CHATS ON VIOLONCELLOS

OLGA RACSTER

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THE ARTIST'S WIFE.
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CHATS
ON
VIOLONCELLOS

BY

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With 18 *Illustrations*

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TO
MY FRIEND
MRS BLACKETT OF ARBIGLAND
THIS VOLUME IS
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY
THE AUTHORESS

LONDON, 1907

PREFACE

No prefatory remarks are necessary to introduce the reader to the following pages. They emanated, in the first place, from a desire for personal instruction, and what the French term *le soulagement du cœur*, a combination—according to Vauvenargues—calculated to prove useful to one's fellows, *car personne est seul de son espéce*. Those who live on my plane of thought will welcome this volume, and those who do not, will easily find a way out of the difficulty presented to them by their attempted perusal of its pages: most modern houses are now provided with wastepaper baskets of ample proportions!

My true reason for allowing myself to wander into the paths of a preamble, springs from a desire to thank my friends and colleagues for their assistance in supplying me with many interesting facts.

In particular I am indebted to Sir George Donaldson for permission to reproduce his Duiffoproucart Viol; to Dr William H. Cummings for the use of his interesting old engraving of Benjamin Hallet; to Mr W. E. Whitehouse for notes concerning Signor Piatti; to Mr Edward Heron Allen for courteous admittance to his valuable library, and for permission to reproduce the handsome carved violoncello by Galli; to Mr John Bridges for his photographs of "The King" Amati, and for supplying me with many points relating to its history; and to Miss Gertrude Roberts for helpful research at the British Museum.

Also I waft hearty acknowledgments to that great host of musical historians—my predecessors—to whose various records from century to century we owe our present knowledge.

OLGA RACSTER.

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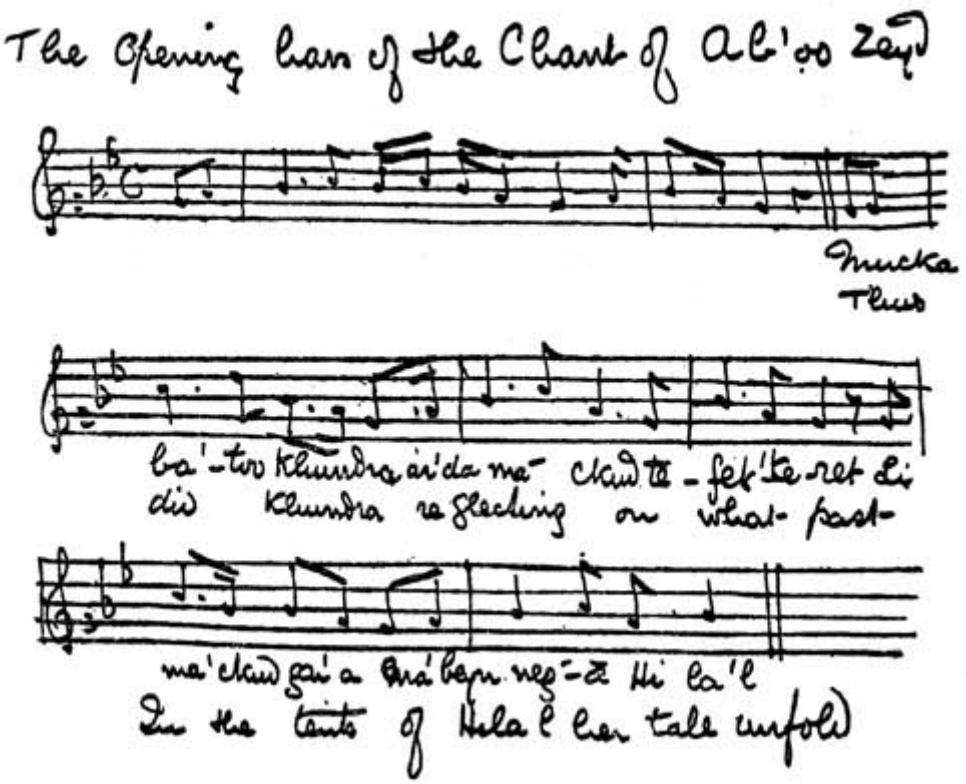


The Opening bars of the Chant of Ab'oo Zeyd

Chats on Violoncellos

CHAT THE FIRST

INTRODUCTION

Fog—The South Kensington Museum—The Ravanastron —Arabia—The Kemangeh à Gouze—Egypt, and the Rabab

Is there any city in the world that can—metaphorically speaking—hold up its head beside this place of mystery—London in a fog? Paris, Berlin, Vienna, St Petersburg, New York—what can they do in the production of a bilious-green, murky-yellow species of hyperphysical abomination? Nothing! Yet we English are not in the least proud of our prerogative. Perhaps elation is impossible among such depressing surroundings, or, perhaps the true British spirit of being satisfied with everything that *is* British, because it *is* British, predominates too utterly to admit of any other emotion.

From whatever cause our inertia springs, the clue is too deeply locked away in every Cockney's heart to be revealed. The effect, however, is plainly seen in the total lack of epic poetry, or chromatic musical depiction of the thing. Our literature does not teem with such lines as:

> "The 'cellist stood in the empty hall,
> Whence all but himself had fled,
> ''Tis the fog,' he sighed, 'that has tired them all
> And sent them so early to bed!'"

No! genius ignores the subject, and fills in the weary hours of darkness with sighs, and gasps, and chokes, like ordinary mortals.

What an outlook greets us this dull November day! Misty bricks and mortar emerge and disappear like swiftly buried cities. Hazy, indefinite, dubious figures loom upon us out of the darkness, like ancestral ghosts; dull thuds, faint cries, strange stampings and gratings are transmitted to our ears with telephonic minuteness; and all the while our throats are aching, our eyes are streaming, our noses are smarting, the motor bus is useless, and—we don't know where we are.

Perhaps in all the gamut of human sensibility there can be no more creepy sensation than that of being lost in familiar surroundings. The ruler of Hades himself, or Jupiter with his thunderbolts, could not invent a more refined torture than that consummated in the paradox: "Here I am!—Where am I?" Yet, how ordinary has this impression become to the dweller in London.

"Here, boy! can you tell me where I am? I thought I was near the South Kensington Station, but—I begin to be horribly puzzled. That great thing opposite looks just like the Parthenon!"

"Parth yer on!" exclaims a little urchin, apparently emerging from nowhere, and brandishing a torch as big as himself—"Parth, did yer say? Yer on the parth roight enough! Want a loight, loidy?" he adds, reserving further information until he is sure of a customer.

"Yes, yes, to be sure! Don't leave me whatever you do! Where am I?" distractedly. "What is that place opposite? I saw it a moment ago, but—it's gone again!" A pause—similar to that which precedes each new slide at a magic-lantern show—follows this speech, then out of the darkness comes the excited exclamation: "There! there it is! Now, what is it?"

"That there?" hoarsely mutters our impish guide with a grin. "Why, that there's the Kensin'ton Mooseum."

"The Kensington Museum! Surely it can't be! Why, it is the very place I have been looking for for hours past. Do you think you can get me across?"

"Git yer across!" with an accent of scorn, "o' corse I can git yer across. You just keep close alonga

me, loidy, and we'll git over in two ticks."

With torch held aloft and a hopeful heart he makes a start and—returns to the comparative safety of the pavement. Then he makes a second hoppy trial—with the same result. We begin to feel nervous, and search in our memory for some battle-cry or epic poem with which to fortify our courage, and drop upon Montrose's lines:

"He either fears his fate too much,
  Or his deserts are small,
Who dares not put it to the touch
  To gain or lose it all."

"Now then, 'ere you are, look sharp!" shouts our familiar urchin, utterly ignoring our poetic mutterings. Straight away he plunges into the chaos like an arrow shot from a bow. We follow blindly, breathlessly, with the grace of a polar bear after a gadfly, and in an incredibly short space of time reach the safety of the Museum doorway.

What a transformation scene greets our eyes when we enter! Here is a little Paradise indeed: food, warmth, light, and all the treasures of the Universe besides. Without—we know—are horrors worse than Bluebeard's dungeons or the Underground Railway at Gower Street. But what matter to us now if the sky rains salt herrings and the streets be full of roaring bulls, for we are safe from the great Babel, although we can see its stir if we will.

Come! sober scholar, gay *flaneur*, or ignoramus (it is all the same), rest, and drink in the fascinations of these armies of priceless china, silver, glass, pictures, and furniture which shine, and glint, and sparkle, and peep, in tantalising invitation! Here are rare editions: historic relics: miniatures, lace, statuary—in short, a banquet to suit all tastes; and here, more particularly, in the least prominent position, is a unique collection of musical instruments, hiding their heads in remoteness. It is regrettable that many of these interesting relics of the past are placed in such dark corners that a good deal of nose-flattening and eye-straining is necessary to see them at all. Still, one is well rewarded for any slight personal inconvenience sustained in viewing them, for, apart from their special interest, do they not stand before us as the mute historians of the past?

Look at this old virginal, encased in what was once rich red velvet, but now faded and worn with the touch of many a vanished hand! Behold those keys, brown with age! Yet these were once white and responsive to the taper fingers of that most consummate diplomatist, Queen Bess. Surely it was just here, on this side, that my Lord of Leicester stood bending his proud head to eagerly plead an answer to his oft-repeated suit! Or perhaps it was impulsive Essex plucked and twitched the thing, while he sued for the pardon of an elderly, capricious coquette!

A little to the left of the historic virginal is the harp of the ill-fated Marie Antoinette, brave owner of that empty title, *Reine de France*. What has been the history of the graceful thing since that short space of calm when its tones resounded in the Queen's *Salon* at the Tuileries? Was it also dragged after the poor lady by a cruel infuriated mob, like the harp of her friend, Mademoiselle de Lamballe? Who knows! The tumbrels seem to rumble by us as we gaze, and the sickening refrain:

"Madame Veto avait promis
De faire égorger tout Paris;
Mais son coup a manqué
Grâce à nos canonniers.
Dansans la Carmagnole
    Vive le son,
    Vive le son,
Dansans la Carmagnole
Vive le son du canon"

rings in our ears.

Close beside this melancholy relic is the cheering cast of Brian Borroimbe's harp, which was played on by that versatile King of Ireland during the eleventh century. A little farther—in an

obscure corner—is the fiddle said to have belonged to James I. of England, and almost beneath it is a cast of the beautifully carved violin which is generally supposed to have been given to the Earl of Leicester by Queen Elizabeth. Facing this is Handel's harpsichord, a plain, workmanlike little instrument of neutral tint, and, and—can it be? or—is it only the shadow of that pillar there that deceives us into imagining that we see a misty outlined figure near the keyboard?

At first it appears to take the form of a little child, stretching his small fingers with loving patience from note to note, while now and again he glances timorously round, as though fearful of detection.

Surely now it is Mr Handel himself: this man before us, in full bob-wig and handsome habiliments, can be no other than the successful favourite of the highest in the land. There he sits, with an expression of "Vat de tevil do I care!" on his face, hammering out "The Harmonious Blacksmith." Not the man to trouble himself about women, or succumb to the tender passion, yet women were ever helpful and friendly to him. As he plays, a strange medley of figures gather round him: there is handsome Sir Robert l'Estrange, smarting under the indignity of being called "Cromwell's fiddler": Cuzzoni—at a distance—for she has not forgotten Handel's threat to throw her out of the window at the last rehearsal. Also there is the poet Gay, and Lord Burlington: Her Grace of Chandos, with her shadow, Mr Pope: Hogarth, Smollett, and that rogue, Colley Cibber, bursting with some merry squib, which must be bottled up until the end of Mr Handel's piece, for fear of rousing that gentleman's fiery temper.

Then quite suddenly the crowd fades away, leaving the lonely figure at the harpsichord. The outline has grown very faint, yet one can discern that it is the master still; older, gentler, feebler, with eyes that gaze, but cannot see. Genius is still the dominating power, neither age nor infirmity can destroy it. The groping fingers continue to pour forth that exquisite flow of music, which is with us now and will remain always, for his name is

> One of the few immortal names
> That were not born to die.

Turning away from the many interesting memories revived by the old harpsichord, we discover that we have turned our backs on a case of Asiatic instruments clustering round a double-bass of such ample proportions that it is impossible to ignore it.

"The Giant"—as the monster is aptly called—is massive in every way. It is tall—nearly ten feet—it is broad, stout, and, in addition to its bulky proportions, exercises a strange magnetic influence over the gazer. So forcible is its power, that one is compelled to stay and meditate beneath its shadow as though it were still part of the parent tree from which it was ruthlessly torn some hundred years ago. As we settle down to view this mighty example of the perfected form of the violin, stray facts concerning this instrument and others of its kind come to us in a hap-hazard fashion. Our memory is whipped into various whimsical recollections of big things and fat people. Irresistibly a reminiscence of the great Lablache is wafted to us. This gigantic singer was a humble double-bass in the orchestra of a theatre, in a small Italian town, before his glorious voice brought him renown. One evening, as he was preparing to finger his part in the orchestra, he heard that the principal bass singer was too indisposed to sing. Here was the chance of Lablache's life, and—he took it. He filled the vacant bass singer's part himself and gained such an instantaneous success that he forsook the double-bass for ever. Yet, although he discarded it, he could not quite get rid of its memory, for his very voice was reminiscent of its tones. No one noticed this resemblance more than Weber, who, hearing him a few months after his début, exclaimed involuntarily: "By heavens! he is a double-bass still!"

As for the biography of the big bass before us, it is short but honourable. Made in Italy—that happy land of *lutherie*—it was once the property of Domenico Dragonetti, who came to England in 1794 and gathered victorious laurels in this country until the day of his death. Amusing anecdotes are said to have flowed incessantly from the lips of this whimsical artist, yet nothing he said surpassed his ridiculous habit of making up a "no-language" out of several tongues. Although Dragonetti resided in London for upwards of forty years, yet until his dying day he could not converse for ten minutes without running into several different languages, and when he exchanged opinions with his

bosom friend, Lindley, who stuttered frantically, the effect defied both description and imitation. There is a story on record that Dragonetti and Lindley were one day lounging down Wardour Street, which was then—as it is now—the haunt of the connoisseur, when they came upon a shop where, among other attractions, a parrot was put out for sale. The friends contemplated the bird for some time without speaking, until they attracted the attention of the shopman, who at once came out to them. Lindley began stumbling out endless questions to him, for the bird had taken his fancy, and Dragonetti poked in a query now and again in his own curious jargon. How old was the bird? What did it like to eat? Where did it come from? Was it a clever bird? Was it tame? and so on, ending, with a tremendous effort on Lindley's part: "Ca-ca-can-can he-he-e et-t-t-talk?" The salesman, impatient of having been kept so long to no purpose, felt he would lose nothing by a little outburst of temper, so he turned upon his heel with the sarcastic reply: "Talk! I should think so, and a jolly sight better than either of you, or I'd wring his blooming neck."

Dragonetti had no rival in his day, though Bottesini, about half-a-century later, could accomplish all that Dragonetti did. Indeed he did more, for he proved what wonderful effects could be produced by utilising the double-bass as a solo instrument, whereas Dragonetti was more particularly an orchestral genius. It is said that in private, however, he frequently amused his friends with wonderful flights on one string, or jocularly played a second violin part in a Quartet on his bulky instrument. Like Paganini his disproportionately long knobby fingers gave him a wonderful command and grip of the fingerboard, and he produced a tone like the great rolling pedal notes of an organ. So vast and penetrating was its quality, and so spirited his leadership of the double-basses, that his absence invariably called forth a comment from the audience on the weakness of the bass at such-and-such a concert.

Like Paganini, and many other famous artists, Dragonetti also possessed a cherished instrument, from which death alone parted him. The tone of this beautiful Gasparo da Salo is recorded to have been immense, and many were the occasions when its sonorous voice was the means of providing Dragonetti with the material for perpetrating one of his practical jokes. On the very day that the good monks of the monastery of St Pietro, near Venice, presented him with the double-bass, his high spirits led him into all kinds of pranks. Mad with delight at the possession of such a treasure, he carried it home and seated himself in the hall, with the bass planted before him. In response to a few strokes of his bow the bulky instrument emitted such thunderous rolling sounds that all the china and glass, even the pots and pans, began to rattle. Up from the kitchen department came the frightened inmates, hardly knowing what to expect, and they found nothing but—a slim lad, playing a big fiddle.

Returning to the double-bass before us, we must admit that the numerous large basses made in Italy and England, as well as during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was surprising. The conventional mind of the English can rarely create anything for itself in art, but must for ever imitate. Thus when they discovered that the Italian players who came to England used much larger double-basses than they were accustomed to, the order went forth at once: "Make ours large too!" The arrival of Gariboldie in London, in the reign of King George III., was the signal for much agitation amongst the King's musicians, for it was understood that he was accompanied by an unusually large double-bass. Mr Nilbone, the principal bass, was in particular most anxious, and wrote the following letter to the eminent maker, William Forster, upon the matter[1]:—

Windsor, July 4th, 87 [1787].

> Sir,—By his *Majesty's* order you are to form a plan for a new double-bass; it is to be at least four inches wider, if not more, than that which you made and the depth according. You are to make it as well as possible—so as not to let any exceed it in England—as Gariboldie has sent to Italy for an uncommon large one both in goodness and size by the performance at the Abbey next year....[2]

For what exact purpose these monster instruments were used it is difficult to surmise, unless for the amusement of some "Giants of mighty bone and bold enterprise." Perhaps some descendant of

Anak, Og, or Goliath was the first owner of this monster; some colossal *virtuoso* who made his fellow-artists tremble—like jelly in a bowl—when he arbitrarily forbade them to take their encores. Certainly the advertisement columns of *The Daily Advertiser* some two hundred years ago contain so many announcements of giants, that one might easily be led to suppose that they were a drug in the market at that time.

An account of a bass which must have been quite as massive—possibly larger—as the one before us is given in his "Memoirs" by the Baron de Pollnitz, an Austrian nobleman, who visited many courts during the latter part of the eighteenth century. He received a particularly gratifying reception at the court of Duke Maurice of Saxony, whom he discovered to be an enthusiastic collector of musical instruments, and more especially of bass-viols. In the following passage the Baron describes his visit to the Museum where they were stored:—"The Prince conducted me into a hall which was hung with bass-viols from the bottom to the top, in the same manner as an arsenal is with helmets and breastplates. In the middle of the hall was a viol which was distinguished from all the rest. It reached up to the very ceiling, and there was a ladder set, which such as had the curiosity to take particular view were obliged to ascend, for surely it was the most stately instrument of the kind that was ever made. The Duke made me take particular notice of it, and was pleased with the admiration I expressed of it."

In an interview with one of the Duke's gentlemen-in-waiting which followed the reception at the palace, the Machiavelian-like use to which this double-bass had been put is revealed with startling clearness: "As for my august master," remarks the garrulous courtier, "his fancy runs only on bass-viols, and whoever solicits him for employment or any other favour cannot do better than accommodate his arsenal with one of these instruments. That large one which you saw in the room where all the viols are kept was presented to him by one who wished to be a Privy Councillor. His petition was granted, and had he asked for anything else he might have had it."

Another huge double-bass is described by Mr William Gardiner, of Leicester, in his delightfully chatty book, "Music and Friends." He recounts coming across the monster in his native town in 1786, and says: "It was of such a height that Mr Martin [the maker] was obliged to cut a hole in the ceiling to let the head through; so that it was tuned by going into the room above."

If either of these instruments had by chance found its way to the East, what a sensation it would have created! The Oriental in all generations has cherished a fine reverence for bulk, apparently measuring the intellect by the dimensions of the body, and this is no doubt his reason for constructing his gods in such awe-inspiring proportions. Not only does he make them large, but he also carefully preserves the traditional history of his country with which they are intertwined, and it is interesting to observe what a goodly part music plays in these annals. For instance, to the assumed founder of the Chinese Empire, B.C. 3000, the God Fohi, called "The Son of Heaven," is assigned the invention of several stringed instruments, while their musical scale—distributed in the manner of the black notes on the piano—was derived from a miraculous bird rejoicing in the name of Foung-hoang.

