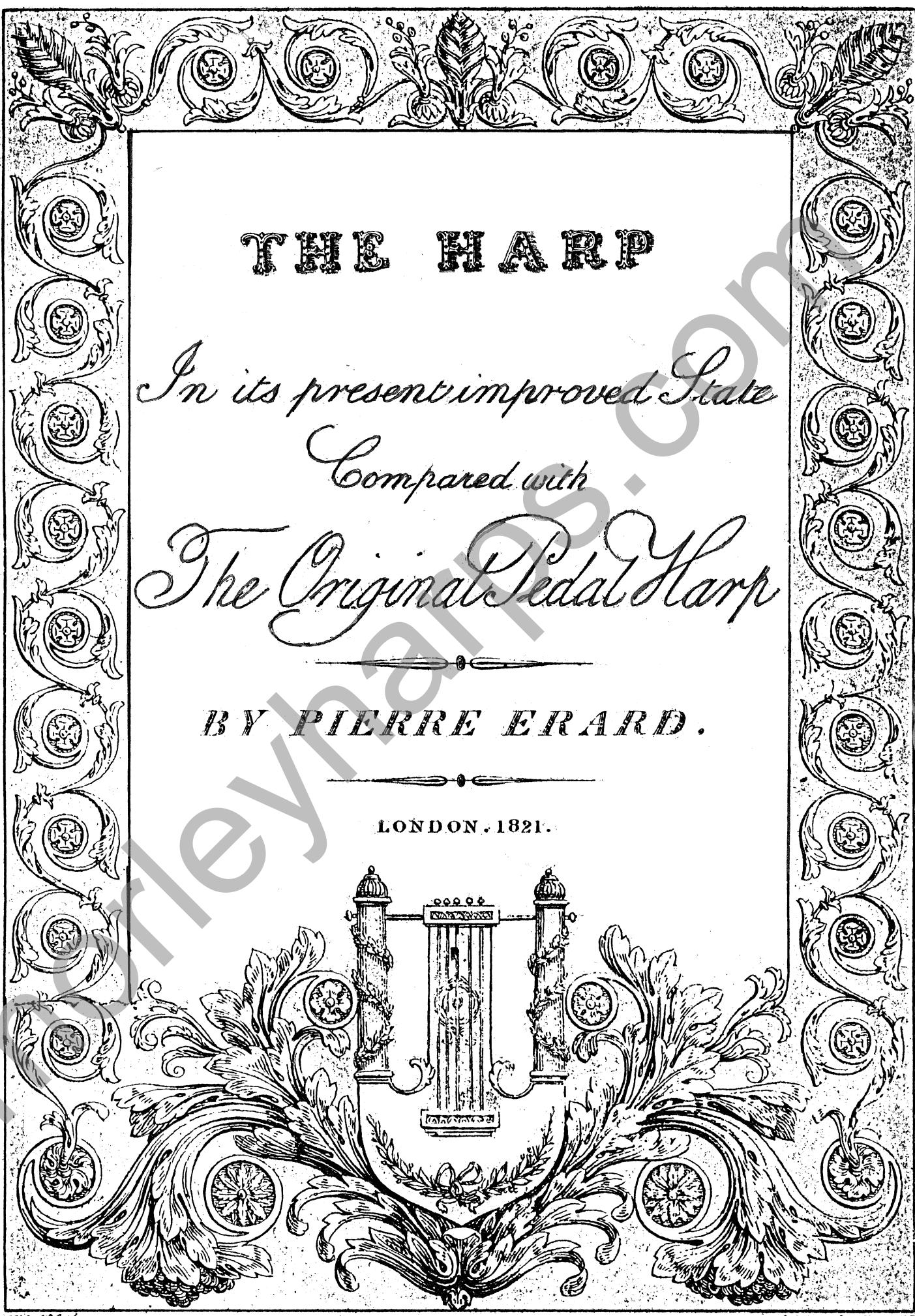
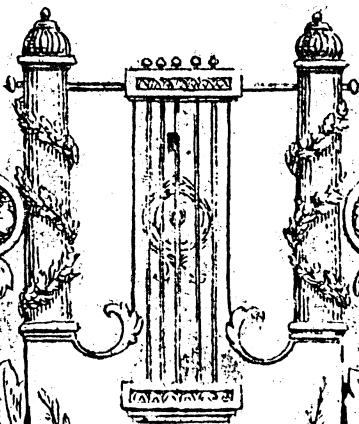


# THE HARP

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Compared with  
*The Original Pedal Harp*

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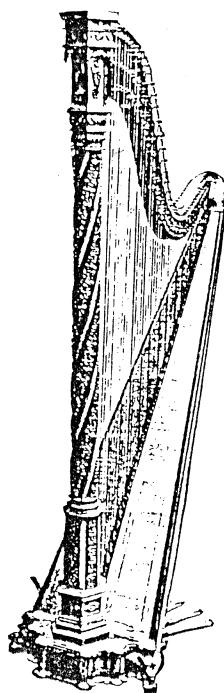
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Height 5 ft. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$  ins. 46 or 47 Strings.  
140 GUINEAS.

Between 1890 and 1892 the house of Erard closed in London. The Morley family, harp makers in London purchased much from the sale and represented the Erard Company selling harps made in Paris.

The harp world had been based on the 6000 plus harps built by Erard in England.

Clive Morley Harps Ltd retain the old " Stock Books " which date the Erard harps made in London and in many cases show the original purchasers of the harps.

The old decorative moulds, instrument making patterns and music purchased at the time of the sale enable old instruments to be restored to their former glory and reproduction of rare music for the harp to be made available.

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CLIVE MORLEY HARPS LTD.,  
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SEBASTIEN ERARD.

## A GENIUS OF FRANCE

A SHORT SKETCH OF  
THE FAMOUS INVENTOR,

SEBASTIEN ERARD,

THIRD EDITION.

# A GENIUS OF FRANCE

A SHORT SKETCH OF  
THE FAMOUS INVENTOR,

SEBASTIEN ERARD,

AND THE FIRM HE FOUNDED IN PARIS,  
1780.

BY  
A. GRANGIER.  
TRANSLATED BY  
JEAN FOUCHEVILLE.

MAISON ERARD,  
PARIS.

## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

*The third edition has been greatly curtailed by leaving out the history of the ancestors of the Piano and all the technical details connected with the manufacture of the Piano and Harp.*

*Paris, 1924.*

## INTRODUCTION.

The name of Erard for the last century has been so closely identified with music that a short sketch of the career of the founder of the firm—Sebastien Erard—will prove interesting to the present generation and give some idea why the Erard Piano to-day occupies in its own country a higher position than any one Piano Maker in any other country.

Sebastien Erard, in his own particular line, is justly considered as the greatest genius who ever lived; as an inventor he surpasses not only all his predecessors, but also all those who after him have gained some reputation in following his steps.

The manufacturing of the first Piano worthy of the interpretation of the music of the great Masters is due to Sebastien Erard; since that time, to the present day, the name of Erard is attached to all improvements which have been attained in that direction.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

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SEBASTIEN ERARD

ANTON RUBINSTEIN

FACTORY

I. J. PADEREWSKI

F. LISZT

F. CHOPIN

CHOPIN'S MONUMENT

ERARD'S CONCERT HALL

THALBERG

---

LISZT'S MANUSCRIPT when 12 years old.

THALBERG'S LETTER.

LISZT'S LETTER.

## CHAPTER I.

SEBASTIEN ERARD was born in Strassburg. Alsace, in 1752; he began to study at an early age, and took to drawing, geometry and mechanics with such ardour that he carried off all the prizes at school.

When thirteen years of age, he climbed the Strassburg steeple and sat on the top of the cross, no unfit exploit for one who intended to tower above all his contemporaries in the region of mechanical achievement. At sixteen, on the death of his father, he determined to go to Paris and seek his fortune. In 1768 he entered a harpsicord firm as a common workman, but was so intolerably inquisitive and so apt to puzzle his master that he got dismissed as a speculative young man who wanted to "know everything."

His next master\*(1) seems to have been alive to the treasure he had captured in the young Sebastien. Having to make an instrument which was to possess quality of touch and tone hitherto unattained, he came in despair to young Erard, who set to work and made such an ingeniously beautiful instrument that soon all Paris was talking about it. The master was obliged to confess that Erard was the author, and from that day the young man's fortune was made; he had multitudes of orders, and at this period we notice the variety of his talents.

The exuberant inventive power of Erard, now aged twenty, knew no bounds; he revelled in every kind and quality of mechanism, ingenious toys, new instruments, each capable of being a new type, but lightly thrown aside and forgotten, set up in Paris as a nine days' wonder of skill and rapidity, but soon superseded by something quite different and still more extraordinary.

Everyone with a difficulty came to him, and every difficulty seemed to melt away before the magic of his brain.

A rich lady, the Duchess de Villeroi\*(2), great patroness of art and artists, allotted him a suite of apartments and workshop in her Chateau; there he made his first Pianoforte. The Pianoforte did not prove popular in France; the Parisian makers did not succeed with it, and the few Pianos then were imported from England and Germany.

Great was the jealousy in France when Erard's improved Pianos—then considered miracles of art—came into vogue; their fame soon spread to Germany, and in 1799 a rich Hamburg merchant had already collected 200 specimens.

Madam de Villeroi's accommodation was now too small for him, and he summoned his industrious and able brother, Jean, to his side, and they set up their own firm in the Rue de Bourbon, which was later transferred to the Rue du Mail\*(3).

The storm which was gradually brewing now burst over the successful manufacturers; on some technical point his vigilant and jealous rivals procured a police occupation of his premises, hoping no doubt to damage his reputation and suspend his trade, but too many silver-toned Pianos pleaded his cause in every Paris drawing room. The Court itself came to his assistance, and a special "Brevet" was issued by King Louis XVI., doing homage to the genius of the illustrious inventor.

### BREVET.

*This day, the 5th of February, 1785, the King being at Versailles informed that M. Sebastien Erard has succeeded by a new method of his invention to improve the instrument called a forte-piano; that he has even obtained the preference over those made in England, which he makes a commerce in the City of Paris, and his Majesty wishing to fix the talents of M. Erard in the said city, and to give him testimonies of the protection with which he honours those who, like him, have by assiduous labour contributed to the useful and agreeable arts, has permitted him to make, to cause to be made, and to sell in the City and faubourges of Paris, and wherever it may seem to him good, forte-pianos; and to employ there, whether by himself or by his workmen, the wood, the iron, and all the other materials necessary to the perfection of the ornament of the said instrument without his being liable on this account to be troubled or disturbed by the guards, synaics, and adjutants of the corporation and committees of arts pretext whatever; under the conditions, nevertheless, by the said M. Erard of conforming himself to the regulations and ordinances concerning the discipline of journeymen and workmen, and of not admitting into his workshops any but those who shall have satisfied the aforesaid regulations. For assurance of his will his Majesty has commanded me to expedite to the aforesaid M. Erard the present Brevet, which he has chosen to sign with his own hand, and to be counter-signed by me, Secretary of State, and of his commands and Finances.*

*Signed, LOUIS,*

*Countersigned, LE BARON DE BRETEUIL.*

Nothing seemed to escape this laborious and versatile mechanicien. At this time, the harp mechanism, which was very imperfect, arrested his special attention. A celebrated harpist, Krumpholtz, begged Erard to give his mind to the subject.

In a short time Erard told him a harp could be constructed on a perfectly new principle. Meanwhile Krumpholtz had associated himself with an opposition Harp Maker of the old school, and perceiving that his partner would at once be ruined if Erard's new harp was introduced, he went to the latter and begged him to desist.

It is certainly one of the oddest facts in the history of inventions that Erard, touched by the distress of

\* (1,2,3) SEE PAGE 4

Krumpholtz, abandoned his brilliant scheme and quietly laid aside as lumber about 80 harps he was constructing on his new principle.

In August, 1807, there is a record of Erard's paying Mrs. Krumpholtz various sums of money amounting to £168 19s. 0d., a further proof of his generosity.

It was only fourteen years after, that urged by the repeated call of harpists, he took up his invention and produced, after infinite labour, a harp in 1811 known as the Double Action Harp, which exceeded the wildest dreams of harpists and mechaniciens in its ingenuity and absolute perfection. At this model he worked for years, and it is recorded that for three months before its appearance he did not undress, his meals were snatched hurriedly, and a few hours sleep on a sofa sufficed at intervals to restore him\*(4). His expenditure during this period was large, as from February, 1807, to April, 1809, it amounted to £20,449 2s. 3d. But he had his reward; the ultimate model had never been excelled, and has become the universal one throughout the world. In one year, the first, Erard sold £25,000 worth of harps.

The dawn of the French Revolution made it dangerous for Erard, suspected of Royalist feelings, to remain in France\*(5). He came to England and started a branch in London, which is now situated in 18, Great Marlborough Street, W., where he first produced his Harp.

Recalled to Paris in 1815, he submitted his new Harp to the Academy of Science and Fine Arts, and received a most flattering address. From that time he was without rival at the Exhibitions. Thrice he received the Gold Medal, and was also decorated with the Legion of Honour.

However, it is of the Piano (always a more popular instrument than the Harp) that the greatest of Erard's triumphs is to be told. Although many notable improvements had been made by Erard in the Piano, and the smaller instruments worked easily, the touch of the Grand was heavy, the stroke uncertain, and the framework too weak to support a greater length and thicker size of string and tension; to overcome this, Erard used a metal frame to resist the extra strain.

Notwithstanding all attempts by various makers to produce a mechanism with a better repetition, it required a genius to find the solution and to invent a mechanism, which,

#### *First—*

When the finger on striking the key would impart the quality and intensity of the stroke to the string instantly.

#### *Secondly—*

Could instantly repeat that stroke.

Such a genius was found in the person of Sebastien Erard, and the solution of these two questions has

given him historically absolute supremacy amongst Pianoforte Manufacturers, and constituted the most important work realized in the manufacture of Pianos. Between 1820 and 1830, Erard revolutionized the Piano. The fame of the Erard Pianos became such, that persons said "An Erard" when speaking of a pianoforte, taking the name of the inventor for the generic name of the instrument. This invention marked the crowning exploit of his life.

Sebastien next turned his attention to the Organ and invented the "expressive touch"; he also invented a mechanical saw, capable of slicing thin wafers of wood, which became the wonder of the Paris workshops.

Whilst perfecting a magnificent Organ for the Tuilleries (destroyed during the revolution of 1830), he was struck down by a serious malady, and after a lingering illness died at his Chateau la Muette on the 5th of August, 1831.

Fetis, in his biography of Erard, says: "Excellent ami, bon parent, ce digne artiste avait une ame simple et droite, une disposition de bonté inaltérable qui devrait toujours accompagner le talent, et qui, malheureusement ne s'y joint pas toujours. Quoique sans orgueil, il avait, comme tous les hommes supérieurs, le sentiment de ce qu'il valait, et sa sensibilité s'alarmait quelquefois des injustices dont il était la victime; mais qui oserait le lui reprocher?"

Après tant de travaux et de découvertes, il doit être permis à un artiste tel que lui de réclamer la part de gloire qu'il avait si justement acquise."\*(6)

The history of the fortunes of the Erards is picturesquely connected with the beautiful Chateau la Muette\*(7).

Soon after his arrival in Paris, Erard, then a young man, waited one Sunday at the gate of the Chateau to see Queen Marie Antoinette, who resided there, come out in her carriage. Sebastien, who was in the midst of the crowd when she passed, cried "Vive la Reine"! with a powerful voice and Alsacien accent. The Queen remarked the fine young man, whom she mistook for one of her own countrymen. She spoke to him and asked him of what country he was. He replied: "I am French at heart by my birth as your Majesty is by marriage." The Queen, much pleased with this young man's appearance, and the answer he had given, ordered the Swiss Guards to allow him to walk over the gardens and to see the grounds.

A few years later he constructed a harpsicord for Marie Antoinette\*(8), which combined several remarkable inventions to adapt the instrument to the limited resources of her voice; one of these inventions was a transposing keyboard.

About half-a-century after that Sunday, the Chateau la Muette was for sale, and Sebastien was the pur-

\* (4,5,6,7,8) SEE PAGE 4

\*(1) This maker felt the task was beyond his powers; he applied in his trouble to his young apprentice, who undertook to build the instrument, but had to bind himself not to claim the authorship. The maker not enjoying a great reputation for cleverness, being pressed with questions, was compelled to name the real author. The incident became known, and attracted attentions to young Erard.

One mechanical Harpsicord, a master-work of invention which Erard made soon after for the Museum of the Duke de la Blancherie, and of which the "Journal de Paris" gave minute description, caused a sensation amongst the Parisian Artists and Amateurs, and was the means of bringing the young manufacturer to the front. Thus at sixteen his reputation began, and before he was twenty it was established.

\*(2) Sebastien Erard always remembered the Duchess de Villeroi; in his old age he often spoke with gratitude of her many kindnesses to him.

\*(3) Erard went to 13, Rue du Mail. The celebrated Madame Recamier resided at No. 12 soon after her marriage in 1798.

The great State Minister of Louis XIV., Colbert, resided at No. 7; the Artist Decaisne at No. 4.

\*(4) Sebastien Erard in his later years slept little; his bed was littered with papers, which were covered with drawings. His pencil seemed never to be out of his hand.

He was not content with drawings alone, but made models which were put into actual practice. Many of these were never adopted, not from reasons of failure, but from their costliness of construction; they were placed in his Museum at his Factory along with the rest of his inventions.

\*(5) Sebastien Erard was in Brussels at this time, suspected of Royalist proclivities. He was warned by his brother not to return to Paris; he came to England, to whose hospitable shores so many had fled.

It is certain he was under suspicion. The special privilege granted by the King, making an instrument for the Queen, numbering the Aristocracy among his clientele (among whom was the celebrated Madame Roland) would have been sufficient evidence in those days to have sent him to the scaffold.

Madame Roland was guillotined in the Autumn of 1793. In 1795 the contents of her flat, untouched since her arrest, were ordered by the police to be sold. The guardian of her orphan daughter got permission to take away a few of the child's personal belongings, among them being an Erard Piano—this had been given to her by her parents on January 1st, 1793, as a New Year's gift.

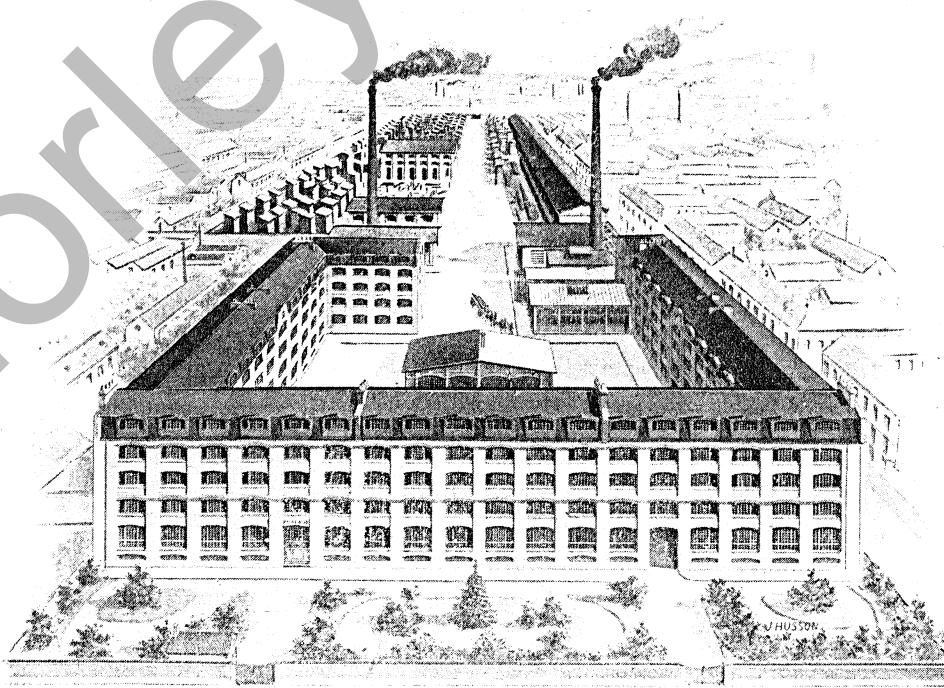
\*(6) Sebastien Erard can be said to have numbered, besides all musicians, the greatest artists of the day among his friends, by whom he was held in high esteem, and whom when in need he was ever ready to help, a tradition still carried on by the present Firm, to whose generosity many poor struggling artists owe their present success.

He was personally fond of all art; his pictures, furniture, etc., testified to his tastes in those directions.

