SOME HARPISTS.

Paper read on October 16th, 1893.

By EDMUND T. WEDMORE.

The harp is less popular now and possibly, too, less understood than some other musical instruments. It may, however, be conceded that few can compare with it in elegance of structure and appearance, in the beauty and fascination of its music, and in a history of such antiquity. It has not the literature of the pianoforte or violin, it is not common like the one, or portable as the other; it has not a tongue like a trumpet, nor is it all-embracing as the organ. But what instrument is so responsive to every feeling and full of subtle

charm as the harp? It can be played without recourse to the gymnastics and veritable wrestling too often obtrusive in some musical performances. It claims the honour of being the source from whence all stringed instruments have sprung; in all ages it has been imbued with associations political, poetical and religious.

Authorities concur in looking to Egypt for its earliest history: the earliest delineations there, however, give no indications that the harp had not existed long before.

The Egyptians pressed into the service of music the natural elements which they symbolised into gods. In their temple at Dekkeh is a picture representing the fire-god Ptah playing on a harp; and there are representations of blind singers accompanying themselves on the harp. Singers and dancers formed part of the household of the greater Egyptians.

On the walls of a catacomb, dating from the first dynasty, the departed master of the house and his consort are represented listening to two female singers accompanied by two harps and a flute, whilst with wooden clappers a girl is beating time. In the 18th dynasty there was a marked increase in the number of musical instruments. The tombs of El Amarna furnish proof of variously-constructed harps used at social gatherings. An interior is depicted on a door in these catacombs where the number of male and female singers and instrumentalists is so large that Ambrose says of them: "The Egyptian palaces were surrounded with whole conservatoires of music."

The shape, constructions, number of strings, and methods of playing the harp will indicate the chief periods of Egyptian history. The primitive bow-like instrument was played horizontally and carried on the shoulder; later the base was enlarged, and later still it stood on the ground. The highest point of development was attained under Rameses III., 1284 B.C. It became then truly a royal instrument.

The degeneration of the music of the Temple dates from the commencement of the conquest of Egypt, a deterioration being then observable in the make of the harp, till at last it resumed its old bow-shape, and was finally transferred from the hands of men to those of women.

Bruce views the frescoes on the walls of an ancient sepulchre at Thebes as proof that music must have been in great perfection over 3000 years ago. Burney gives a sketch and description of a very ornate harp of this period—extreme height, 6 ft. 6 ins.; 40 strings;

no front pillar, consequently of low tension and pitch, and strung with intestines. The performer's left hand seems employed in the upper part of the strings, among the notes in alt; whilst stooping forward, his right hand is beginning with the last string, preparing to ascend with rapid execution.

The harp is undoubtedly the most important of the Egyptian instruments. It seems strange that none are to be found with so many strings in subsequent ancient history; that with such a model as this Theban instrument, its form and use should not have been perpetuated. The barbarism and ignorance into which nations fall by the devastation of invaders account for it.

The ancient Assyrian harps were like those of Egypt in being without a front pillar, but they differed in the sound-body, which was uppermost, and in it we find the early use of sound-holes, whilst at the lower end there was a bar to which the strings were tied. Layard discovered in the ruins of the palace of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (700 B.C.), a bas-relief representing a procession of musicians and singers going to meet the conquerors on their return from battle. The first musician, probably the leader of the band, is playing upon a harp; two other men carry harps, and of six women four are playing harps. This bas-relief is now in the British Museum. There is a striking similarity between this record and the description of such processions among the Israelites.

Now as to the Hebrews. How early in the Bible is there reference to the harp! No other instrument is alluded to so frequently throughout the Scriptures. Two kinds of harps are referred to, besides the instrument of ten strings which was itself a sort of harp (Psalm xxxiii. 2, and cxlv. 9): (1) A small one, varying in form, more or less simple, with comparatively few strings, easily carried, and held whilst played. This one Dr. Stainer considers was a kind of lyre or guitar, such as David the shepherd used. It was possibly sounded by a plectrum. (2) A large one, fully 6 ft. high, standing on the ground, with tall sound-board, many strings, and decorative massive foot; such as was used when Samuel anointed Saul, who was told to meet a company of prophets having a harp, tabret, oboe, and guitar (compare 1 Samuel x. 5).

Although the outline of the harp has varied at different epochs and in different countries, the relation of its proportions to the musical scale is very close. Whether it be Egyptian, Persian, mediæval, or Celtic, it is fashioned in beauty of line and often characteristically adorned.