The Brahmin traditions of the Hindus inform us that the God Nareda invented one of their most popular instruments now in use—the vina—while speech and musical sounds were the creation of Brahma's amiable and intellectual consort, Saraswati. Turning to the legendary history of Ceylon, we again find allusion to musical invention. The most ancient myth of this island concerns the doings of Rama—a physical incarnation of the God Vichnou—and Ravenan, the giant king who is credited with the difficult achievement of inventing the first stringed instrument played with a bow, five thousand years ago. This Ravenan, besides being of great strength and rejoicing in several heads, considered himself such a sweet and virtuous soul, that he established himself as a divinity, and invited his subjects—like a hot-pie man—to "gather round." The request—if an arbitrary command can so be called—met with a speedy response. They not only "gathered round," but they worshipped, and the foolish giant became exceedingly puffed up. Indeed, so great was his exaltation when he saw the growth of his proselytes, that he at length conceived the plan of making conquests farther afield. But—to borrow from Mr Bernard Shaw—"You never can tell." You start scaling the Alps with a high heart, and a conviction that you will reach the top, when a nasty

avalanche descends upon you and you are extinguished as easily as a farthing dip.

This was the case with the many-headed Ravenan. Whether the strain of thinking with seven heads at a time destroyed his judgment, or whether he did not think at all but allowed his conceit to get the better of him, we do not know, at any rate the avalanche was at hand in the form of his enemy, Rama. The moment that God heard of Ravenan's intentions, he cried aloud with Jovelike fury: "By Brahma, it shall not be!" and there and then bore down upon Ravenan with his army. A great battle ensued, but alas! to no purpose as far as Rama was concerned. He was not only routed by the Cingalese soldiers, but his consort, Sides, was carried away to the enemy's camp. Other encounters followed the first, but still Ravenan's army conquered. Probably they might have gained the final victory had not Rama assumed a Siegfried characteristic. He appealed to Brahma and obtained from him a magic spear, with which he ended Ravenan's despotic reign.

Of course in these so-called enlightened days, the Oriental tradition of the ravanastron (Ravenan's invention was named after him) is laughed down. But after all one must own the truth of the saying: "There is no smoke without a fire," and also allow that even the most poetic fancy must have some species of realism to give it birth. Possibly this instrument attributed to Ravenan was but the "rushy Zampogna" alluded to by Sir Roger North[3] as employed "to stir up the vulgar to dance." Call it by what name you will, specify the fingers that made it to be dusky or white, there is no doubt that our grave and learned historians of the subject give evidence of the existence of a stringed instrument played with a bow in India at a very early date. The first duty of all historians—as we know—is to be truthful, therefore, when they reiterate the statement that the fiddle-bow is mentioned in Sanskrit characters which cannot be less than two thousand years old, we must believe implicitly. And then again, we are told that the description of India's musical instruments found in Sanskrit treatises, reveal that the forms of the instruments there mentioned, have scarcely altered during the last thousand years. Here is another point in favour of the ravanastron's Indian origin. Finally, Monsieur Pierre Sonnerait—the oft quoted—in his "Voyages aux Indes oriental" (Paris, 1782), records that this identical instrument was then in use among a religious sect called the Ponderons.

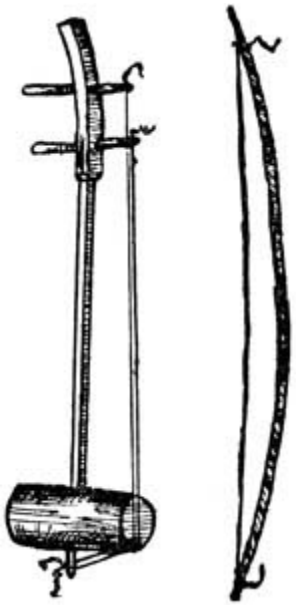


Fig. 1.—RAVANASTRON

A description of an instrument bearing a great similarity to the ravanastron, which is depicted on a tall, handled cup belonging to the collection of Greek and Etruscan vases made by Lucien Napoleon, Prince of Caneno, is to be found in Mr J. M. Fleming's "Violins Old and New" (London, 1883). His authority is a reproduction of the instrument, which he states to have found in an illustrated catalogue of the Prince's valuable collection, published by subscription at Milan, in 1836. The scene in which the instrument figures is printed in red on a black ground, and reveals a man reading to a couple of youths who lean upon knotted sticks, while they listen with great earnestness to the narrative. On each side of the principal figure is an object which is technically termed, by

authorities in these matters, “thecæ”—indicating the profession of the reader. It is the form of one of these “thecæ” that closely resembles the ravanastron, and, in addition, has a bow placed across the strings startlingly modern in appearance.

Fig. 2
ANCIENT EGYPTIAN GUITARS

Looked at from a conjectural point of view, one might hazard that this picture perhaps furthers the cause of the Indian ravanastron’s antiquity, when we bear in mind that the music of the Sanskrit period closely resembles that of the Ancient Greeks. The Greeks in their turn—it may be remembered—borrowed their music from Egypt: the Arabs from Persia: the Chinese from India: Japan from China: and so on in a merry-go-round of reiteration. This borrowing system has originated numberless theories of derivation, but one cannot get away from the fact that Egypt was the mother country of musical instruments with stretched strings and possibly (?) of the bow also. The resemblance between the ancient Egyptian guitar (Fig. 2) and the ravanastron (Fig. 1) has easily led to the supposition that those most accomplished instrumentalists of ancient times must have discovered the art of producing sound by friction, although they have left no proof of any such invention. But—we live in an age of discovery—the most effete origin of the bow may yet be unearthed, for the world’s dust heaps are far from being completely ransacked. Only the other day a contemporary newspaper announced that “Dr von Lecoque, a scientific emissary of the Persian Government, has arrived safely at Srinagar [Kashmir], after a journey through remote parts of Asia. He has brought with him a quantity of highly interesting paintings upon stucco, the background in many cases being of gold-leaf, as in Italian work, and a number of manuscripts in ten different languages and one wholly unknown tongue. Dr von Lecoque’s discoveries probably constitute the greatest archæological find since the days of Layard and Rawlinson.”

Pending the appearance of further revelations concerning the origin of stringed instruments played with a bow, there is no harm in quoting the following Oriental tale which to some extent tends to strengthen the invention of the bow and *gut* strings in India. The story is to be found in a Persian work entitled the “Tute Nama”[4] (“Tales of a Parrot, or Parrot Book,”) written by a Persian author named Nakhshabi, A.D. 1329, who adapted the romance—be it noted—from a Sanskrit work, now extant. The frame or leading narrative of the book deals with a merchant who had a beautiful wife, but, desiring to increase his wealth by establishing trade with other countries, he resolved to travel. His wife, with sweet and womanly affection, clings to him, and endeavours to dissuade him from his purpose. But for reply, he expatiates to her upon the evils of poverty and the advantages of wealth in a manner that would delight the heart of “Major Barbara’s” cynical father “Andrew Undershaft.” “A man without riches,” says he, “is fatherless, and a home without money is

destitute." Again: "He that is in want of cash is a nonentity, and wanders in the land unknown." Other similar aphorisms greet his gentle wife's persuasions, and at length the matter ends in his departure. Before leaving, however, he goes to the bazaar and purchases, at a great cost, a wonderful parrot that can discourse eloquently, and a species of nightingale called a "sharak," which can imitate the human voice in a surprising manner. These he presents to his spouse as a parting gift, charging her that she shall consult the birds and gain their joint consent before transacting any matter of importance.

Time passes; the merchant's wife has bemoaned her lord's absence and conversed with the birds, until, one day, a handsome foreign Prince goes by the beautiful lady's residence, and chances to meet the glance of her languishing eyes. In true Persian fashion, they instantly fall in love with one another, and the usual female Mercury of such romances is employed to arrange a lover's meeting. Before keeping her appointment with the Prince, however, the merchant's wife seeks the counsel of her two birds, as in duty bound. The "sharak" forbids her to see the Prince at the first suggestion, and is rewarded for her vigilance by getting her neck wrung. The parrot is next questioned, but seeing the fate of his companion he prudently temporises, and commences to tell a tale of such flattering interest that his mistress forgets to be angry, and listens, eager and absorbed.

Night after night, the parrot—in the manner of Sharazad, who narrated stories for "A Thousand and One Nights"—eloquently romances, thus cutely preventing the lady's contemplated intrigue, until the merchant's return makes it impossible. On the fourteenth night the clever bird entertains his mistress with the following ingenious theory of the invention of musical instruments:—

"Some attribute ... the discovery to the sounds made by a large stone against the frame of an oil-press, and others to meat when roasting, but the sages of Hind [India] are of opinion that it originated in the following accident. As a learned Brahmin was travelling to the court of an illustrious raja, he rested about the middle of the day under the shade of a mulberry-tree, on the top of which he beheld a mischievous monkey climbing from bough to bough, till by a sudden slip he fell upon a sharp-pointed shoot which instantly ripped up his belly, and left his entrails suspended on the tree, while the unlucky animal fell breathless upon the dust of death. Some time after this, as the Brahmin was returning, he accidentally sat down in the same place and, recollecting the circumstance, looked up and saw that the entrails were dried and yielded a harmonious sound every time the wind gently impelled them against the branches. Charmed at the singularity of the adventure, he took them down and, after binding them to the two ends of his walking-stick, touched them with a small twig by which he discovered that the sound was much improved. When he got home he fastened the staff to another piece of wood, which was hollow, and by the addition of a bow which was strung with part of his own beard he converted it into a complete instrument.[5] In succeeding ages the science received considerable improvements. After the addition of a bridge purer notes were extracted; and the different students, pursuing the bent of their inclinations, constructed instruments of various forms according to their individual fancies; and to this whimsical accident we are indebted for the tuneful *ney*, and the heart-exhilarating *rabáb*, and in short all the other instruments of wind and string."

If we would see this rabab mentioned by our Persian author, we have but to look on the right-hand side of the big bass before us, and there behold the identical thing suspended from a hook, like a misfit in a tailor's shop. But before we begin discoursing upon its history it would be as well to glance at the Chinese fiddle, called the Ur-heen, hanging to the left of the bass. In shape it is almost the counterpart of the ravanastron; the same broomstick neck and fingerboard combined, the same round minute body. Here, however, the resemblance ends, for the body of the Chinese instrument is made of half a cocoanut shell (curiously enough the monkeys' favourite repast), covered with gazelle skin, while the body of the ravanastron—as though desiring to accentuate its relationship to the violin family—is constructed of a cylinder of sycamore wood hollowed out. It may be remembered that M. Fetis, in his "Notice of A Stradivari," makes a very decisive remark about the ravanastron: "If we would trace a bow instrument to its source," says he, "we must assume the most simple form in which it could appear, and such as required no assistance from an art brought to perfection, and such a form we shall find in the ravanastron."

Fig. 3.—RABAB

Accepting this theory then as our basis, we must behold in this insignificant-looking construction (Fig. 1), devoid of classic line or Stradivarius curve, the progenitor of the violin family—or, shall we say: "The *Violoncello* family"? There is certainly some foundation for giving the deeper instrument precedence; first: the earliest pitch was low, and, second: if this is doubted, evidence comes to hand in the primitive stringed instruments played with a bow being too insecurely constructed to have borne the pressure of a tight—and consequently high-pitched—string. Another significant testimony is also to be found in the tuning of India's fiddle, the sarange. Its highest string does not exceed middle C, and, besides this, it is held vertically, like the violoncello.

But we have hung over this thrice-told tale of India's supposed contribution to the history of the violoncello overlong, we must turn our attention to the waiting rabab (Fig. 3). Comparing this with the ravanastron, a glance is sufficient to realise the development made in the right direction. Here the length of neck is curtailed, and more attention given to the sound arrangement. The outline of the body partakes no more of the American "meat-can" type, and there is an attempt at assuming those drawn-out corners and exquisite curves which, under the masterly touch of Amati and Stradivarius, finally developed into unassailable perfection. According to the Persian parrot's story, we might be led to suppose that this was also a Hindu invention, but it is probably more correct to conclude it to be the Arab development of the ravanastron, for truly:

"... all Arabia breathes from yonder box."

Yes! Not only does it breathe, but also whispers of that stalwart race of warriors, awakened from the lethargy of years and thrilling to Mohammed's sublime cry: "There is one God alone!" speaks of the majestic growth of civilisation and chivalry among them, which emanated from the Prophet's teaching: tells of the conquest of Persia in the seventh century, from whence they gathered wealth and culture, and of the subsequent subjugation of the whole of Egypt, Assyria, and India under one vast Empire. In this manner did the more advanced knowledge of the vanquished become disseminated among the conquerors and—keeping pace with the newly kindled spirit of progress—receive impetus at their hands. The Persian system of music was taken by the Arabs *en bloc*; likewise their musical instruments, and those of India and Egypt, consequently they became possessed of a a numerous and varied assortment. Of their prime favourite *el oud* (lute), alone, they are said to have counted thirty varieties, and of stringed instruments played with a bow they had fourteen different types. At the present day, only two out of this array exist from which to draw conclusions: the Persian kemangeh à gouze (ancient place of the bow[6]), and the Arabian rabab, which was possibly derived from the Indian ravanastron through the kemangeh.

Fig. 4.—KEMANGEH A GOUZE

In the eighth century, the Arabs enlarged their dominions still further by the addition of Spain, and it was there more particularly, amid the bewildering wealth, the luxurious self-indulgence and unrivalled magnificence, that music—"the language of love"—became indispensable. Mahommed might frown upon the art: might decry it as a device of the devil; might thunder that it caused "hypocrisy to grow in the heart like as water promoteth the growth of corn," but to no avail, the placid Moslem found some means of reconciling his love of sweet sounds to the teachings of his religion. In Cordova, which was then the capital of Spain, "from every balcony in the evening time sounded the tinkling of lutes, and the melody of voices, so that the city seemed wreathed in musical airs after the bazaars were closed and the evening recreation had begun. The Caliph, secluded from public curiosity in his voluptuous retreat of Zehra, passed his hours of recreation amid scenes that may well recall the description of fable. The 'pavilion of his pleasures' was constructed of gold and polished steel, the walls of which were encrusted with precious stones. In the midst of the splendour produced by lights reflected from a hundred crystal lustres, a sheaf of living quicksilver jetted up in a basin of alabaster and made a brightness too dazzling for the eye to look upon. Amid the decorations of rare and stupendous luxury was a musical tree—a similar construction is said to have existed at Constantinople and one at Bagdad—the branches of which were made of gold and silver. On eighteen large branches and a number of twigs beneath them sat a multitude of birds shaped out of the same precious metals. By an ingenious mechanism inside the golden tree the birds were made to sing in a most melodious chorus, to the delight and amazement of the listeners."[7]

In Bagdad, Cairo, and Damascus there was the same lavish grandeur, the same magnificence, and, amid the culture and poetic romanticism, which was the wonder of all Europe, the prime instigator to the development of music and musical instruments—the minstrel—sprang into life. Not only were bands of minstrels kept at the palaces of the caliphs, princes, and viziers, but companies of wandering minstrels roamed the country from city to city and house to house, everywhere receiving welcome and creating a fine taste and criticism among the people. No man was accounted a good minstrel unless—besides being able to play sweet melodies, and jingle bright tunes—he could utter clever things with point and clearness of diction: repeat endless poetry, both grave and gay: have a fluent command of speech, and, when singing, enunciate with perfect purity. All these attributes they attempted to display and cultivate in their playing of the dulcimer; their singing to the accompaniment of the lute; their story telling, and their chanting to the rabab on the eternal theme—love.

Alas! princely race of poets and musicians, your greatness has vanished like a cloud of dust. Vanquished and overcome in your turn, your grandeur, your literature, your science is a thing of the past, and your dignified minstrel is to-day but a beggarly sha'er (poet) who frequents Egyptian

cafés, and, for a paltry remuneration, chants to the accompaniment of the rabab. Go to that most cosmopolitan spot on earth, Cairo, where Greek, Turk, Egyptian, Persian, and Arabian rub shoulders, and present an incessant kaleidoscopic vision of brilliant colours, and there you will meet this minstrel, remnant of "Arabian Nights'" wonders. Down the street he comes, stops at a café, seats himself on the mus'tub'ah, or raised seat, which is built against the front of the coffee-shop—rabab in hand, while another performer on the rabab seats himself beside him to play certain parts of the accompaniment. The auditors occupy the rest of the sha'er's platform,[8] or "arrange themselves on the mus'tub'ahs of the houses on the opposite side of the narrow street, and the rest sit on stools or benches made of palm-sticks; most of them with pipe in hand; some sipping their coffee, and all highly amused, not only with the story, but with the lively and dramatic manner of the narrator." After invocating the Prophet's blessing the sha'er, who both recites and chants *par cœur*, plays a few introductory notes on the rabab and then begins to relate the popular and ancient story of the adventures of Ab'oo' Zey'dee, which is full of dramatic possibilities for one gifted with histrionic talent. The first part of the tale deals with the childhood of the hero who—owing to his mother praying before his birth that he might be brave like a blackbird whom she saw attack and vanquish a numerous flock of birds—was born as black as night. On account of his sombre hue the helpless infant is cast upon the world in his mother's arms by his father, who is the chief of the great tribe of Ben'ee Hila'l. One of the many situations in which the tale abounds is the manner in which the mother keeps the knowledge of his father's name from her son, and incites him to war against his own tribe. However, everything ends well: the dusky hero is restored to his own, and the humble sha'er, having come to the end of his narration, again asks the Prophet's blessing. The proprietor of the *café* gives him a small recompense for attracting customers, and he departs on his way, taking with him the feeble glimmer of wonders faded and gone.

Besides the *one*-stringed rabab used by the sha'er, there is also an identical *two*-stringed instrument called rabel ab monghun'ee, or singer's viol, reserved entirely for the accompaniment of vocal performances. Both are constructed of wood, and the resonant body is made by stretching skin over the four-cornered body frame. Some of the sounding boxes have no back, while others have another piece of skin to form that part.

The charms of the rabab have so completely usurped our attention that we have neglected to speak more fully of that undoubtedly ancient instrument, the Persian kemangeh à gouze (Fig. 4). As there is perhaps no more delightful or authentic description of this instrument than that given by Sir William Ouseley, we will quote the whole extract from his: "Travels in the East, particularly in Persia," just as it stands:

"My desire of hearing what the Persians considered as their best musick, could only be gratified it is said in the chief cities. Meanwhile a kind of violin called kemáncheh (or, as pronounced in the south of Persia, Kamoncheh) and found in almost every town, afforded me frequent entertainment. That which I saw first was in the hands of Mohammed Caraba'ghi, a poor fellow who sometimes visited our camps. His kemáncheh was of *tut* or mulberry-tree wood; the body (about eight inches in diameter) globular except at the mouth, over which was stretched, and fixed by glue, a covering of parchment; it had three strings (of twisted sheep's-gut) and a bridge placed obliquely. A straight piece of iron strengthened the whole instrument from the knob below, through the handle or fingerboard to the hollow which received the pegs. It was carried hanging from the shoulder by a leather strap; in length it was nearly three feet from the wooden ball at the top to the iron knob or button which rested upon the ground. The bow was a mere switch, about two feet and a half long, to which was fastened at one end some black horse-hair. At the other end this hair was connected by a brass ring with a piece of leather seven or eight inches long. The ring was managed with the second and third fingers of the performer's hand and by its means he contracted or relaxed the bow, which was occasionally rubbed on a bit of wax or rosin stuck above the pegs....

"The performer generally combined his voice with the tones of his instrument. At the house of a person in Bushehr, I one day heard another minstrel sing to his kemáncheh a melancholy ditty, concerning the ill-fated Zend dynasty which became extinct on the murder of Luft Ali Kha'n in 1794, when the present King's uncle, of the Kajar tribe, assumed imperial authority. The Zend princes

were much beloved.... The elegy on their misfortunes abounded with pathetic passages, and the tune corresponding drew tears from some who listened." Later the author informs us that the kemáncheh is made of various materials: "I have seen one of which the body was merely a hollow gourd; and another of which every part was richly inlaid and ornamented. Some," says Abd-ul-cadir, "form the body of this instrument from the shell of a cocoanut, fixing on it hair strings; but many are made from wood over which they fasten silken strings."[9]

But! ... but! ... but, surely it is lunch-time! The sight of the big double-bass and its Asiatic satellites is becoming very irksome, and—the American's "silent sorrow" is overcoming us. In plain words: "We are hungry!"

Was it not Schopenhauer who said to a German officer, who watched the philosopher's mighty appetite with astonishment: "I eat much, sir, because I have a great mind," adding that thought required vigorous nourishment? Of course! Then let us enter the spacious restaurant, guarded by two of Flaxman's *chefs-d'œuvre*; seize a white-robed table; beckon to a black-robed waiter; and take the food of thought, *à la* Schopenhauer.

A Bass-Viol of 1584

"While cleaning the attic of the house of Dr John I. Orton yesterday, workmen found an old church bass-viol. Inside the viol is engraved the name of the maker and the date, 'G. Billini-Onna, 1584.' Experts place its value at at least $1000. The viol has been in the possession of the Orton family for three generations but for a number of years has been missing."—*Newhaven Register*, 1902.