\*(7) The Chateau la Muette was originally a Royal Hunting Box belonging to Louis XV., who often stayed there. Marie Antoinette, on the night of her arrival in Paris, was received there by Madame du Barry and Louis XV., on her betrothal to his grandson, afterwards the ill-fated Louis XVI.

After the death of Louis XV. the Court removed there, and the Queen received in State all the ladies of high nobility, who came in deep mourning to pay homage to the new Queen. The Chateau figured during the revolution, and was the scene of more than one of the terrible acts committed during the reign of terror.

\*(8) Among the furniture taken to the Temple for the use of the King, Queen and their family during their imprisonment was a fine Grand Piano-Erard. After the Queen was taken from the Temple to the Conciergerie for her trial and later to her execution, her daughter, who still remained a prisoner, was visited by a member of the Convention, to enquire as to her wants. Touching the keys of the Piano and thinking it was out of tune, he asked her if she should like it put right. She replied, "No, Monsieur; the Piano is not mine, it is the Queen's. I have not played on it, and I will not do so." Poor child! she was not then aware the mother had met the same fate as her father.



FACTORY.

chaser. Sentiment no doubt played the chief part in Sebastien's feelings at the time, since Louis XVI. had been his patron and protector.

The "Figaro" stated the price paid for this estate in 1803 was 800,000 francs; less than a century later the Erard family refused 30,000,000 francs for it.

On the death of Sebastien, the business was carried on by his nephew, Pierre, who had been associated with his uncle for many years. Pierre Erard died at La Muette in August, 1855. The following incident was recorded in the press:—On Monday, August 20th, when all Paris and its crowd of visitors were waiting to see the Queen Victoria of England in the Champs Elysees, a stately hearse, followed by mourning coaches and a large procession, crossed the Avenue, and changed for a moment the thoughts of the sightseers. "Whose is it?" "Whose is it?" brought out the answer: "It is the funeral of Pierre Erard, the great Pianoforte maker."

## CHAPTER II.

About the year 1839, the firm of Erard reached its zenith, and secured a superiority which has been maintained to the present day. When Erard's patent for the double escapement action expired, Pierre Erard applied for an extension—this protection had only been granted in a few cases, to Watt, for instance, for the Steam Engine. The Judicial Committee, after minute enquiry and strict examination of accounts, granted an extension of seven years. This, perhaps, is the only instance when a Piano was brought into Court and played on by direction of their Lordships. The performer was Madame Dulcken, a great Pianist and one of the most prominent artistes in the musical world of London. She had the greatest number of pupils, at the head of whom was Queen Victoria. In giving evidence she stated that after her experience of other Pianos, she considered Erard's superior to all.

On the expiry of Erard's various patents, factories were started for making Piano parts and actions, which enabled many Piano firms to buy the various parts and assemble them.

About 1850, Erard, out of curiosity, engaged the services of a competent expert to examine and report as to the type of Pianoforte being made about that period throughout the world. After visiting Belgium, Switzerland, America, New York, Germany, Russia, Denmark and England, he found all the instruments in a great degree imitations of Erard, particularly as regards studs, upward bearing and framing. This explains why Erard Pianos had such a superiority over all others and gained them the only Council Medal at the Great London Exhibition in 1851, and no doubt caused Rubinstein to say "there is but one Piano—the Erard; as to the others, they are but imitations."

If imitation is the sincerest flattery, no greater tribute can be shown to Erard, as from the date of the invention of the double escapement action to the present time, it is the only principle adopted not in its entirety, but in a modified, cheaper, and not so perfect a form, and no Piano builder throughout the world who boasts of any reputation, ever thinks of buying any other type of action, unless made on Erard's principle.

It will create surprise to hear that one large firm of action makers in Paris can lay claim to supplying the best known Piano firms in England, Germany, Austria and America, showing conclusively that the French in that special manufacture are considered the best in the world. Some firms in advertising their Pianos, state "with the splendid Erard action." The real Erard actions are only made by Erard in their own factory from the finest materials, some of which are specially made, and are not obtainable elsewhere; hence the great superiority and durability which has been demonstrated even after 80 years use. Now-a-days the Erard Pianofortes are constructed with such perfection that there is but very little room left for improvements.

## CHAPTER III.

The inventions of Sebastien Erard are too numerous to mention; they practically embrace everything of importance in connection with the Piano. Some of the principal inventions are:—

Double action for the Harp, five times patented from the year ...	1798 to 1811
Piano with two keyboards opposite each other	1811
Piano with brass studs, on to each note	1809
Piano with sustaining tone	1812
Repeating or double action for the grand piano	1820
Expressive touch in the organ	1830
Harmonic bar improving the tone of the treble in the grand	1838
Metallic planks substituted to the wooden planks formerly used	1851
Iron frame cast in one piece	1851
Keyboard of pedals for playing with the feet	1851
Brass forks and studs of an improved model	1856
Wrest pin plank inserted into an iron frame	1865
Soft pedal making the hammers strike nearer the strings without producing an alteration in the touch	1880
Double sounding boards for grands	1889
New wrest pin rendering the tuning easier	1889
Hammers with removable heads for instruments intended for extreme climates	1889
New soft pedals for grands acting progressively	1899



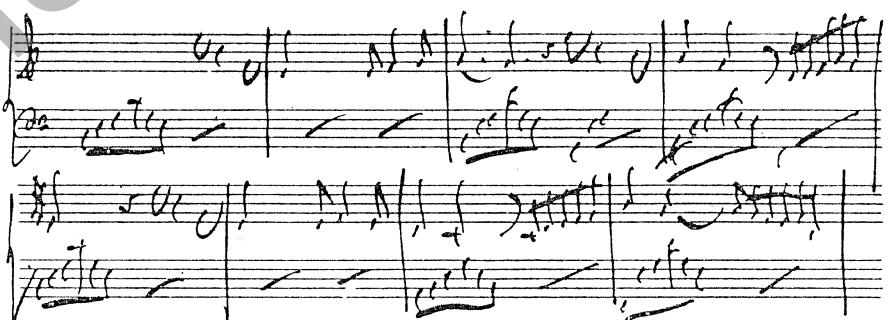
F. LISZT.

*Mon cher Thénier*

Il est les hautes et les  
mous qui dispensent de la  
barmalite des eloques. Néanmoins  
Majesté vous est venu de la  
comme sonne une gloire & l'art  
contemporain dont l'allemand que  
j'aime a bien droit - Il ne  
faut la louer. Oùthannen qui  
l'a dû être n'a pas fait chose de  
bon pour draper le Concerto  
qui je devrais d'agréer que depuis  
plusieurs années je suis bâti  
dans l'opéra d'une autre culture &  
dans l'opéra d'un autre genre.

Mon cher don Ben, je vous  
voie au moins deux fois  
ce que dispense et vous pour  
entendre à l'affrement d'un  
rêve à d'ordres et au port, dans  
le pavillon d'ordre à la forme  
d'un de ces beaux Paons d'Eau  
qui un jour si bien Ravelbrough

que  
Ah! la carafe, auxiliaire  
et tout à vous  
*J. dreyfus*  
Rugy 12 mai 18.



*Douc' Allegro*  
*di Bravura.*

*Composées et Dedées  
à Mme le*

*Comte Thos d'Alma de Gygy  
pour son très favorable  
et très sympathique accueillir*

*François dreyfus  
age de douze ans  
Op. 1*

PRINCIPAL DISTINCTIONS AND HONOURS:

"Brevet of King Louis XVI" special maker of Pianos	1785
Warrants to the Emperor Napoleon I and Empress Marie Lousie	1810
Gold Medal, Exhibition, Paris	1819
Warrant to the Duchess of Kent, England	1820
Sebastien Erard, inventor of the "Double Action for the Harp, Double Escapement Action and the expressive touch for the Organ," Chevalier of the Legion of Honour	1824
Gold Medal, Exhibition, Paris	1827
Warrant to King George IV	1829
Warrant to Queen Adelaide	1830
Warrant to King Louis Phillippe and all the Princes of the Royal Family	1832
Gold Medal, Paris	1834
Warrant to the Duchess of Kent	1834
Pierre Erard, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour	1834
Warrant to the Princess Victoria	1834
Warrant to Queen Victoria	1837
Gold Medal, Paris	1839
Gold Medal, Paris	1844
Warrant to Prince Albert	1848
Hors Concours, Exhibition, Paris	1849
Only Grand Medal (Council Medal), Exhibition, London	1851
Warrant to the Emperor Napoleon III and Empress Eugenie	1853
Gold Medal, Exhibition, Paris	1855
Warrant to the Prince of Wales	1863
Warrant to the Princess of Wales	1864
Gold Medal, Exhibition, Paris	1867
Warrant to the Queen of the Belgians	1867
M. Schaffer, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour	1867
Hors Concours, Exhibition, Vienna	1873
Warrant to the Queen of Spain	1875
Two Gold Medals, Exhibition, Sydney	1878
Two First Class Medals, Exhibition, Sydney	1879
Three Gold Medals, Exhibition, Melbourne	1880
Two Diplomas of Honour, Antwerp	1885
Hors Concours, Exhibition, Barcelona	1888
M. Blondel, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour	1888
Grand Prix, Exhibition, Paris	1889
Hors Concours, Exhibition, Paris	1900
M. Blondel, Officer of the Legion of Honour	1900
Warrant to King Edward VII.	1901
Warrant to Queen Alexandra	1901
Warrant to the Princess of Wales	1902
Warrant to the Prince of Wales	1903
Warrant to King George V.	1910
Warrant to Queen Mary	1911
Warrant to Queen Alexandra	1911

The Paris Conservatoire, since its foundation, has been exclusively supplied with Erard Pianos. The first prize is always an Erard Grand. The Minister of Beaux Arts is supplied with Erard Pianos for the branches of the Paris Conservatoire.

The Erard Pianos are more frequently used as solo instruments and for accompaniments in Concerts than any others in France.

Erard's clientele of professionals and amateurs is the most select and most numerous of all.

Owing to the high reputation of Erard, several firms at various times have attempted to sell Pianos bearing the name Erard, not manufactured by the firm Erard. In every case the Courts have granted an injunction. In one case the offenders had to pay no less than 15,000 francs for damages with expenses; a salutary lesson indeed!

It is impossible to give a complete list of all the artistes who have played on the Erard Pianos, but, from the year 1824, when Liszt as a boy first played the Erard, the following best-known artistes have played Erard in Paris. Many have taken their Erard's to Great Britain, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, and even South America, without any subsidy, a practice unfortunately now so common, and one which Erards have no desire or intention of following:—

ARNAUD, YVONNE	BERT, BERTHE
ALBENIZ	BLUMER, FRITZ
BOSQUET	BAUER, HAROLD
BIZET, GEORGE	BROCK, VERA
BUSONI, FERRUCCIO	CARRENO, THERESA
COSELLI	GOLDSCHMIDT, BERTA MARY
CHAMINADE, CECILE	HOFMANN, JOSEF
CAFFARET, LUCIE	HOWARD-JONES
CHOPIN	HUMMEL
DELIBES, LEO	HERZ
D'INDY, VINCENT	HAMBURG, MARK
DUKAS, PAUL	JANOTHA, MISS
DIÉMER, LOUIS	KETTEN
d'ALBERT, EUGEN	KLEEBERG, CLOTILDE
DAWSON, FREDERICK	LISZT
de BERIOT, CHARLES	LAMOND, FREDERIC
de PACHMANN	LHÉVINNE, JOSEF
DELAFOSSÉ, LEON	MASSENAT
DAVIES, FANNY	MENTER, SOPHIE
DEHELLY, GENEVIEVE	MOSZKOWSKI
DREWETT, NORAH	MOISEIWITSCH
de KOEZALSKI, RASUL	MENDELSSOHN
de RADWAN	MOSCHELES
da MOTTA, VIANNA	MALATS
ESSIPOFF, ANNETTE	PADEREWSKI
FAURÉ, GABRIEL	PEPPERCORN, GERTRUDE
FRIEDMANN, IGNAZ	PLANTÉ, FRANCIS
FREY, EMIL	POWELL, JOHN
FISCHHOF, JOSEF	RUBINSTEIN, ANTON
GOUDON	RUBINSTEIN, NICOLAS
GABRILOWITCH, OSSIP	RIPPER, ALICE
GÄNZ, RUDOLF	RISLER, EDOUARD
GRUNFELD	RUBINSTEIN, ARTHUR
GOODOWSKI	SAINTE SAËNS
GALSTON, GOTTFRIED	SAUER, EMIL
GUIMAR, NOVAES	SANDOWSKA, WANDA



THALBERG.

Winchester 20 Sept 1834

Mon cher ami

L'intrigue de Manchester est  
tout à fait un mythe  
puisque j'ai pu faire de nos  
correspondances. Addison nous fait  
dire que ce lieu est parfaitement  
indifférent auxquels pianos je  
peux; nous n'aurions jamais pu  
envoyer un piano avec un Van  
qui pour les distances aurait  
été trop grandes, ainsi nous  
avons pris ce que nous avons  
trouvé Tachy que je trouve de  
nos enfants à Cork, Limerick  
et Dublin.

Tout ce dont je vous

J. Thalberg

SAPELLNIKOFF  
SLIWINSKI, JOSEF  
SCOTT, CYRIL  
SCRIABINE  
SCHELLING, ERNEST  
SAFONOFF, WASSILI  
STOJOWSKI, SIGISMUND  
TUDOR, PHILIPP

THALBERG  
VERNE, ADELA  
VERNE, MATHILDE  
VERDI  
VINES, RICARDO  
WARNER, VERNON  
WIENIAWSKI, JOSEF  
WIDOR

M. J. Pichot, Ancien élève de l'École Polytechnique, Laureat de l'Institut Censeur honoraire de l'Université, Chevalier de la Legion d'honneur, Officier de l'Instruction publique Paris, writing about French Manufacturers, says: "In spite of embittered competition of the Foreign makers, who now supply instruments at prices which prove the inferiority of the material used, and an over hurried manufacture, the French manufacture has maintained the rank it knew how to acquire, and Erard, faithful to the traditions of Sébastien Erard, have the pleasure of seeing the artistes continuing to be faithful to them and look to their Factory for their precious instruments. Their great artistic intellect and scrupulous honesty deserve to be quoted as an example to all industrial Establishments."

#### CHAPTER IV.

The enormous number of unsolicited letters of praise received by Erard's during the last 100 years from all the greatest artists testify to the merits of their pianos, and the high reputation Erard's have attained in serving their clientele.

A few being interesting are reproduced, and a small selection of extracts from others is given.

#### LISZT.

Liszt came out in Paris as a boy of thirteen in 1824, playing an Erard Grand with seven octaves. Travelling to England the same year with his father, Adam Liszt, he was fortunate enough to meet Pierre Erard, who was going on a visit to his branch in London, and with whom he stayed.

The concerts given by young Liszt in London were principally private; he was presented at the Court of George IV. with great success, and gained the favour of the King. His first public concert in London took place in June; a numerous audience was assembled, among them being such authorities as

Clementi, Ries, Kalkbrenner, Cramer, Potter, Latour, and other virtuosos, who stood around the instrument and formed as it were a framework to Master Liszt before his Erard in London.

On the last occasion when he visited England, in 1866, he selected an Erard Concert Grand, at 18, Great Marlborough Street (some of whose employees have still a vivid recollection of the venerable master with his striking appearance, trying his Piano), to be sent to Windsor, where he played for the last time before Queen Victoria.

Apropos of Liszt's appearance at Court, His Majesty King George IV., whose taste for fine arts in general, and music in particular, was well known, gave express orders for one of Erard's Pianofortes to be taken to St. James's Palace to be compared with an instrument of old construction. Both Pianofortes were placed in the Throne Room, and J. B. Cramer, the celebrated pianist, writer of the well-known Studies, was commanded by His Majesty to play upon the two instruments. The King's preference was not for a moment doubtful, and signified in so decided a manner by His Majesty that Pierre Erard received the King's commands the next day to transport the elect Pianoforte to the Drawing Room at Windsor, in place of an instrument of the old construction. The King shortly after conferred a Royal Warrant appointing Erard Piano Maker in Ordinary to His Majesty.

#### THALBERG.

Thalberg as an executant had only one rival—Liszt. It was the wonderful mechanism invented by Sébastien Erard that enabled Thalberg to produce his effects which were considered so wonderful. He was a great friend of Erard, and his many recitals in Italy, France, and England, where he always played an Erard, helped greatly to bring before the public the merits of the Erard Piano.

He had wonderfully formed fingers. Persevering study enabled him to form wonderful legato, novel effects and inventions through the adroit use of the pedal, to make one believe that one heard two performers at the same time.

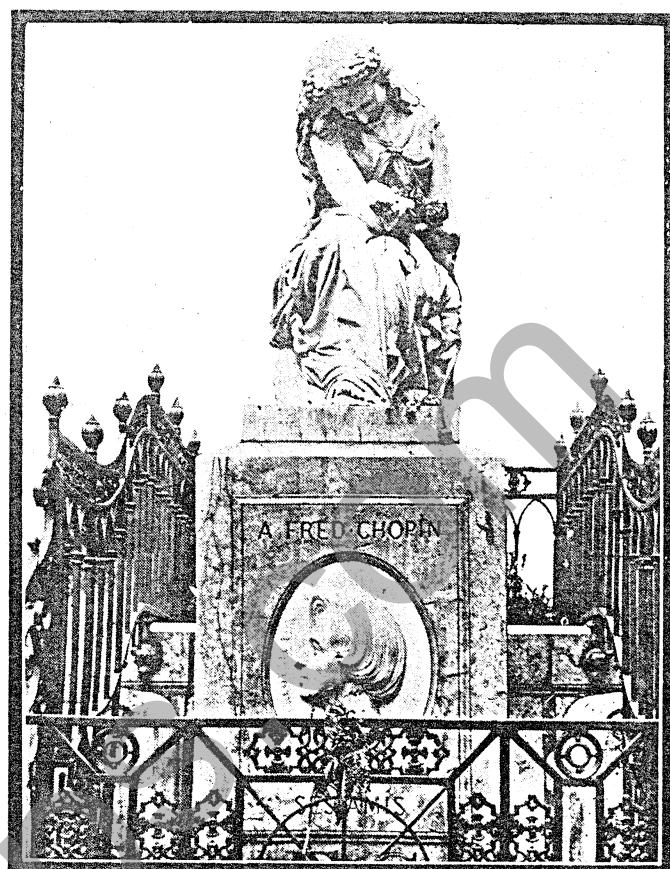
Concerning one of his Fantasias, some of Erard's friends fancied that he had written the brilliant octave repetition to show off the "*Double Echappement*" of Erard. This is not very likely; the truth is, the Erard action (which was such a revelation to pianists after using a Viennese, or so-called English action—really invented by Backers, a Dutchman), which he understood so well, enabled him to write such a passage and find new effects to surprise the public. He first appeared in Paris 1833, in London 1836.

#### CHOPIN.

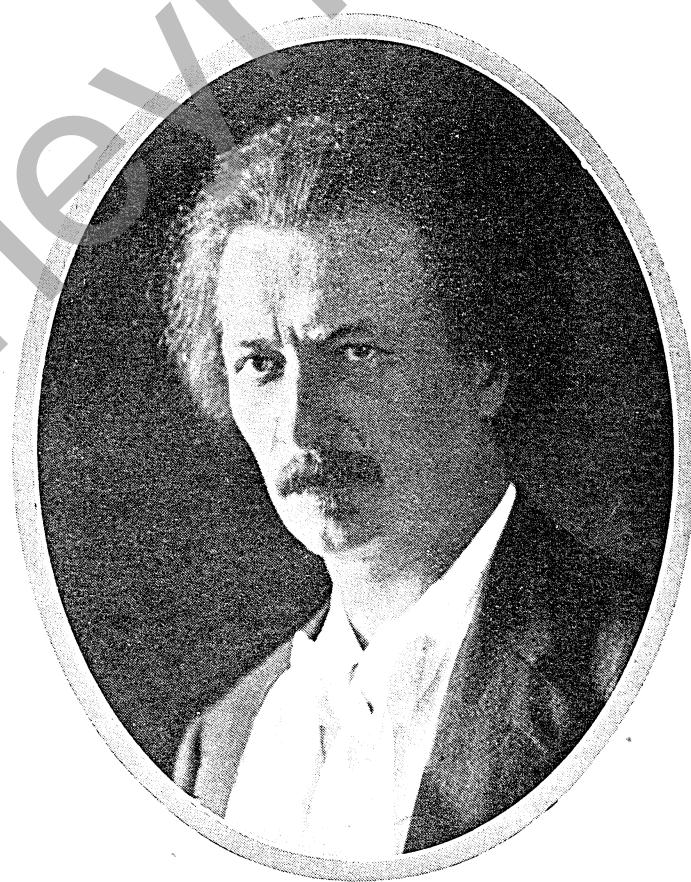
Chopin, when strong and healthy, as during the first years of his residence in Paris, used to play an Erard. On his second visit to England in 1848,



F. CHOPIN.



CHOPIN'S MONUMENT.