Laban would have had Jacob depart from him suitably accompanied by the tabret and harp. The evil spirit in Saul was banished when David played with his hand.

David had his band, and composed, and accompanied and made elaborate arrangements, which are fully recorded in the 1st Book of Chronicles (1 Chron. xv.).

It is clear that the harp was the chief instrument in ceremonials, religious, state and social.

The pathetic picture by the rivers of Babylon must not be forgotten: "We hanged up our harps on the willows in the midst thereof. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" The Babylonians required of the Israelites *songs*. They used the harp themselves, and held it in high esteem, as we see by another passage: "It is commanded, O people, etc., at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, &c." (Daniel iii. 5).

The prophecies of Isaiah make it clear that similar instruments were used by revellers and outcasts. So it is now. The arts of men: the powers of music are often abused and put to unholy uses, allied to circumstances and place which get them a bad name.

The Jews in their turn becoming tributary to other nations, we will pass on in our survey.

The harp cannot be regarded in the light of a national instrument in Italy, though in the time of the Caesars it was in favour at Rome. Nero encouraged music to gratify his own personal vanity. His harp was a large one, for he played standing, according to the rules of public performance.

In Greece, on the other hand, so popular were harp-like instruments that it has been called the "Land of Lyres."

"Amused, at ease, the god-like man they found,
Pleased with the solemn harp's harmonious sound
(The well-wrought harp from conquer'd Thebes came,
Of polished silver was its costly frame);
With this he soothes his angry soul, and sings
Th' immortal deeds of heroes and of kings."

HOMER.

At public worship and at all feasts the harp was invariably introduced. At entertainments it was handed round, the custom being for each one to play in turn. Both Achilles and Paris were harpists. One checked his rage and thirst for glory with the soothing sounds of his harp, the other employed it to indulge his effeminate habits. At the Olympic games there were contests in music; prizes were awarded to those who played with the greatest precision and taste.

Siculus, who wrote about half-a-century before the Christian era, says: "There is an island over against Gaul, the size of Sicily, under the Arctic Pole, which the Hyperboreans (Britons or Celts) inhabit. . . . They worship Apollo above all other gods. It is said that the inhabitants demean themselves as if they were Apollo's priests. . . . There is a city likewise consecrated to this god, whose citizens are most of them harpers, who, playing on the harp, chant sacred hymns to Apollo in the temple, setting forth his glorious acts. . . . Some of the Grecians passed over to the Hyperboreans, and Abaris, the British Druid and Philosopher, travelled thence into Greece (500 B.C.) and renewed the ancient badge of friendship."

Blegwryd ab Leisyllt, King of Britain about 160 B.C., is said to have been a celebrated musician and performer on the harp: he was therefore called the God of Music.

Angus, King of Munster, whose death is mentioned in the Ulster annals A.D. 489, had excellent harpers, who, playing before him, sung the acts of heroes sweetly in verse. It was also in the 5th century that Colgrin was besieged in York by King Arthur, when Badulph assumed the character of a harper and thereby gained admission to the beleaguered city to consult with his brother.

We have records of Irish bards in the 6th century. Dallan Forgall, in his poem on the death of a contemporary (594), speaks of the song with harp accompaniment being without joy—"a sound following the bier to the grave."

Then we come to the Druidical bards—the divines, prophets, and musicians of the Britons, whose interposition, we are told, was sufficient to prevent an imminent battle.

In the 8th century, at a feast of the Saxons, the Venerable Bede records the custom that every guest should sing to the harp in his turn. The poet Caedmon was present, saw his turn approaching, and being unable to play in shame retired.

Then we have King Alfred's experience in the Danish camp in Somerset as further evidence of the popularity of his instrument and of deference paid to the player. In 872 Alfred established a prælectorship of music at Oxford, appointing John the monk of St. David's the first professor. There is a cross with a harp sculptured on it belonging to the ancient church of Ullard, near Kilkenny, not later than 830. There is no front pillar to this harp; structurally it is similar to the Eastern harps. Engel says of the Anglo-Saxon harps that they may be regarded as constituting a transition from the lyre to the harp.