Extracts from Anthony Wood's Diary

"The 25th December 1656, Th. I paid young Mr Bishop 3s. for mending my base violl.

"February 18th, 1658, to Bishop for mending my viol 1s., to Rich for my shoes and spent 1s.

"25th, for violl strings, 7d.; the same, for my musick meeting, 9d."

Epitaph said to be on Johan Jenkins' Gravestone

“Under this stone rare Jenkyns lye
The Master of the Musick Art,
Whom from the Earth, the God on high
Called up to him to bear his part
In Anno 78, he went to heaven.”

—John Jenkins was an extraordinary player on the Lyra viol in the time of Charles I.

CHAT THE SECOND

Lunch, and the Emperor Albinus—The Crwth—The immature Bow Instruments which preceded the Fifteenth-century Viol—M. Coutagne and Gaspar Duiffoproucart

WHILE under the shadow of the friendly double-bass, we were particularly favoured and aided by the punctuating poke of a finger at the instruments mentioned. Now, however, isolated in that inartistic invention—a Restaurant—we have no such aid. There is no inspiration to be gained from knives and forks, plates and spoons, unless one be a cutler, a potter, a *chef*, or rejoices in the voracious appetite of the Emperor Albinus. This monarch—says our classical dictionary—thought nothing of devouring 500 figs, 100 peaches, twenty pounds of dry raisins, 10 melons, and 400 oysters for breakfast. What the heavier meals of the day were composed of is a matter upon which we are left to cogitate.

There is no necessity to dwell upon the many immature bow instruments which preceded the fifteenth-century viol, but, for the sake of context, they must be allowed a passing interest and a glance at these pictures of them, which we have here upon the table. The Welsh crwth we will not mention, for it has already been effectually cast out of the fiddle family's ancestry by an eminent authority in such matters. Likewise, for the same reason, we will pass the rote or rotta, with a vacant stare.

Fig. 5.—REBEC

The rebec,[10] however, we will welcome, for here we tread upon safe ground. Lying uppermost upon the table before us is a sketch (Fig. 5) of this little pear-shaped instrument which was the parent of the viol, and the darling of the minstrel's heart. Its progenitor was the rabab of Arabia, and it derived its Frenchified title through the rabab's Spanish equivalent "rabel," or "arabel." Owing to its commodious size, and consequent utility, this little instrument diffused itself rapidly over Europe. To sunny Provence; to France; to Normandy; and lastly to England it went in the hands of Troubadours and Crusaders, and so great was the charm of its coarse strings and rotund form, that mankind cherished it for many centuries. In England it became quite habitual to look upon the violin and the rebec as almost the same instrument; so much so, that the term fiddle became as synonymous with the rebec as with the violin. Thus we find Fletcher, in his "Knight of the Burning Pestle," putting the following speech into the mouth of one of his characters: "They say 'tis present death for these fiddlers to tune their *rebecs* before the Grand Turk," while "Golding," in Thomas Shadwell's Comedy of "The Miser," speaks of the Fiddler's Violin.

The first instrument played with a bow in France, the rebec survived longest in that country, and in the first half of the sixteenth century we find woodcut representations of it in complete "sets"—*i.e. soprano*, *alto*, *tenor*, and *bass*—in Martin Agricola's "Musica Instrumentalis Deudsch."

Fig. 6.—SPANISH MINSTREL (Eleventh-century MS.)

Underneath our rebec picture is quite an ornamental drawing of a man dancing upon stilts (Fig. 6), which comes from a Saracen's pencil. This gentleman is a minstrel, and we ought to admire him, yet the cast of his countenance has been a severe shock to our cherished dreams of the romantic silky haired troubadours of the past. The picture is taken from a Spanish MS. of the eleventh century, one of the most valuable of its kind in that Aladdin's cave—the British Museum—and is considered to be the work of a monk of the monastery of Silos in Bourgos (Old Castille). The instrument held in the minstrel's left hand, while he nimbly trips upon a "light fantastic toe," is curious and interesting, for it is in the nature of a freak. So equivocal is its appearance that as one looks one might easily be led into paraphrasing Shakespeare by exclaiming: "Is it a *rebec* that I see before me?" Certainly the form resembles that instrument, yet it has none of its three-stringed simplicity. More properly speaking, it appears to be a combination of the guitar and viol system, for, while the fingers twang the string above, the bow rubs a drone accompaniment beneath. How much of this arrangement is due to the fancy of the artist, and how much to truth, it is impossible to surmise, but certain it is that this is not the only specimen of a combination musical instrument to be found amongst the Arabs. The learned and industrious Michael Prætorius, in his "Theatrum Instrumentorum" (Wolfenbüttel, 1620), gives two views of an Arabian instrument which he calls a Monocordum and pipe. In form it is identical with the rabab (Fig. 3) but the neck serves the double office of fingerboard and reed, so that the performer could play both instruments at one and the same time. One cannot help regretting that this invention has passed out of use, as it would surely be welcome to those weary hosts and hostesses of modern times who ceaselessly strive to "cut down" the expenses of the inevitable music at the inevitable "At Home." The artist would play solos upon his combined flute and viol among the clattering tongues and tea-cups, and the fee for his services would work out in the following satisfactory manner:—One artist + two musical instruments = One Fee. Excellent!

Beneath the minstrel in his elaborate stockings lies a picture of a comfortable, pleasant-looking old

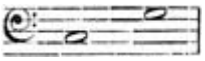
gentleman wearing a crown upon his head, and scraping what looks uncommonly like an attempt at the Stradivarius model. This figure (Fig. 7) taken from a bas-relief which was once in the Chapel of St Georges de Boscerville, Normandy—built in 1066—and now preserved in the museum at Rouen, is perhaps the oldest known representation of such a shaped viol extant. Monsieur Fetis, speaking of this figure in his “Histoire General de la Musique,” describes it as a “two-stringed rubebe held between the knees of the person who plays upon it with a bow.”

Fig. 7
FIGURE FROM ST GEORGES DE BOSCERVILLE
(11th century)

Now the archæologist who seeks for truth among the relics of ancient musical instruments is greeted with serious difficulties. He finds on one side of him a “mountain of names,” and on the other side of him a “mountain of musical instruments.” In his hand he grasps bewildering allusions to these in poetry and prose, while sculptural representations, pictures, and drawings flit before his eyes. He holds a bit here, in his endeavour to unite the mountains, snatches a fragment there, and thus it is that we find so many contradictory assertions among authorities on the subject.

Fig. 8
BAS-RELIEF FROM COLOGNE MUSEUM (12th century)

Monsieur Laurent Grillét asserts that this Boscerville instrument is not a rubebe, as Monsieur Fetis says, but a rote, while the latter's theory that the rote was a direct descendant of the lyre, and was played by plucking the strings, has been borne out by Mr Heron Allen. An authority of the period, Jerome of Moravia, who wrote his "De cæntiâ Artes Musiciea" in 1274, and dedicated it to Gregory X., speaks of the rubebe as a two-stringed instrument played with a bow and tuned thus:



Unfortunately he does not illustrate his text, but the depth of pitch given by him would indicate an instrument of larger proportions than the one held by the Boscerville figure. In any case, whether this be the instrument indicated by Jerome or not, he has distinctly described the existence of a bass species of viol at that date, and our next picture might certainly be taken as an illustration of his description, giving licence of course, to the third string. This bas-relief in marble (Fig. 8) is preserved in the museum at Cologne, and, looked at with a twentieth-century eye, is wonderfully replete with omens. Observe the bridge and its position: the sound holes in their approved place: the manner in which the sounding-board joins the neck: the excellent fingerboard and tailpiece. All these items, combined with its size, might easily allow it to be the rubebe of Jerome de Moravia and if one supposes this to be so, it is not amiss to suggest that the Boscerville instrument is also a rubebe, which experience enlarged in the following century to the size before us.

It is hardly necessary to add further examples, as these three give a fairly broad idea of the progressive attempts at a definite form, from about the eleventh to the end of the fourteenth century. During this period there were doubtless no hard and fast rules for tuning. The minstrel adapted the pitch of his instrument according to whim, or the compass of his voice. He danced and sang to his own improvised accompaniments. Thus we hear in 1391 of: "Un nommeé Isembart jouait d'une rubèbe, et, en jouant, un nommé Le Bastard se print à danser," and again in 1395, "Roussel et Gaygnat preurent à jouer, l'un d'une fluste l'autre d'une rubèbe, et ainsi que les aulcuns dansoient."[11] The minstrel's person and attainments were undoubtedly of a genial character, yet with all due deference to his merry ways, and the good service he rendered to poetry and music, one cannot help observing that his dancing and warbling were the means of retarding the development of musical instruments to a certain extent. If you roam the country with your

musical equipment upon your back you naturally require something of a portable size. “A fiddle under my cloak?” says the indignant Sir Roger l’Estrange in defending himself against Mr Bagshawe’s insinuations that he frequently solicited private conferences from Oliver Cromwell with a fiddle under his cloak; “Truly my fiddle is a bass-viol, and that’s somewhat a troublesome instrument under a cloak.” The minstrel of the Middle Ages was certainly of the same opinion, and was careful that his fiddle should not assume alarming proportions. He was content so long as he could carry it about with ease like “Gervais de Nevers” who:

—“donned a garment old
And round his neck a viol hung
For cunningly he played and sung.”

Another obstacle to the progress of stringed instruments was placed in their way by the early contrapuntists who expended their genius entirely upon vocal music. Thus it was that no one appeared to realise that a resonant bass-viol, answering to the pitch of the bass voice, could be constructed by enlarging the rebecs and embryo viols then in use. Not until the middle of the fifteenth century did anything of the sort appear, and when it did, it came at the imperative call of the part-songs then coming into vogue. The singers of these compositions demanded to be kept in tune just as much as the warblers of sweet melodies had required, and it was the desire to do this to the best advantage that led eventually to the construction of complete sets of stringed instruments played with a bow and answering in pitch to the treble, alto, tenor, and bass voices.

And now, if you have finished your coffee, shall we return to our case of Asiatic instruments? There is to be found amongst them a mongrel species of bass instrument, which certainly acted in no mean way as a factor in the development of low-pitched instruments played with a bow. We allude to the *trummelscheit*, known in England under the ambiguous title of marine trumpet. It carries one short gut string tuned to CC, and when correctly played—*i.e.* harmonically—gives out a scale corresponding in pitch to that of the high soprano voice.

This *trummelscheit* before us is rather undersized. Its form and construction are of an advanced type, for besides the short gut string it has the additional sympathetic wire strings piercing the body like a delicate bundle of nerves. Broadly speaking, this instrument was probably made in France in the days when aristocracy prospered, and danced stately minuets at the court of “Le Grand Monarch”: when that cultured son of *tapisier*, Molière, wrote his immortal *comedies* for the amusement of the *haute monde*, and Jean Baptiste Lully’s impudence and genius placed him upon the highest pinnacle of fame. The intriguing Jean Baptiste—whom Boileau denounced as a *coquin tenebreaux*, a *cœur bas*, and a *bouffon odieux*—was possessed of talents which quite equalled his gifts as a composer of operas. He could write such divine inspirations as “Bois Epais”: could revolutionise the “*ballet de la cour*” by the introduction of the pirouette and sprightly allegro: could play the fiddle to perfection, and conduct his band of “*Petits Violons*” in a manner to make them quickly famous. He could pen mischievous verse; take advantage of court squabbles and turn them to good account, and used his histrionic gifts to the most satisfactory ends. Many a time did Lully’s impersonations of the exquisitely comic situations in which Molière delighted to place his characters, obtain for him the King’s pardon when his Majesty had been fairly exasperated by the unscrupulous actions of his “*Surintendant de la Musique*.” The polygamy scene in *M. de Pourceaugnac* was one of Maître Lully’s most effective parts for this purpose, and it is easy to imagine how the ludicrous perplexities of M. Jourdain in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*[12] must have been interpreted by a man who had himself risen from obscurity to wealth and fame. It is in the latter witty comedy that we hear of the trumpet marine and its position at that time. Bewildered M. Jourdain’s music-master is advising him to give concerts twice a week at his house.

LE MAÎTRE DE MUSIQUE

> Au reste, monsieur, ce n’est pas assez; il faut qu’une personne comme vous, qui êtes magnifique et qui avez de l’inclination pour les belles choses, ait un concert de musique chez soi tous les Mercredis ou tous les Jeudis.

M. JOURDAIN

Est-ce que les gens de qualité en out?

LE MAÎTRE DE MUSIQUE

Sans doute. Il vous faudra trois voix: un dessus, une haute-contre et une basse, qui seront accompagnés d'une basse de viole, d'un téorbe et d'un clavecin pour les basses continues, avec deux dessus de violon pour jouer les retournelles.

M. JOURDAIN

Il faudra mettre aussi une trompette marine. La trompette marine est un instrument qui me plaît, et qui est très harmonieux.

LE MAÎTRE DE MUSIQUE

Laissez-nous gouverner les choses.

In spite of Molière's just, or unjust ridicule, the marine trumpet figured in the royal band of Louis XV. Several names of artists who played this instrument at the French court are recorded in the *État de la France* for 1702, and among them we find Danican Philidor, a favourite musician of Louis, "le bien aimé" (?) and as rampant a chess player as was his contemporary Diderot. Whether from motives of economy or because the marine trumpet was looked upon as "no great shakes" (as our Yankee cousins say), all players of that instrument at the French court were also performers on a species of hautbois—now obsolete—called the Cremorne. How these virtuosi managed to juggle notes out of both instruments at the same time, history does not relate, but in the face of such a feat as that achieved by Don Jumpedo, who nightly jumped down his own throat at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket some hundred years ago, all things seem possible.

England was not behind France in her use of the marine trumpet. Gay King Charles would have all things at court in accordance with the French fashion, and the marine trumpet doubtless found its way to the British coast in the company of truffles, perruques, pirouettes, and long-ear'd puppy dogs. Whether it was bundled in with the Cremorne, as was its fate in France, or ignored, as in Italy, is not recorded, but its advent was apparently announced in the following stirring advertisement published in *The London Gazette* for 4th February 1674:—"A rare concert of Trumpets Marine, never before heard of in England. If any persons desire to come and hear it they may repair to the Fleece Tavern near St James' about two of the clock in the afternoon every day in the week except Sundays. Every concert shall continue one hour and so begin again. The best places are one shilling and the other sixpence." The marine trumpet was not only a means of drawing the public, but it apparently had a market value of its own, for we find in Thomas Shadwell's play, *The Miser*, of that period, that a certain loan includes a "Bolona lute, a roman Arch lute, 2 gittars, a Cremona Violin, a Lyra Viol, 1 Viol da Gambo, and a Trumpet-Marine, very fit for you if you be a lover of musick."

Fig. 9.—MARINE TRUMPET

But it was in Germany—the scene of the trumpet marine's birth—that it found its real vocation. In that land of sausages and romance, beer and love sonnets, it was known under the double title of "Trummelscheit"—from its resemblance to a sword sheath—and "Nonnen-Trompett," for the reason that the nuns themselves employed it in their convents. The delicate lips of the fair *religeuses* were unable to cope with the mouth-distorting horn; yet they required an instrument of that type to add vigour to their heaven-sent praises. Their difficulty was in reality not unlike that of the German bassoon player, Schubert, when Baumgarten commanded him at rehearsal to sustain a certain note. "It is very easy for you, Mister Baumgarten, to say, hold out that note," replied he quietly, "but who is to find the vind?" The wind instruments must have their human bellows, but these being weak, the marine trumpet became a substitute for the horn, and every German cloister was furnished with, and employed, a nonnen-trompett or nonnen geige. Until almost the end of the eighteenth century, this quaint custom continued, after which the nuns apparently grew bolder and fearlessly attacked double-basses and violoncellos and whole orchestras of instruments. Kastner, writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century, says: "All who go to Lichtenthal near Baden can hear the nuns of the convent of this name sing divine service with an orchestral accompaniment in which many of them took part," which proves that even at that date the custom of supplying their own music had not been excluded from convent life.

How the marine trumpet or trumpet marine came to be so called is a riddle that possibly finds its solution in the form of the instrument itself. The shape in its earliest form resembled the long speaking-trumpet familiar to sailors. Thus we can account for the nautical touch which is given to this instrument by the first half of its title, while the trumpet part must be engendered by the *timbre* produced by the ingenious arrangement of the bridge. One does not often find the correct bridges on the existing marine trumpets. To be accurate, the bridge should be made of wood in the form of a shoe. The heel part should be attached to the table of the instrument and the gut string passed over it, while the toe part should rest unattached upon a little square of inlaid ivory or glass. The toe acts like the *bâton* of the *chef-d'orchestre*; each throb of the pulsating string is faithfully translated by a tap upon the ivory or glass when the player sets the string in vibration with his bow. It is this ingenious arrangement that contrives to give a sonorous burring—associated with the sound of brass instruments—to the harmonies of the marine trumpet. Mr E. J. Payne, who wrote the able article upon this instrument in Sir George Grove's "Dictionary of Music and Musicians" (first edition), there says: "The facility with which the marine trumpet yields its natural harmonies is due

to its single string and its lop-sided bridge. Paganini's extraordinary effects in harmonics on a single string were in fact produced by temporarily converting his violin into a small marine trumpet. As is well known, that clever player placed his single fourth string on the treble side of the bridge, screwing it up to a very high pitch, and leaving the bass foot of the bridge comparatively loose. He thus produced a powerful reedy tone and obtained unlimited command over the harmonics."

Michael Praetorius, writing in 1620, gives a good deal of interesting information about the marine trumpet. He says that its ancient origin is undoubted: that the roaming musicians played upon it in the streets; and plasters it with faint praise by remarking that, "its tone was more agreeable at a distance than close to it." Marin Mersenne, most exact and careful critic, scribbling in Paris sixteen years later, discusses this instrument lengthily. In the course of his remarks—which are full of interest—he mentions that the marine trumpet was very difficult to play for the reason (oh! mark this, ye modern violoncellists of the dexterous digits) that it was necessary to move the *thumb* or another finger with swiftness. "I have no doubt," he adds, "that one could not play it perfectly until one had studied it as long as the lute or viol." Mersenne's allusion to the *thumb* movement of course speaks for itself, still, it is interesting to note more particularly that the *movable thumb* was employed by marine trumpet virtuosi long before it was ever included in the technique of the violoncello. The genius of Berteau was the means of introducing thumb movement as a special aid to the high positions on the violoncello, in the first half of the eighteenth century; until then the fingerboard over the belly remained unknown. Truly there is nothing new to be discovered! Here was the modern violoncellist's particular recourse in use probably a century or so before he became slightly acquainted with it as a *novelty*, at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

To make a long story short, and end the tale of the marine trumpet, we will briefly outline its origin. In ancient times it was nothing more nor less than the monochord, an instrument, as we know, invented by Pythagoras of Samos, for measuring musical sounds, B.C. 530. When he departed this life, this learned Greek exhorted his disciples to "strike the monochord" and thereby rather inform their understandings than trust to their ears in the measurement of intervals. His followers and pupils not only hearkened, but performed, and thus from century to century the monochord was preserved. It acted as bass to the rebecs of the Middle Ages; it replaced the horn in the German convents; it originated the thumb movement; and eventually suggested the big "Geiges" which came into vogue in Germany in the first half of the sixteenth century. From the pictures and descriptions of these "Geiges" given by authorities of the period, the earliest were made in two kinds—*i.e.* those with bridges and those without. Both appear in complete quartets, and both were provided with six or more strings. With the bridgeless "Geiges," or viols, we may adopt Toole's remark about China in one of his inimitable impersonations. "China," said he, "is divided into two parts, China proper and China improper. With the latter we will, of course, have nothing to do." As a matter of fact we don't want to have anything to do with these bridgeless viols or "Geiges," because in our heart of hearts we feel very dubious as to their existence. Though we may tremble when we say it, we instinctively assign their creation to some *facile* artist long since passed away. Either this erring gentleman forgot to sketch the bridge or else these—so-called—bridgeless viols were nothing more nor less than big guitars beside which the officious delineator added a bow. In any case we will dispense with them and hasten to that immediate predecessor of the violoncello, the viola da gamba, a leg viol, which was known all over Europe by its Italian name.