I. J. PADEREWSKI.

writing to a friend he said : "Erard a été charmant il m'a fait poser un Piano." Travelling to Scotland he gave two concerts ; the total receipts of his Glasgow Recital were made up as follows :—

96 Tickets paid	... £50	8	0
44 Tickets unpaid	... 23	2	0
		£73	10
Expenditure ...	... 14	8	5
Total ...	... £59	1	7

This compares very differently to a recital given by Paderewski in London, during the time of the Boer War, which, according to his agent, realized over £1,100, the whole of which was handed over by this generous artist for the benefit of the war fund, Erards defraying the expenses.

Chopin died the following year in Paris, and was laid to rest in the Cemetery of Père la Chaise. The monument unveiled in 1850, visited by so many admirers of his compositions, having fallen into a state of decay, was recently restored by Erards at their expense.

#### MENDELSSOHN.

Mendelssohn was another of the countless admirers of Erard's Pianos. His first appearance in England took place in London, 1829, and in Paris 1832. He played an Erard then and at his subsequent visits.

As a Pianist he possessed great skill, certainty, power, rapidity of execution, and a lovely tone.

#### PADEREWSKI.

Paderewski made his first appearance in London, May, 1890. In all countries where he has been able to obtain Erard, he has used them in preference to all others, and explains the saying of his, which is so well-known and raised such a controversy, "I play only on Erard whenever obtainable." The fantastic reports assiduously circulated about this great and generous artist, of enormous fees being paid him by Erards or of his having a financial interest in the Firm, were given as reasons for his playing Erard, the obvious intention being to try to influence public opinion, that *money*, and not the *merits* of the Piano, influenced his choice. These statements contained no truth, and Erards emphatically state that Paderewski never had any financial interest in the Firm, nor did they ever pay him any fee.

After an absence of ten years, Paderewski made his reappearance on the Concert platform in Paris and London in 1923; he created a furore, and no artist has probably ever had such wonderful receptions.

Paderewski selected what he considered the best piano to play on; no inducement or fee was offered him. His choice was an ERARD.

His opinion of the piano is expressed in his letter :

*This new model overhanging Erard is  
the most beautiful grand piano  
I ever played on during my whole  
career*



#### ANTON RUBINSTEIN.

Rubinstein was a faithful friend of Erard; he always played the Erard Piano in France and England from his first appearance. Two of his well-known sayings were : "The Erard is the aristocrat among all Pianos." "There is but one Piano—the Erard; as to the others, they are but imitations." The latter saying, after knowing the achievements of Sébastien Erard, was only too true.

Illustration of the famous "Salle Erard" in Paris, where all the greatest artistes play. This is not the old Concert Hall of which George Mathias, a pupil of Chopin from 1839 to 1844, wrote :—

"If at that time, 1844, a famous Virtuoso came to Paris, as for instance Döhler, Dreyschock, and even Leopold de Meyer himself, there sat enthroned in the Erard Concert Hall, a veritable Areopagus of Pianists and pianoforte teachers, whose verdict was decisive. What a Jury ! Chopin with his hair brushed high and thrown backwards from his forehead, his features always bearing a certain langour ; Zimmerman, with his clear understanding and variable opinions ; Thalberg, fair, handsome and tall ; Kalkbrenner, with his grave condescension. Was not that the heroic age of the Piano ? Alas, they are all no more ! Truly there are others there."

*Letter from Madame Dulcken's husband.*

HAMBURG,  
26th July, 1833.

Dear ERARD,

We arrived here a week ago. Your Piano has been landed safely and is the astonishment and delight (and the greatest mystification to a few Piano makers) of all who have the pleasure of beholding it.

Believe me, dear Erard,  
Your very sincere and obliged  
Friend and Servant,  
DULCKEN.

4, MANCHESTER STREET,  
Thursday, 8th Feb., 1827.

Mr. PIERRE ERARD,  
Dear Sir,

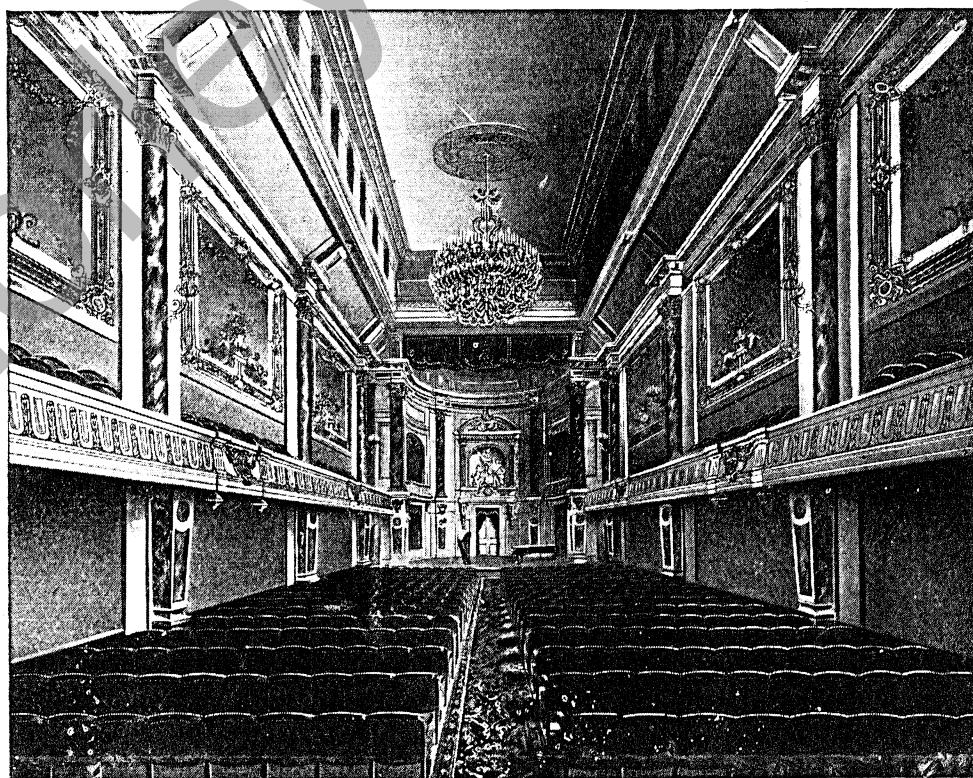
Allow me to thank you for your very kind attention in sending me another Pianoforte which I am happy to say gained the greatest admiration.

It will arrive in London to-morrow by Crosswellers Van, and I hope not in any way the worse for the journey.

I was very sorry you did not join the party to Brighton, till I was informed of the reason, when I must say, I was delighted, and it not only strengthened my hope and opinion that in a very short time the very great superiority of the instrument will admit of no doubt, but also made me somewhat proud of my own judgment in so decidedly considering it, before *all others*.



ANTON RUBINSTEIN.



ERARD'S CONCERT HALL.

The one I have I will wait your order to return as I cannot just now indulge myself with one, but look forward for the time when I may be able with great delight, as I am convinced I shall never be satisfied to play on any other. Concluding that the one Moscheles played on must have met with its due admiration.

I beg to congratulate you on the certainty of their success and remain,

Dear Sir,  
Your very much obliged  
G. FERRARI.

G. Ferrari, born in 1759, was a cultivated, versatile musician. Knew M. Campan, Marie Antoinette's Master of the Household, left France shortly after 1793 and settled in London, composed a large number of works.

COLOGNE,  
7th October, 1839.

PIERRE ERARD, Esq.  
Dear Sir,

I must now remind you of your kind promise to send a Pianoforte for me to Holland, and beg you will forward a most beautiful instrument with an easy touch and well rounded keys for me directed to Madame Duleken, Pianiste to H. M. Queen Victoria, care of M. Plattner, Music Sellers, Rotterdam, without delay.

I hope you will send me a very brilliant one, as I am anxious for the success of your first Piano among the good Dutch people.

I hope Madame Erard is quite well and beg, dear Sir, to give my kindest regards to her, and believe me,

Ever yours most truly obliged  
LOUISE DULCKEN,

The following letter from Kalkbrenner, a celebrated Pianist (from whom Chopin took lessons), is interesting in showing the high reputation of Erard's Pianofortes in Foreign Countries. Erard's reply shows that Liszt, who had become so celebrated, preferred the Erard Piano. About this period Liszt took an Erard Grand with him during his European Tours:—

HAMBURG, 16 8bre, 1840.

Messieurs ERARD,

Par la presente je viens vous prier de vouloir bien me dire quel serait le prix d'un très beau piano à queue de votre fabrique, de plus si vous confectionnez aussi des pianos carrés, droits etc et quel en est le prix. Je vous prierai en même temps de me dire en quoi consistent les autres frais et quel est le à combien monte le port par bateau à vapeur jusqu'ici.

Dans l'attente de votre réponse j'ai l'honneur d'être avec une grande considération.

GUSTAVE THÉODORE KALKBRENNER.  
Veuillez m'avoyer votre réponse sous l'adresse de Messieurs Hildebrandt et Cie.

We hasten to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 16th inst., and in answer beg to refer you to the annexed list of prices.

We have lately sent over to your City one of the above instruments, the price of which is 130 guineas. It was consigned to Monsieur Schubert, Editeur de Music, Hamburg, and is destined for the celebrated M. Liszt, who will soon be there, when he intends to give Concerts and when he will show off the great superiority of these most admired Pianos.

We have the honour to be, Sir,  
Your most Obedient Servants,  
S. & P. ERARD.  
M. Gust. Theodor Kalkbrenner,  
Hamburg.  
LONDON, October 20th, 1840.

Ignaz Moscheles, a friend of Erard, whose preference for Erard's Pianos was well known, was considered the foremost Pianist after Hummel and before Chopin; Mendelssohn as a youth had lessons from him. Renowned for the variety and brilliancy of his extempore performances, played in Paris 1822, Philharmonic Society, London, 1826.

SOUTHAMPTON,  
18th November, 1830

Mon Cher ERARD,

Je viens de recevoir votre instrument et vous concevez avec quel plaisir je ni'en sers après n'avoir en qu'un Piano quarré depuis pres d'un mois, d'ailleurs votre Piano quoi qu'un de vos plus anciens est fort beau et je compte bien le travailler. Il est arrivé en si bon ordre que je n'ai pas même besoin de la faire accorder, ce qui lui fait grand honneur.

Recevez mes remerciements et agréez l'assurance de mon amitié.

I. MOSCHELES.

THALBERG :—

"A few days ago I received the magnificent Pianoforte which you have made for me, and which is all that is beautiful. It pleased me in every way, and I hope soon to show the Neapolitan public that there is only one Piano—the Erard Piano."

MADAME SCHUMANN :—

"I have asked for an Erard Piano."

RICHARD WAGNER :—

Sir, I was yesterday at your house to thank you for the great kindness, with which you have provided me with such an excellent Piano during my stay in London, and to tell you at the same time of my departure, which is fixed for to-morrow evening. If it is not possible to see you again, allow me to beg you to have your Piano removed in the course of the day, and believe me very sensible of the kindness and munificence with which you have responded to the recommendation of my friend Liszt.

Believe me, Sir, with every gratitude,

Yours very truly,

RICHARD WAGNER,

MENDELSSOHN :—

"The difference between your instruments and those which are manufactured here is so great! It is like hearing a full orchestra near a small Piano."

SAINT-SAENS :—

"The Erard Piano is to me the type of the piano. It is what I always play upon with the greatest pleasure."

MDLLE CHAMINADE :—

"I have cherished your pianos since I first began to play."

MARK HAMBOURG :—

"I consider your Pianofortes the finest instruments in the world, both as regards beauty of tone and touch."

FREDERIC LAMOND :—

"After personal experience I can only endorse everything that has been said in favour of your Pianos by Rubinstein, Liszt and Paderewski."

MADAME ADELINA PATTI :—

"The Pianoforte you have recently supplied me with gives great satisfaction, and the tone is perfect."

HAROLD BAUER :—

"The peculiar sensitiveness of the Erard makes it unique among pianos. The inmost characteristics of the player are consequently realised as in no other pianoforte."

WASILY SAPELLNIKOFF :—

"I always play with preference on your pianos; the playing on your Grands is a pleasure, while on others it is a labour."

ADELA VERNE :—

"The only pianoforte that satisfies every requirement of the pianist in its touch, and charms every ear by the beauty of its tone."

I am very grateful to you for sending that beautiful piano down to Bournemouth.

SIR HENRY J. WOOD :—

"I consider your new Overstrung Baby Grand Pianoforte extremely fine in every way. Its tone and touch are so sympathetic that to my mind it is the ideal instrument for the soloist and accompanist."

EMIL SAUER :—

"The perfection of these instruments, their extreme beauty of tone and wonderful durability place them above criticism."

REFERRING TO STYLE 10 GRAND.

"My very best thanks for the charming little pianoforte you so very kindly sent for my concert. Everybody admired it very much."

"We are most grateful for the very fine pianoforte you were kind enough to send us for Tuesday evening. I think it was a most beautiful instrument, and many of the audience have told me how struck they were with the beauty of its tone."

"I am writing to tell you how very much I enjoyed playing on the Erard Grand at your concert on Tuesday last. I found the touch most responsive, and for pianissimo passages it was most delightful. One so often finds at local concerts inferior instruments, that I very much appreciate playing on such a good one."

"Please accept my very sincere thanks for the beautiful piano you sent last Saturday. It added so largely to the success of the Cafe Chantant, and I heard many remarks about the 'beautiful tone.' I have a piano purchased in June last, and find it not at all to my liking, and can assure you of the great pleasure I had in using the instrument you so kindly sent down here. It made me more than regret that I had not visited your showrooms before purchasing a new piano."

"I hope you will send two pianos which equal the one on hire at present, which has the nicest tone of any piano I have played on."

"My husband has asked me to write and express my feelings in reference to your piano we had at our concert. I am a pianist and must thank you most sincerely for the kindness and thoughtfulness you have shown in sending us such a lovely piano down. Both.....and I thoroughly enjoyed playing on it; the tone and touch are beautiful."

REFERRING TO REPAIRED PIANOS.

PIANO 43 YEARS OLD.

"Please find cheque value.....in settlement of your account. You must allow me to say that I have never had more pleasure in drawing a cheque for work done than in this instance, nor do I think anyone could have effected the renovation in a better manner than yourselves."

PIANO 18 YEARS OLD.

"I have yours of October 18th, and have pleasure in informing you that my piano has since arrived in very excellent condition, and we are delighted with same. It is a credit even to the firm of Messrs. S. & P. Erard."

PIANO 29 YEARS OLD (Badly damaged by water.)

"Mrs.....is delighted with piano. It is certainly a most remarkable recovery, and it appears to be better than ever."

PIANO 78 YEARS OLD.

"It is a very old one, for it was bought by my Grandfather about 80 years ago, and selected by Sir Jules Benedict who wrote his name inside (where it is now) as at this time he was giving music lessons to my Aunts. I consider my piano a wonderful advertisement for the durability of your pianos. It still keeps well in tune, and has a very sweet tone. Many musicians have exclaimed in amazement at its still being so good."

PIANO 18 YEARS OLD.

"I have the pleasure to enclose cheque for.....and desire to express most grateful appreciation of the excellent way in which you have carried out your contract. The piano is as near to the perfect instrument it was when you sold it to me, as it could possibly be made, and is to me a great joy."

REFERRING TO NEW PIANOS.

STYLE 16.

"The piano has arrived safely and in good condition this morning. My son has been playing it all the day, and it gives great satisfaction. It is a beautiful instrument. I must again thank you for the generous way you have treated me, truly upholding the Erard tradition."

STYLE 15.

"The piano arrived yesterday quite safely. We are very pleased indeed with it in every way, and I should like to thank you again."

DECORATED GRAND.

"It gives me much pleasure to send you a cheque with my hearty thanks for the honourable and courteous manner in which you have conducted the transaction."

STYLE 15.

"I must just send you a line to thank you for all the trouble you have taken to get me a piano, and also to let you know that I like the piano immensely. The tone is beautiful and suits the room perfectly. I really am delighted."

STYLE 10 GRAND.

"I enclose cheque in settlement of the enclosed account as agreed. The piano was delivered safe and sound, and gives every satisfaction. We are indebted to you for the prompt and businesslike way in which you arranged for delivery."

STYLE 15.

"With Mr.....best thanks. The piano is beautiful."

STYLE 15.

"The piano arrived safely to-day. My son is charmed with it, and we have had a delightful musical afternoon and evening. Thanking you for your kind attention."

STYLE 15.

"Mr.....begs to thank Messrs. Erard for the beautiful new piano which he found on his return yesterday. It is pure joy to touch an instrument so perfect."

STYLE 10.

"No one knows better than I how beautiful the Erard pianos are. I would buy one in preference to any other piano on earth."

To Sebastian Erard Esq<sup>r</sup>

Dear Sir,

Permit me to offer this little  
work to the Public under the Sanction of your  
name.

As a brief history of the different im-  
provements, which have been made on the Harp,  
I trust it will not prove uninteresting to the lov-  
ers of Music, who derive so much gratification  
from that beautiful Instrument

I remain,

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate Nephew,  
Pierre Erard.

18 Great Marlborough Street.

June 1821.