In 940, in the reign of King Howel Dda, Wales possessed honoured bards. Y Bardd Teulu, corresponding to our Poet Laureate, received on his appointment a harp from the king and a gold ring from the queen. We have proof of the ancient practice of harmony among the Welsh in the *crwth*, one of the earliest known instruments played with a bow. The bridge is so nearly flat that it is impossible to make any string except the first and the sixth sound alone. Harmony must result from the use of this instrument, unless all its strings were tuned in unison. They were not so tuned, for we are furnished with the intervals. Another proof is to be found in some exercises for the harp taken from an old Welsh MS.: "The following is the music of the Britons, as settled by a congress or meeting of the masters of music, by order of Gruffydd ap Cynan, Prince of Wales (about 1100), with some of the most ancient pieces of the Britons, supposed to have been handed to us from the British Druids in two parts, bass and treble, for the harp." At this congress rules were laid down for performance and for composition, and it was decreed that henceforth all compositions were to be written in accordance with these enactments; that none but those who were conversant with the rules should be considered thorough musicians, or competent to undertake the instruction of others.

Welsh music not only solicits an accompaniment, but being chiefly written for the harp is usually found with one; indeed, in their ancient tunes there are often solo passages for the bass as well as for the treble. They resemble the scientific music of later centuries.

Here are two Ancient British triads:

- (1) "Three things indispensable for a gentleman: His harp, his cloak, and his chessboard."
- (2) "Three things proper for a man to have in his house: A virtuous wife, his cushion in his chair, and his harp in tune."

I hope we all keep our household pianofortes in tune—a much easier matter than to keep a harp in tune.

By the same laws, it was expressly forbidden to teach or to permit a slave to play upon the harp. None but the king, the king's musicians, and gentlemen were allowed to possess harps. A gentleman's harp was not liable to seizure for debt, and his person was esteemed inviolable and protected from injury by severe penalties.

Nothing could show more forcibly the privileges Welsh bards

enjoyed during the 11th and 12th centuries than their power of obtaining presents by petitionary poems. This grew to excess, and had to be checked. Rules were laid down: "A minstrel to possess no more than 10s., under penalty of forfeiting the whole to the king; the itinerant minstrel not to go to the house of a gentleman, neither a chief minstrel to that of a plebeian; to be of friendly conversation, peaceable, obliging, humble, and fond of doing good offices; to know how to serve from the kitchen to the table, and to carve every fowl that might come before him."

Coming to the 12th and 13th centuries, we find Richard I.'s place of confinement in Germany discovered by his minstrel Blondel. Henry III. gave 40s. and a pipe of wine to Richard the harper, and a pipe of wine to the harper's wife. Edward I., before he was king, had good reason to remember his harper, who proved his friend and saved his life. And Edward I., as king, was a patron of minstrels and harpers. When he held a great Court-plénière in 1306 the money spent on the concourse of minstrels was £200, equivalent to about £3,000 of our money. This is illustrative rather than exceptional.

Perhaps the oldest harp we have is the famous instrument in Trinity College, Dublin, of the 14th century or a little later. There is a cast of it at South Kensington. The wood is elaborately carved; it had 30 strings. In 1760 Arthur O'Neill woke its long dormant harmonies; and Bochsá (of whom more hereafter), when at Dublin with George IV., in 1821, played upon this identical instrument at a banquet given by the Lord Mayor. At the end of his performance his fingers were nearly cut to pieces by the brass wires. According to tradition, the accordance was based upon the old diatonic scale, with the minor 7th (sometimes replaced by the major 7th).

We learn that the Ancient Irish had three "modes" in their music which the best musicians were considered able to play—*i.e.* the *guantraighé*, producing on the audience delightful slumber; the *goltraighé*, producing tears and lamentations; and the *geantraighé*, producing loud and uncontrollable laughter. Whatever these tunings were, and probably the Highland Scotch had the same, the secret is locked up in the wood of the harps that responded to them.

The harp first appeared on the Irish coat of arms in Henry VIII.'s time. The passing glimpses of Irish society afforded by the records of the old harpers give an insight into the habits and tastes of this warm-hearted and pathetically humorous people.

Rory Dall O'Caghan devoted himself to the harp. He was blind. He travelled to Scotland shortly before James VI. came to the English throne, and moved among the best of company. He visited Eglintoun Castle. Lady Eglintoun, not being aware of his rank, affronted his pride by demanding a tune. He refused and left. Learning afterwards who he was, a reconciliation was sought and effected. The incident gave rise to O'Caghan's writing the tune "*Da mihi manum*," or "Give me your hand" (about 1603). The fame of it spread till it reached the king. The composer was invited to the Scottish Court, and he delighted the royal circle by his playing. During his last years he was in very indigent circumstances.