To begin with the makers of these and their kind, we find the earliest known names are those of Hans Frey, and Jean Ott, who worked in Nuremberg in the first half of the fifteenth century. It may be remembered that Nuremberg was at that time one of the most active commercial centres in Europe, and in addition fostered all the talent and intellect of the day. Within its precincts dwelt the poetic cobbler, Hans Sachs, penning his four thousand master songs, his numberless comedies and tragedies, and making slippers for dainty Eva besides. Then there was Adam Kraft, modelling his limestone tabernacle in the Church of Lawrence, and Peter Vischer, the brass worker—and Albert Dürer. Before this illustrious name we pause, for he himself, we believe, played the viol, while the viols to be found in his paintings are doubtless most accurately portrayed for—was not Hans Frey the viol-maker his father-in-law? It is said that Hans Frey amassed considerable wealth in his native town, but his affluence was certainly not due entirely to the patronage of his viol-

playing clientèle, for we know that he was a “respected citizen skilled in all things,” and that not the least of his accomplishments was his skill in copper repoussé work. Many are the decorative figures, tankards, cake moulds, and other characteristic designs which owe their existence to his expert fingers. How redolent are they of guilds, master-singers, rules, institutions, and all the elephantine conceit and narrow-mindedness which went to make the life of the middle-class Nuremberg citizen!

After Hans Frey and Jean Ott we hear of Joan Kerlino who, according to Fetis, worked at Brescia, in Lombardy, in 1449. A “viola da Braccio,” or arm viol, of his making was in the possession of a Parisian *luthier* named Koliker, in 1804, mention of which had been made by De Laborde in his “Essai sur la Musique” some twenty-five years previously.[13] Herr von Wasielewski traces Kerlino’s name to a German origin, assuming that he settled in Brescia and founded a school there. If this most probable assertion be true, then it follows, “as does the night the day,” that the Italian viola family owes its creation to Germany. Notwithstanding Germany’s precedence in the matter of originating the viol form, it is curious to note that the earliest known book in which a picture of a viol is to be found is that by Carmine Angurelli, which was published in Vienna in 1491, just forty-three years after the German Kerlino is said to have been making viols in Brescia. A copy of the little work is in the British Museum, and the woodcut of a seven-stringed viol which graces its title-page is a type ahead of its time.[14] It is quite equal to the viols shown in Hans Judenkünig’s “Ein schöne Kunstliche Underwaisung,” published in Vienna thirty years later, and far in advance of any representation of a viol in Martin Agricola’s “Musica Instrumentalis,” which appeared in 1528. The form of Angurelli’s viol has much more grace than the German “Geiges” of that date. There are no upper bouts, the curve from the joint of the neck sweeps straight down to the lower bouts, a shape, by-the-by, adopted for his grand old tenors by Gasparo da Salo, the Brescian maker, at a later date. The head of the viol is square, it has seven pegs, and one which projects at the side of the head and supports two more strings. The bridge is well delineated, and is almost identical with the familiar form now to be seen on every violoncello; moreover, it stands in the right place and not close to the short tailpiece as we find in Dürer’s pictures. The sound-holes are in the primitive C form, also freely used by Da Salo, and the tailpiece is a facsimile of that employed in the middle of the following century. Perhaps the most puzzling part of the picture is the bow which hangs on a peg beside this viol, for it is even of a more advanced type than the viol itself. Does this woodcut represent the consummation of Kerlino’s work in Italy, or is this viol and bow but one of those freaks of fancy which leap the bounds of an artist’s idealism and suddenly appear in completeness, as did Minerva from Jupiter’s ingenious brain? Whichever the case may be, we have in this picture the earliest woodcut representation of a viola da gamba extant, and to those who enthuse over these things we say: “Look at it in the works where it is to be found!” (p. 67 *f*).

After Kerlino there was a famous performer on the lute in Germany, named Hans Gerle, who made stringed instruments, and contributed to the literature of musical instruments by writing his “Musica Teusch,” which was published in 1532. In 1500 we find the monk, Pietro Dardelli, making viols in Mantua, while Ventura Linarolli was likewise occupied in Venice in 1520, and Peregrino Zanetti was busy in Brescia in 1540. Morglato Morello was also a diligent craftsman in Mantua in 1550, and Gaspard Duiffoproucart was making beautiful viols, lutes, and chittaras at Lyons in 1558.

Until Dr Henry Coutagne published his “Gaspard Duiffoproucart et les Luthiers Lyonnaise,” in Paris in 1893, Choron and Fayolle’s version of this maker’s life which appeared in their “Dictionnaire historique des Musiciens,” in 1810, was pretty generally accepted. According to the latter authorities, Duiffoproucart was born in the Tyrol at the end of the fifteenth century, and worked in Boulogna. He was supposed to have travelled in Germany before settling definitely in Boulogna in 1515, and when Francis I. visited that town he made Duiffoproucart a handsome offer to accompany him to France. The King’s proposition proving tempting, Duiffoproucart is said to have accepted it, and made many viols for the musicians belonging to the court orchestras. But apparently the air of Paris did not suit the good viol-maker. His health suffered, and for this reason he obtained leave to settle in Lyons.

Like a bolt from the blue, however, Dr Coutagne, bristling with authentic documentary evidence,

has refuted the whole story. Through his careful research we learn that Duiffoproucart was born at Freising in Upper Bavaria in 1514: that he established himself in Lyons about the middle of the sixteenth century: that Henry II. of France granted him his *"Lettres de naturalité*" in 1558, and that he died in Lyons in 1570, leaving several children, among whom one son followed his father's profession.

Thus has the life of the Lyons viol-maker confined itself into reasonable limits at last, and instead of our imagining him settling in Boulogna, a young man full of ambition, in 1515, we now picture him at that date in long clothes, felicitously celebrating his first birthday; all of which has a tint of an Æsop fable about it which is most attractive. But there is something even of greater interest than the satisfactory establishment of this maker's career by the aid of document and script, and that is —his much-discussed portrait which is in the Bibliothèque National in Paris. This picture was engraved in Lyons by Pierre Wœiriot in 1562, and is supposed to have been copied from the original portrait, which graced the back of one of Duiffoproucart's own viols. At the base of the picture the maker's name is inscribed and spelt thus: "Duiffoprougcar," which, by the way, is the most familiar form, but according to M. Coutagne is incorrect orthography. Under the name are two Latin lines which we shall have reason to refer to later, and then follows: "æta. ann. XLVIII," and the date: "1514." The true meaning of these words and figures remained a puzzle until Dr Coutagne solved it by discovering that the Roman figures indicated the age of the maker to be forty-eight at the date of the publication of the engraving, in 1562, while the Arabian figures give the year of his birth, 1514.

If we were compelled to rely entirely upon this engraving for evidence of the number of viola da gamba made by Duiffoproucart, we might be led to imagine that he had never made such an instrument in his life. The artist has represented him as a man of fine physique, surrounded by various specimens of small viols, lutes, and guitars, but no sign of a bass-viol is visible. Notwithstanding the artist's omission, however, three—if not four—of this maker's viola da gamba are in existence, and if we would see one of these we have not far to go. Indeed, here close beside us, guarded by the policeman's watchful eye, is a specimen of Duiffoproucart's skill (p. 74). It hangs in a good light and its glass house exposes every side of it to view. The property of Sir George Donaldson, there is no doubt but what he has a very unique possession in this singular little bass-viol. Its small proportions suggest an exceptionally large knee viol (originally it was doubtless a very large tenor-viol called in France, Quinte) or an instrument especially constructed for use in church processions. The deep brown varnish, with a glint of red in it, is particularly good, and adds to the elegance of the outline and *tout ensemble* of the viol. The front is free from ornamentation but the back bears an inlaid design, in coloured woods, of a saint and an angel. Round the edges and in the upper part there is an interlaced design of flowers. The peg-box is surmounted by a horse's head well carved, while the fingerboard is also inlaid in coloured woods and bears the Latin inscription so indelibly associated with this maker:

"Viva fui in Sylvis: fui dura occisa securi
Dum vixi tacui: Morte Dulce cano." [15]

and his particular mark is on the back where the neck joins the ribs. This instrument belonged to the Parisian *luthier*, M. Chardon, before it became the property of Sir George Donaldson, and, while in the hands of its former owner, aided in identifying the famous viola da gamba, by the same maker, now reposing in the Musée Instrumental of the Brussels Conservatoire. This beautifully inlaid specimen—known as the "*basse de la ville de Paris*," owing to the fifteenth-century plan of the gay city which adorns the back—is slightly longer than Sir George Donaldson's, though its dimensions are smaller than those finally adopted for the violoncello. It has had an adventurous career, this viol, belonging successively to M. Roquefort, M. Raoul—an enthusiastic Parisian musical amateur, who published several compositions for the violoncello as well as a method for that instrument—and also to the mighty fiddle-maker, J. B. Vuillaume. At the death of the latter it went through many vicissitudes and wandered about Russia, passing through several hands. M. Coutagne describes the beauties of this graceful viola da gamba so accurately and delightfully that we cannot do better than quote his words:

“One is at first struck by the richness and variety of the decoration,” says he. “The neck curves forward at the top in the form of a horse’s head of goodly proportions, but the back of this is covered with delicate and complicated carvings representing the head of a woman, a satyr playing a Pan’s pipes, the whole being framed in designs of animals, fruit and musical instruments. The peg-box itself is covered with carved encrustations of a woman playing a lute; a dog attached by a collar, and other ornamentation.

VIOLA DA GAMBA
By Gaspard Duiffoproucart.

“The upper table is of pine, the back and the ribs are of maple. The front is covered with a dull red varnish, that of the rest of the instrument is clear yellow. A similar contrast is observable in the character of the two tables. The front is covered with representations of butterflies, and bunches of roses, and carnations in a pot: some birds on a branch and a building of varied shapes, remarkable for a tower and a Chinese pagoda: briefly, a design in the decorative Dutch style of the seventeenth century. The back, on the contrary, is covered with a complicated *marqueterie* design in multi-coloured woods. The whole of the upper part is taken up with a scene which is apparently inspired by Raphaël’s ‘Vision of Ezekiel’; it represents a profile of St Luke seated upon an ox and being raised in the air towards the clouds from whence angels are seen blowing trumpets. Below this is an unpretentious plan of a good-sized town situated by a stream dotted with islands and surrounded by walls; more than two hundred houses measure at the most half-a-square-inch, other edifices constitute the background of this picturesque decoration, where some microscopic figures of men also appear. Inscribed beneath is the name, ‘Paris,’ and we have found an almost identical plan, dated 1564, at the Bibiothèque Nationale. To complete the description of this inlaying we

must mention several bunches of flowers which encircle the principal subject."

M. Coutagne says that this viol shows signs of recutting and also attempts to change the C-shaped sound-holes into the *f* form, now so familiar to the eye of the connoisseur and *virtuoso*. The absence of any name signature to this viol, and the marked difference of workmanship and colour observable between the front table and the rest of the viol, caused several experts to doubt its authenticity until it was placed side by side with this viola da gamba of Sir George Donaldson's. Then the incontestable evidence given by the close resemblance existing between the two instruments at once allayed all doubts as to the authenticity of the back, head, neck and ribs of the "*basse de la ville de Paris*." The front, however, with its dull red varnish and painted design never felt the touch of Duiffoproucart's hand. Beyond a doubt this is of English manufacture: and more than possibly the work of seventeenth-century Barak Norman.

Can anything be more *bizarre* than this union of the work of good John Bull Norman and Lorraine Duiffoproucart? Imagine such methods applied to other beautiful and valuable works of art, and we might come across such incongruities as, Cleopatra's Needle nicely finished off with a druidical stone, or the statue of Wellington supporting Napoleon's head upon its shoulders, or Raphaël's beautiful madonnas seated upon Chesterfield couches: one might go on endlessly summing up such horrors were vandalism a ruling power, but fortunately it is not; even the remotest cottage dweller now knows the value of his various household gods, and only parts with them "at a price."

The third example of Duiffoproucart's work is known as the "*basse de viole au Vieillard à la chaise d'Enfant*." A drawing of this instrument by M. Hellemacher is included in M. Vidal's "Instrument à Archet" (Paris, 1876-78), and M. Soubie also gives a clear representation of it in his "Histoire de la Musique Allemande" (Paris 1896). In form and size, this viola da gamba resembles the two already mentioned. It is small, the same horse's head surmounts the peg-box, and the picture on the back is said to have been copied from a design of Baccio Dardinelli, which was engraved by Duiffoproucart's contemporary, Augustin Venetien. The inlaying is in the characteristic style of the maker, in several coloured woods. The fourth gamba by this maker—according to Monsieur Chardon—exists in Switzerland and completes the number of known examples of violas da gamba by this maker.

Not many yards away from this graceful Duiffoproucart viol of Sir George Donaldson's is a viola da gamba of strikingly beautiful workmanship. The inlaying is exquisitely rich in ivory and tortoise-shell, reminiscent of the luxurious decorations lavished by past makers on that much-treasured instrument—the lute. As you gaze at this viol's profuse charms, you are seized with a longing to assume a mantle of gorgeous ostentation, to powder your hair, and wrap rich brocades around you, to dance stately minuets, to discuss my Lady Castlemaine and that pretty, witty jade, Nell Gwynne, behind your fan, to traverse London in a *chaise à porteur*, to listen to the King's "four-and-twenty fiddlers" at Whitehall: in short,—to comport yourself as a loyal subject of Charles II.

But before we allow ourselves to lapse into such delights, we have here two interesting photographs of an Andrea Amati masterpiece; a violoncello which numbered among the famous set of thirty-eight bow instruments sent to Charles IX., King of France, by Pope Pius V. We shall linger over these pictures with more than ordinary interest, for the reason that they introduce us to the first wavering incursions of the violoncello against the viola da gamba. This Amati violoncello was but the advance guard of the main body which followed at a later date. Very slowly, but yet surely, the violoncello ousted the gamba, but its victory was not a matter of delight to everyone. Many were the comments upon the matter, and M. Hubert le Blanc even wrote a clever little book upon the subject entitled, "Defense de la Basse de Viole contre les Enterprises du Violon et les Pretensions du Violoncel." This was brought out in Amsterdam in 1740, and it is said that the author was so delighted to find a publisher, after having tried every firm in Paris, that his enthusiasm led him to rush off to Amsterdam and settle there, when he found a publisher in that town.

Will you come here to the central hall? We can sit down close to this beautiful majolica and endeavour to place Duiffoproucart and Amati in the world of music which surrounded them. Come!

How to Hold or Place the Viol

Being conveniently seated, place your Viol decently betwixt your knees; so that the lower end of it may rest upon the calves of your legs. Set the soles of your feet flat on the floor, your toes turned a little outward. Let the top of your Viol be erected towards your left shoulder; so as it may rest in that posture, though you touch it not with your hand.

How to Hold and Move the Bow

Hold the Bow betwixt the ends of your thumb and two foremost fingers near to the Nut, the thumb and first finger fastened on the stalk; and the second finger's end turned in shorter against the Hairs thereof; by which you may poise and keep up the point of the Bow. If the second finger have not strength enough, you may join the third finger in assistance to it; but in playing Swift Divisions, two fingers and the thumb is best.

From Christopher Simpson's "The Division-Viol" (First Edition, 1665).

CHAT THE THIRD

The Renaissance—The Influence of the Netherlands School—A brief Outline of the growing Use of the Viol in Germany, Italy, England, France

It must be allowed that both Gaspard Duiffoproucart and Andrea Amati were fortunate in living at a time when Art, Science, and Literature had taken a new lease of life. The meeting of sixteenth-century modernity with antique culture had created a new atmosphere of learning; in a word, the Renaissance had dawned, and progress had begun its march over Europe. *Il Divino* Raphaël, Leonardo da Vinci, Savonarola, Galilei, Lassus, were as comets in the horizon of advancement. Petrucci in Venice had invented the art of music printing, and deep in the heart of the Netherlands there had grown up a technically equipped school of musical composers, before which the spontaneous art of the minstrel was compelled to recede. Impelled onward by Guillaume Dufay, Johan Ockenghem, Josquin des Prés, and their successors, to Lassus, the higher culture of the divine art was making rapid progress and consummating the final emancipation of musical instruments. Already, in the early part of the sixteenth century, signs and tokens of the event were observable. In 1511 a native of Strasburg—Sebastian Virdung—compiled a species of miniature Grove's dictionary devoted to the musical instruments of his time. The work was published in his native town, and was afterwards extensively cribbed by Agricola and Luscinis. The numerous woodcuts with which Virdung's work is interspersed are of interest, especially when such guileless incongruities as a "Grosse Geigen"—without a bridge—and a "Kleine Geigen" (a rebec) with a bridge present themselves.

Ten years after Virdung, Hans Judenkünig was busy penning little pieces for voices and stringed instruments, a style of composition that counted numerous imitators at a later date, both on the Continent and in England. His manuscript—published by good Hans Syngriner in Vienna in 1523—consists of a number of short pieces, songs and dances, with the lute and viol pieces written in tablature. A precious copy of this work is jealously preserved in the Royal Library at Vienna. When one realises that it is easily within human capacity to feast upon its secrets, one cannot help wishing that a "magic carpet" could be requisitioned to take us to the spot where it now lies, at once. Could this be accomplished, and we were suddenly confronted with Judenkünig's dog-eared elderly tome, our feeble attempts at description would collapse like a Gibus hat. There is something about time-honoured volumes that commands silence.

There are other points of interest about Judenkünig's work besides that of its being the earliest attempt to mingle instruments in a methodical concerted manner. For instance, the title-page monopolises our attention, for the name Geygen is among the first to be found in print. Then again, further on, there is a woodcut representation of a man standing erect and playing on a big six-stringed viol, which he apparently holds vertically before him.[16] The instrument does not touch the ground, and, doubtless, it is attached round the player's neck by a cord or ribbon, although the artist has not shown anything of that description. Similar woodcuts of the period intimate that this manner of playing the bass-viol was not at all uncommon during the sixteenth century. The custom was, doubtless, a survival of those "*musiciens ambulants*," the minstrels, who could not be burdened with many accessories, and, like the Egyptian camel, carried their belongings on their backs. It was doubtless with their fiddles slung round their necks that the Chester minstrels sallied forth in the reign of King John, and, unarmed, conquered the besieging Welshmen by making such a noise that their enemy imagined themselves to be opposed by an overwhelming force, and flew. Also, at a later date, it is easy to imagine the genial Anthony Wood desiring to escape a little from University pedagogism and stealing out with five chosen comrades "in poor habits," and how like country fiddlers they "scraped for their livings." Roaming the country with their viols on their backs, Wood states that they went to "Farringdon Fair," and, to the house of Mr Thomas Latton, at "Kingston Bakepaze," who gave them money and sent drink out to them. After playing dance music at the inn and visiting other private houses, a most depressing encounter with some soldiers

considerably damped Anthony Wood's spirits. These men of war forced them to play in an open field without paying them a penny. "Most of my companions," says he, referring to the incident, "would afterwards glory in this, but I was ashamed and could never endure to hear of it." Among the five gentlemen who assisted in this escapade he mentions that "Edmund Gregorie, B.A., and gent. com. of Mert. Coll., Ox., played the bass-viol."

Another call for playing the bass-viol in the position depicted by Hans Judenkünig came from that all-powerful patroness of music—the Church. To facilitate the use of viols in the religious processions, the bass-viol was attached round the neck of the performer. A small hole was made in the upper part of the back of the instrument so employed and a peg inserted. A cord or chain was attached to this peg, and passed round the player's neck; an arrangement which allowed him to play with some degree of ease. Bass-viols so employed gained the title of "viola da Spala," or shoulder viols, in Italy, from the position in which they were held. The early violoncellos, which were of a small size—not the size destined to live—were submitted to a similar chaining and carrying; of course, thumb movement and the numerous treasures of the high positions were unknown, and the player confined his efforts to the first position.

Two years after Hans Judenkünig's publication, Martin Agricola, whose real name was Sore or Shor, published his "Musica Instrumental Deudsch," a remarkable work, both from the point of view of literature and musicianship. He launched into woodcut representations of all the viols of the day, and they are probably there found for the first time in complete Quartets, with the names under each instrument as follows:—"Discantus" (treble), "Altus," "Tenor," "Bassus." The tuning of all these viols at this period was always regulated by that prescribed for the lute. Gerle and Judenkünig states this to be composed of fourths, with a third intervening, while Agricola instructs the executant to

"Draw up your fifth string as high as you may
That it may not be broken when on it you play."

This confusing method was even practised in the following century, for the worthy John Playford, in his "Introduction to the Skill of Music" (Twelfth Edition, 1694), tells the would-be player of the bass-viol that: "When you begin to Tune, raise your *Treble* or smallest String as high as conveniently it will bear without breaking; then stop only your *Second* or *Small Mean* in F and tune it till it agree in *Unison* with your *Treble* open," and so on with each string. Imagine a modern orchestra tuned according to this recommendation!