# THE HARP

IN ITS PRESENT IMPROVED STATE,

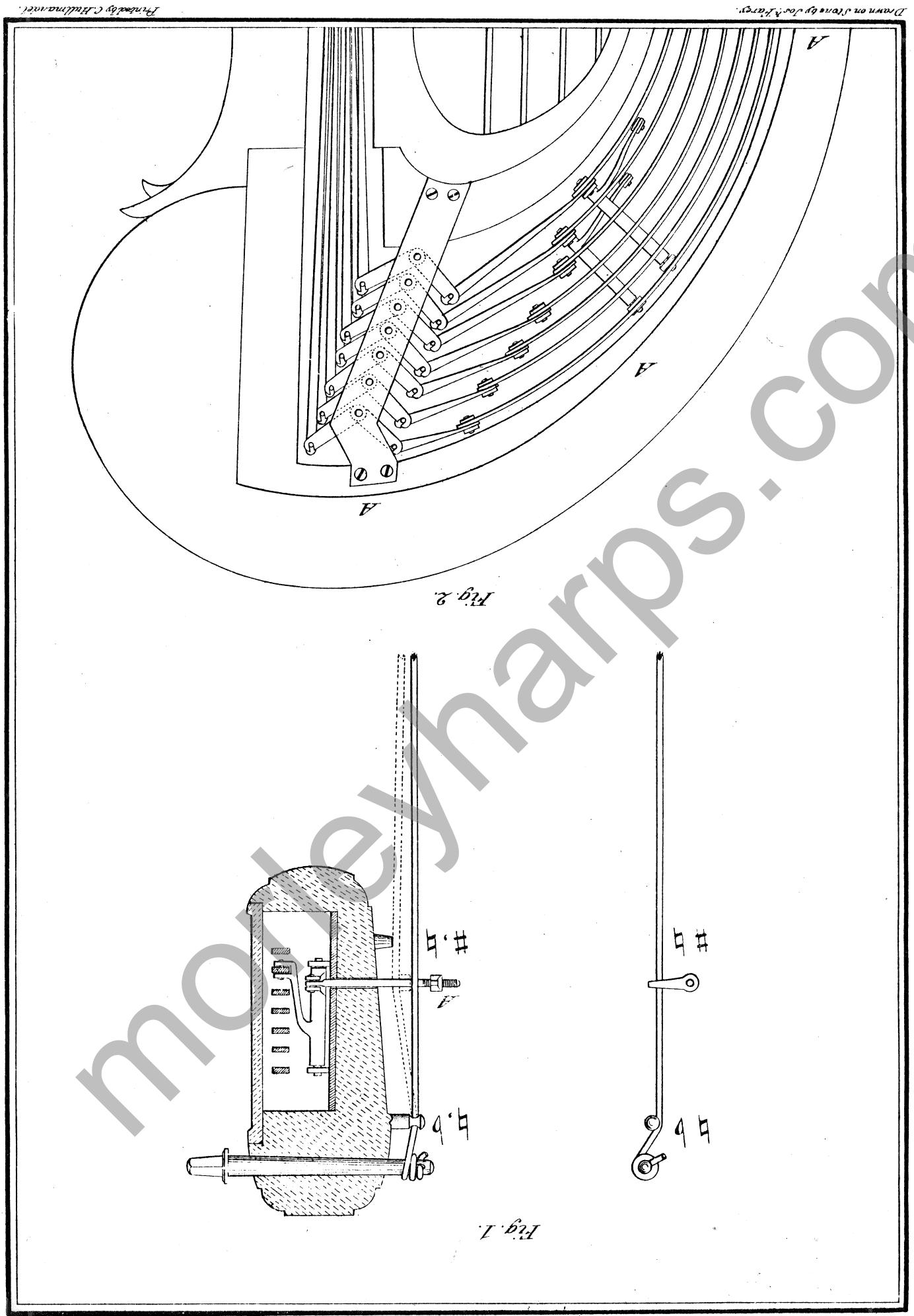
COMPARED WITH

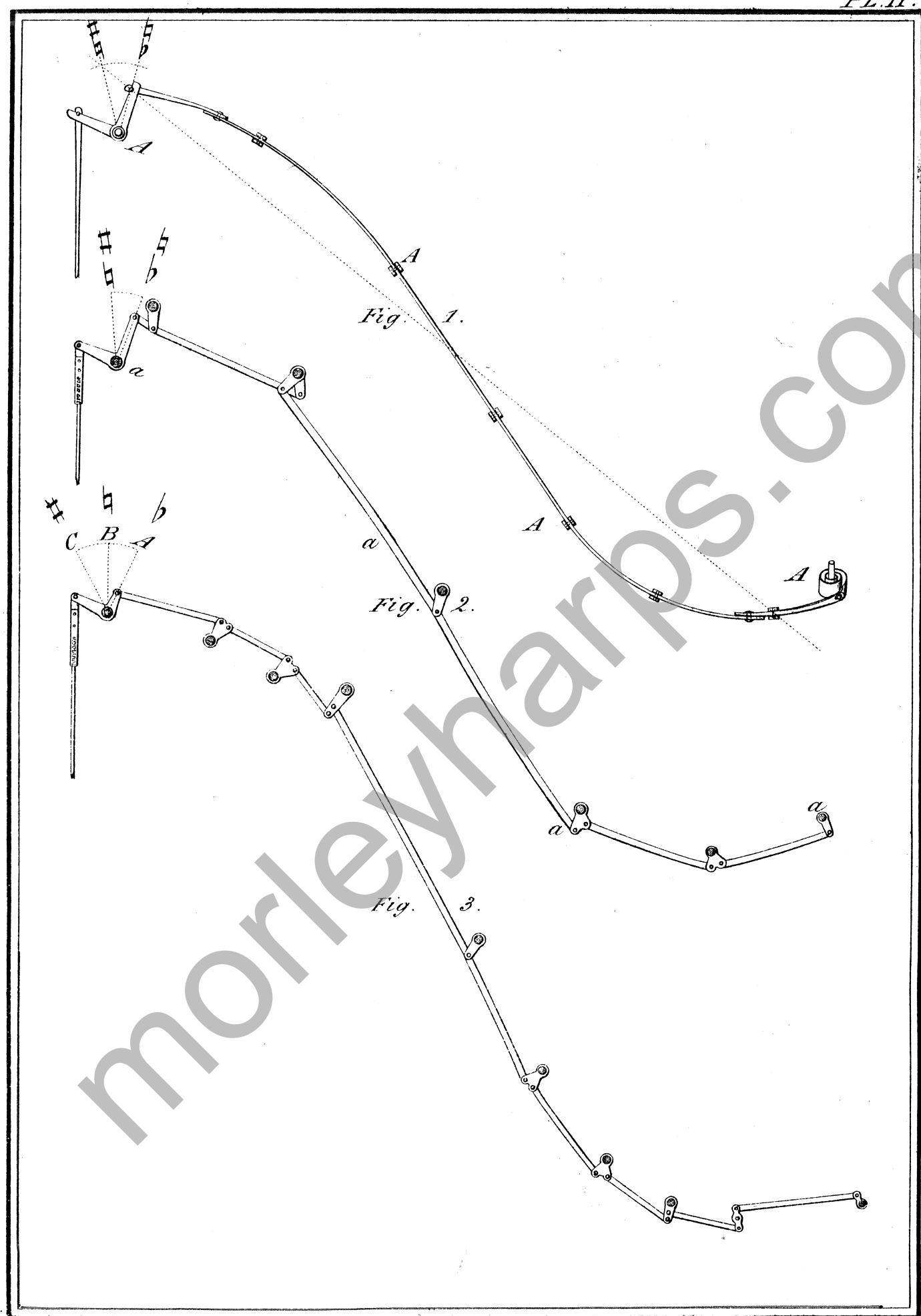
## THE ORIGINAL PEDAL HARP.

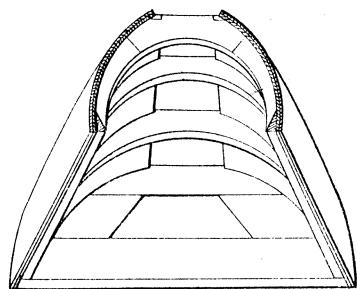
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THE first Pedal Harps exhibited in England, about forty years ago, were imported from France, and are known at the present time under the denomination of *French harps*. The plan of their mechanism, and the proportions upon which the tone is dependent, are generally allowed to be defective in many essential points.

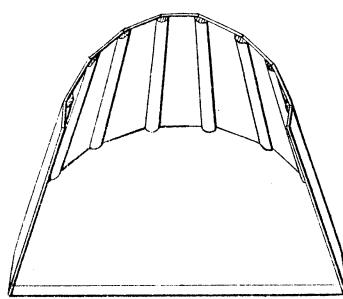
A great defect in the construction of these harps is, that the action of the pedal, to give the string a second sound, draws it out of the vertical perpendicular, to make it rest upon the neck of the instrument at A, (*see Pl. I. Fig. 1.*) ; which lateral motion greatly increases the difficulty of the execution, by destroying the uniformity of the distances between the strings; and tends to put the string out of tune, by making it deviate from its original position, as the curve which it so describes makes it much longer than the straight line from the sounding-board, to the fixed stud or bridge. Besides, the system of cranks and rods, at A, A, A, A, which actuate the motion, is constructed upon so wrong



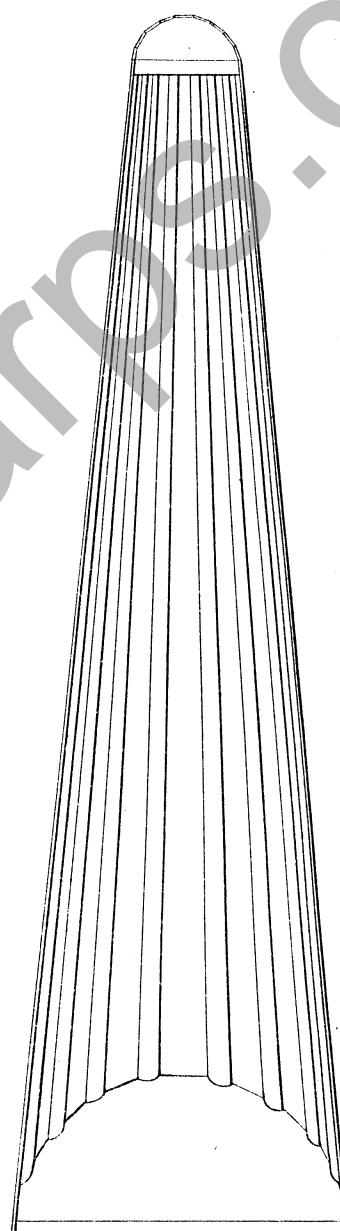
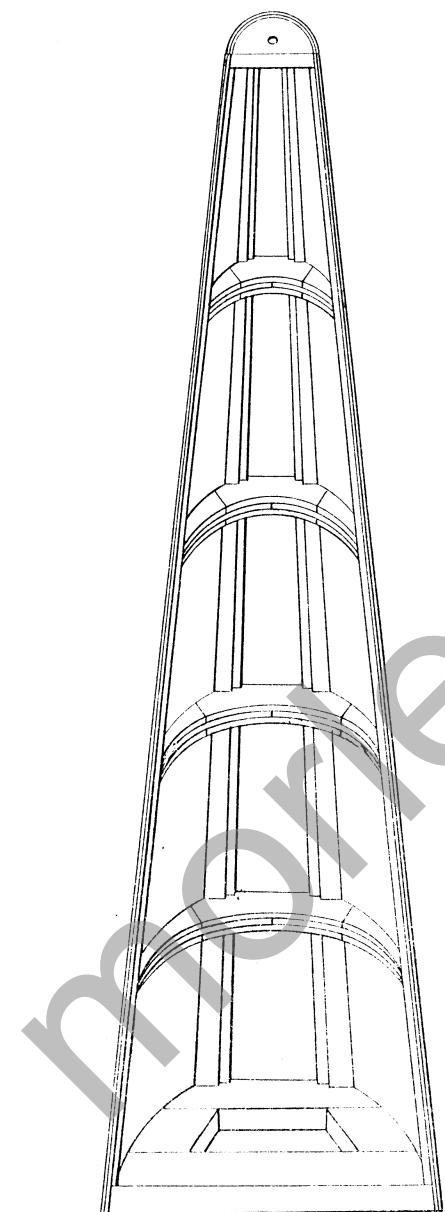




*Fig. 2.*



*Fig. 1.*



a principle, (*see Pl. I. Fig. 2. and Pl. II. Fig. 1.*) that it cannot be depended upon to stop the string, when shortened the degree of a semitone, with sufficient tightness to produce as clear and pure a tone as when open.

These are defects dependent upon the mechanism. There are others attending the construction of the frame or wood-work of the harp, of no less importance.

The mechanism being introduced into the neck, hollowed out to receive the same, (*see Pl. I. Fig. 1, 2.*) the necessary curve to preserve the due proportions of the strings throughout the instrument could not be given to the neck, without great danger of its giving way ; and as that part of the instrument was originally shaped out of one solid piece, the grain of the wood must have been cut in the bent part of it, and rendered the more liable to break.

With such defects in the construction of the neck of the harp, it would have been impossible ever to string the instrument with strings of the size now in general use, the weight or draught being, thus, more than doubly increased.

The sonorous body used to be made out of seven or nine pieces : which construction was attended with considerable trouble to the workman, and was never to be depended upon in point of solidity. (*See Pl. III. Fig. 1.*)

Such was the state of the harp, as imported from the Continent, when Mr. Sebastian Erard took out his first patent in 1794, *the first for the harp ever granted in England*: and a slight inspection of this harp will make it evident, that he effected a complete revolution in the system of construction for that instrument. (*See Pl. IV.*) Fig. 1.) Instead of enclosing the mechanism in the wood itself, he makes it quite independent of the frame or wood-work: the system of cranks and rods, *a, a, a, a,* (*see Pl. II. Fig. 2.*) acting upon each other in a direct and uniform manner, is placed under the wooden part of the neck *b, b, b,* at A, (*see Pl. IV. Fig. 1.*) and made to act between two brass plates *c, c, c, c,* which serve as true and immovable bearings *d, d,* for the different centres of the mechanism. Those two brass plates, which contain the whole of the mechanism, are placed upon the neck of the harp when put together, and have the property of giving it additional strength.

Mr. Sebastian Erard was the first to construct the neck of several pieces of wood, so as to make the grain run in straight lines, wedging each other in the bent parts.

The most ingenious and useful of his first improvements is the mechanical contrivance, generally known by the name of the *fork*. (*See Pl. IV. Fig. 1 and 2.*) It is so universally acknowledged to be superior to any other means known or employed for the purpose of shortening the string, to give it another tone, that all the harp-makers in the United Kingdom avail themselves of the invention.

Fig. 2.

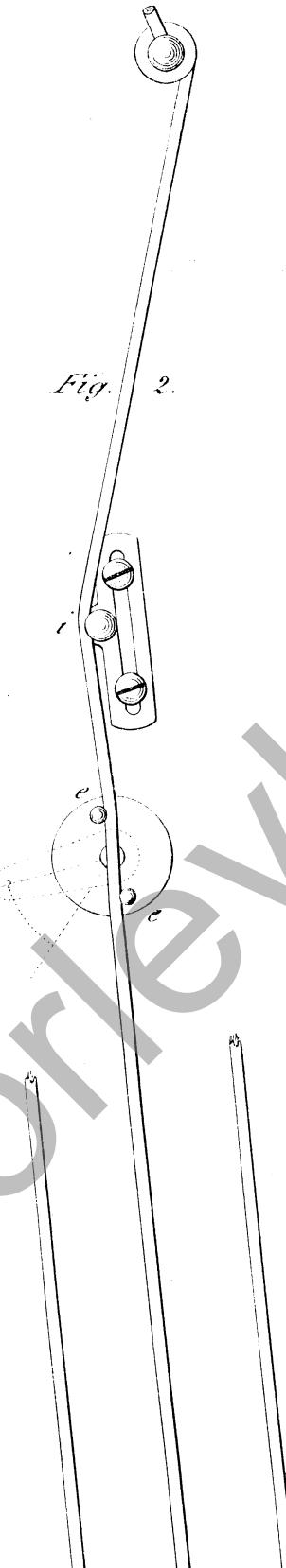
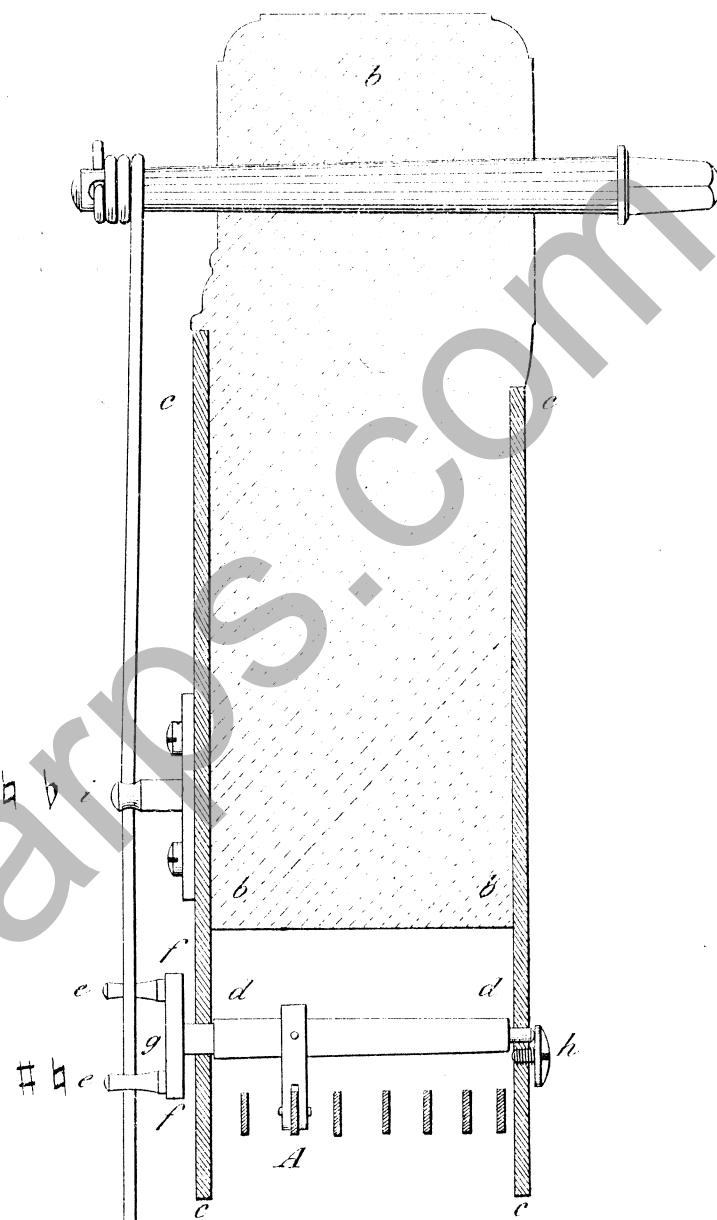


Fig. 1.



The great merit of any mechanism rests on its simplicity : the fork is merely two prongs or points *e, e*, mounted upon a little brass round plate or disk *f, f*, the centre of which is screwed upon an axis or arbor *g, h*, passing through the two plates *c, c, c, c*, (see *Pl. IV. Fig. 1, 2.*) . The string pends from the bridge pin or stud *i*, so as to cross the face of the round part or disk ; when the pedal is depressed, the levers and connecting rods *a, a, a, a*, (see *Pl. II. Fig. 2.*) placed under the wooden part of the neck at *A*, (see *Pl. IV. Fig. 1.*) act on the axis *g, h*, upon which the fork is mounted, so as to make it describe a sufficient angular motion to bring the two pins *e, e*, on the disk, into contact with the string, thus shortening it the degree of a semitone, and at the same time pressing it with sufficient tightness to make the string produce as clear and as firm a tone as when open. *The string, however, is kept perfectly parallel to the two contiguous strings, and free from any lateral motion in the vertical plane.* (See *Pl. IV. Fig. 1, 2.*)

Twenty-five years' experience, a stronger argument than the best reasoning, has proved, that the proper pressure of the fork does not overpower the natural elasticity of the string.

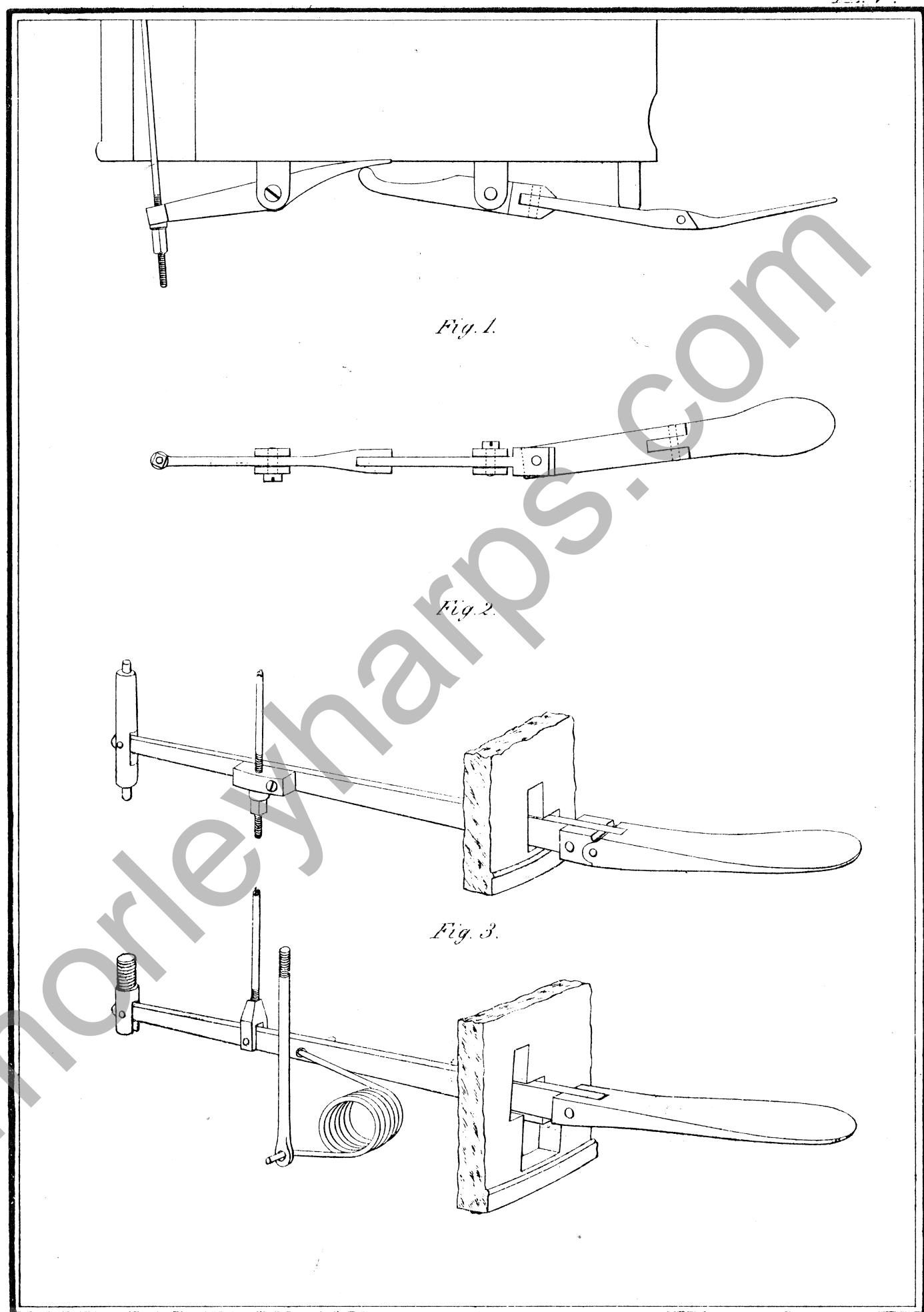
There are several other improvements in Mr. Sebastian Erard's harp, which, though not so essentially important, yet contributed to render his work perfect : such as the adjusting screw *h*, at the back plate (see *Pl. IV. Fig. 1.*) ; the different ways of connecting the different parts of the mechanism ; and the round shape which he gave to the sonorous body, rendering it by so doing much more sonorous and more durable. (See *Pl. III. Fig. 2.*)

The proportions of the strings were also greatly altered by him, so that the French harp and Sebastian Erard's compared might be said to have that striking difference between each other, in point of tone, which exists between a grand Piano Forte and a Harpsichord ; and, in point of construction, that which exists between the badly-constructed old wooden machinery mills, and one of our present improved cast-iron engines.