A tune, author unknown, was composed as a farewell to the gallant remnant of the Irish army who, upon the capitulation of Limerick in 1691, preferred an honourable exile to remaining in the country when their cause was lost. It is believed that the air was sung by the women assembled on the shore at the time of embarkation. It is a pitiful tale. The melody is a very fine one of its class, and frequently alluded to in the modern songs of Ireland. It is called "*Geadha Fiadhaine*."

The Dalway harp, dated 1621, appears to have had pairs of strings in the centre. These were of brass wire, and played with pointed finger-nails. Its Italian contemporary, "*Arpa Doppia*," was entirely on the duplex principle, with gut strings, and played with the fingers. The double harp, *i.e.* with two rows of strings, was common in Italy in the 16th century. "This most ancient instrument was brought to Italy from Ireland, where they are excellently made and in great numbers; the people of that island having practised it for many, many ages."

This is the earliest instance of the power of modulation in the harp. Hitherto there had been no power to change the key in which the instrument was tuned; there was no mechanism to produce sharps or flats. John Thomas says: "This double harp consisted of the diatonic scale on the *right* side from the upper part down to the centre, with a row of accidentals on the opposite side, to be played when required by putting the finger through; the diatonic scale was continued on the left side from the centre to the lower end, with the accidentals opposite."

The celebrated Irish bard Carolan lived during the last half of the 17th century. He was blind from infancy, and from "an error in his education" he contracted a fondness for spirituous liquors which he did not overcome. He was a man of remarkable talent

and skill in playing the harp. Aptommas in his history name many famous Irish harpers, amongst them two women, Catherine Martin and Rose Mooney. Meetings were held in Ireland from 1781 till 1792 to promote the art. The last took place in Belfast, when a great many players were gathered together.

Evelyn in his diary says: "Came to see my old acquaintance and most incomparable player on the Irish harp, Mr. Clarke, after his travels. He was an excellent musician, a discreet gentleman, born in Devonshire, as I remember. Such music before or since did I never hear, that instrument being neglected for its extraordinary difficulty; but in my judgment it is far superior to the Lute itself, or whatever speaks with strings. . . . Pity 'tis that it is not more in use; but indeed to play well takes up the whole man, as Mr. Clarke has assured me, who, tho' a gent of quality and parts, was yet brought up to that instrument from five years old, as I remember he told me."

We must now speak of two old Scotch harps. The Lamont harp may have been an old, broken and mended instrument, with a pre-traditional story we can never hope to hear, but about the middle of the 15th century it was brought from Argyleshire by a lady of the family of Lamont to the house of Lude, upon her marriage into the family of Robertson of Lude, where it has ever since remained. It is 38 ins. high, 16 ins. broad, and had 30 strings. The most remarkable feature in its construction is that the front arm is *not* perpendicular to the sound-board. Its upper part, together with the top arm, are turned towards the left, in order to leave a better opening for the voice of the player. Of course it must be remembered that the harp was held by the Caledonian, Irish, and Welsh harpers on their *left* side—*i.e.* the upper strings were struck by the fingers of the left hand. This peculiarity of construction in the Lamont harp shows it was made at a period when the accompaniment of the voice was considered as the chief, if not its sole, province.

Queen Mary's harp is of much lighter fabric. It is 31 ins. high and 11 ins. broad. The sound-board bulges, and in this respect it resembles the modern harp. In front of the upper arm was the queen's portrait, and the forearm was jewelled. Of these decorations it was despoiled in 1745, otherwise it is in good preservation. For many centuries the strings used by Highland as well as Welsh harpers were of brass. They had a peculiar manner of producing the tone by their nails, which they trimmed with the greatest care, shaping them like the quills on the jacks of a harpsichord. A

harper was punished for his offences by having his nails cut quite short. He had to retire till they again grew.

Queen Mary's harp was restrung about 100 years ago, and tuned so that the shortest string was the upper C: compass, four octaves. The bottom string was only 24 inches long. The best length for this note is 40 inches; hence the lower notes were less satisfactory from lack of tension.

The history of these two harps, the Lamont and Queen Mary's, points to the fact that playing on and singing to the instrument was in favour amongst ladies during the 15th and 16th centuries. "And the shell went round, the bard sang, and the soft hand of virgins trembled on the strings of the harp."

Even the children are shown to be "sweeping along the strings," with their little fingers trying to find the sweet sounds with which their mothers had delighted them. "Why does it not answer us? Show us the string where dwells the song." She bids them search for it; their fingers wander among the wires.