Turning to Italy during the same period, we find much of interest. There a princely school of musicians had grown from the seeds scattered by those Netherlanders who became welcome guests of the Medici and other great Italian families. The cultured *cliques* of dilettanti, who were to be found in almost every town in Italy, were speeding the advancement of music and musical instruments, while other nations were at a musical standstill. Amateur viol players were far from few, and some idea of the growing popularity of the instrument may be gathered from the fact that the contemporary painters elected to introduce it into their pictures. Raphäel's painting, of "Saint Cecilia"—now in the Dresden Gallery—gives a faithful representation of the form of the viol of the period, in the instrument which lies at her feet. It has no strings upon it, and how the well-drawn bridge stands upright without support is an anomaly which has its fellow in a fresco by Melozzo da Forzi, which graces the walls of the *Sacristie* of St Peter's in Rome, Among the musical angels there represented is one who plays on a viol. The strings of this instrument are depicted raised to the accustomed distance from the table of the viol, but no trace of a bridge to support them is visible.

Paul Veronese also elected to introduce the viol into his masterpiece, the "Marriage in Cana of Galilee," which is in the Louvre in Paris. The group of viol players in the background have a special interest when one realises that it is Titian who is playing the bass-viol, while behind him may be seen Tintoretto playing the alto-viol, and Paul Veronese himself the tenor-viol. The treble-viol—

called Discantus by Agricola and Discant in England—is in the hands of an ecclesiastic. In Titian's picture entitled the "Music Lesson," to be seen in the National Gallery, he has shown the custom of singing and playing to the accompaniment of a bass-viol very clearly, while Guido Reni in his "Coronation of the Virgin," in the same gallery, demonstrates another practice of the period in his two angels playing the lute and viol. Many other similar examples of viols are to be found in the paintings and engravings of that time, and in every case it is observable that (1) viols were entirely subservient to the voice; (2) that neither artist, engraver, nor dilettanti paid much attention to the violins and violoncellos which were being made by Andrea Amati in Cremona. That the shape of all viols was doubtless influenced by the advent of the stranger violin and still more foreign violoncello, is probable; indeed, one can observe the coming ascendancy of the new form in the bass, which Domenichino has placed in the hands of his matchless "St Cecile." The*f f* holes are full of grace, the primitive C form being entirely cast aside. The whole outline of the gamba too is very handsome, and its resemblance to the bass-viol by the old Brescian, Pelegrino Zanetti, to be seen in the Musée of the Paris Conservatoire, is so exact that it is easy to imagine that that instrument, served as Domenichino's model.

In the first half of the sixteenth century, the tentative efforts made by such men as Galilei, Cavalieri, and Peri towards the composition of music of a more dramatic character than that which surrounded them at that time, resulted in a higher status for the viola da gamba, and later, for the violoncello. For the latter it was a waiting game, but "*tout vient à celui qui sait attendre*." One result of the general agitation among musical circles was the appearance of a notable book on the art of playing viols by Silvestro Ganassi del Fontego. This interesting work, entitled "Regola Rubertina," was published in Venice in 1542, and was exclusively devoted to the art of fingering and tuning treble and bass viols. A most important fact is to be learnt from the inscription on the title-page, which states among other particulars that the book is suitable for those who play the viol *without frets*—evidently the beginning of a surer technique.

Perhaps nowhere in Italy was the dominant idea of restoring the learning of the ancient classics more deeply and fittingly rooted than in the birthplace of the greatest mediæval poet—Dante. In beautiful Florence there were *coteries* composed of the most prominent men of the day who found a common cause in their zeal for the revival of the culture and polish of former ages. The house of Giovanni Bardi, Count of Verino, was more especially a meeting-place for the restless spirits of the day. Among the company who there assembled frequently was Vincenzio Galilei—the father of the astronomer—Jacopo Corsi, Ottavino Rinuccini, Strozzi, Jacopo Peri, and Emilio Cavalieri. To Peri is accorded the honour of writing the first opera, and to Cavalieri the first oratorio—two mighty steps these towards the emancipation of musical instruments, for both these forms of composition gave birth to the orchestra. Bent upon freeing music from the severe canonical style to which the Church confined it, Galilei made an attempt by writing a species of Cantata—*Il Conte Ugolino*—which he himself sang sweetly to the accompaniment of a bass-viol before the Bardi dilettanti.[17] After this effort, Emilio Cavalieri, a Roman gentleman of good family, and another devoted member of the Bardi *coterie*, wrote the important *La Rappresentazione di Anima e di Corpo*, wherein he brought about a more equal unison of voice, poetry, and instruments. This composition was performed at the Church of Valicella, in Rome, and the orchestra consisted of a Harpsichord, a double Guitar, two Flutes, and a Basso Viola da Gamba (double bass-viol). No separate parts were given to the performers, so doubtless they were left to work out their way through the maze of figures and signs which graced the Harpsichord part. These two experiments led to others of a similar kind. Then Jacopo Peri, another of the Bardi faction, who moved in the highest circles of Florentine society, essayed a still higher flight. Instigated to the effort by Jacopo Corsi—another Florentine nobleman, whose house was likewise a centre for all the musicians of the day—and Rinuccini the poet, he attempted a musical drama which was believed to be identical in style with that of the ancient Greek tragedies. This work is the earliest known opera, it was entitled *Dafne*, and was performed at the Palazzo Corsi in 1597. According to Giov. Batt. Doni, "it charmed the whole city," so that three years later Peri was commissioned to write an opera to be performed on the occasion of the marriage of Henry IV. of France with Maria di Medici. The title of this second opera was *Euridice*; it also scored a great success, and in the preface to the composition, Peri

himself records that Jacopo Corsi played the graviciembalo (the piano of the period), while the rest of the orchestra comprised: a chitarrone (a kind of guitar) which was in the hands of Grazio Moritalvo; a lyra grand (species of bass-viol with a large number of strings) played by Battista del *Violino* (note the name) and a luto grosso (large lute) played by Giovanni Sani. Thirty years later Giovanni Legranzi introduced the viola da gamba into his orchestra, and five years after that a similar number of violas da gamba, together with two contrabassi di viola, are included in the orchestral score of that mighty innovator, Claudio Monteverdie, in his opera, *Orpheus*.

Music in England at the end of the fifteenth century was but another name for noise. The dignified minstrel of former times was gone, as was also the significance of his title. True, there still existed little bands of wandering musicians who claimed the name, but they were composed entirely of the most degenerate classes of society. Indeed, so noted were they for their evil practices that it was thought necessary to issue certain regulations to prevent “idle persons under colour of minstrelsy going messages or other feigned business, being received in other men’s houses to meate and drinke.” But neither protective laws nor Edward IV.’s charter, which was granted to keep outsiders from assuming the livery of the King’s minstrels, could revive the romantic exclusiveness which had formerly been the privilege of their sect.

Thus music and musical instruments having lost their chief support in the lordly though uncultured minstrel, other patrons had to be found. In Henry VII.’s reign, Dr Burney tells us of a certain “Dr Fayrfax of Newark Cornyshe” and a few others who set popular poetry to music, “which,” says he, in his dry way, “was uncouth but superior to the music.” Then again, we hear in the same reign of the “Stryng Minstrels at Westminster,” and of the “waits” who belonged to each town in England and made “merrie musick for the kynge” when he passed that way. Henry VIII.—whose musical abilities were of no mean order—included two viols in the State band in the year 1526. The fifteen trumpets and ten sackbuts, receiving the most pay, with which the viols had to compete, doubtless allowed them no chance of being heard, but they were there, and it was their *début* in the royal music; *dejâ quelque chose*. Henry VIII.’s son, Edward VI., increased the number of viols in his musical establishment to eight, which was a significant augmentation, when we find that his father’s sackbuts had been reduced to six. About this time compositions styled “songes for severall voyces” came into vogue, no doubt instigated by the visit to these shores of the great Netherlands composer, Orlando Lassus. The first of these “severall voyce” compositions was published by Winken de Worde in 1530, and we make mention of them here because it was these very “songes” for “three, fower, and five voyces” that later became “Apt for voyce and vialls,” and were eventually succeeded by that form of composition called “Fantesies.” In 1540, the Italian gambist, Ferabosco, established himself in London, and gave lessons in the art of viol playing, and, as the cult of the gamba grew in England, ventures in the land of concerted music were made by musicians of the period. In the dumb show English play entitled *Gorbodic*—performed in 1561—the earliest English tragedy to be acted on the stage, music was executed by voices and musical instruments between the acts. The first act opened with the instructions that: “Firste the Musicke of Violenze began to play, durynge whiche came in uppon the stage sixe wilde men clothed in leaues.” Likewise Gascoyne’s *Jocasta*, of about the same date, was preceded by a dumb show accompanied by viols, cittaras, bandoras, and other musical instruments. The year 1558 saw the publication by Anthony Munday of “A Banquet of Daintie Conceits,” to be sung to the lute, bandora, virginals, or any other instrument, and in 1593 one of the earliest and best music printers of the day, William Barley, brought out an important work entitled “A New Booke of Tablature containing Instructions to guide and dispose the Hand, to play on sundry Instruments, as the Lute, Orpharion, and Bandora.” Then came, in 1597, the famous lutanist John Dowland’s “First Booke of Songes or Ayres of foure Parts, with Tablature for the Lute. So made that all the Parts together, or either of them, severally may be sung to the Lute, Orpharion, or Viol da Gambo.” The year 1599 gives us the Psalms of David, “in Metre to be sung and played on the lute, orpharyon, citterne, or base violl,” by Richard Allison, “to be solde at his house in the Duke’s Place near Alde-gate,” and dedicated to the

Countess of Warwick. It is interesting to note that some MS. lute compositions of Allison's are preserved in the British Museum. In the same year, Thomas Morley, gentleman of the Chapel Royal and pupil of William Byrd, "by whose endeavours," says Anthony Wood, "he became, not only excellent in music, as well as in the theoretical as practical part, but also well seen in the Mathematicks in which he was excellent," published his "First Booke of Consorte Lessons, made by divers exquisite Authers for six Instruments to play together," dated 1596. The "six instruments" selected to "play together" consisted of the "Treble Lute," "The Pandora" (a species of bass-lute), "The Citterne" (small guitar), "The Base violl," "The Flute," and "The Treble violl." What this mixture sounded like it is difficult to surmise. No doubt the players sat round a large circular table with their "parts" spread out before them; no doubt there was a fine display of lace ruffles and graceful white hands: no doubt there were many glances exchanged between the coquettish lady with the "Treble Lute" and the dark man playing "The Base violl": no doubt the beauties of the "exquisite authors" were perhaps somewhat lost upon these two, but "The Pandora," "The Citterne," "The Flute," and the "Treble violl" were more intent upon the music, and strummed away to their hearts' content. Side by side in a ring lay the parts before the performers then, but to-day, what a strange irony of Fate it is that has scattered them about in different museums and libraries.

In the British Museum you will find the Flute part printed by "Thomas Snodham for John Brown" and "sold at his shop in Dunstones Church Yard in Fleet Street 1611." The "Trebel violl" part is preserved in the library at Magdalen College, Oxford. "The Pandora" part is at Christ Church, Oxford, and the "Cittern" part is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. The "Base Violl" part and the "Treble Lute" part have, curiously enough, disappeared completely. Did the lady of the "Lute" jilt the gentleman of the "Base violl" and he in a fit of rage—consequent on the event—destroy the treacherous parts that were the means of bringing them together; or, did they elope, live happy ever after, and leave directions for the parts—so full of tender reminiscences—to be buried with them?

Morley attempted no other composition of the kind, for the very good reason that he did not supply a "public want" as do so many of our modern composers and authors. The reissue of his work in 1611 proved that it was appreciated at a later date, but at the time of the first publication the English people had not yet broken away from the habit of combining voices with musical instruments. So Morley had to capitulate, and in 1600 contented himself with pleasing the popular taste by bringing out "The first booke of Little Aires to sing and play to the Lute with the Base violl." People delighted in singing these little "Aires" in those days. It was a favourite pastime and must have put a stop to a great deal of gossiping, scandalous chit-chat. The "Base violl," like the guitar in the barber's shop, was kept hanging on the wall, ready to hand, and when an unloquacious visitor appeared, how delightful it was to reach down the "Base violl" and sing a "Little Aire" to its accompaniment!

John Maynard wrote a similar set of compositions which were also published by Snodham in the same year. These he named "The XII. Wonders of the World," classified under the following headings:—"The Courtier," "The Deune," "The Souldiour," "The Phisition," "The Merchant," "The Country Gentleman," "The Bachelor," "The Marryed Man," "The Wife," "The Widow," "The Maide." Each of the little songs are provided with an accompaniment for the lute and bass-viol. The style of the poetry is quite in the Gilbertian vein, as may be judged by the following lines purporting to describe the duties of a medical man:—

"Studie to uphold the slippery fate of man
Who dies when we have done the best and all we can.
From Practise and from bokes, I draw my learned skill
Not from the knowne receipt or Pothecaries bill.
The Earth my faults doth hide
The World my cures doth see
What youth and time effects is oft ascribed to me."

This curious and interesting little volume concludes with some "lessons" for the lute and viola da gamba, in all of which the player of the bow instrument never quits the first position. The whole is

dedicated to Maynard's "Honoured Lady and Mistris the Lady Joane Thymne of Cause Castle in Shropshire," to whom he addresses a ponderous hyperbole on her gracious qualities beginning with the amiable wish that "Nestor's years on earth, and Angels' happiness in heaven" might be hers.

The musical attainments of "La Belle France" were full of interest during the same period. At the beginning of the fifteenth century the figure of the good King Réné of Anjou faces his kingdom, viol in hand and whistling the refrain of his latest composition. A kingly creature with noble gifts of mind and person which opened to the first inspiration of the Italian Renaissance and mingled its vigour with the culture of Provence. The influence of this minstrel Prince in the domains of Art was powerful at the time, yet it was soon obliterated by the coarse tastes of his conqueror, Louis XI. An instance of this monarch's musical vagaries is instanced by his command that a concert of pigs should be provided for him. The master of the Royal Music, M. l'Abbé de Baigne, complied with the demand of his royal master by inventing an ingenious arrangement which was a mixture of pork and piano. He procured swine of various ages and sizes, placed them in a tent and erected a keyboard, the notes of which were each furnished with a spike which was to each pig like the business end of the nail to the man who inadvertently came into contact with it. When the good Abbé attacked the notes vigorously, each pig became acquainted with his own particular spike and burst forth into long and pronounced squeaks. Heretofore we have always looked upon those numerous nursery rhymes in which animals figure as instrumentalists as due to the inventive caprice of the writer. Confronted with Louis XI.'s practical application of such idiosyncrasies, the following couplet is but a representation of real life after all:—

"Come dance a jig
To my granny's pig
With a rowdy, rowdy, dowdy;
Come dance a jig
To my Granny's pig
And pussy cat shall crowdy."[18]

We assume that the pig and the cat formed the instrumental part of the performance, while the guests footed it lightly. An instance of feline dexterity is afforded us in the following:—

"A cat came fiddling out of a barn
With a pair of bag-pipes under her arm;
She could sing nothing but fiddle cum fee,
The mouse has married the bumble-bee;
Pipe cat—dance mouse
We'll have a wedding at our good house."[19]

Louis XII.'s visits to Italy encouraged the further spread of those artistic tastes introduced by King Réné. He imported the Italian crafts and architecture into France, and his choir, which afterwards graced the court of Francis I., had not its equal in Europe. It was Louis XII.'s influence and taste that laid the foundation of a new era in French musical art, a foundation upon which Francis I. built a solid structure. This monarch's tastes were of great assistance to art, for he keenly encouraged the importations of Italy's treasures and gave appointments at his court to the Netherlands musicians. He sanctioned the establishment of Petrucci's system of music printing by Robert Ballard—who for many years rejoiced in the privilege of being "seul imprimeur de la musique de la chambre, chapelle, et menu plaisirs du roi." The King was himself a lute and guitar player of no mean order, and he could sing his own "chansons" to the accompaniment of these instruments, excellently. It was this monarch who founded the royal "musique de chambre" by establishing a separate band which should perform in his anteroom and on particular occasions. The services of these musicians were quite independent of those of the members of the "chapelle" band, and included some of the best artists of the day, among them Claude Gervaise and the famous lutanist

Albert were especially noted. Gervaise held a similar post in Henry II.'s regime and figured also in Charles IX.'s musical establishment. In 1556 he published seven books of "Gaillards, Pavan's," and popular songs for four and five viols. The appearance of these compositions in France nearly half-a-century before Morley's "Consort Lessons for six different Instruments," in England, is in the nature of an anomaly, seeing that both Maugars and Rousseau state that in their day (seventeenth century) the viol was in its youth in France, whereas the English,—who had received that instrument straight from Italy—were the finest performers in the world.

Both Henry II., and his son, Charles IX., were loyal to the traditions of the musical tastes of their family. The first of these monarchs we know granted Duiffoproucart his "lettres de naturalisation," and it is quite within the bounds of possibility that his gamba, now before us, and the Amati violoncello, which we are about to discuss, came in contact with one another at the French court. The Machiavelian-like manœuvres of Marie de Medici at her son's court did not squash Charles IX.'s ardent love of music and poetry, any more than Henry VIII.'s matrimonial imbroglios prevented him from attaining a degree of excellence on the flute. It is said that the French king frequently took part with the choir of his "Chapelle" in singing Mass in the manner of his father, and that he was greatly attached to his musicians. In spite of his affection for them, however, he advocated low living and high thinking for them. "Poets and musicians resemble horses," said he, "they become soft and lose their vivacity if surrounded by abundance, let them be nourished but not fattened."

It was during this monarch's reign that the important event of the foundation of an "Academie de Musique" by a distinguished poet and musician—Antoine de Bäif[20]—took place. The premises of this establishment were situated in the poet's own home in the Faubourg Saint Marcel. All the most eminent musicians of the day, both native and foreign, were received and handsomely entertained at this "Academie," and each week a grand concert of vocal and instrumental music was given and regularly attended by Charles IX. Marguerite de Valois, the King's sister, in imitation of De Bäif, also established an "Academie de Musique" at her Palace of Issy and herself presided at the concerts, which were held in the grounds of the *chateau*. At the base of a limpid fountain the Princess and her musicians assembled each week, and the poets of the day named the fountain "Castalinus" in memory of that which flowed at the feet of Parnassus, consecrated by the ancient Greeks to the Muses.

It is under the date 27th October 1572—but three days after the tragic St Bartholomew's Eve—that the "Archives Curieuses de l'Histoire de France"[21] records a certain flautist, named Nicolas Delinet, receiving money wherewith to buy a "Cremona Violin":—"A Nicolas Delinet joeur de Fluste et Violon dudict la somme de 50 livres tourn pour lui donner moyen d'achepter ung Violon de Cremonne pour le service dudict Sieur," so runs the announcement. From this *purchase* of a Cremona violin, it may be inferred that the exquisite Amati "set" to which this violoncello belonged had not yet arrived from Italy. Yet they were sent in the year 1572. The thought presents itself irresistibly that Pope Pius V. sent this handsome present to Charles IX. as a token of his approbation of the St Bartholomew Massacre. The completeness of the "set": the novelty of shaping the bass instruments in the same form as the violin, and the appropriateness of such a gift to the music-loving Charles, all point to an intimate personal graciousness, which might well be taken for a secret approval of some deed or event.

Made of Copper

"Mike Cougler, of Mush Island, Lexington County, owns a violoncello made of copper which can be heard two miles away."—*South Carolina Gazette*, 1902.

New Music

This day are published

Six Solos for two violoncellos with a thorough bass for the harpsichord.

Composed by Signor Pasqualiano.

Printed by J. Walsh in Catherine Street in the Strand.—*London Evening Post*, 14th January 1748.

Fiddle Strings

This day imported and sold wholesale or retale at Simpson's Musick Shop in Sweeting's Alley, opposite the East door of the Royal Exchange.

Roman Ring Firsts, Seconds, and Thirds; blue Firsts, and white Seconds and Thirds, in knots and all in great perfection. Merchants and shopkeepers may be served with any quantity at the lowest prices.—*General Advertiser*, 31st January 1750-51.