The consequence of those very striking improvements in the harp was, that it rose considerably in the estimation of the musical world. The professors and amateurs of the greatest merit, both in this country and abroad, were eager to procure Erard's harps, and thus they shortly got into general use.

Mr. Sebastian Erard soon effected further improvements upon his first harp ; the pedal, for instance, which used to consist of two levers, acting upon one another, and the one which projects out of the pedestal being made with a joint to allow its lateral motion into the notch, (*see Pl. V. Fig. 1.*) he greatly simplified in making it into one single lever, or arm. (*See Pl. V. Fig. 2.*)

Thus, about the year 1800, the single action harp had attained so satisfactory a state of perfection as to admit of no further improvement in its mechanical construction ; it was still however very defective as to its powers of modulation :—from the very nature of the



instrument, since sufficient room must be left for the fingers to have free access between the strings, it is not practicable to have more than seven strings within the octave, which number, with the requisite distance between them, forms as wide a space as the hand, placed in a proper position upon the instrument, can reach with facility.

Those seven strings are generally tuned diatonically upon the single action harp in the key of E 3 flats ; that mode of tuning seems to have been generally adopted as the best to divide, as much as possible, the imperfection of the instrument, between the flats and the sharps. The action of each pedal raising each string one semitone, upon the single action harp, had it been tuned in the key of C the modulations practicable would have been confined to keys with sharps, whilst, by tuning the harp in a key with flats, the number of keys practicable is divided between the flats and the sharps, though not increased, for where the advantage of the flat is gained, that of the sharp is lost, and *vice versa*.

This imperfection of the instrument as to modulation could not escape the observing mind of Mr. Sebastian Erard ; he made the first attempt to remedy it about the year 1801, when he completed a harp which produced *three distinct sounds upon every string*, viz. *the flat, the natural, and the sharp*.

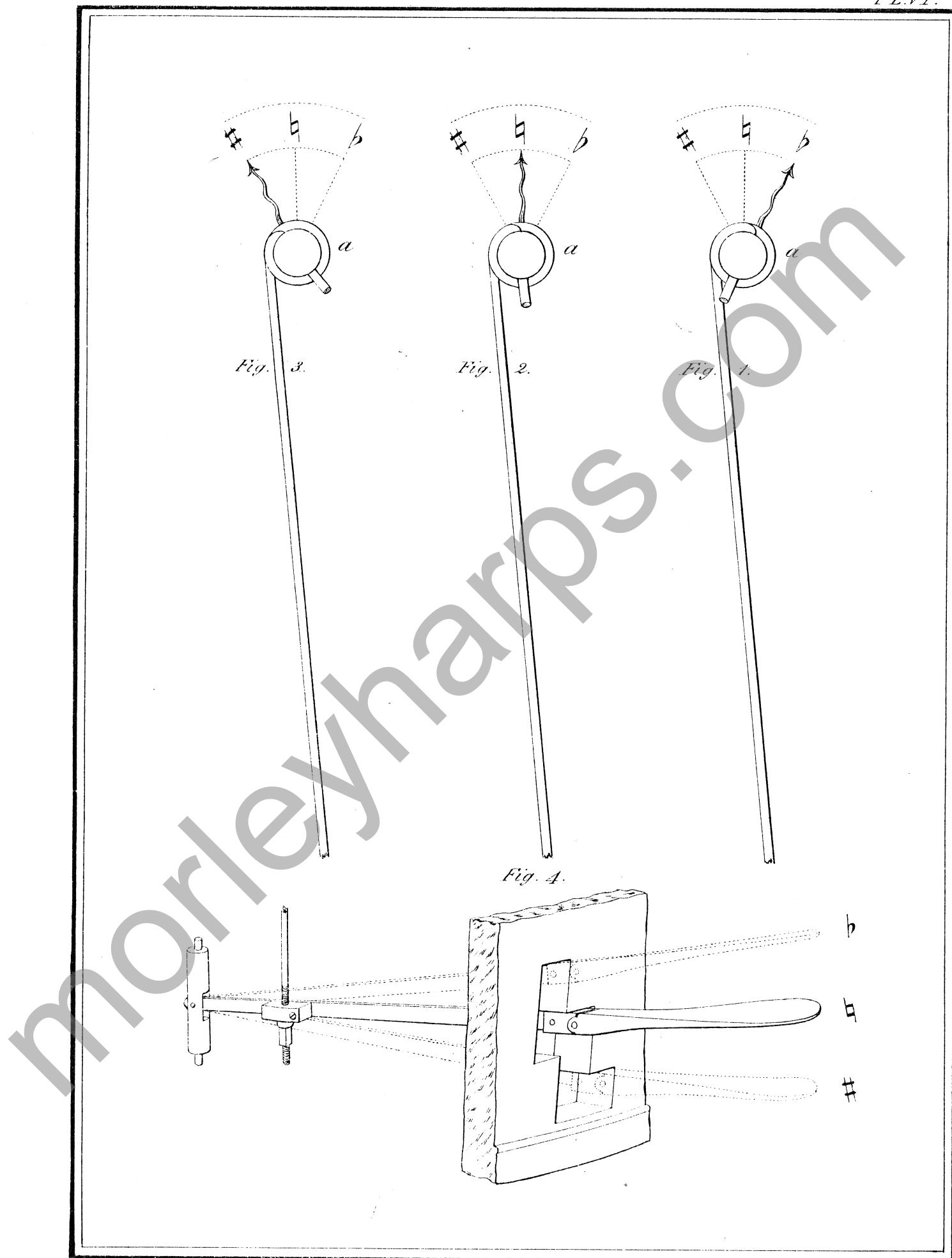
The patent for that harp is dated the 16th of June, 1801. It contains the double notch, or cut, in the pedestal of the harp, by means of which the pedal, after having been pressed to a first rest, as in the single

action harp, may be pressed to a second rest, (*see Pl. VI. Fig. 4.*) This contrivance is an essential part of the construction of a double action harp, and those who now attempt to make double movement harps, avail themselves of it as well as of all his other improvements, *and perhaps some of them without knowing who was the original inventor.*

The principle of the mechanism to effect the semitones, is different from that of his single action harp, produced in 1794, namely, *the shortening the strings by means of a fork.*

The pedal when depressed makes the rest pin *a*, (*see Pl. VI. Fig. 1, 2, 3.*) upon which the string is wound, turn round, and describe a certain angular motion, which winds up the string so as to raise it two successive semitones, in the same way that it might be done with a tuning hammer. As the outward appearance of the mechanism was the same, whether the string were flat, natural, or sharp, Mr. Sebastian Erard contrived at the time a sort of index, to shew the position of the pedal :—it consisted of a needle attached to the rest pin itself, and which by following the rotatory motion of the rest pin, pointed to the figure flat, natural, or sharp, (*see Pl. VI. Fig. 1, 2, 3.*)

This mode of effecting the semitones upon the harp had some advantages, but was attended on the other hand with inconvenience, that of increasing the tension of the string. There are those, perhaps, who would have produced this harp to the public, and promoted its sale; but Mr. Sebastian Erard was aware of the defects of an instrument built upon such a plan, and knew that it could never be of general use, he therefore,



regardless of the great expence and labor he had incurred, reserved it as a mere curiosity. Its mechanism is well worth the attention of the curious, as it contains several problems in mechanics, difficult to solve.

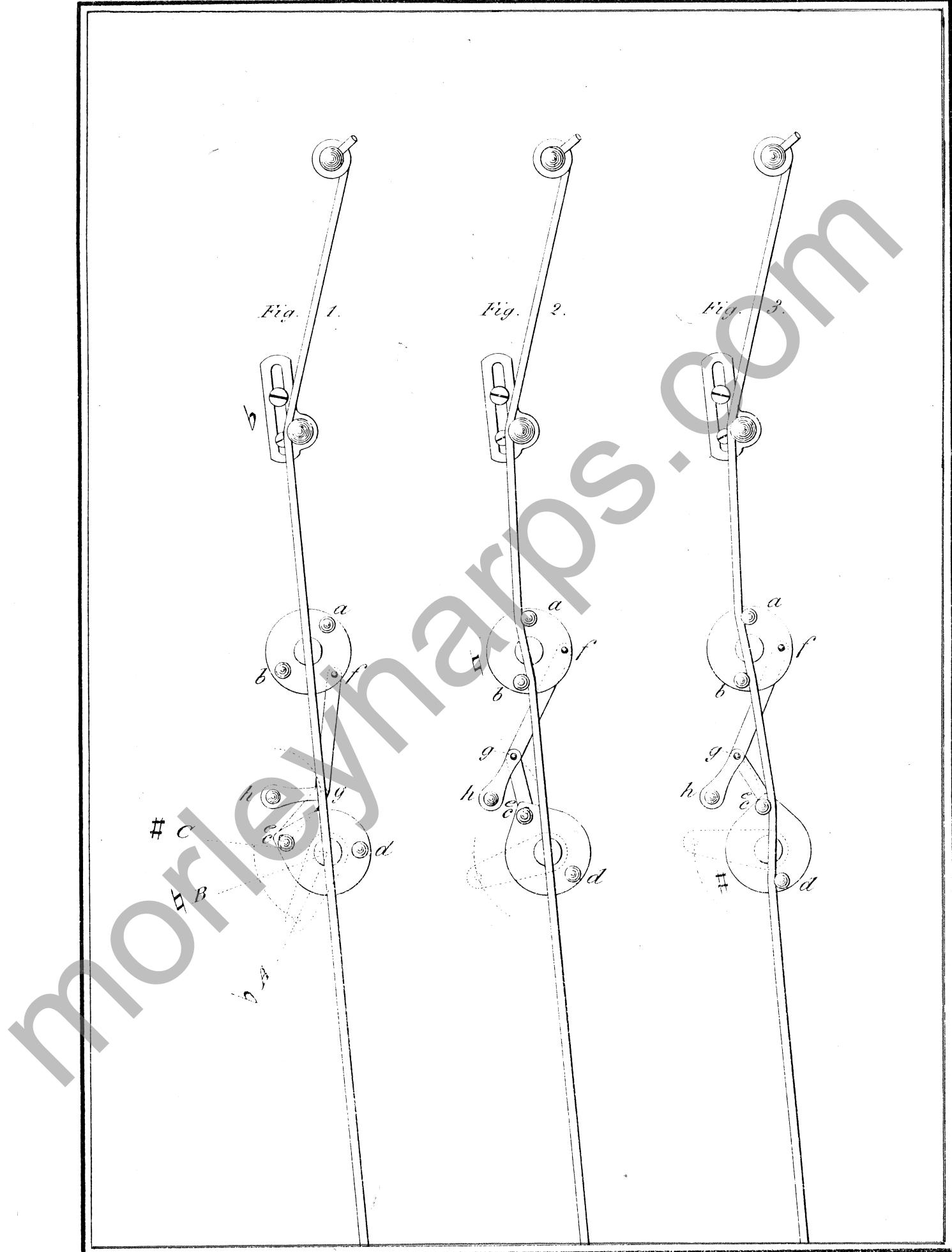
It was about the year 1808 that Mr. Sebastian Erard began his double action harp upon the same principle as that of his single action harp, produced in 1794, namely, *the shortening the string by means of a fork*. He then pursued a series of laborious experiments, all of which are contained in his patents of 1808, and 1810 ; and it was not until 1811, after having spent no less than twenty thousand pounds in establishing in his manufactory the different machines upon which the nicety of the execution of a mechanical work so essentially depends, that he brought out his present double action harp.

In this he preserved exactly the same simplicity of mechanism as in his single action, and he accomplished the shortening each string two successive semitones by means of one pedal, in the following manner :

The reciprocating motion is conveniently increased, and divided into two parts from A to B, and B to C, (See *Pl. II. Fig. 3. and Pl. VII. Fig. 1.*) This motion is communicated to the axis or arbor upon which the lower fork effecting the sharp is mounted ; the position of the two forks, when the string is open or flat, is such, (*see Pl. VII. Fig. 1.*) that whilst a line drawn between the two points *a, b*, upon

the upper disk, would cut the string at acute angles, a line drawn between the two points *c*, *d*, upon the lower disk, would cut the string at right angles, or nearly so. The upper and the lower forks are connected to each other by three small pieces, two of which are small steel links attached by joints *e*, *f*, at one end, to the extremities of the forks, at requisite points, and at the other ends, both to the extremity *g*, of a small brass lever moving round a fixed stud, screwed fast into the brass plate at *h*.

The relations and proportions which these different pieces bear to each other are such, that by depressing the pedal to the first rest, the first part of the motion from A to B being actuated upon the centre or axis of the lower fork, the upper link *f*, *g*, attached to the upper fork, and the little brass lever *g*, *h*, turning round its own centre at *h*, are moved by the assistance of the other link *g*, *e*, attached to the lower fork, so as to form a straight line, *f*, *g*, *h*, (see *Pl. VII. Fig. 2.*) By this operation the upper fork has been made to press the string firmly at *a*, *b*, (see *Pl. VII. Fig. 2.*) to shorten it the first semitone, and vibrating freely between the two prongs on the lower disk, the string sounds the natural. From the circumstance of the upper link *f*, *g*, and the brass lever *g*, *h*, forming one straight line, it follows, that all the weight occasioned by the pressure of the upper fork upon the string at *a*, (see *Pl. VII. Fig. 2.*) rests entirely upon the fixed stud of the brass lever screwed fast into the plate at *h*, and is thus rendered perfectly independent of the actuating or main motion upon the axis of



the lower fork. For the second shortening of the string, or for the sharp tone, the second part of the motion from B to C is gone through by depressing the pedal a second time, and the lower fork presses the string at *c, d*, (*see Pl. VII. Fig. 3.*) exactly in the same way that it does in the single action harp.

To produce the above effect from one actuating pivot or centre only, so as to render the second part of the motion perfectly free from the weight occasioned by the pressure of the upper fork, Mr. Sebastian Erard had to solve one of those delicate problems called in mechanics *escapements*, which in his mechanism is thus effected : the weight of the pressure of the upper fork rests, as we have just described, upon the centre of the brass lever screwed fast into the plate at *h*, (*see Pl. VII. Fig. 2.*) and is quite independent of the actuating motion upon the lower arbor ; but the straight line formed by the upper link *f, g*, and the brass lever *g, h*, being broken into two pieces at *g*, allows the lower link *e, g*, and the lower disk, to pass over the centre without any obstruction.

By successively unfixing the pedal from the two notches, the same effects are produced in an inverted manner with equal facility ; and, considering that the combination of the different movements belonging to one pedal is actuated merely by the sinking and rising of one rod enclosed within the pillar, it will be perceived with what nicety the movements are combined.

Any person taking the trouble of examining the movement above described, and selected by Mr. Sebastian Erard as the best, from several others of his own invention, must allow that it unites the utmost simplicity with the most perfect efficacy. Five pieces only, two of which are the disks with prongs on them to shorten the string, effect the operation, and the motion is distributed to the different pieces from one axis only, that of the lower fork.

These movements, which are on the outside of the plate, and contrived for each separate string in the bass, as at *h, i, k*, (*see Pl. VIII.*) disappear about the middle of the harp, at *l, m*, where the weight of the strings diminishes in proportion to their diminished length and thickness. A similar motion to that on the outside, is then contrived inside of the mechanism, once for each string of a different name, and is afterwards communicated by connecting rods from octave to octave, upon both the upper and lower rows of forks.

Mr. Sebastian Erard might easily have adopted this plan of construction throughout the whole compass of the instrument, by merely contriving the movement once for the seven different strings in the octave, at the head of the harp, communicating the same by rods from octave to octave up to the top; and this arrangement would at first sight appear more simple, as there would be nothing on the outside of the brass plate, but the two forks to each string, as at *l, m*, (*see Pl. VIII.*) He, however, rejected it as very defective.

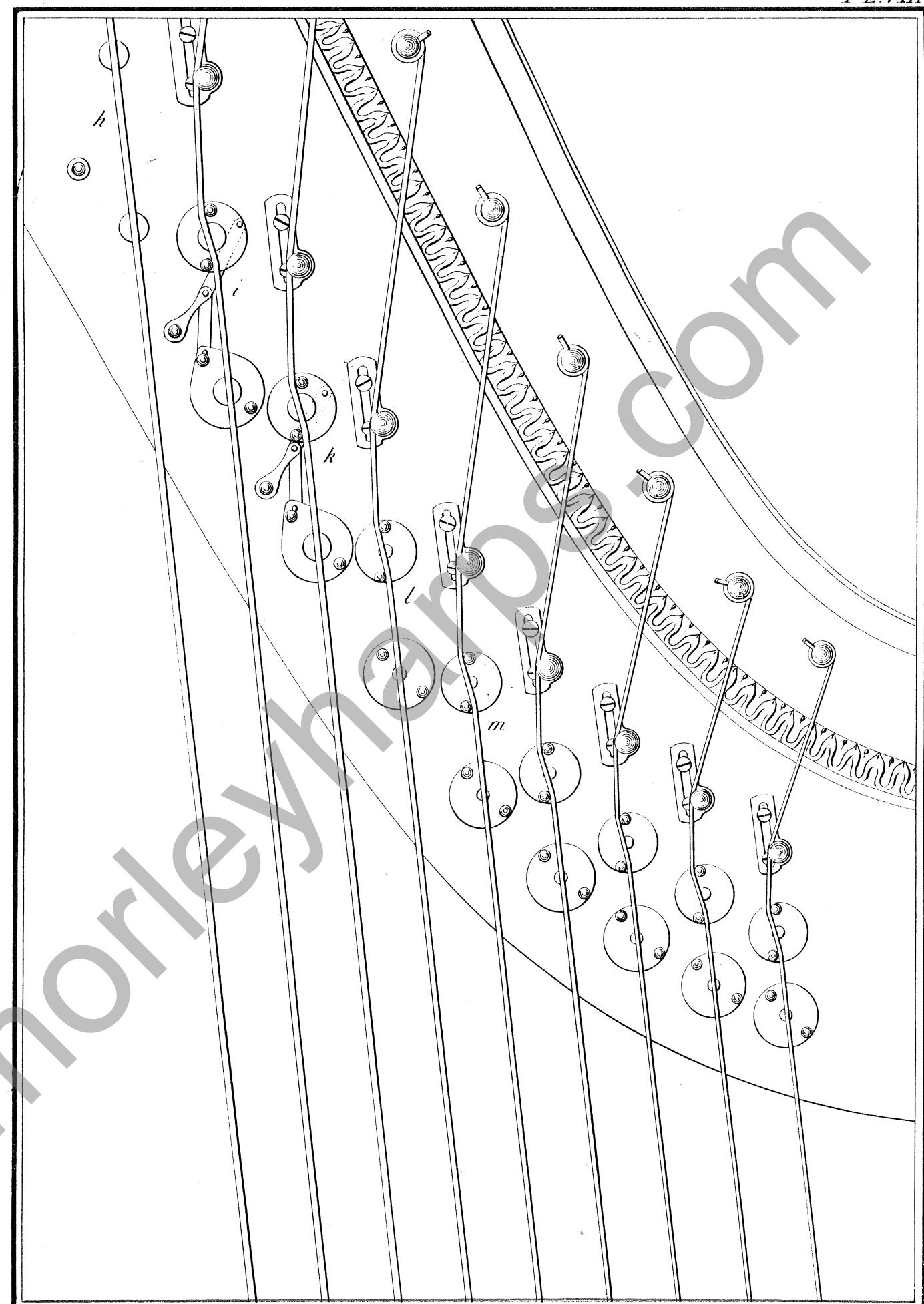


Fig. 1.