A proverb in the Island of Mull has its origin in an incident on a hill-top, since then called the "Harpers' Pass."

There lived a celebrated harper who loved and married a girl of exquisite beauty. His fame he owed partly to the superiority of his instrument. Next to his wife it was the pride of his heart, and his constant companion. The happy couple went in winter to visit a sick relative on the opposite coast. Those who know the spot will not wonder that a woman should sink under the cold and fatigue of such a journey. They struggled against the keen blast. At length the young wife, quite exhausted, fainted away. Her husband, with the utmost tenderness, did all he could to preserve so dear a life. Perceiving symptoms of recovery, he tried to kindle a fire. He struck a flint and received the sparks on a little dry heath he had collected with difficulty. The place was too barren to produce even this in quantity. In such penury of fuel, the good man scrupled not to sacrifice his beloved harp! He broke it in pieces, and fed the flame with its fragments.

The story goes on to tell of the arrival on the scene of an individual furnished with refreshments. This was no other than a young man whom the wife had known and cared for in her childhood. He lingered not wisely but too long, played a base trick upon the husband, and carried off the too willing beauty.

Hence the proverb among the people of Mull when they meet with ingratitude: "Fool that I was to burn my harp for her (or him)."

Amongst the Highland chieftains there was scarcely a household of importance that had not its bard or harper. In the old castles the Harper's seat is pointed out to this day.

King James I.'s (of Scotland) love of music, harp-playing, and skill in the management of his voice are alluded to in the *Annals of Scotland*.

Less than fifty years after his time, George Buchanan, in writing of the manners and customs of the Western Islands of Scotland, says: "They use the great bagpipe. They delight very much in music, especially in harps of their own sort, of which some are strung with intestines and some with brass wire played with their nails or with a plectrum. Their only ambition seems to be to ornament their harps with silver and precious stones; the lower ranks deck theirs with crystals. They sing of the exploits of their valiant men: nor do the bards for the most part treat of another subject."

Another writer in 1597 says: "They sing verses prettily compounded, containing praises of valiant men. There is not almost any other argument whereof their rhymes entertain."

Two compositions by John Garve Maclean of Coll, a noted performer and composer in the time of James VI. and Charles I., have been handed down to the present. One of them, the "Royal Lament," was in memory of the unfortunate Charles.

The last native harper appears to have been Murdock Macdonald, brought up in the family of Maclean of Coll, whose payments record that he pursued his calling in the family till 1734. A lady of the family entertained Dr. Johnson with the music of the Highland harpers in a manner that induced him to say: "She is the most accomplished lady I have found in the Highlands. She knows French, music and drawing, sews neatly, makes shell-work, and can milk cows."

It was in Charles I.'s time that a charter was granted to the musicians of Westminster, incorporating them into a body politic, with powers to prosecute and fine all who except themselves should attempt to make any benefit or advantage of music in England and Wales; powers which were put into execution in the subsequent reign. What would the professors of to-day think of such a state of things?

Bunting, the Irish chronicler, mentions the "crom cruit" (the curved harp) and "cinnard cruit" (harp with a high head). The Welsh triple harp, with its elevated neck, might well be the

"cinnard cruit." The instruments were hereditary, and were preserved with the greatest care in the families to whom they belonged. The triple harp was always strung with gut. The outer rows are diatonic and tuned in unison; the centre row chromatic, for the sharps and flats. It has 98 strings. It is strung on the right side of the comb, and Mr. John Thomas says it is the only harp ever known to be so strung.

At the Welsh National Eisteddfod prizes are still given for triple-harp as well as for pedal-harp playing.

To a stranger, perhaps one of the most interesting performances at these gatherings is *Penillion* singing. The word *penillion* is derived from the Welsh verb *penillio*, to form stanzas. *Penillion* singing belongs exclusively to Wales. It is intended to display the singer's skill in making extempore verses to any tune that may be played upon the harp: a condition of the performance being that the verse commence after the melody but terminate with it, in strictly rhythmical measure. The vocalist is not allowed to employ consecutive notes of the melody played upon the harp; those which are sung must form, as it were, a ground bass inverted to the accompaniment. Two or more singers usually take part in the performance, contending alternately for supremacy.