CHAT THE FOURTH

Andrea Amati—"The King" and its History—Gasparo da Salo—Woods employed by Ancient *Luthiers*—Paolo Maggini and the "Dumas" Bass—M. Savart's Experiments—Freaks—Stradivarius Violoncellos—Signor Piatti's Violoncellos—The Bass of Spain—Davidoff's Violoncello—Herr Klengel's Amati—A neat Swindle—Stradivarius' Contemporaries—Owners of Rugger Violoncellos—George IV.'s pseudo Stradivarius—The earliest Treatise on the Violoncello as a Solo Instrument—Mr Andrew Forster's Gamba—The Prince Consort's "Ancient Instruments" Concert—Development of the Technique, of Violoncello playing

THE romances of real life are generally allowed to be far more amazing than anything fiction can create. Perhaps though, when all is said and done, the most sentimental or interesting happenings are not those which lie concealed in reality or myth, but in the unwritten something which clings about the antique treasures we prize—"Those certain things" which Oliver Wendell Holmes calls "good for nothing unless they have been kept for a long while."

That old oak chair is more precious than a modern production, not because the wood is better or the make more solid, but for the misty reminiscences of lace and buskin, Cavalier and Puritan, in which it is steeped.

This exquisite brocade is valued not so much for its rich texture as for the memory of the shapely shoulders of a Du Barry, or a Castlemaine, which it once graced.

This china vase: this tapestry: this antique ring—we have but to look at them and they tell us many an unwritten story, impossible to repeat, and appealing to us alone. Of all the mute romancers carefully preserved from time's destructive grasp, none can tell such tales as do the grand old fiddles. Those constant yielding companions of generations passed away have served as confessional boxes for so many centuries that each curve and bend teems with a secret. Take this masterpiece of Andrea Amati for instance (p. 114). Made in Cremona by a man of the mature age of fifty-two or thereabouts, the impulsive hazard of his youthful efforts had long since passed away: definite aim had developed his gifts, and ripe experience had given his hand an exquisite cunning. Little did he think as he sat in his sunny Cremona workshop, smoothing the back of this violoncello, bending the ribs, letting in the purfled edges, while he chatted now and again with a neighbour who dropped in, that he was building a monument to his own memory.

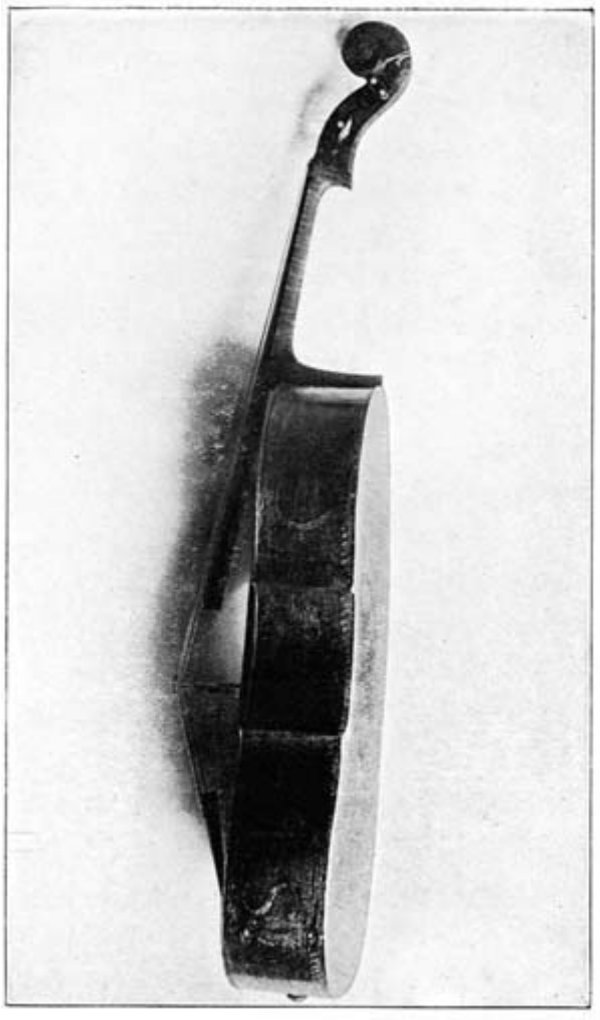
THE 'KING'
VIOLONCELLO BY ANDREAS AMATI, 1572.

Sent with its fellows to the French court, this violoncello arrived, with the painted armorial bearings of Charles IX., exquisitely pure and fresh in colour, upon its back and sides. It was relegated to the King's "Chapelle," or private oratory, doubtless occupying a humble position in the band where the Duiffoproucart viol was prominent: feeling the touch of fresh fingers, as the old ones lost their skill: seeing the intrigues of the court life: hearing the cries of, "The King is dead! Long live the King!" observing each phase of human love and folly, and watching the vagaries of Princes for over two hundred years. Truly your tales would outrival Balzac himself could you speak, and your royal title —"the King"—is but a well-deserved panegyric.

At the time of the French Revolution, in 1790, this violoncello is said to have been still in use at the court of the unfortunate Louis XVI. On the 6th and 7th of October in that year the mob destroyed the whole magnificent "set"—consisting of twenty-four violins (twelve large, and twelve small), six tenors, and eight basses—to which it belonged. Two of the violins of this number were afterwards recovered by Viotti's pupil, M. J. B. Cartier, and one of the small violins belonged to George Somes, Esq., in 1884. These fiddles, and this violoncello—"The King"—are apparently the only members of the "set" that survived the reckless vengeance of the mob. When one realises how easily such delicate constructions are ruined in sacrilegious hands, their preservation in the midst of the pandemonium, which reigned supreme at that time in Paris, is miraculous.

After the Revolution a glimpse of the whereabouts of "The King" is afforded us by a pencilled note written by the father of its present owner on the back of the frame, containing the interesting slip of paper which has accompanied this violoncello for at least a hundred years. On the paper itself the following inscription is written in French characters:—"Basse faitte par erndre ermati Luthiér â cremonne eu italie en 1572. envoyez par le pape 3: à Charles 9 roi de france pour sa chapelle.—avec ses amories et se devise, pietate justicia." Turning this little framed document over, the three

faintly pencilled words, “Duport had it,” seem to imply that “The King,” during the Napoleonic era, was the property of Berteau’s gifted pupil, Jean Pierre Duport, known generally as “Duport l’ainé.” If this was the case, then this violoncello went with him to the court of Frederick the Great at Berlin. It is more probable, however, that it fell into the hands of Jean Pierre’s brother, Jean Louis Duport—one of the finest violoncellists of his day—as he became a member of Napoleon’s band and professor at the Conservatoire of Music. Another pencilled note in the same hand, at the back of the frame, stating that “A Hollander brought it to Betts in 1812, and he sold it to H. W. Curtis”[22] (afterwards Sir William Curtis) still further points to Duport, the younger, as its owner, for Duport was in sore straits at one time. This accomplished artist, it may be remembered, also held an appointment at the court of Frederick the Great, but when the defeats of Auerstädt and Jena placed Prussia in the position of a suppliant at the feet of Napoleon, Duport returned to Paris utterly ruined. If the violoncello had belonged to his brother it is possible that Jean Pierre may have ceded it to the more accomplished Jean Louis, and the latter brought it to Paris in 1806, where his misfortunes induced him to part with it to a dealer. The next we hear of “The King” is on the death of Sir William Curtis, when it figures in the catalogue of his musical instruments—which were sold by auction on 3rd May 1829—as: “Lot 9, a violoncello by Andrea Amati Cremonencis Faciebat, 1572. A document was given to the proprietor when he purchased this instrument, stating that it was presented by Pope Pius V. to Charles IX., King of France, for his chapel. It has been richly decorated, the arms of France being on the back and the motto ‘Pietate et Justitia’ on the sides. The tone of this violoncello is of extraordinary power and richness.” The Rev. Canon A. H. Bridges, Rector of Beddington, either bought it at the above sale, or from Sir William Curtis’s survivors. On the death of Canon Bridges, in 1891, it became the property of his son, the present owner, John Henry Bridges, Esq., of Ewell Court, Surrey.



THE ‘KING’
VIOLONCELLO BY ANDREAS AMATI, 1572.

Some connoisseurs describe “The King” to be nothing but a curiosity at the present time. This is

hardly correct, for, in spite of its having been very much knocked about in the past, it still retains a sweet quality of tone which makes it a delightful drawing-room instrument. Like Amati's fiddles "The King" is of small dimensions; indeed violoncellos at this early date were nothing but extra large tenors, and it was not until makers turned their attention to evolving violoncellos out of the viola da gamba that the former began to take a prominent place in the ranks of stringed instruments. The transition itself from gamba to the early form of violoncello took place in the second half of the sixteenth century but—"Who effected the change?" Was it Duiffoproucart in Lyons, Andrea Amati in Cremona, or Gasparo da Salo, looking forth over the sunny plains of Lombardy? The correct reply is perhaps—"All!" Duiffoproucart reduced the size of the huge German geiges so as to furnish what Rousseau in his "Dictionnaire de Musique" defines as *"les instruments de remplissage*." Previous to the dispersion of viols into various sizes, they were universally large both in Italy and later in France and England. "The first viols in use in France," says Jean Rousseau—the eminent violist—in his "Traité de la Viole" (Paris, 1687), "had five strings, and were very large ... of such dimensions indeed, that the Père Mersenne says that a young *Page de Musique* could be shut within to sing the treble part, while the bass was played upon the self-same instrument"—an arrangement which certainly could not contribute to the happiness of either the little page, or the bass-viol, and the diminishing process which necessarily did away with such a forlorn practice was certainly welcome to all the actors in the trio. Owing to the breaking up of the viols into various sizes, orchestras grew in proportion, so that we find in the *Etat de France* for 1645, that the "Musique de la Chambre de Monsieur" (Louis XIV.'s brother) boasted "Nicolas Fleury" and "Pierre Montigny" as players of the Haute Contre,[23] "Pierre Noinne" and "N... le Vert" as players of the Taille Basses,[24] while "Francois Martin" and "Guillaume Mercer" disported themselves on the "Taille Haute."[25] In the beginning of the following century, further names of *instruments de remplissage*, appear in the Paris Opera orchestra: for instance "2 quintes" [26] "2 tailles,"[27] and "3 haute contres."

This was the result of Duiffoproucart's creation of the small viola da gamba, a size which broke into many degrees and kinds. Then Andrea Amati made a further step in the right direction by making small-sized bass instruments in the same form as the violin, which had at that time assumed the shape now so familiar. The moot question—"Was it Andrea Amati in Cremona, or Gasparo da Salo in Brescia who first made violoncellos in the form of the violin?"—is of course unanswerable at this space of time. Da Salo was a man of progress, ready to fight for his opinions. He made some fine double-basses and grand tenors which are sought after to this day, and Herr August Reichers, the Berlin violin-maker, possessed a small-sized violoncello by this maker in 1884. If this instrument was not a cut-down bass-viol, or an exceptionally large tenor, it is apparently a solitary example of a violoncello by Da Salo, but even though its existence be allowed, the numerous violoncellos made by Andrea Amati must necessarily admit him to be—if not the inventor—at least the earliest known *luthier* to make violoncellos.

Although Da Salo may be looked upon as no enthusiast where violoncellos were concerned, he was not neglectful in the matter of other bass instruments. Signor Dragonetti possessed no fewer than three fine basses by the Brescian maker, of various sizes, and Mr Hart, in 1875, owned a small double-bass of Da Salo's which had been brought from Italy by Tarisio, and was looked upon as the *ne plus ultra* of its kind. A Da Salo viola da gamba, catalogued as of the year 1570, was to be seen among the sumptuous display of musical instruments shown at the Special Loan Exhibition held at Fishmongers' Hall in the summer of 1904.

But, fortunately, we need not rely entirely upon catalogues, description, and speculation for an idea of Da Salo's skill as a gamba-maker, for, here beside us, in their neat glass house, two examples of the fine old Brescian repose in calm tranquillity, like veterans silently ruminating over many campaigns. They both face us with the quaint C-shaped sound-holes, so dear to the hearts of the old viol-makers, and both display upper tables of remarkably well-chosen even-grained pine wood. One of them is strung with seven strings, but the seventh is a later invention, for the earliest viols had five strings, then six, and it was not until the last part of the seventeenth century that Sainte Colombe (some say Marais) added another to the six. A true unaltered seven-stringed viol is hardly

ever to be met with now. A solitary and excellent example, however, was lent by M. Galley to the Special Loan Exhibition at South Kensington in 1872. This was a remarkably handsome gamba and had remained untouched, with the exception of an attempt to attach sympathetic strings. A further adjunct to be found in this Da Salo gamba before us is the scroll, which curves round in a unique manner like a wisp of twisted ribbon: this never felt the touch of Da Salo's hand. It may be the work of Barak Norman, for a similar, indeed identical, scroll crowns his gamba now in the Donaldson Museum, but certainly it is not Da Salo's work. In his day sculptured human and animal heads were *de rigueur*, and, like his contemporaries, he carved these himself, or employed special artists to do so. In Germany the followers of Jacobus Stainer of Absam—whose favourite ornament was a lion's head—freely adopted this practice, but the custom died out first in Italy, where viol-makers discovered that such a system was far from remunerative.

Close to this gamba of Da Salo's with the spurious scroll, his second example exhibits his skill as a wood-carver, in the exquisitely chiselled head of an old woman, which surmounts the neck. The varnish is slightly darker on this gamba than on the one beside it. Age is no doubt responsible for this and not the maker himself, as it is also for the black Da Salo fiddles of which some connoisseurs speak with a degree of scorn. It may be noticed that there is but one line of purfling round this gamba. This was such an ordinary custom with Da Salo that comment is unnecessary. It is clumsily let in, lacking the grace and finish expended upon this difficult art by Cremona makers. The Amatis above all others excelled in the neatness of their purfling, and the customary three lines is always to be met with in their fiddles as well as in those of Stradivarius. The latter, however, on one solitary occasion reverted to one line of purfling in the violoncello upon which Bernard Romberg played for many years. This instrument is unique in many ways, for the gifted Cremonese maker made the back and sides of plane wood and poplar, material which he employed occasionally in the early part of his career, but which he had discarded at the date (1711) he made the violoncello.

Speaking of wood, by-the-by, the proper selection of timber was held to be a matter of great importance by the ancient *luthier*. M. Fetis, in his "Antonio Stradivarius," has given some interesting information regarding the source from whence the old viol-makers obtained their wood. He says that maple was sent from Croatea, Turkey and Dalmatia to Venice in the shape of galley oars, and that the Turks, ever seeking to outrival the Venetians, and consequently frequently at war with them, took care to choose wood with the handsomest wave, knowing well that it would break the more easily. It was from among this selection that the viol-maker had to gather his timber. In his own country there was certainly little difficulty in obtaining wood, but, where would he get such maple as came to him from Dalmatia? Secretly he welcomed this

"... thing devised by the enemy"

and turned it to good account. The illustrious Da Salo was very partial to pear wood as well as sycamore, which he cut slab-ways from the tree, as did most of his contemporaries. Stradivarius preferred maple to any other wood, but he went with the times and also employed the woods favoured by his brethren, such as poplar, lime, and even grained pine. A species of red pine, common to the Tyrol, and known to the Italian makers by the name of "Azarole," was more in favour with the Cremona *luthier* than Swiss pine. Only the south side, the side exposed to the drying rays of the sun, was used. Indeed, this precaution is one which has been observed by makers for over three hundred years, knowing well that it is one of the first aids towards solving the problem: *Given*: A log of wood. *Make*: A fiddle. The timber must be blameless, free from knots or blemish, and—above all—free from worm, a fate which has destroyed whole forests of pine if the trees are cut at the wrong season of the year. Also the tree must have arrived at a maturity of ten years, and the question of sap flowing through the outer part of the tree must be duly considered. Speaking on this subject, Mr Davidson[28] remarks that, owing to the sap passing through this part of the tree, the wood abounds in saccharine matter and is quickly susceptible to decay. In trees which have arrived at maturity, there is no distinction between the sap and heart wood, the wood being of the same texture throughout and almost uniform. The proper time for cutting trees is when the sap ceases to flow, and experience has determined the month of December to be the best time

for this purpose, as the wood which has been cut during this month has been found to have always been of superior quality to any cut during the other months. Monsieur l'Abbé Sibre, author of "La Chelonome ou le parfait Luthérie," which was published at the beginning of the nineteenth century, voices the merits of wood cut in December and January long before Mr Davidson, and adds the admonition that the wood must be cut from between the bark and heart of the tree. The wood being cut as required from the healthy pine or maple, it is sawn into planks, and,—though the fiddle-maker's hands are madly twitching to commence operations on it,—subjected to a drying process to be effected by sun and air for at least six years. If at the end of that period of time the *luthier* is still enamoured of his timber, then he may clamp it and cut it and scrape it into the violin or violoncello of his fancy. Monsieur Simoutre, the French violin-maker and author of some patent improvements which, in common with all innovations connected with bow instruments, have had no lasting effect, contends that the best pine wood comes from Silesia, from La Valteline, Les Grisons, Le Simmenthal in the Bernese Alps, from certain sheltered parts of the valley of the Lac de Joux, in the Canton de Vaud, Switzerland, and from the southern slopes of the Jura Bernois. Modern violin-makers generally employ maple cut from trees growing on the southern slopes of the Carpathians and also in some parts of the Eastern Alps, but where this is not procurable, it has been found that it is not absolutely necessary to range the Alps or the Carpathians in search of suitable wood, for many a fine violin and violoncello have been made from the wainscot or beam of an old-time cottage or mansion. J. B. Vuillaume used to roam over Italy and Switzerland frequently for the sole purpose of picking up choice bits of pine which had probably formed part of a beam or support in some residence for hundreds of years. Out of these purchases he undoubtedly made some of his finest instruments. His example has recommended itself to many other makers, and only the other day we heard of a contemporary English maker whose best violins and violoncellos have been formed from an old beam obtained from a house near Eltham. Such practices as these certainly place *lutherie* within the range of everyone so inclined, for, who is there in these days that does not possess a likely piece of old furniture? some familiar escritoire, or table, or panel, out of which a possible rival to Cremona's *chefs-d'œuvre* may be conjured by the aid of gouge, chisel, bending iron, and glue pot. In spite of the time-saving effects which the appropriation of the family heirlooms for this purpose would effect, how much more appealing and poetic were the methods of the ancient *luthier*, who went straight to the forest for his wood. Can one picture Stradivarius storing up old beams, and tables, on the roof of his house in Cremona? Can we imagine Guarnerius roaming about the country seeking likely bits of wood in cottages, or the Amatis, or Da Salo, the maker of these gambas, resorting to such a commonplace expedient. No! a thousand times. They went straight to the forest for their timber, wandered through the misty depths of clustered pines, pondering in the deep silence upon many a knotty point of their craft. Or they stood at times on the rocky borders of the wood, where the trees looked down upon the valley from whence the sound of the rushing brook could be faintly heard. From a point of vantage they watched the trees being felled: hearkened to the tone they emitted as their torn limbs bounded from rock to rock: counted the number of circles to ascertain the age of a likely tree: examined the colour with care to judge of its health. If they were satisfied with these various preliminary tests, they bought what they required, stored the planks on the sheltered side of their workshop or on the roof of the same, and watched the hot Italian sun do its work of drying. Not only did the most eminent makers of the past carefully store their own wood, but if they became possessed of a particularly handsome piece they did not scruple to patch and piece it together, so that no scrap of the treasure should be wasted.

THE 'VASLIN'
VIOLONCELLO BY ANTONIUS STRADIVARIUS.
DATED 1725.