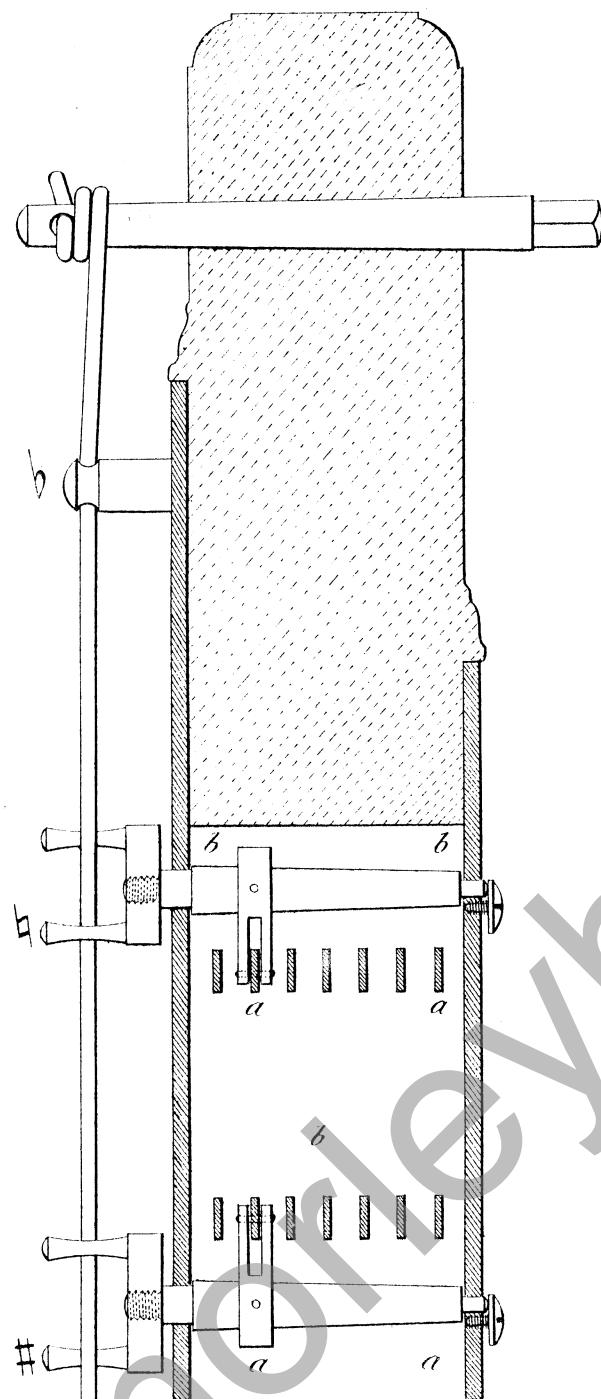
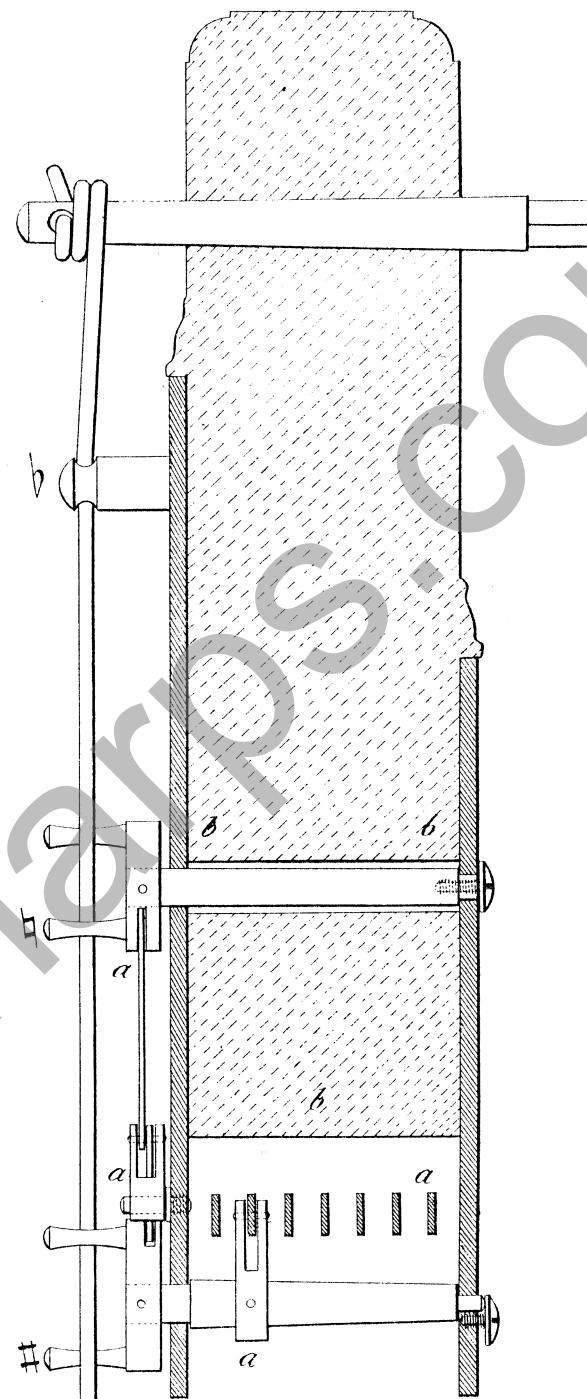


Fig. 2.



In fact, to allow sufficient room within the neck of the harp for the action of two ranges of movements, one above the other, as at *a, a, a, a,* (see *Pl. IX. Fig. 1.*) instead of having the movements outside, as at *a, a, a, a,* (see *Pl. IX. Fig. 2.*) the neck must be considerably weakened by cutting away about one third of the wood, as at *b, b, b,* (see *Pl. IX. Fig. 1, 2.*) whilst that part of the instrument cannot be made too strong, in the bass especially, to resist the great weight or draught of the strings.

From the natural structure of the harp, (where the two parts upon which the strings are fastened at both ends, viz. the neck, and the sonorous body, cannot be kept apart from each other by any other support but the pillar, as free access to the strings must be left for the hands on both sides of the vertical plane formed by the range of strings,) it follows, that when the neck or curved part where the mechanism lies, is not made sufficiently strong to resist the tension of the strings, when drawn up to concert pitch, it will get distorted and alter completely its shape, from that in the original plan of the instrument; the mechanism in that case must evidently get deranged also, and answer no longer with the precision required to effect the semitones. Besides, Mr. Sebastian Erard, in contriving the movements outside and separately to each string in the bass, divides, upon *three* and *four* different studs, as at *h,* (see *Pl. VII. Fig. 2.*) the weight of the pressure of the forks effecting the naturals, upon six strings in the whole compass of the instrument, instead of having the whole weight rest upon only *one* movement at the head of the harp, which evidently

renders his mechanism as many times less liable to get out of order, or to wear out by use.

The tone, which so essentially depends upon the firmness with which the string is stopped, could not be so good where the steadiness of twelve forks, six for the naturals, and six for the sharps, pressing upon six strings of the same name, should depend upon one combination of movements at the head of the harp, instead of resting upon three, four, or five, in different parts of the neck, as in the mode of construction adopted by Mr. Sebastian Erard.

In short, this mode of construction of having the movements outside on the brass plate, and contrived separately for each separate string in the bass, is the only one which can be employed with success, as it is the only one which combines the requisite advantages of precision and solidity.

Mr. Sebastian Erard improved the pedal in his double action harp still further; the centre of action is contrived by means of a screw turning into a brass socket, affording an easy lateral motion, (*see Pl. V. Fig. 3.*) This lateral motion is rendered true and steady by his new spring, which, being placed on the side of the pedal, makes it go of itself into the notch, when depressed by the foot, and keeps it in that position with sufficient steadiness to prevent its slipping off again (*see Pl. V. Fig. 3.*); and in case of that spring breaking, in the country, or in a distant climate, another may be introduced with the greatest facility, whilst

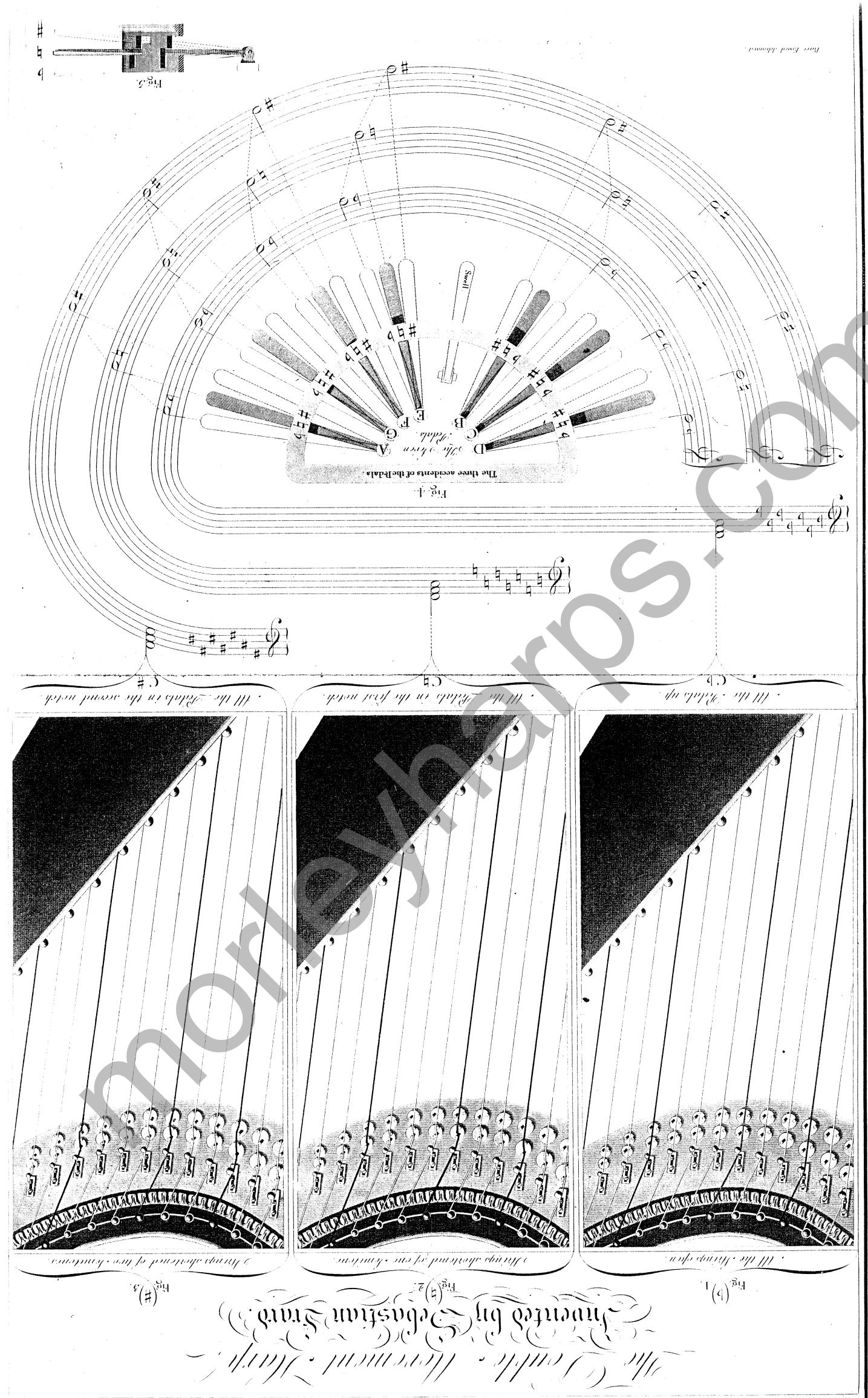
in harps where the springs are placed within the mechanism itself, the instrument must be taken entirely to pieces to be repaired.

The double action harp has very great advantages over the single, in point of musical theory ; but, as the object in view was to consider the harp simply as a mechanical production, it will be sufficient to state that, instead of thirteen scales, (eight major and five minor,) practicable upon the single action harp, the double action possesses *twenty-seven complete, (fifteen major and twelve minor,)* with the advantage of an uniform fingering for all of them.

The double action harp is, of all instruments with fixed sounds, the most perfect ; and as it possesses *twenty one sounds* in the octave, instead of *twelve* as keyed instruments, it is susceptible of a much more perfect system of temperament.

The plate at the end has been annexed to give a view of the general plan of the instrument, in regard to musical theory.

It would be superfluous to pass any encomium on Mr. Sebastian Erard's harps—they speak for themselves, and have proved on trial to answer in any climate ; his double action harp must ever stand as an attesting proof of the merit of the man to whom the public are indebted for that invention.



The Grand Harp  
invented by Sebastian Grard.

Fig. 1.

All the strings open.

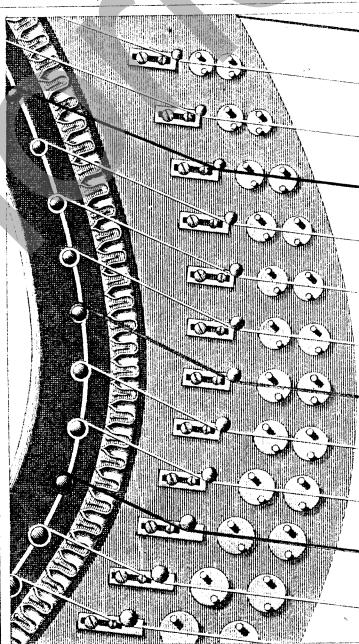


Fig. 2.

Strings shortened of one semitone.

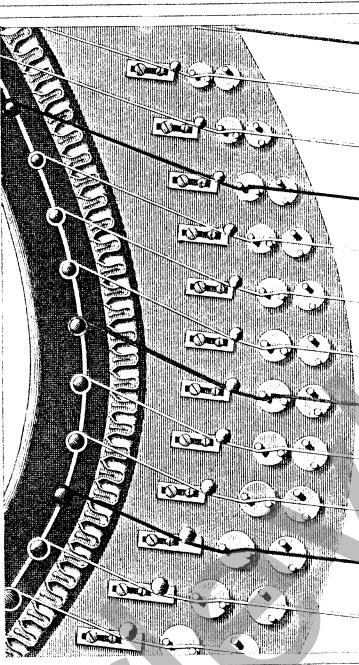
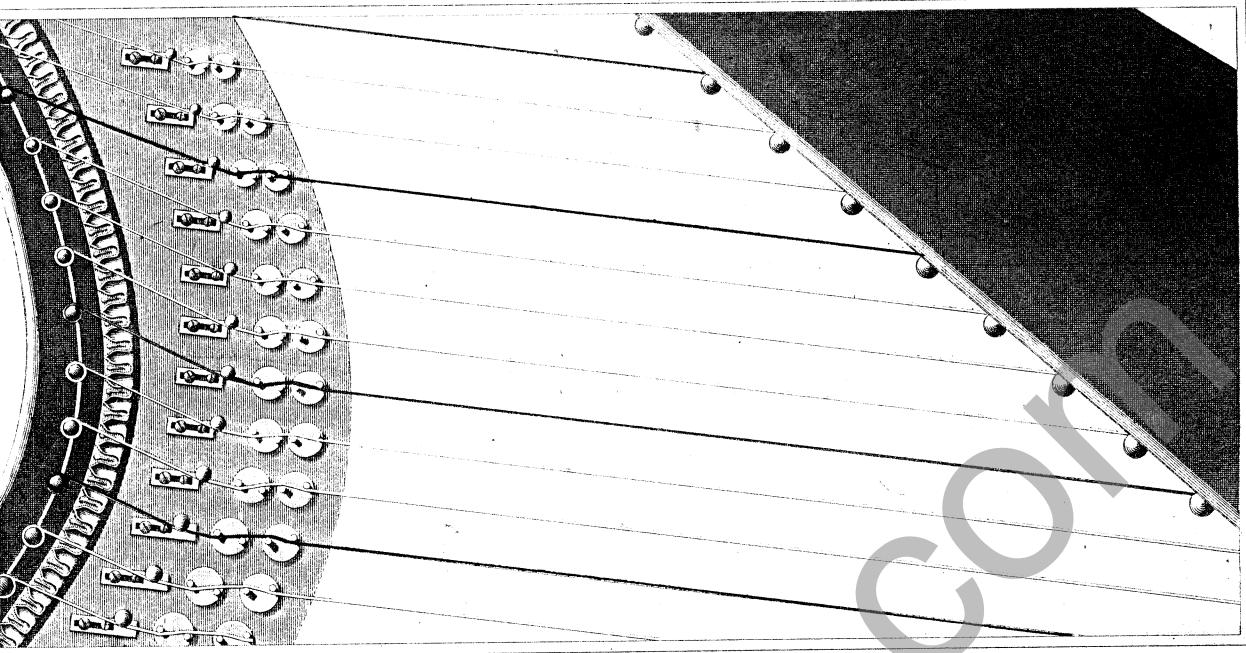


Fig. 3.

Strings shortened of two semitones.



All the Pedals up.

C<sup>b</sup>

All the Pedals in the first notch.

C<sup>#</sup>

All the Pedals in the second notch.

C<sup>##</sup>

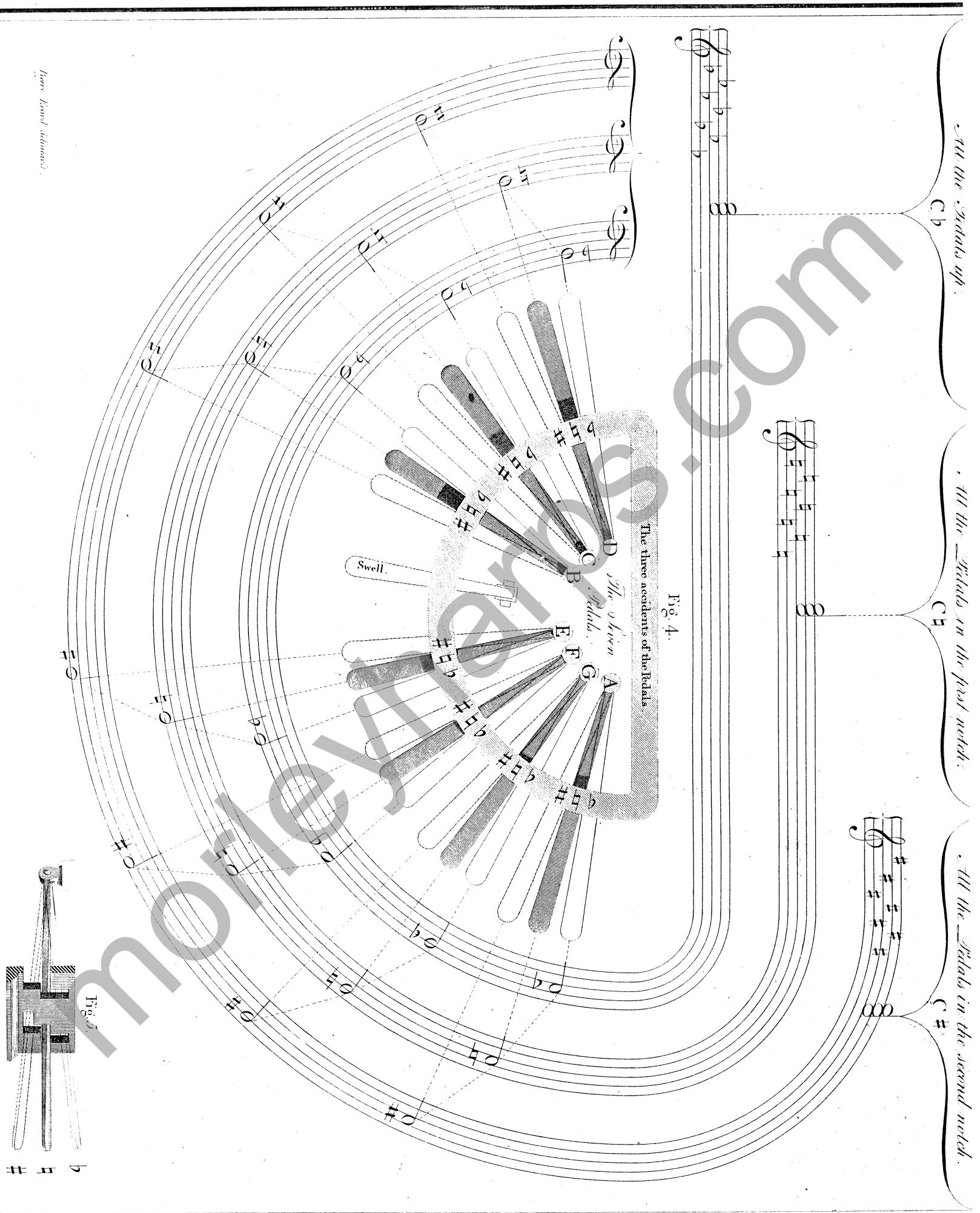
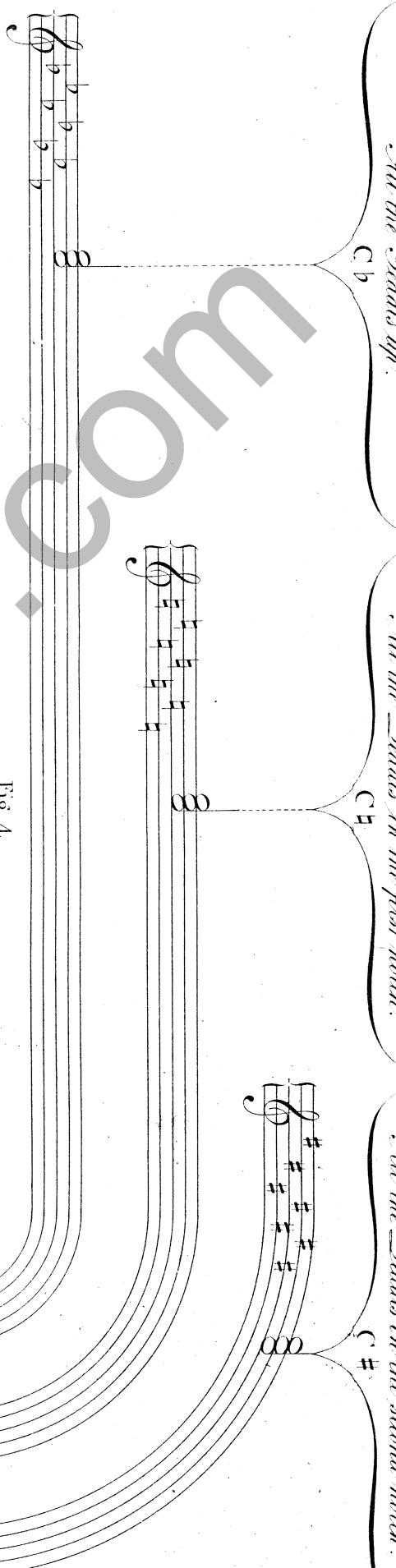


Fig. 4.