It will be understood that no accidental semitones were possible on the harp with single rows of strings, unless a string was shortened by the player's finger. This plan lasted till the 17th century, when a Tyrolese maker adapted hooks screwed into the neck or harmonic curve that could be turned downwards to fix the desired semitone at pleasure—and to inconvenience when you wanted to restore the string to its first position. About 1720, Hochbrücker, a Bavarian, invented pedals, which, acting through the pedestal, governed the stopping, and thus left the player's hands free—an immense advantage. It thus became possible to play in eight major scales and five complete minor and three descending.

Before Dr. Burney wrote his *History of Music* (1772), he travelled in order to collect materials at first hand. He says: "At Brussels I heard some pretty pieces by Godecharle performed extremely well on the harp with pedals by a young lady, his pupil, whom he accompanied on the violin. The harp is much practised by the ladies in Brussels as well as in Paris. The pedals for the half-notes make it less cumbersome and unwieldy than our Welsh harp. It is tuned in the diatonic scale, the changes are made by the feet. This method was invented in Brussels about fifteen years ago by M.

Simon. It is ingenious and useful, for by reducing the number of strings the tone of those that remain is improved. The less an instrument is loaded, the more freely it vibrates.

"At Vienna I heard M. Mut on the single harp, without pedals, a very difficult instrument, as he was obliged to make the semitones by brass rings with the left hand, which being placed at the top of the harp were not only hard to get at but disagreeable to hear. The secret of producing semitones by pedals has not yet reached Vienna."

Naderman, the Paris harp-maker, used a hook mechanism, giving each string two sounds.

The Frenchmen Cousineau, father and son, hit upon a contrivance to pinch the strings with pieces of metal. They also made slides raising or lowering the bridge pins.

The Cousineaus produced the first *double-action* harp, about 1782, by doubling the pedals and mechanism. They changed the key of open strings from E \flat to C \flat . It then became possible to play in fifteen keys. In this feature the harp exceeds the power of keyboard instruments; it also has another advantage—the fingering is the same for all keys.

François J. Dizi attempted to vary the principle of construction by fastening the strings inside the curve (about 1825). His object was to avert the side-strain which is present in all other harps. Any advantage gained by this method was counterbalanced by the difficulty of stringing and regulating.

Dizi decided to come to England, where the harp was at that time more popular than in any other country. He travelled through Holland and embarked for England. Encountering a storm, he fell into the sea and was very nearly drowned. Upon recovery of consciousness, he could not remember the name of the vessel he had become separated from. His predicament was distressing—harp, letters, baggage all gone, he was dependent on strangers! He could not speak English, and failed to recover his property. After weeks of suffering in London, he heard the sound of a harp. He entered, told his tale, sat down to the instrument, and thereon expressed himself. How fortunate! the house was none other than Sebastian Erard's. Dizi was not long in establishing a high reputation.

Louis Spohr (1784—1859) occupies so prominent a place in the annals of music that his association with the harp is of particular interest. As a youth he learned to play it, and studied it enough

to realise how difficult it is. He also valued it as an accompaniment to the voice. His chief connection, however, lies in his having married a harpist, Dorette Scheidler (about 1786—1834). He was soon led to devote himself to the technique of the harp, for Dorette was not only a brilliant player, but one who was moved by the music as she played, so that she moved others. The duet-playing of Spohr and his wife was marked by a unity of feeling. Spohr wrote concerted music for his wife and himself. His experience proved that any addition disturbed their own deep sympathy. His study of the harp led him to pitch it half a tone lower than his violin. He tuned the harp himself, and brought it to a "perfectly pure and tempered pitch." The violin sounds most brilliant in sharp notes, the harp best in flat notes. By his method he obtained the most effective key-notes for both instruments: for the violin D and G, for the harp E \flat and A \flat . A second advantage accrued—the harp-strings broke less frequently.

Spohr designed and had built a travelling-carriage for their artistic tours. It was made of basket-work to ensure lightness, with a compartment for the harp, one for the violin, and another for personal luggage; a seat for the driver and one for themselves. On the first day of their journey the carriage turned over.

Dorette Spohr used at first a Strasbourgh harp, later a Naderman, and in London (1820) an Erard.

The first pedal-harps exhibited in England were imported from France about 1780. Their mechanism was defective in essential points.

It was left to Sebastian Erard (1752—1831) to perfect the harp so as to allow of modern music being played upon it.