Gasparo da Salo, as we have already said, was an adept in the choice of wood, and he was fortunate in lighting upon some particularly even-grained pine. In these days his work is looked upon as rough, or, to put it more gently, primitive. The recent researches of Il Cavalieri Livi—the keeper of the Brescian state archives—have, however, proved that this was far from the case in his lifetime. Until the results of the Cavalieri's investigations were published in the *Nuova Antalogia* on the 16th August 1891, nothing definite concerning this maker's life was known. Thanks to the Brescian income-tax returns and other authentic documentary evidence it is now proved that Da Salo's real name was not Salo at all but Gasparo di Bertolotti, that he rejoiced in a grandfather named Santino di Bertolotti who was a lute-maker at Polpenazze, that his father was one Francesco Bertolotti, a painter familiarly called "Violino" by his friends, and that his son, Gasparo, the future violin-maker, was born at Salo, a small town on Lake Garda, not many miles distant from Brescia. Unfortunately the date of Da Salo's birth still remains unknown, owing to the loss of the

pages from the parish register where it should appear, but the income-tax returns for 1568 state him to be twenty-six years of age at that date, and those for 1588, forty-five, thus locating his birth approximately in the year 1542. It is presumed that he learnt his art from his grandfather first, and later from a Brescian viol-maker of the name of Gerolamo Virchi, who stood sponsor to Gasparo's son, Francesco. The earliest efforts of the great Brescian master apparently did not find favour with his fellow-countrymen, and, this being so, he became discouraged and contemplated trying his fortunes in France. A certain Father Gabriel saw the gifted man's dispirited efforts, and also observed his intentions. He was reluctant to see one of his flock go forth to a foreign country, and to prevent such a calamity came forward with a loan of £60. Curiously enough this small sum changed the bent of Da Salo's life. He remained, and encouraged by the faith of the good priest set to work with such definite aim and earnestness, that as a result he soon established himself in a house with a shop in the *Contrada del Palazzo vecchio*. This event occurred in the year 1568. He paid £20 rent per annum for this establishment, valued his stock of musical instruments at about £60, and styled himself *Magistro di Violini*. In 1579 he exhibited the added title of *Magistro di Cittaris*, and in 1583 called himself *Artefice d'instrumenti musica*. Twenty years after his first establishment in the *Contrada del Palazzo vecchio*, he changed his residence to the *Contrada Cocere*, where he claimed to be the owner of violins finished and unfinished valuing quite £200, and where he had acquired the ostentatious title of *Magister instrumentorum musicorum*. The year 1599 found him purchasing another house in Brescia, situated in the *Contrada di St Pietro di Martero*, and between 1581 and 1607 he owned land adjoining Calvagese, near Salo. It was at Calvagese that Da Salo's son, Francesco, found his bride, the Signora Fior. He also followed the captivating profession of his father, until the latter's death on the 14th April 1609, when he apparently lost heart, for from that time he ceased to be a *luthier*. Probably he sold the excellent business to Da Salo's gifted pupil, Gio. Paolo Maggini, who had worked as an apprentice in the Brescian master's workshop for quite eight years, and was then a bachelor of thirty or thereabouts. In any case, whether he became possessed of the business or not, the esteem which had previously been bestowed upon his instructor fell to his share. On the whole he deserved all the support he gained for he not only equalled Da Salo as a maker but surpassed him in everything save the ugly stiff sound holes which, for some unaccountable reason, he retained.

In the history of the violoncello, it is a puzzling and curious circumstance, that no viola da gamba by Maggini is extant.[29] His violins, violas, violoncellos and double-basses have resisted the onslaught of over three hundred adventurous years, and, this being so, one cannot help wondering why his gambas have not also withstood time's ravages. The obvious reply seems to be that, "He made none!" However, whether he did or did not, his attitude certainly had no effect on the position occupied by the violoncello at that time. The general feeling about the instrument was akin to the sentiments expressed by the Comte de Rabutin in his "Epistles":

"Je ne vous aime pas, Hylas;
Je n'en saurois dire la cause,
Je sais seulement un chose;
C'est que je ne vous aime pas."

Not being liked, and yet appearing among them, musicians were confronted with a difficulty which they solved by placing this "white elephant" in the obscure position of playing the fundamental bass in the music of the Church.

As regards the lack of Maggini violas da gamba, circumstantial evidence may be right after all. The man was a genius, and, true to his instincts, sought after new methods rather than personal gain. He threw aside the useless and picked out the good, and, this being so, it is not surprising that he should prefer to turn his attention to the budding violoncello, rather than the pristine viola da gamba.

In the delightful monograph of this maker's life—already mentioned—among the excellent summary of the instruments made by him, there is an interesting description of a quartet of instruments generally known as the "Dumas Set," from its having once belonged to a family of that name. In an ancient château near Lyons the members of the Dumas household passed through

the terrors of the first Revolution and saw the establishment of the Empire. They were enthusiastic musical amateurs—friends of Beethoven—and inspired by a genuine love of chamber music they collected together four magnificent examples of Maggini's skill. Of the four instruments—*i.e.* violin, viola, violoncello and double-bass—which comprise the "set," the violin and viola are of the most characteristic and perfect type, although the violoncello is also excellent. According to Lady Huggins's description of the last, "it has two lines of purfling, but no ornamental device. The bottom circle of the sound-holes is smaller than the top. There is the same under-bevelling of the inside edge of the sound-holes, as in Maggini's other instruments, the same arching of the model. The wood of the back and the sides is cut on the slab" (parallel with the growth of the tree—a favourite practice with the ancient viol-makers). "The back is joined, also the belly, the latter having the wood the ordinary way of the grain, the coarse grain being outside." As we look at the instrument, the thought involuntarily rises in us—"to Maggini we owe our modern violoncello." What a curious mixture of the "old" and the "new" is to be found in this instrument. The back cut on the "slab"—in accordance with the long-standing custom—and the belly cut in the improved manner. Maggini, although a great innovator, and the first to cut the wood in the new way—*i.e.* wedge-ways from the tree—was evidently in a state of uncertainty when he made this violoncello. To balance matters he mingled the divers ways, yet, in spite of his hesitation, he came nearer to gauging the most equitable proportions for the violoncello than any other maker of his time. It would be of great interest if it were possible to discover by what means Maggini and his predecessors arrived at their conclusions. Whether it was in the manner of old Mrs Tibbins, who made a fiddle by means of a blunt knife, a piece of glass, and a bent file, or, on the principles of Monsieur Felix Savart. If the ancient *luthier* planned his work on the latter's scientific basis, then he was accurate in every detail, for no more satisfactory experiments on the construction of bow instruments have been attempted. The idea of these experiments was suggested by a guitar-shaped violin made by Stradivarius and owned by the elder Chanot. Imagining that so eminent a maker would not have constructed such a violin without good reason, Monsieur Savart—a doctor of medicine—threw up his profession for that of science and interested himself in organising a series of tests in the first half of the nineteenth century. As a result of his labours *luthiers* were at last confronted with the astounding assertion that an arched surface vibrates less readily than a plane one: that there are points where the vibrations are greatly reduced, and that the aggregate vibration is least at the sound holes and at the corner blocks of a violin or violoncello.

Starting from this groundwork, M. Savart constructed a violin entirely made of flat surfaces and straight lines with narrow rectilinear slits for sound holes (so as to cut as few of the fibres of the wood as possible) and no tailpiece, the drag of the latter on the tender part of the belly being considered detrimental to the instrument. The most astonishing part of this fiddle was that it passed the test of comparison with a Stradivarius victoriously. The members of the Académie des Sciences formed a council and, assisted by such eminent musicians as M. Berton, Catel le Sueure, and Cherubini, sat in solemn judgment. The merits of the instrument were considered by them at several meetings, and the gifted violinist, M. Lefebvre, was requested to play alternately upon a *chef-d'œuvre* of Cremona and the Savart "box-fiddle," in an adjoining room. The decision arrived at by these gentlemen was that the square fiddle was every bit as good in tone—if not better—as the Cremona violin. Of course this was most flattering to the inventor, yet it is a question whether such excellent results would have taken place had the Savart fiddle been in less skilful hands. The great violinist Remenyi maintained that he could produce just as good a tone out of an eight-shilling fiddle as out of a 1000-guinea one. Monsieur Lefebvre's handling of the "box-fiddle" was doubtless superior to the fiddle itself and,—as Voltaire said of Duport's violoncello playing,—he made the council of impulsive Frenchmen believe in miracles "by making a nightingale out of an ox."

A few years previous to Monsieur Savart's researches M. Chanot—a naval officer, and a member of the distinguished family of violin-makers of that name, being compelled to leave the navy on account of his staunch Royalist predilections—had turned his attention to constructing guitar-shaped fiddles and violoncellos. These were also subjected to similar tests by the members of the Académie des Sciences and—as in the case of the Savart fiddle—pronounced to be superior to the

instruments of Cremona. There were independent experts, however, who considered them faulty in tone and only to be regarded as curiosities. In the midst of diverse criticisms, these instruments found a market for a few years, the violins and violas fetching 300 francs, while 500 francs was the price demanded for the violoncellos. Those who desire to pursue the subject of vagaries, will find much to interest them in Mr Davidson's "The Violin," and Mr Heron Allen's "Violin-making as it was and is"; sufficient for present purposes is it to know that such grotesqueness as eighteen stringed violins played with a bow and producing the combined effect of the violin, viola, violoncello and double-bass: the combination violin and violoncello with piano which can be played by one person: the melephone, which was nothing more than a concertina enclosed in a species of violoncello, and other such fallacies, have been relegated to the land of oblivion. Certain it is that the ancient viol-maker never dreamed of such horrors. Once in a way he attempted such a mild invention as a detachable neck, which could be unscrewed and placed inside the instrument through a door in the ribs, like the viola da gamba in the Donaldson Museum, but otherwise his methods, like his varnish, were so simple that he made no fuss about them. He saw no necessity for rushing into print, or taking out patents, or wrangling, or arguing. The traditions of his graceful craft were transmitted by word of mouth and practical demonstration to his pupils, and the pupils, living in an atmosphere of *lutherie*, sucked in the unwritten lore as naturally as the earth absorbs rain. What need to cry out the sky is blue, when all the world can see it!

It was among such surroundings that the mighty Stradivarius learnt his art in the workshops of Nicolo Amati, grandson of Andrea Amati, who made "The King." The *atelier* of this maker was a very nest of talent in the middle of the seventeenth century, for Nicolo Amati's renown attracted all the most enthusiastic young aspirants of the art. It is easy to imagine the grand spirit of emulation, and even rivalry, which must have existed within the four walls of Amati's premises in Cremona. An unrivalled master of his art at the time, bestowing care and thought on every part of his work, there is no doubt that he did much towards advancing the construction of the violoncello in the matter of experimenting with thicknesses, but he did not alter the dimensions of the violoncello which was at that time about 31 inches in length, if not longer. The majority of Amati violoncellos have been cut down, so that it is difficult to judge of their original size, but it is probable that they originally measured over 31 inches in length. The paramount influence of the Church in musical matters was responsible for the large dimensions of the violoncello at that date; it was looked upon as useful to reinforce the double-bass, or "bass-violin" as it was then called, for the big viols had already gone out of use in Italy in the middle of the seventeenth century. In "The Familiar Letters of Abraham Hill" (London 1767), his brother, Thomas, writing to him from Lucca, 1st October 1657, speaking of the instrumental music he had heard there, says that it "is much better than I expected. The organ and violin they are masters of, but the bass-viol they have not at all in use, and, to supply its place, they have the bass-violin." According to Maugars in his "Reponse fait à un curieux ..." (1639) the viol was going out of use in Italy, quite twenty years before the above date. "Regarding the viol," he remarks, "there is no one in Italy now who excels on that instrument, and even in Rome it is still little cultivated: I am very astonished at this, seeing that they had formerly one Horatio de Parme, who was a marvellous player." The writer of these lines was himself a magnificent performer on the viola da gamba. He visited Rome, where he found the gamba, the theorbo, and harpsichord the most fashionable instruments, and, in spite of the numerous violins and violoncellos being made by Nicolas Amati in his busy workshops in Cremona, these latter were considered to be what Lord Chesterfield would have called "ungentlemanly instruments." If by chance any enthusiastic amateur was rash enough to adopt the violin, he was careful to hide the fact from his friends for fear of being thought disreputable. This antipathy to the fiddle was just as keenly felt in England, when the encroachment of the new-fangled four-stringed instruments began to endanger the position of the viol. Anthony Wood, writing in 1653 at Oxford, says in reference to this: "Before the Restoration, gentlemen played three, four and five parts with viols. They esteemed a violin to be an instrument only belonging to a common fiddler, and could not endure that it should come among them for fear of making their meetings vain." This prejudice against the violin is even felt to-day by many people. We ourselves remember an old lady's astonishment when we confided to her that we could play the violin: "Why!" she exclaimed, "I thought such instruments were only played outside public-houses."

The degree of excellence attained by such men as the Abbé Maugars, Hoffman, Sainte Colombe, and Marais, on the viola da gamba was certainly detrimental to the development of the violoncello. Maugars spent four years studying the gamba in England in 1620, and when he visited Rome, in 1639, his performances at the house of Signora Leonora Baroni, a famous Italian singer—who was herself no mean performer on the harpsichord and gamba—gained him the highest eulogies, which he recounts with no uncertain voice in the pamphlet already referred to (p. 138). In the face of the prodigies performed by gamba players, makers were content to follow the times and allow the violoncello to retain its large proportions. Even Stradivarius, who made the violin what it now is, did not occupy himself with the dimensions of the violoncello, but adopted the measurements of his contemporaries.

A complete account of this maker's violins and violoncellos is to be found in Messrs Hill's valuable monograph "Antonio Stradivari, his Life and Work." In the chapter devoted to a *résumé* of Stradivari violoncellos, they make the interesting assertion that no violoncello by Stradivarius is known to them previous to the year 1680. The earliest dated instrument of the violoncello type known to them was made by the great Cremona master in his twenty-third year, 1667, and, although it has been considerably altered, it apparently originally contained many of the features of the viola da gamba and violoncello. They are of opinion that the instrument was primarily strung as a gamba, which was doubtless the case, for at that time it was customary to make gambas in two forms—*i.e.* with flat back and true viol-shaped upper bouts curving high into the neck, and also in the violin form. Christopher Simpson, the most renowned English gamba player of his day, gives excellent representations of both these forms of gambas (p. 80) in his "Division Viol" (Second Edition, London, 1667). He recommends the violin shape as superior to the viol form for playing divisions on a ground as "the sound should be quick and sprightly, like a Violin; and Viols of that shape (the Belleys being digged out of the plank) do commonly render such sound."

Another violoncello by Stradivarius, which shows similar signs of alteration, belonged to Mr Leo Stern in 1902. Its proportions, although cut down by Dodd, are still of the largest, and the presence of a fifth hole in the head for a peg indicates that it was originally strung with five strings. No doubt this was originally an extra large viola da gamba of the form recommended by Christopher Simpson. Messrs Hill also give the interesting piece of information that they are acquainted with a viola da gamba by Stradivarius, or, to speak more correctly, with the material which once formed one. The often over-generous hand of the modern maker has employed itself in adding fresh wood in all directions with a view to transforming the instrument into a violoncello. Brought from France to Italy in its original state, it may possibly be the viol made by Stradivari in 1684 for the Comtessa Cristina Visconti, the patterns of which are preserved in the "Della Valle Collection."

Still referring to Messrs Hill's book we find that Stradivarius made about thirty large-sized violoncellos between the year 1680 and 1700 and that it was not until the latter date that he shows any signs of turning away from the violoncello of large proportions. Two instruments which bear evidence of this important change of construction are the Cristiani (1700) and the Servais (1701). The first of these measures 30-1/2 bare inches in length, while the Servais measures 31-1/8 inches, but even these proportions were large as compared to the violoncellos he made ten years later. The Cristiani is of particular interest at the present moment as it has recently become the property of the nation. It originally belonged to a charming lady of that name who gained repute as a professional violoncellist in the forties of the nineteenth century. Felix Mendelssohn paid her the compliment of playing her accompaniments at her concert at Leipsic, and dedicated one of his "Songs without Words" to her. She was not a great executant by any means, but the violoncello at that date did not count so many women players as it does in these days, and, then again, she was possessed of much personal beauty, so that her critics judged her in the same manner as they did the handsome Madame Catalani, of whom it was said that:

"If to her singing some few errors fall
Look in her face, and you forget them all."

Mdlle. Cristiani's violoncello—after her death at Tobolsk, in Siberia, in 1853—fell into the hands of M. Benazet, a Baden-Baden amateur. Through the medium of Messrs Gand & Bernadel, it became

the property of the eminent violoncellist, Herr Hugo Becker, in 1884. Ten years later Messrs Hill bought it, and still later Mr Charles Oldham, a well-known ophthalmic surgeon of Hove, Brighton, purchased it from them. At the latter's death, on the 24th January 1907, he bequeathed the "Cristiani" violoncello, together with the famous inlaid "Rode" violin (1722), a violin of the Amatasie period dated 1687, and the handsome inlaid viola made by Stradivarius for Philip IV., of Spain, in 1696, to the nation. These four instruments have been confided to the care of the British Museum, but it is to be devoutly hoped that the authorities may find some clause in Mr Oldham's will, by which they may avoid the necessity of placing them under a glass case. There is no more melancholy object than the violin or violoncello which is relegated to a museum and compelled to silence. The handsome violin by Stradivarius in the Musée of the Paris Conservatoire, and Paganini's violin in Genoa—standing under a glass case like an eight-day clock—are melancholy examples of such a useless practice. It would be of much more practical use to art, if wealthy connoisseurs would follow the example of Mr John Rutson, and leave their valuable collections of musical instruments to some musical institution for the use of gifted pupils unable to purchase a suitable instrument for their public début and early appearances. It is undeniable that, as a rule, genius is poorly endowed with this world's goods, and often lacking in opportunity; thus it is that many a gifted violinist or violoncellist has been balked of success for lack of a good instrument to play upon.

After the year 1700, Stradivarius made some fine violoncellos, the most superb of all at the present time, being the instrument he made in his seventy-sixth year. This grand example is dated 1720, and, besides its intrinsic merits, it has a special interest, having been the favourite instrument of Signor Piatti. Many were the hands through which it passed before finding a safe haven with the gifted Italian violoncellist to whom it was presented by Colonel Oliver in 1867. Like Ole Bull and his Gasparo da Salo, Piatti was enamoured of the violoncello the moment he saw it, on a visit to Dublin, during the first year of his sojourn in England in 1844. Its memory lived in his mind for years, and he longed to possess it. The most consummate of storytellers and most genial of men, Piatti was never weary of recounting the romantic manner in which his violoncello crossed his path from time to time, and how he wished to purchase it, but was debarred from so doing by want of sufficient capital. However, it was a case of "Kismet." He did eventually become its proud possessor, and like a pair of lovers they found no hardship in overcoming obstacles together. The career of this instrument is traced by Messrs Hill from the year 1818, when it was brought to this country from Cadiz, by a wine merchant named Mr Dowell. For 300 guineas it passed into the hands of the Rev. Mr Booth, who—like Mr Dowell—was an Irishman. The purchase was effected through the medium of Paul Alday, an Irish violinist, whose name is responsible for the story that he was once so lost in the labyrinths of a seemingly endless *cadenza* at a concert, that an exasperated member of the audience exclaimed: "Well, Mr Alday, are you going to play *all night*!" Ten years after Mr Booth became the possessor of the violoncello, another change of ownership took place at a sale by auction at Messrs Cramer & Beale's where a well-known Dublin violoncellist, Mr Piggot, purchased it. The sum paid by the latter is unknown to Messrs Hill, but from some notes kindly supplied us on the subject by Comtessa Lochis—Signor Piatti's daughter—through the medium of Mr Whitehouse, the statement that "it was sold for £100 to a professor of Dublin," may allude to the price paid for it by Mr Piggot. After Mr Piggot's death, in 1853, Sir Robert Gore Booth, an amateur violoncellist, undertook the sale of the instrument for his deceased friend's widow, and, bringing it to London, invited Piatti to come and see it. As soon as Piatti beheld the violoncello, he recognised it to be the exquisite instrument he had seen in 1844, and never forgotten. Great was his chagrin at being unable to purchase it, but at the time it was impossible. By his advice, however, the violin-maker, Maucotel, went to see it, and managed to obtain it at a bargain for £300, and shortly after Colonel Oliver bought it of Maucotel for £350. To Piatti—already a frequent visitor at Colonel Oliver's house—the Stradivarius violoncello was a still further attraction, especially as he could play on it whenever he felt inclined. He used to care for it like a child, and at length, on a memorable day in the year 1867, he was at the Colonel's house, occupied in comparing the Stradivarius' merits with that of a violoncello by the brothers Amati and another by Montagnana, when Colonel Oliver suddenly inquired—"Which do you prefer?" Piatti at once indicated the Stradivarius without hesitation. His astonishment and embarrassment were

unbounded when in reply to this conclusion, the Colonel said laconically: “Take it home then!” But nothing would induce the simple-minded *virtuoso* to accept the Colonel’s offer, and after thanking him, he left the house hurriedly, fearing that his great longing for the violoncello might make his refusal “tremble in the scale.” Scarcely had he arrived home, however, when the violoncello was brought to his door, and from that day to his death remained with him always.

It was on this grand Stradivarius that Piatti delighted audiences week after week, and month after month, at the Saturday and Monday Popular Concerts, (now, alas!—be it said to our shame—dwindled out of existence for want of support) and it was on New Year’s day, 1901—six months before his death—that he played his *Swan Song* (the “Danza Moresca”) before a party of friends at his daughter’s house, with all his accustomed skill and brilliancy. Although it is not part of our subject here to detail the lives of violoncello players, yet we cannot leave this artist, so beloved in England, without mentioning the touching tribute to his memory, which is celebrated annually by his resting-place, in the private chapel of the Lochis family. The funeral, which was a public one, attended by the Prefect, the Mayor, and representatives of the leading Musical Societies of his native town of Bergamo, took place on the 22rd of July 1901. In spite of the tempestuous weather, hundreds of townsfolk and people from the neighbouring provinces turned out to do homage to their esteemed countryman. Four professors, from the Music School at Bergamo, played the Andante from Schubert’s Quartet in D minor, according to the last wishes expressed by Piatti, and a week later again visited the Lochis Chapel, where they made a solemn compact to meet each year, and perform the same Andante on the anniversary of the master’s death. Thus is the memory of the great artist, whose lovable nature made him a boon companion and cherished friend, reverently preserved.