The three accidents of the Pedals.



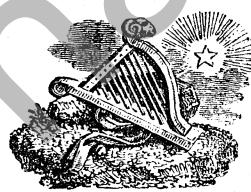
NOTICE BIOGRAPHIQUE

SUR

SÉBASTIEN ÉRARD,

CHEVALIER DE LA LÉGION-D'HONNEUR.

PAR F. FÉTIS.



PARIS.

IMPRIMERIE DE E. DUVERGER,

RUE DE VERNEUIL, N° 4.

1831

## NOTICE BIOGRAPHIQUE

S U R

# SÉBASTIEN ÉRARD,

CHEVALIER DE LA LÉGION-D'HONNEUR.

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ÉRARD (SÉBASTIEN), l'un des plus célèbres facteurs d'instruments de musique et celui dont les découvertes étaient les plus utiles aux progrès de son art, naquit à Strasbourg, le 5 avril 1752, et fut le quatrième enfant de Louis-Antoine Érard, fabricant de meubles, qui ne s'était marié qu'à l'âge de 64 ans. Il tenait de son père une constitution robuste qui n'a pas peu contribué à ses succès, car elle lui a permis de se livrer à ses travaux avec une assiduité qui aurait altéré la santé d'un homme moins heureusement organisé. À cet avantage, il joignait un esprit hardi, entreprenant, et ce qui est plus rare, une persévérance sans bornes dans ses projets ou dans les inventions qu'il voulait exécuter. Son caractère décidé se manifesta dès son enfance. À l'âge de 15 ans, il monta au plus haut point du clocher de la cathédrale de Strasbourg, et s'assit en dehors sur le sommet de la croix, trait de courage et d'adresse qui ne s'est peut-être pas répété depuis.

Vers l'âge de 8 ans, Sébastien Érard fut envoyé dans les écoles de Strasbourg pour y étudier l'architecture, la perspective, et le dessin linéaire, genre de connaissances indispensable à qui veut se livrer à l'art des constructions ou aux arts mécaniques. Il y joignit un cours de géométrie pratique; mais son esprit inventif ne tarda point à lui suggérer des méthodes particulières pour la résolution des problèmes.

mes qu'il se proposait à lui-même. Cette première éducation, qui répondait aux besoins de son imagination, lui fut dans la suite d'un grand secours pour tous ses travaux. Continuellement occupé d'inventions nouvelles, son esprit était sans cesse en méditation, et son crayon lui fournissait les moyens de résoudre toutes les difficultés avant qu'il se livrât à la construction. Dans la dernière moitié de sa vie, il dormait peu. Son lit était couvert de papiers sur lesquels il traçait des plans d'amélioration d'instrumens ou d'inventions nouvelles. Ses livres mêmes, à défaut de papier, étaient couverts de tracés de pièces mécaniques. Cette facilité d'exprimer ses idées par le dessin lui a épargné bien des essais superflus et bien des dépenses inutiles. Au moyen de ses connaissances positives en mécanique, Érard voyait avec netteté les objets dont il s'occupait et évitait les tâtonnemens, qui sont le désespoir des hommes d'invention dont l'éducation élémentaire a été négligée. Lui-même avouait dans sa vieillesse les avantages qu'il avait retirés de cette éducation, et disait souvent qu'il devait ses succès au dessin, à la géométrie et à la mécanique. Les moyens d'exécution ne lui manquaient jamais : dès qu'il tenait le principe de ce qu'il voulait faire, il improvisait quelquefois trois ou quatre modèles fonctionnant dans des systèmes différens, et choisissait ensuite celui qui remplissait le mieux son but, abandonnant les autres et mettant au rebut des choses que d'autres ont cru trouver ensuite comme des perfectionnemens de ce qu'il avait fait. De cette facilité d'invention et d'exécution résulte cette multitude de modèles de tout genre qui se trouvent aujourd'hui dans ses ateliers et dans ses magasins de Londres et de Paris.

Ses heureuses dispositions et son aptitude au travail lui avaient assuré de bonne heure une grande supériorité sur ses condisciples; aussi était-il toujours décoré de la croix de mérite que l'on accordait au plus habile dans les écoles de Strasbourg. Travaillant dans les ateliers de son père, il avait acquis de bonne heure ce qu'on nomme *la main*, c'est-à-dire l'habileté dans le maniement des outils, genre de mérite indispensable à qui est destiné à diriger des ouvriers et à

les former. Un professeur de l'école du génie de Strasbourg, qui connaissait l'aptitude du jeune Érard pour l'exécution, s'adressait à lui pour faire construire les modèles dont il se servait pour les démonstrations de son cours, et lui disait souvent, admirant la perfection de son travail et ses idées ingénieuses : *Jeune homme, vous devriez entrer dans le génie, votre place y est marquée.*

Il était encore enfant lorsqu'il perdit son père, dont la mort laissait sans fortune une veuve et plusieurs enfans. Sébastien prit la résolution de se rendre à Paris pour y chercher de l'emploi, et partit de Strasbourg à l'âge de 16 ans, ayant à peine l'argent nécessaire pour le voyage. Son parrain, homme riche, auquel il alla faire ses adieux, ne lui donna que sa bénédiction, et la seule chose dont il ne se montra point avare fut l'eau bénite qu'il lui jeta sur la tête. Ce fut vers 1768 que le jeune Érard arriva à Paris; il s'y plaça chez un facteur de clavecins dont il devint bientôt le premier ouvrier, et dont il excita la jalouse par sa supériorité. Ce facteur, importuné des questions que lui faisait Érard sur les principes qui le dirigeaient dans ses constructions, et ne sachant comment y répondre, finit par le congédier en lui reprochant de vouloir tout savoir. Un autre facteur renommé du même instrument, encore en vogue à cette époque, ayant été invité à construire un instrument qui exigeait d'autres connaissances que celles qu'il avait acquises par ses habitudes routinières, se trouvait fort embarrassé pour satisfaire à cette demande: sur la réputation naissante du jeune Érard, il alla le trouver et lui proposa d'exécuter l'instrument moyennant un prix convenu, mais sous la condition que le facteur y mettrait son nom. Érard y consentit; mais lorsque l'instrument fut livré à la personne qui l'avait commandé, et qui sans doute avait peu de confiance dans l'habileté du facteur, cette personne, étonnée de la perfection du travail, demanda au maître facteur s'il en était réellement l'auteur; celui-ci, pris au dépourvu, avoua que l'instrument avait été construit pour lui par un jeune homme nommé Érard. Cette aventure se répandit dans le monde musical et commença à fixer l'attention sur le jeune ar-

tiste : celui-ci acheva de se faire connaître avantageusement par son *clavecin mécanique*, chef-d'œuvre d'invention et de facture qui causa la plus vive sensation parmi les artistes et les amateurs de Paris. Ce morceau remarquable avait été construit pour le cabinet de curiosités de M. De la Blancherie<sup>1</sup>. L'abbé Roussier en fit une description détaillée qui fut insérée dans le *Journal de Paris*, et qui fut ensuite reproduite dans l'*Almanach musical de Luneau-de-Bois-Germain*, en 1780.

Sébastien Érard n'avait pas vingt-cinq ans, et déjà sa réputation était si bien établie que c'était toujours à lui qu'on s'adressait pour toutes les choses nouvelles qu'on voulait faire exécuter. Il était recherché par les hommes les plus distingués: l'un d'eux l'introduisit chez la duchesse de Villeroy, qui aimait les arts, protégeait les artistes, et qui avait surtout un goût passionné pour la musique. Elle voulait qu'Érard demeurât chez elle, et lui offrait un engagement avantageux; mais le désir de conserver son indépendance lui fit refuser cet engagement. D'ailleurs, il avait déjà conçu le projet d'un voyage en Angleterre, et brûlait du désir de le réaliser. Il fut seulement convenu qu'il resterait chez la duchesse le temps nécessaire pour exécuter plusieurs idées de cette dame, qu'il aurait dans l'hôtel de Villeroy un appartement convenable à ses travaux, et qu'il jouirait de la liberté la plus entière. Dans sa vieillesse, Érard se plaisait

(1) Ce clavecin était remarquable par plusieurs inventions dont on n'avait pas d'idée auparavant. On y trouvait trois registres de plume et un de buffle; une pédale y faisait jouer un chevalet mobile qui, s'interposant sur les cordes à la moitié de leur longueur, les faisait monter tout à coup d'une octave, invention qu'un facteur de Paris, nommé Schmidt, a renouvelée dans le piano à l'exposition des produits de l'industrie de 1806, c'est-à-dire trente ans après qu'Érard l'eut trouvée. En appuyant par degrés le pied sur une pédale attachée au pied gauche du clavecin, on retirait le registre de l'octave aiguë, celui du petit clavier, celui du grand clavier, et l'on faisait avancer le registre de buffle. En diminuant la pression du pied sur la pédale, on avançait le registre de l'octave aiguë, celui du petit clavier, celui du grand clavier, et l'on retirait le jeu de buffle. Enfin, lorsqu'on voulait faire parler à la fois tous les jeux, on se servait d'une pédale attachée au pied droit du clavecin, sans être obligé d'attirer le petit clavier au-dessus du grand, et conséquemment sans interrompre l'exécution, comme cela se faisait aux autres clavecins.

encore à rendre hommage à la bonté de M<sup>me</sup> de Villeroy et à parler de la reconnaissance qu'elle lui avait inspirée.

Ce fut dans l'hôtel de Villeroy qu'il construisit son premier piano. Cet instrument, connu en Allemagne et en Angleterre depuis plusieurs années, était peu répandu en France, et le petit nombre de pianos qui se trouvait à Paris y avait été importé de Ratisbonne, d'Augsbourg ou de Londres. Il était de bon ton dans quelques grandes maisons d'avoir de ces instrumens étrangers. M<sup>me</sup> de Villeroy demanda un jour à Érard s'il ferait bien un piano; sa réponse fut affirmative et prompte comme sa pensée: déjà le piano était dans sa tête. Il se mit aussitôt au travail. Comme tous ses ouvrages, ce premier piano sorti de ses mains portait le cachet de l'homme d'invention et de goût: il fut entendu dans le salon de M<sup>me</sup> de Villeroy par tout ce que Paris renfermait alors d'amateurs et d'artistes distingués, et produisit la plus vive impression. Beaucoup de grands seigneurs s'empressèrent de lui demander des instrumens du même genre, mais ils ne furent pas si prompts à s'acquitter de ce qu'ils lui devaient: la plupart ne le payèrent point.

Ce fut vers cette époque que son frère, Jean-Baptiste Érard, vint le joindre. Travailleur infatigable, homme intègre et loyal, Jean-Baptiste a partagé depuis lors les travaux, les succès et les revers de Sébastien. L'accueil favorable que le public faisait aux instrumens sortis de leurs fabriques les obligea bientôt à quitter l'hôtel de Villeroy pour un établissement plus vaste qu'ils fondèrent dans la rue de Bourbon (faubourg Saint-Germain): insensiblement et par les efforts des deux frères, cet établissement finit par devenir le plus beau de l'Europe.

Les succès toujours croissants de Sébastien Érard excitant la jalousie des luthiers de Paris qui faisaient le commerce des pianos étrangers, l'un d'eux, dont il est inutile de tirer le nom de l'oubli où il est tombé, fit pratiquer une saisie chez Érard, sous prétexte que cet artiste *ne s'était pas rangé sous les lois de la communauté des éventailistes, dont l'état de luthier faisait partie.* Érard trouva facilement

parmi ses protecteurs des personnes en crédit à la cour, et sur le rapport favorable qui fut fait au roi de son mérite et de ses mœurs, il obtint de Louis XVI un brevet<sup>1</sup> flatteur qui constatait les services qu'il avait rendus à l'industrie française. Par l'effet de cette protection, l'établissement des deux frères prit chaque jour de nouveaux développemens, et le débit de leurs pianos à deux cordes et à cinq octaves, tels qu'on les faisait alors, devint immense.

Il est difficile de se faire aujourd'hui une idée juste de la vogue qu'obtinrent ces instrumens par la suite, et qu'ils conservèrent même long-temps après que Dussek et Cramer eurent mis à la mode, par leurs nouvelles compositions, les pianos à cinq octaves et demie. Ce n'était pas seulement en France qu'ils étaient estimés ; on les recherchait également dans les Pays-Bas et en Allemagne. Un seul marchand de Hambourg, qui en faisait le commerce, en avait réuni plus de *deux cents* en 1799. Le nom de *piano d'Érard* était si bien répandu, que beaucoup de personnes se persuadaient que ces deux mots ne pouvaient être séparés, et qu'ils formaient un terme générique.

(1) On verra peut-être avec intérêt en quels termes est conçu ce brevet; en voici la teneur :

« Aujourd'hui cinq février mil sept cent quatre-vingt-cinq, le roi étant à Versailles, informé que  
- le sieur Sébastien Érard est parvenu par une méthode nouvelle, de son invention, à perfectionner  
- la construction de l'instrument nommé *forté-piano*, qu'il a même obtenu la préférence sur ceux  
- fabriqués en Angleterre, dont il se fait un commerce dans la ville de Paris, et voulant Sa Majesté  
- fixer les talens du sieur Érard dans ladite ville et lui donner des témoignages de la protection dont  
- elle honore ceux qui, comme lui, ont, par un travail assidu, contribué aux arts utiles et agréables,  
- lui a permis de fabriquer, faire fabriquer et vendre dans la ville et faubourgs de Paris, et par-  
- tout où bon lui semblera, des forté-pianos, et d'y employer, soit par lui, soit par ses ouvriers, le  
- bois, le fer et toutes autres matières nécessaires à la perfection ou à l'ornement dudit instrument,  
- sans que pour raison de ce il puisse être troublé ni inquiété par les gardes syndics et adjoints des  
- corps et communautés d'arts et métiers pour quelque cause et sous quelque prétexte que ce soit,  
- sous les conditions néanmoins, par ledit sieur Érard, de se conformer aux réglemens et ordon-  
- nances concernant la discipline des compagnons et ouvriers, et de n'admettre dans ses ateliers que  
- ceux qui auront satisfait auxdits réglemens; et pour assurance de sa volonté, Sa Majesté m'a com-  
- mandé d'expédier audit sieur Érard le présent brevet qu'elle a voulu signer de sa main et être  
- contresigné par moi secrétaire d'État et de ses commandemens et finances. »

*Signé LOUIS.*

Le baron de BRETEUIL.

Continuellement occupé d'inventions et de perfectionnemens, le génie de Sébastien Érard s'exerçait sur une multitude d'objets. Ce fut ainsi qu'il imagina le piano organisé avec deux claviers, l'un pour le piano, l'autre pour l'orgue. Le succès de cet instrument fut prodigieux dans la haute société. Il lui en fut commandé un pour la reine Marie-Antoinette, et ce fut pour ce piano qu'il inventa plusieurs choses d'un haut intérêt, surtout à l'époque où elles furent faites. La voix de la reine avait peu d'étendue, et tous les morceaux lui semblaient écrits trop haut. Érard imagina de rendre mobile le clavier de son instrument, au moyen d'une clef qui le faisait monter ou descendre à volonté d'un demi-ton, d'un ton ou d'un ton et demi, et de cette manière la transposition s'opérait sans travail de la part de l'accompagnateur. Ce fut aussi dans le même instrument qu'il fit le premier essai de l'orgue expressif par la seule pression du doigt, essai qu'il a exécuté depuis en grand dans l'orgue qu'il a construit pour la chapelle du roi. Grétry, dans ses *Essais sur la musique*, qui furent imprimés il y a trente-cinq ans, a signalé cette invention à l'admiration des musiciens et à l'attention du gouvernement.

Un autre instrument, la harpe, commençait à se répandre en France. Krumpoltz, par la beauté de ses compositions et par son style plein de goût, l'avait mis à la mode. Les harpes dont Krumpoltz se servait alors, et qu'on désignait sous le nom de *harpes à crochets*, étaient fort imparfaites sous le rapport du mécanisme, bien qu'on eût fait beaucoup d'efforts pour les rendre aussi bonnes que le permettait le mauvais principe sur lequel elles étaient établies. Les défauts de cette construction inspiraient souvent à Krumpoltz du dégoût pour son instrument. Lié d'amitié avec Érard, et témoin de la facilité avec laquelle il perfectionnait tous les objets dont il s'occupait, il le pria d'abord de lui faire une contrebasse à clavier pour la mettre sous sa harpe comme un tremplin et pour s'accompagner avec ses pieds; Érard satisfit à l'instant à cette demande<sup>1</sup>. Alors

(1) Cette contrebasse existe encore dans les magasins de M. Érard.

Krumpholtz pria Érard de s'occuper de la harpe elle-même, et de chercher des moyens efficaces pour corriger ses défauts. Érard y pensa; des idées nouvelles lui vinrent; et il s'occupa de les mettre sur le papier et de tracer le plan d'une harpe conçue sur un principe absolument nouveau. Pendant qu'il était occupé de ce travail, Beau-marchais vint le voir. Cet homme célèbre jouait de la harpe et connaissait la mécanique, étant fils d'un horloger et ayant lui-même exercé cet état. Il voulut persuader Érard de renoncer à son projet, et lui dit qu'il n'y avait rien à faire à la harpe, qu'il s'en était occupé et n'avait pu rien trouver de mieux que ce qui existait. Heureusement Érard ne se laissa point persuader; il était sûr de ce qu'il faisait, et bientôt il fut en état de montrer à Krumpholtz le résultat de ses travaux, qui répondait parfaitement à ses vues.

Les plus graves inconveniens de la harpe à crochets, consistaient dans le peu de solidité de son mécanisme, le faux principe de son mouvement, qui ne s'opérait qu'en forçant vers un point la flexion d'une branche conductrice des crochets, et dans le mouvement même de ces crochets, lesquels tiraient les cordes hors de la perpendiculaire pour les éléver d'un demi-ton. Les recherches de Sébastien Érard le conduisirent à la découverte d'un mécanisme d'un principe nouveau et rationnel, qui faisait disparaître tous ces défauts. Ce mécanisme, qui a été adopté par tous les facteurs de harpes, après l'expiration du brevet pris par Érard, est celui auquel on a donné le nom de *fourchette*. Au lieu de tirer les cordes hors de la perpendiculaire, il fonctionne au moyen d'un disque armé de deux boutons qui, par un mouvement de rotation, saisit la corde dans sa position naturelle, et la raccourcit de la quantité nécessaire pour l'élèver d'un demi-ton, et cela avec une solidité, une fermeté à toute épreuve. Ceci se passait vers 1786. Mais dans l'intervalle des recherches d'Érard, Krumpholtz s'était lié d'intérêt avec le facteur qui était alors en réputation pour la harpe à crochets. Celui-ci fit comprendre à l'artiste que ce genre de harpes serait bientôt oublié si Érard réussissait, et que la ruine de leur établissement en serait la

suite. Krumpholtz, le même Krumpholtz qui avait entraîné Érard dans des travaux immenses et dans des dépenses considérables, vint le trouver et le pria de renoncer à son nouvel instrument. La situation fâcheuse des affaires de cet artiste, la crainte de mettre le comble à son infortune, et la conviction que la nouvelle harpe ne réussirait qu'avec peine ayant Krumpholtz pour adversaire, détermina Sébastien Érard à renoncer à la faire connaître en France dans ce moment. Près de quatre-vingts corps d'instrumens qui étaient déjà construits, ainsi que leurs mécaniques, furent mis à l'écart, et le travail des harpes fut abandonné.