In 1794 Erard produced his *single-action* harp, on the "fork" principle. Other makers soon availed themselves of this invention. A little disc is set upon the harmonic curve behind each string. Upon the disc are two prongs, which, when the disc is turned on its axis by the mechanism placed inside the comb, grip the string and shorten the length that is free to vibrate, thus raising it one semitone higher. When a pedal is pressed down it acts immediately on all the strings of one name—say all the A's. The string is in no way moved out of its perpendicular or out of its plane. The tone is as firm and clear as when the string was open.

After many experiments, S. Erard brought out his complete *double-action* harp in 1811. Such a one as we have here. A second or additional movement by the pedals was introduced, which acts on

the mechanism and turns a second little disc placed below the original one, and raises the string another half-tone. Each string is capable of sounding its own note as flat, natural or sharp, at the will of the player. Brass plates strengthen the neck. Formerly the wood was hollowed out to insert the mechanism. A most ingenious contrivance was placed outside the brass plate, whereby each lower disc acts upon the disc above it, so that for the lower notes, where the strain is greatest, one attachment *within* suffices. The wood-work of the neck was improved by being constructed on a new principle, of many pieces. In the pedestal there are notches to receive and retain the pedal in any of its positions, from which it can be released in a moment. A spiral spring underneath facilitates the changes. And finally Sebastian Erard made the convex body, bearing the sound-board, of one piece, on a substantial frame, doing away with the old lute-like plan of building it up with staves. The harp is now distinguished as the only instrument with fixed tones not formed by the ear and touch of the player that has separate notes \sharp 's, $\#$'s, and \flat 's; thus approaching *written* music more nearly than any other. I should add the strings are of gut, the C's being coloured red and the F's blue to assist recognition. The eight longest strings are of silk, spun over with wire. A centre or swell pedal opens panels in the body of the instrument to emit more sound. The vibrating harp-strings can only be checked by the hand; their normal condition is free. The Grecian model is about 5 ft. 7 ins. high, 44 strings; no limit to modulation. The large Gothic model is 5 ft. 9 ins., 46 strings; $6\frac{1}{2}$ octaves, C to F.

It was not until this double-action harp was invented, when enharmonic and other effects could be produced, that operatic and other composers introduced it into their orchestral scores. Now, when they wish for romantic or poetical effects they avail themselves of its peculiar character, its unique *timbre*. We find it in Mozart's music in a concerto in company with a flute, and in varied relations amongst the works of Spohr, Dussek, Schumann, Godefroid, Meyerbeer, Berlioz, Gounod, Liszt, Wagner, and our modern English composers. The chief harpists have written for their favourite instrument, many of them for it also combined with other instruments. I should name Dizi, Labarre, Hasselmans, Krumpholtz, Bochs, Alvares, Chatterton, Oberthur, Aptommas and John Thomas, though time will not now admit of further reference to some of them. I will refer to three Parrys prior to the Drs. Parry who are still working amongst us. First, John Parry, of Rhuabon, harper to Sir Watkin Williams

Wynne. He issued the earliest published collection of Welsh melodies. He was quite blind. His playing was admired by Handel. He died in 1782. Second, John Parry, born at Denbigh (1776—1851), who received the title of Bardd Alaw (Master of Song). He wrote an account of the rise and progress of the Harp, and published Welsh melodies in a series called *The Welsh Harper*. And third, his son, John Orlando Parry (1810—1879), born in London. A pupil of Bochs, he was a harpist, pianist, composer, and vocalist. He used to accompany himself on the harp. He was associated with Albert Smith, and with Mr. and Mrs. German Reed—the forerunner of Corney Grain.

Robert Nicholas Bochs (1789—1856) was a man of remarkable powers. He was harpist to the Emperor Napoleon in 1813. He possessed a rare facility for writing and adapting music with great despatch. He formed a style of playing quite his own. Even to the close of his life he was continually discovering new effects. He came to London in 1817, and so popular did the harp become that Bochs was unable to satisfy the demand for lessons. In 1822 a symphony of his was given at the Philharmonic, and he was for a short time connected with the R.A.M. In 1847 he went to America, through the States to California, thence to Australia, where he died of apoplexy.

“Never more shall float such music,
None could sweep the lyre like him.”

At Dresden, Berlioz (1803—1869) became acquainted with Parish Alvares—the English harpist, the Liszt of the harp—whose playing made a great impression on the Frenchman. “It is inconceivable what graceful and spirited effects he produces,” says Berlioz. “His variations in harmonies on the ‘Naiades’ Chorus’ in *Obéron* and a score of similar pieces charmed me inexpressibly. The advantage of being able to strike two strings in unison gave him the idea of combinations which seem absolutely impracticable on paper. The pedals produce double notes, known as ‘synonymes.’ The strings may be changed, so that instead of representing the diatonic scale of $C\flat$, they are enabled by the synonymes to give in the descending succession the series of $C\sharp$, $C\sharp$; $A\sharp$, $G\flat$, $G\flat$; $E\flat$, $E\flat$.