Vers cette époque, les troubles de la révolution éclatèrent en France et portèrent un notable dommage à l'industrie. Sébastien Érard prit le parti de passer en Angleterre, non pour abandonner la France, mais pour y ouvrir de nouveaux écouleemens aux produits de sa fabrication. Il y resta plusieurs années; mais lorsqu'il voulut revenir, le régime de la terreur était établi en France. Déjà Érard était à Bruxelles, lorsqu'il reçut de son frère une lettre dans laquelle celui-ci lui peignait les dangers qui l'attendaient à Paris. Il prit le parti de retourner à Londres et d'y fonder un établissement du même genre que celui de Paris.

A Londres, comme dans cette ville, il remplit ses magasins d'instrumens et de produits qui étaient tous de son invention. En 1794, il prit son premier brevet pour le perfectionnement des pianos et de la harpe, et sa fabrique de ces instrumens ne tarda pas à obtenir la vogue. Cependant il n'oubliait pas son pays, et le désir de revoir la France l'occupait sans cesse; il profita du changement qui s'était opéré dans le gouvernement après le 9 thermidor, et arriva à Paris en 1796. Ce fut alors qu'il fit fabriquer les premiers grands pianos en forme de clavecins, dans le système anglais, dont il avait perfectionné le mécanisme, et qu'il fit paraître les harpes à simple mouvement, de son invention. Ces instrumens sont les premiers pianos à échappement qu'on ait fabriqués à Paris. Ils avaient dans le clavier le défaut de tous les instrumens de ce genre, c'est-à-dire la

lenteur dans l'action des leviers et du marteau. Les artistes et amateurs de Paris, accoutumés au jeu facile des petits pianos sans échappement, éprouvaient de la gêne sur ceux-ci. Ce fut par ce motif, qu'après de nombreux essais et des recherches de tout genre, Sébastien Érard publia, en 1808, un nouveau genre de piano à queue, dont le mécanisme répondait avec plus de promptitude, et dont les dimensions plus petites étaient plus en rapport avec la grandeur des salons de Paris. Dusseck joua sur un de ces pianos avec un succès éclatant dans les concerts qui furent donnés à l'Odéon par Rode, Baillot et Lamarre, à leur retour de Russie. Les amateurs et les artistes donnèrent beaucoup d'éloges à ces pianos et s'en montrèrent satisfaits : Érard ne l'était pas. Il savait qu'il restait encore à perfectionner, les claviers étant faciles, mais le coup de marteau manquant de précision. Nous le verrons plus tard, de retour d'Angleterre, exposer le modèle d'un nouveau grand piano qui réunit tout ce qu'on peut désirer de perfection dans le mécanisme de cet instrument.

Vers 1808, il était retourné à Londres ; il allait y mettre le sceau à sa réputation de facteur d'instruments, et plus encore à celle de grand mécanicien, par l'invention de la *harpe à double mouvement*, dont il avait déjà jeté autrefois le plan, et qui suffirait pour immortaliser son nom. Quelle que fût l'importance des améliorations qu'il avait introduites dans la construction de la harpe, il savait que tout n'était pas fait, et que cet instrument était resté fort inférieur au piano sous le rapport des ressources harmoniques. Des difficultés insurmontables se rencontraient lorsqu'on voulait moduler dans certains tons, et le seul expédient qu'on connût, était de s'interdire l'usage de ces tons. Ceci demande une explication.

On sait que la harpe s'accordait en *mi b*, en sorte qu'on obtenait le *si*  $\natural$ , le *mi*  $\natural$  et le *la* par les pédales qui élevaient d'un demi-ton les mêmes notes affectées d'un  $\flat$ . Mais le *re b* ne pouvait se faire qu'enlevant l'*ut*  $\natural$  à l'état d'*ut*  $\sharp$ , le *sol*  $\flat$ , que par le *fa*  $\sharp$ , et ainsi des autres notes ; il en résultait que dans les tons de *la b*, par exemple, on

ne pouvait faire une gamme, parce que la même corde devait servir pour *ut* ♭ et pour *re* ♯. Cependant, on sait que les deux systèmes de modulation les plus usités et les meilleurs sont ceux par lesquels on passe à la dominante et au quatrième degré d'un ton quelconque. Dans le ton de *mi* ♯, par exemple, il faut pouvoir passer en *si* ♯ ou en *la* ♯, sans compter le mode mineur d'*ut*. On voit par-là que la harpe était privée de l'une des modulations naturelles du ton qui lui était le plus favorable. La musique qu'on écrivait pour cet instrument était donc bornée, et, en quelque sorte, hors du domaine de l'art.

Plusieurs facteurs frappés de ces considérations, avaient essayé de porter remède aux défauts de la harpe, mais n'avaient pu y réussir. Sébastien Érard, que la nature semblait avoir destiné à perfectionner tous les instrumens à mécanisme, fit encore pour celui-ci ce que les autres n'avaient pu faire. Il imagina de faire faire à chaque pédale une double fonction qui put éléver à volonté chaque corde d'un demi-ton ou d'un ton. La combinaison d'un semblable mécanisme offrait des difficultés considérables, à cause de la courbe de la console et de plusieurs autres problèmes non moins embarrassans qu'il fallait résoudre; Érard fut obligé d'y employer plusieurs années d'un travail constant, et des sommes considérables en essais. Enfin, la réussite la plus complète couronna ses travaux, et sa *harpe à double mouvement* vit le jour.

Le succès de cette harpe fut immense; elle parut à Londres en 1811, au moment où la circulation du papier-monnaie était la plus abondante. Érard vendit pour 25,000 liv. sterl. (environ 625,000 fr.) de son nouvel instrument dans le cours de la première année. Le travail que cette invention avait coûté à Érard est à peine croyable; on le vit pendant trois mois ne pas se déshabiller et ne dormir que quelques heures sur un sopha. Il fit plusieurs modèles avant d'arriver à la perfection qu'il désirait, et les difficultés à vaincre étaient telles qu'il était presque décidé à renoncer à l'entreprise, lorsque l'idée du mécanisme qu'il a définitivement adopté vint le tirer

d'embarras. Pendant un court séjour qu'il avait fait à Londres en 1800, il avait déjà construit une harpe à double mouvement sur un principe curieux de mécanisme, mais qui offrit des inconvénients sous plusieurs rapports. Le 16 juin 1801, il avait pris un brevet pour cette nouvelle invention. Le principe du mécanisme une fois adopté et les modèles construits, il restait un travail immense à faire pour en établir la fabrication. C'est dans l'invention des outils de tout genre et dans l'ordonnance et la distribution du travail que le génie d'Érard se fait apercevoir. Sa manufacture de Londres, que nous avons visitée, ne le cède à aucune autre de quelque genre que ce soit, pour les moyens ingénieux de fabrication, la précision des outils et des machines, enfin pour la perfection du travail. De retour en France, Érard établit le même genre de fabrication dans ses ateliers de Paris, et eut à former de nouveaux ouvriers et à construire de nouvelles machines et de nouveaux outils<sup>4</sup>.

Les fréquens voyages qu'il faisait en France lui avaient fait négliger la fabrication des pianos à Londres, et la harpe seule se construisait dans ses ateliers. Cependant dans tous les brevets qu'Érard prit en Angleterre, et qui sont au nombre de quinze ou vingt, de nouvelles idées pour le perfectionnement du piano aussi bien que de la harpe y sont exposées. Il se proposait de les exécuter en France. A chaque exposition des produits de l'industrie, ses ouvrages ont été couronnés. Trois fois il reçut la médaille d'or, et la

(4) Au mois d'avril 1815, Érard soumit sa nouvelle harpe à l'examen de l'Académie des Sciences et de l'Académie des Beaux-Arts réunies; une commission fut nommée, et celle-ci, par l'organe de M. de Prony, son rapporteur, proposa aux Académies d'approuver les découvertes de l'habile artiste, ce qui fut adopté. La conclusion du rapport de M. de Prony était ainsi conçue:

« La nouvelle harpe de M. Érard nous paraît réunir au mérite d'un mécanisme fort ingénieux, et qui remplit très bien son objet, celui d'augmenter considérablement les propriétés musicales de cet instrument, puisque, sans double emploi, elle renferme vingt-sept gammes ou échelles diatoniques complètes, tandis que l'ancienne n'en contenait que treize.

« Nous pensons que cette invention, par laquelle l'auteur acquiert de nouveaux droits à la reconnaissance des hommes qui s'intéressent aux progrès des arts, mérite des éloges et l'approbation des deux classes. »

croix de la Légion-d'honneur lui fut décernée à l'une des dernières expositions ; enfin , aucun des témoignages honorables qui peuvent être donnés à un manufacturier du premier ordre ne lui a manqué. Le modèle de son grand piano à double échappement fut exposé en 1823. Ce mécanisme , chef-d'œuvre de combinaison , est la solution d'un problème qu'aucun facteur n'avait pu résoudre. Il s'agissait de réunir dans un même clavier toutes les nuances du toucher qu'offre le mécanisme simple sans échappement et la précision du coup de marteau du mécanisme à échappement. Il est facile de comprendre quelles étaient les difficultés immenses de ce problème : Érard les a résolues de la manière la plus heureuse. Ces nouveaux instrumens ont été établis depuis lors dans la fabrique de Londres par Pierre Érard, neveu de Sébastien , qui dirige aujourd'hui cette fabrique. Le roi d'Angleterre , Georges IV, grand amateur et connaisseur en musique , fut frappé de la beauté de ces instrumens et en acquit un pour son château de Windsor ; la reine actuelle , non moins satisfaite de leur supériorité , a donné à M. Érard le titre de son facteur de piano. Un de ces instrumens , qui avait été construit pour la duchesse de Berry , et qui a été acquis depuis peu par M. Troupenas , éditeur de musique , a excité l'admiration des artistes qui l'ont joué ou entendu.

Quoiqu'il fût constitué de la manière la plus robuste , Sébastien Érard pouvait difficilement résister à tant de travaux. Les contrariétés inséparables d'une vie si active sur le vaste théâtre de deux capitales telles que Paris et Londres , devaient aussi exercer leur influence sur sa santé. Depuis dix ans environ , des maladies douloureuses venaient souvent interrompre le cours de ses travaux. Vers la fin de 1824 , la pierre se déclara ; heureusement Érard fut opéré avec le plus grand succès , au moyen du procédé de la lithotritie , par M. le docteur Civiale. A peine rétabli , il s'occupa du perfectionnement de l'orgue , et parvint à finir le grand instrument expressif où tous les genres d'effet sont réunis , et qu'il a construit pour la chapelle des Tuilleries. Déjà , à l'exposition de 1827 , M. Érard avait livré à l'ad-

miration des connaisseurs un grand orgue dont la construction pouvait passer pour un chef-d'œuvre de précision et de fini. Toutefois il n'y avait point encore fait entrer le développement de sa belle invention de l'expression par le toucher plus ou moins léger, plus ou moins appuyé du clavier. Cet orgue était expressif, mais autant que le peut être le grand jeu de cet instrument. Son expression était obtenue par le moyen de pédales qui faisaient ouvrir ou fermer des jalouses pour laisser le son se propager au dehors, ou pour le renfermer dans le corps de l'instrument, et par celui de l'élargissement ou le rétrécissement progressif des conduits du vent sur les jeux d'anches. Ces moyens étaient connus depuis plusieurs années, et M. Érard n'en réclamait pas l'invention; mais une multitude de perfectionnemens se faisaient apercevoir dans son instrument, où les registres étaient ouverts ou fermés par des pédales qui permettaient de ne point lever les mains du clavier pour modifier à l'infini les effets de l'orgue. Depuis lors, M. Érard a ajouté à cet instrument un clavier de récit expressif par le toucher, tel qu'il l'a exécuté dans le bel orgue construit pour la chapelle des Tuilleries; dans cet état, cet instrument offre un modèle de perfection, sous le rapport de l'invention et de la facture<sup>1</sup>.

(1) Sur la demande d'Érard, une commission de l'Institut fut nommée pour examiner le bel instrument que cet artiste avait construit pour la chapelle du roi; cette commission, composée des membres de la section de musique, après avoir pris connaissance de tous les détails de l'orgue expressif, fit le rapport suivant, qui fut adressé à M. Érard par M. Quatremère de Quincy, dont la lettre était conçue en ces termes:

INSTITUT DE FRANCE.

—  
ACADEMIE ROYALE DES BEAUX-ARTS.

Paris, le 2 décembre 1829.

Le Secrétaire perpétuel de l'Académie,  
Monsieur,

En vous adressant le rapport de la section de musique, approuvé par l'Académie, sur les perfectionnemens que vous venez d'apporter à l'orgue, qu'il me soit permis de vous exprimer l'extrême

Érard était occupé à faire poser l'orgue de la chapelle du roi lorsque les événemens de juillet arrivèrent, et causèrent la perte

satisfaction que chacun des académiciens a éprouvée en vous donnant ce témoignage de l'admiration que vous leur avez causée. C'est avec beaucoup de plaisir que l'on a cru devoir déroger en votre faveur à l'usage de faire des rapports uniquement sur les demandes du gouvernement.

Agréez, monsieur, l'assurance de ma considération distinguée,

*Signé QUATREMÈRE DE QUINCY.*

Le Secrétaire perpétuel de l'Académie certifie que ce qui suit est extrait du procès-verbal de la séance du samedi 28 novembre 1829.

*Rapport sur l'orgue expressif de M. SÉBASTIEN ÉRARD.*

Conformément aux désirs de l'Académie, sa section de musique s'est réunie pour procéder à l'examen de l'orgue expressif, inventé et exécuté par M. Sébastien Érard.

Cet instrument fut demandé à M. Érard par feu M. le duc de Damas, premier gentilhomme de la chambre du Roi, pour être placé dans la chapelle de Sa Majesté, au palais des Tuilleries.

Comme les autres orgues, cet instrument possède un triple clavier et un quatrième clavier, dit de pédales, posé à sa base.

Le clavier de haut est expressif, c'est-à-dire qu'en pressant modérément la touche on entend faiblement le ton, et qu'on l'augmente à volonté, selon l'accroissement de la pression. En laissant remonter peu à peu la touche, le son s'adoucit, ce qui donne à l'exécutant l'inappréciable faculté de pouvoir à son gré varier et nuancer les inflexions, à l'instar des instrumens à vent ou à archet, et même de faire éprouver parfois à l'auditeur la sensation que produit la voix du plus habile chanteur.

Le clavier du milieu se compose de *flûtes, bourdon, prestant, trompettes, basson, hautbois et cromorne*.

Le troisième, ou grand clavier, est composé de flûtes ouvertes, de flûtes bouchées, prestant, quintes, fourniture, octaves et trompettes.

Tous ces jeux peuvent se réunir, se séparer et offrir, par chaque combinaison diverse, une nature différente de voix, surtout une grande variété d'effets; l'on peut encore, par cette combinaison et le secours des pédales, augmenter ou diminuer à volonté le volume du son.

Messieurs, votre section croit ne pouvoir mieux faire l'éloge de la belle découverte de M. Érard qu'en vous rappelant, dans ce rapport, ce qu'en a dit et écrit l'un de ses plus illustres collègues, le célèbre Grétry, dans ses essais sur la musique, imprimés il y a plus de 40 ans.

« L'orgue, dit-il (3<sup>e</sup> volume, page 424), remplacera peut-être un jour tout un orchestre de cent musiciens. Si Érard achève sa superbe invention, si chaque tuyau d'orgue devient susceptible de toutes les nuances sous les doigts de l'organiste, quel grand parti ne retirera-t-on pas de cet instrument alors parfait! J'ai touché cinq ou six notes d'un buffet d'orgues qu'Érard avait rendues susceptibles de nuances, et sans doute le secret est découvert pour un tuyau comme pour mille. Plus on enfonce la touche, plus le son augmentait; il diminuait en relevant doucement le doigt.

d'une partie des tuyaux ; heureusement le mécanisme du grand orgue et le jeu expressif par la main ont été sauvés. Sébastien Érard, à cette époque, était déjà atteint de la maladie de vingt mois à laquelle il a succombé. Le mal calculaire dont il avait été déjà opéré avait reparu, et il s'y était joint une inflammation des reins. Ni la science, ni les soins assidus de M. le docteur Fouquier, son médecin, ne purent le soustraire à la gravité de ces accidens ; ils triomphèrent de l'excellente constitution qui lui promettait de prolonger son existence dix ou quinze années de plus, et il cessa de vivre le 5 août 1831, à son château de *la Muette*, où il avait fixé sa résidence depuis plusieurs années.

Outre le nombre immense d'inventions et de découvertes relatives aux instrumens de musique, Érard, comme on vient de le voir, avait imaginé une multitude de machines et d'outils nécessaires pour l'exécution de ses plans. Entre ces objets, il faut distinguer une scie mécanique établie dans sa manufacture de Paris, qui débite des bois de toute épaisseur de *trente-deux* pouces de large, et qui fonctionne par des moyens nouveaux de son invention.

Ce n'était pas seulement par ses rares talens qu'Érard avait mérité l'estime de ses contemporains ; cette estime lui était due aussi pour son caractère noble et généreux. Aimant les arts avec passion,

« C'est la pierre philosophale en musique que cette trouvaille. Le gouvernement devrait faire « établir un grand orgue de ce genre, et récompenser dignement Érard, l'homme du monde le « moins intéressé. »

En effet, messieurs, de tous les instrumens de musique de cette nature, aucun encore ne nous a paru comparable à celui de M. Érard. Ce magnifique instrument sous tous les rapports, est admirable, et votre section de musique, partageant entièrement l'opinion du célèbre Grétry, a l'honneur de vous proposer d'accorder votre approbation à son rapport.

*Signé CATEL, AUBER, LESUEUR, BOIELDIEU, CHÉRUBINI,  
BERTON, rapporteur.*

L'Académie adopte les conclusions de ce rapport.

Certifié conforme :

*Le Secrétaire perpétuel,  
Signé QUATREMÈRE DE QUINCY.*

bienveillant avec les artistes, il faisait un bel usage de sa fortune pour la prospérité des uns et pour l'encouragement des autres. La musique, la peinture étaient pour lui des objets de passion. Son oreille bien organisée, son œil perçant lui révélaient les beautés de ces arts, et l'habitude qu'il avait de vivre avec les musiciens et les peintres les plus habiles, avait perfectionné ses heureuses dispositions. Dans le cours de sa vie, il a formé plusieurs collections magnifiques de tableaux auxquelles il avait employé des capitaux considérables, et qu'il avait successivement vendues ; mais la plus rare, et certainement la plus belle que possède aucun particulier en France, est celle qu'il a réunie dans sa maison de campagne de *la Muette*, où il a terminé sa longue et honorable carrière. Son désintéressement parfait et sa loyauté lui ont fait des amis de tous ceux qui l'ont connu. Il avait adopté son neveu, Pierre Érard, fils de son frère Jean-Baptiste, et l'avait associé à ses travaux. M. Pierre Érard, dans le dessein de conserver dans leur pureté les inventions de Sébastien, relatives aux pianos et aux harpes, continue de diriger les établissements de Paris et de Londres, et s'est acquis, par la perfection des instruments qui sortent de ses ateliers, la protection spéciale que le roi d'Angleterre, la Reine et Madame Adélaïde de France accordaient précédemment à son oncle.

Excellent ami, bon parent, Sébastien Érard avait une ame simple et droite, une disposition de bonte inaltérable qui devrait toujours accompagner le talent, et qui, malheureusement, ne s'y joint pas toujours. Quoique sans orgueil, il avait, comme tous les hommes supérieurs, le sentiment de ce qu'il valait, et sa sensibilité s'alarmait quelquefois des injustices dont il était la victime ; mais qui oserait le lui reprocher ? Après tant de travaux et de découvertes, il doit être permis à un artiste tel que lui de réclamer la part de gloire qu'il avait si justement acquise.

La famille et les amis d'Érard se proposent de rendre un dernier hommage à sa mémoire, en faisant frapper une médaille en son honneur.

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