In Frankfort Berlioz again met Alvares, who this time fairly magnetised him. “The man is a wizard, and his harp a siren with a beautiful curved neck and long dishevelled hair, breathing forth the fascinating sounds of another world under the passionate embrace of his powerful arms.”

Parish Alvares was born in Devon in 1815. He had a long and thorough training, first in the house of Grosjean and Schwieso, then from the best men at home and abroad. It mattered not to him what others thought of the harp; to him it had a soul, and all the energies of his fine musical genius were directed towards raising it to the position he believed it should occupy as a solo instrument. He travelled much on the Continent and in the East, and stood himself at the very head of his *confrères*. He has left a great many compositions, both original and arrangements, and died in the prime of life.

On his first German tour (1841-42) Berlioz found no harpist at Weimar, one of the places at which he sojourned in order to produce some of his orchestral works. "A good-natured young fellow was kind enough to arrange the two harp parts for one piano, and play them himself."

At Leipsig there was no cor anglais, ophicleide, or harp. Mendelssohn had been obliged to get harpists from Berlin for his *Anrigone*. At last a man was found from Dresden, and Mendelssohn heard of an amateur who possessed a harp. It was rigged out with a new set of strings; then it turned out that the man scarcely played the harp at all, only simple arpeggios. At sight of Berlioz's music his courage failed him, and Mendelssohn was obliged to render the harp solos on a piano to make sure of their coming in properly.

After speaking of several of the instrumentalists he met with in Hanover, Berlioz says: "The musician who takes the big drum is no musician at all; the cymbal-player is uncertain, and the cymbals are so broken that only a fragment of each is left. There is a lady in the chorus who plays the harp fairly well. This lady and the harpists of Stuttgart, Berlin, and Hamburg are the sole exceptions I have found in Germany, where harpists in general cannot play the harp."

In the orchestra in Darmstadt he finds the harp part given to a painter, "who, in spite of all his efforts and good will, is never sure of giving colour to his performance."

In his autobiography Berlioz says: "I have a vague feeling of poetic love whenever I smell a rose, and for a long time past I have felt the same at sight of a beautiful harp. When I see that instrument I can hardly restrain myself from falling on my knees and embracing it. Estelle" (with whom he had fallen in love at the age of twelve) "was the rose 'left blooming alone.' Henrietta was

the harp, that took part in all my concerts, in all my joys and sorrows, and of which alas! I broke many strings."

Two of our illustrations are by John Thomas, the Queen's harpist, who was born at Bridgend, 1826. He is known as Pencerdd Gwalla. He is actively engaged at the R.A.M. and R.C.M., London, and takes a great interest in the progress of music in the Principality and in the Eisteddfodau. His piece *Autumn* is truly a tone poem; its dominant feeling is sad, but it is lit up by happy imagery.

Some music—yes, even that of the harp,—owing to causes from within and from without, has no lasting connection with us; the elements cease to live in us. Goethe says: "I have left it behind, like a cast-off snake-skin on my path." On the other hand, some music remains beautiful, however often it is heard. There is something eternal, indestructible in the melody; there is something satisfying in the harmony. We can recall memories to the point. Of such music, which has really touched us, we gratefully feel it to be a living part of us: it goes on living with us still. It is truly a gift of God.

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. A. J. Hipkins, Mr. John Thomas, Messrs. S. and P. Erard, Mr. William Vinnicombe, Mr. Aptommas, and Mr. J. G. Morley, either for personal kindness, the use of their writings, or both.

Miss Mary George, harpist, Miss Hilda Nance, vocalist (pupil of Mrs. Villiers), and Mr. F. H. Wedmore kindly gave the following illustrations:

Geadha Fíadhaine	Very ancient.
Di míhí manum	RORY-DALL O'CAHAN, abt. 1603.
The poor Irishman's lament	VÉRY ancient.
The Blind girl to her harp...	STEPHEN GLOVER (Song).
Chant (from Russian Airs)	BOCHSA.
The Minstrel's Adieu	J. THOMAS.
Autumn	J. THOMAS.
Alla Stella Confidente	ROBAUDI (Song, flute obligato).