Signor Piatti’s violoncello at his death passed into the hands of his daughter, Countess Lochis, who, although realising that it was a precious relic of her father, still felt that it would harm the instrument if she kept it without being played upon. She therefore accepted the offer of Herr Robert Mendelssohn, the Berlin banker, and sold it to him for £4000. Herr Mendelssohn, who is the nephew of the composer of that name, is himself an excellent amateur violoncellist, and, in conjunction with his brother, owns a fine Quartet of Strads. During the latter years of Signor Piatti’s life he had offered him £2000 for the violoncello, but had, on the sum being refused, asked Piatti to name his own price. But the Italian violoncellist stubbornly refused to part with the instrument although he no longer played in public. However—as we have seen—the violoncello did become the property of Herr Mendelssohn, who has the distinction of paying the largest sum ever given for a violoncello.

No better or more complete account of Stradivarius’ violoncellos is to be found than in Messrs Hill’s monograph already referred to. The merits of such famous instruments as the “Duport,” the “Mara,” the “Romberg,” the “Bata,” the “Vaslin,” etc., are skilfully described, as well as the sums paid for them, and it is therefore hardly fair to repeat the many facts there stated, but before leaving the subject we are sorely tempted to repeat the well-known romantic episode which occurred in the career of the Stradivarius violoncello known as the “Bass of Spain.” It is our English dramatist, Charles Reade, who recounts the adventure in one of his letters to *The Pall Mall Gazette*, of the year 1872. This was the date—it may be remembered—of the Special Loan Exhibition of Musical Instruments at the South Kensington Museum. Connoisseurs occupied themselves in scouring Italy to gather together all the most important and interesting specimens they could lay hands on, and it was at this exhibition that the violoncello—then the property of M. Galley—of which we here have a picture—was shown (p. 124). Charles Reade, who had learnt pretty well all that could be known about fiddle-making from a certain “Henri”—a past master in the art, but a rampant little revolutionary, whom he met, by chance, at one of his favourite Bohemian restaurants in Soho—wrote some brilliant criticisms on the examples of ancient Italian *lutherie* there displayed. In these articles,[30] the author of “Peg Woffington,” took the opportunity of expounding his theory of the Cremona varnish—the most successful explanation of the concoction ever attempted—and amongst much fiddle lore, gives the following account of the vicissitudes of the “Bass of Spain,” made in the year 1713. It was formerly in the collection of Mr John Adam, later in that of the Duc de Camposelice, and was in the possession of Mr Franklin Singer in 1902:—

“Nearly fifty years ago a gaunt Italian called Luigi Tarisio arrived in Paris one day with a lot of old Italian instruments by makers whose names were hardly known. The principal dealers, whose minds were narrowed, as is often the case, to three or four makers, would not deal with him. Monsieur Georges Chanot, younger and more intelligent, purchased largely, and encouraged him to return. He came back next year with a better lot; and yearly increasing his funds, he flew at the highest game; and in the course of thirty years imported nearly all the finest specimens of Stradivarius and Guarnerius France possesses. He was the greatest connoisseur that ever lived or ever can live, because he had the true mind of a connoisseur and vast opportunities. He ransacked Italy before the tickets in the violins of Francesco Stradivarius, Alexander Gagliano, Lorenzo Guadagnini, Geofredus Cappa, Gobetti, Morgilati Morella, Antonio Mariani, Santo Maggini, Matteo Benti of Brescia, Michel Angelo Bergonze, Montagnana, Thomas Balestrieri Storioni, Vicenzo Rugger, the Testori, Petrus Guarnerius of Venice, and full fifty more, had been tampered with, that every brilliant masterpiece might be assigned to some popular name. To his immortal credit, he fought against this mania and his motto was, ‘A tout seigneur tout honneur.’ The man’s whole soul was in his fiddles. He was a great dealer, but a greater amateur. He had gems by him no money would buy from him....

“Well, one day Georges Chanot, senior, who is perhaps the best judge of violins left, now Tarisio is gone, made an excursion to Spain, to see if he could find anything there. He found mighty little. But, coming to the shop of a fiddle-maker, one Ortega, he saw the belly of an old bass hung up with other things. Chanot rubbed his eyes, and asked himself, was he dreaming? The belly of a Stradivarius bass roasting in a shop-window! He went in, and very soon bought it for about forty francs. He then ascertained that the bass belonged to a lady of rank. The belly was full of cracks; so, not to make two bites of a cherry, Ortega had made a nice new one. Chanot carried this precious fragment home and hung it up in his shop, but not in the window, for he is too good a judge not to know the sun will take all the colour out of that maker’s varnish. Tarisio came in from Italy, and his eyes lighted instantly on the Stradivarius belly. He pestered Chanot till the latter sold it him for a thousand francs and told him where the rest was. Tarisio no sooner knew this than he flew to Madrid. He learned from Ortega where the lady lived, and called on her to see it. ‘Sir,’ says the lady, ‘it is at your disposition.’ That does not mean much in Spain. When he offered her to buy it, she coquetted with him, said it had been long in her family; money could not replace a thing of that kind, and in short, she put on the screw, *as she thought*, and sold it to him for about four thousand francs. What he did with the Ortega belly is not known—perhaps sold it to some toothpick trade. He sailed exultant for Paris with the Spanish Bass in a case. He never let it out of his sight. The pair were caught by a storm in the Bay of Biscay. The ship rolled; Tarisio clasped his bass tight, and trembled. It was a terrible gale, and for one whole day they were in real danger. Tarisio spoke of it to me with a shudder. I will give you his real words for they struck me at the time, and I have often thought of them since:

“Ah, my poor Mr Reade, the Bass of Spain was all but lost.

“Was not this a true connoisseur? a genuine enthusiast? Observe! there was also an ephemeral insect called Luigi Tarisio, who would have gone down with the bass; but that made no impression on his mind. *De minimis non curat Ludovicus.*

“He got it safe to Paris. A certain high priest in the mysteries, called Vuillaume, with the help of a sacred vessel called a glue pot, soon re-wedded the back and sides to the belly, and the bass being now just what it was when the ruffian Ortega put his finger in the pie, was sold for 20,000 francs (£800). I saw the Spanish bass in Paris twenty-two years ago....”

Under the impression that this Stradivarius violoncello he so much admired at the South Kensington Exhibition of 1872 was the “Bass of Spain,” Charles Reade begins his next letter, dated 27th August 1892, with a eulogistic account of its beauties. In reality the instrument was not the “Bass of Spain,” but the fine violoncello made in the year 1725 which we see in the picture before us (see p. 124). There is no doubt about the handsomeness of this violoncello. The scroll is most elegant, the purfling perfection, the varnish transparent orange colour. The front table is made of a well-chosen piece of pine, but it is much cracked, and these cracks have not been too skilfully

mended. Its length is the same as that of Signor Piatti's violoncello, 29-7/8 inches, but the rest of the proportions are a little different. In the hands of M. Vaslin, this violoncello experienced the trials of a fidgety master. It was for many years the faithful companion of this excellent French violoncellist, who obtained it from a Florentine banker through his friend and fellow-artist, M. Girard, the violinist. M. Vaslin found no fault with his violoncello, until the latter part of his life, when he felt convinced that something was wrong with its neck. Times out of number the neck was altered by some of the best *luthiers* of the day, but still the aged violoncellist was not satisfied, and at length resorted to the expedient of tinkering it up himself. At length, in 1869, M. Galley saved it from further torture by persuading M. Vaslin to sell it to him. The bargain was not completed until M. Galley had handed over his own Stradivarius, valued at £400, at the same time paying £600 in cash.

The devious and romantic ways in which fine instruments have become the property of famous artists would fill an interesting volume in themselves, as would also the swindling practices of which they have been the innocent cause. The famous violoncellist, Herr Karl Davidoff, became possessed of his grand Stradivarius entirely through the medium of his magnificent talent. His instrument was originally the property of Count Wielhorskey, a Russian amateur violoncellist, who had a passion for collecting musical instruments. For some reason or other it suddenly dawned on this Russian nobleman that it was impossible to play on all the instruments in his store at once, and that they could not improve standing like waxwork figures under glass cases. So, he conceived the brilliant idea of instituting a competition, the winner of which was to be rewarded with the Stradivarius violoncello. Karl Davidoff was just then touring in Russia and he heard of the Count's challenge. At once he entered himself as a competitor, and, being then at the zenith of his glory, it was only natural that he should carry off the prize easily. He kept it until the end of his life, but it bears many a mark of his rough usage.

The above-mentioned Count Wielhorskey also owned a fine-toned violoncello, which he usually alluded to affectionately as "*the* Amati." This instrument, we believe, was in reality a Ruggieri, but to the Count it was always "*the* Amati." It belonged originally to a Florentine lady of noble birth of the name of Renoncini, and through the instigation and enthusiasm of a certain Italian named Francesco Ciandi, himself a violoncellist in the orchestra of the Italian Opera House at St Petersburg, was brought from its southern home to the Russian court. The Emperor Nicolas presented it to Count Wielhorskey knowing him to be passionately devoted to violoncello playing. It became the Count's favourite instrument, and he scarcely played on any other until old age cramped his fingers and forced him to give up playing entirely. Then, as in the case of the Stradivarius, being averse to sticking it up under a glass case, he presented it to Franz Knetch, solo violinist in the court orchestra, who recounts the gift in his diary under the date 30th October 1850: "To-day Count Wielhorskey presented me with '*the* Amati' violoncello." He also became greatly attached to the instrument and bequeathed it to his sister, who, after his death, was anxious to give it to a museum. But apparently it was again saved from the waxwork type of existence, as Herr Ludwig Grutzmacher, the far-famed violoncellist, played on it for over forty years, and called it "My Amati." The present owner of this fine instrument we believe is a wealthy gentleman in Hamburg.

One of the finest violoncellos made by Nicolo Amati came into Herr Klengel's possession after a good many years of obscurity. The story runs that a young Russian student at Leipsic, discovering his finances to be in a very exhausted condition, bethought himself of a violoncello which had been in his family for many years, but about which he knew nothing. Thinking that the old instrument might possibly have some value, he boldly took it to a pawnbroker's on the chance, and demanded a loan of £5 on it. The pawnbroker in his turn was unable to estimate whether the violoncello was worth such an amount, and, to be on the right side, consulted some experts before giving a reply. The experts quickly realised that they had a very fine Nicolo Amati violoncello before them, and through the medium of the pawnbroker offered the young student £200 if he would sell the violoncello outright. The sum was agreed to by the delighted young Russian. Twenty-four hours after he sold it, Herr Klengel became its owner for about double that sum. Profits in the fiddle trade are certainly swift, but they are not always honest.

Speaking of pawnbrokers, by the way, it is not often that they meet their match in shrewdness. One of the neatest swindles ever perpetrated took place in New York a few years ago, and victimised a well-known, "three-balls" gentleman to the extent of over £30. According to *The New York Sun*, it was one day in May 1902, that a well-known pawnbroker of Allen Street was visited by a shabbily dressed man who asked for a loan on his violin and bow.

"I vas a blayer from Poland," he said, "and my fiddle vas most waluable. I vouldn't lose it for anything."

The pawnbroker offered him something like a guinea on it, and the young violinist accepted it, saying at the same time: "Don't wrab it up. Chust hang it ub der for I vil come and taig it out to-morrow."

The fiddle according to his request was not wrapped up, but placed on a shelf behind the counter. The next day a man with long black hair streaming over his shoulders, and wearing gold-rimmed glasses, entered the pawnshop to inquire the price of some silver-ware. He turned it about, found it was not what he wanted, and, chancing to see the fiddle, asked if he might look at it. The violin and bow were handed to him for inspection and he began to examine them critically.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "at last I haf foundt von of dem! Gott in Himmel! but it is a grandt one."

"A grand what?" asked the pawnbroker.

"A real genuine Rubinsky violin," replied the enraptured foreigner, and whipping it quickly under his chin began suddenly to play.

The more he played the more the pawnbroker became convinced that the instrument was extraordinarily valuable.

"If you will sell dis fiddle to me," said the player, pausing, "I vill gif you tree hundredt dollars for it."

"I can't do that," said the pawnbroker, "because it is not mine to sell. It was only pledged yesterday."

The violinist thereupon demanded the address of the owner, but the pawnbroker, seeing the chance of a "deal," said he could not do that, but, instead, he himself would see the proprietor of the fiddle and ask him if he would sell.

"Ferry vell," said the Polish virtuoso, "here is dwenty dollars to bint the pargain. Eef he vill sell, I vill bay the pallance ven I kome to-morrow."

"Mein Gott!" said the owner of the violin when the pawnbroker visited him the same evening and approached him on the subject of buying the instrument. "I could not pard vid the violin for less than two hundert dollars. It kost me fife hundert tollars in Polandt." The two men sat some time bickering about the sum expected and the sum offered, and at length the pawnbroker laid down $200 and departed with the delightful intention of asking *his* customer $280.

The next day passed, however, without the expected visitor putting in an appearance.

Also the day following passed in the same manner, and the next and the next.

At last the pawnbroker felt a twinge of anxiety. He flew to the address given him by the would-be purchaser and found that no such person was known there. A visit to the house of the former owner of the violin also proved fruitless, for the bird had flown.

The pawnbroker, it is said, did not seek sympathy, well knowing that none is extended to his fraternity, but he occupied himself for some months in trying to straighten his accounts. We could easily light upon numerous tales of swindles in the fiddle trade without difficulty, but as our time is now short, we will content ourselves with quoting this one anecdote, and return to Cremona and its *luthiers*.

Contemporary with Stradivarius, Italy claimed many fine fiddle-makers, indeed, as a matter of fact, there was scarcely a town in Italy that did not possess some adept at the art. In Cremona itself there were many who lived almost at the threshold of Stradivarius' house. Next door to him were

the Begonzi family, and adjoining them was the house of Andreas Guarnerius. Then, but a few steps away in the busy square of St Domenico—now the *Piazza Roma*—Ruggieri, Amati, and Storioni had their workshops. They must have been a hardy lot to remain and compete with the gigantic industry and talent of Stradivarius, but they came through the ordeal in some cases grandly. Andreas Guarnerius, for instance, was a steady workman, who made several violoncellos, though nothing calculated to "strike one all of a heap." One of his best violoncellos was that which was preserved for many years in Mr Gillot's collection, but even this did not command a higher sum than £73 (including a nameless Italian violoncello), at the sale by auction which took place after Mr Gillot's death in April 1872. Another violoncello by the redoubtable Andreas belonged to Beethoven's patron, Prince Joseph Francis Maximilian. This instrument, with several other interesting gambas and lutes, was found in the old chapel of the deserted castle of Prince Lobkovitz in the last days of October, 1872, curiously enough but six months after the sale of Mr Gillot's Guarnerius. The instrument discovered in the chapel was considered so excellent that it was selected to be shown in the Cremonese section of the Vienna Exhibition in that year.

Peter Guarnerius, brother of Andreas' son Joseph, also worked in Cremona during the latter years of Stradivarius' life. He made some especially good violoncellos, large and broad in model, with original, well-cut scrolls, and excellent purfling and varnish. He got hold of some grand timber, which he used for the bellies of many of his violoncellos; wood wide in grain, but beautifully even. We saw a handsome violoncello by this maker but a few days ago in the hands of Miss May Fussell, who has employed it for all her concert work since 1894. The tone is full and rich.

In the same city another eminent maker, the eldest member of a large family of *luthiers*, Francesco Rugger, was a worthy rival of Stradivarius. He occupied a prominent position as a maker, and inscribed himself on his tickets "Francesco Rugger detto il Per, Cremona, 16—" Various definitions of the true significance of the *il Per* adopted by Rugger have been put forth. Some claim that he thereby announced himself as the "eldest" or "father," others that it alluded to his partiality for pear-tree wood as material for his instruments. Read literally, one might easily imagine that the "il Per" belonged to some catch phrase or proverb, possibly a nickname by which the maker was familiarly known to his friends. All the old fiddle-makers adopted some trade-mark—generally extracted from the calendar of saints—Rugger's "il Per" might therefore have been a familiar sobriquet which acted for him in this capacity.

The work of this maker is quite after the Amati type, though in advancing this statement we do not for a moment intend to charge him with being a copyist. Delicacy, finished workmanship, a graceful sound-hole, transparent varnish well laid on, these are the chief characteristics of Rugger's work. Like Stradivarius, he at first went with the times, modelling his violoncellos on a large scale (31-5/16 inches in length), but he appears to have seen the error of his ways before his contemporary, as previous to 1700 he made small violoncellos measuring but a little over 28 inches in length.

An exceptionally fine violoncello of Francesco Rugger was the cause of a lawsuit some years ago, on account of its falling a victim to false labelling, whereby it purported to be the work of Antonio Stradivarius. This handsome instrument belonged at one time to King George IV., who was an enthusiastic amateur violoncellist but scarcely an adept. There is a story told that when King George was Prince of Wales he played the violoncello one day before Handel, and desiring to hear what the great man thought of his performance inquired, “How do you think I play?” It was impossible to reply to such a question truthfully, coming as it did from a royal interrogator, so the wily Teuton had to temporise, “Like a Brince, your Royal Highness,” he answered with warmth, “like a Brince!”

The Duke of Cambridge was the next owner of the pseudo Stradivarius, after which it passed into the hands of Mr Corsby, by whom it was sold to Mr Shuttleworth. In 1877, the same instrument was sold by auction among the collection of musical instruments put upon the market by the death of Mr Parera of Manchester. It figured in the catalogue as an Antonio Stradivarius, and realised the sum of £370.

Several eminent artists have employed Francesco Rugger’s violoncellos for concert work. Ladislaus Zelenka, professor of the violoncello at the Conservatoire at Odessa, and former pupil of Herr Hugo Becker, possessed a very fine violoncello by this maker. Mr Bertie Withers has also an excellent “il Per” instrument dated 1679, and the favourite violoncello of the eminent English violoncellist, Mr W. E. Whitehouse, is a very handsome, small-sized Rugger, in a high state of preservation.

Pietro Giacomo Rugger, who was at work in Brescia at the same time as Francesco of the same name, pursued his labours in Cremona, was another member of the family who made violoncellos of modified dimensions. There are so many points of similarity between his instruments and those of Johannes Baptiste Rugger, who worked both at Cremona and Brescia, that conjecture credits them with joining forces. The violoncellos of Giacomo are distinguished by beautiful varnish and elegant sound holes, but the scrolls lack breadth and boldness. Signor Piatti owned a fine characteristic example of this maker’s work which passed into the possession of Miss Muriel Handley. It is dated 1717. The gamut of prices realised from time to time by this violoncello is one of the many revelations of the caprices of fiddle dealing. Before Signor Piatti became its owner, it had been sold for £30, Piatti parted with it for £500 (!), and after that it was insured for £800.

Milan boasted a favourite pupil of Nicolo Amati, Paolo Grancino, an excellent violoncello-maker, who, doubtless, was one of those who found the competition too much for him in Cremona and sought fresh fields. His instruments are reminiscent of his master, the wood and workmanship good, but the tone is hardly suited to a concert hall. A better craftsman was his son, Giovanni, who also practised his art in Milan in 1703.

In Naples there was Alessandro Gagliano whom the Prince Joussupoff, in his “Luthomonographie” (Frankfort, S.M., 1856), announces to have been the son of a marquis of that name. According to this author, Gagliano, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, was compelled to flee from Naples, in order to escape the vigilance of the police, who were endeavouring to capture him on account of a murder he had committed. The hunted man withdrew to a forest in the neighbourhood of Marghanetto Borgo, and while there, passed the weary hours—for want of better occupation—in carving violin-shaped instruments on the trunks of the trees. Discovering by this means that his hand was apt at such work, he adopted the profession of violin making, and as soon as the police had grown weary of the pursuit boldly established a workshop in Naples. We cannot vouch for the veracity of this story; fiddles have a trick of creating romances, but Gagliano’s sojourn in the wood is generally considered to have been the cause of his excellently chosen pine, and good quality sycamore.

Alessandro’s son, Nicolo, made some remarkably good violoncellos resembling Stradivarius’. The varnish is much darker than his father’s.

Venice claimed one of the best makers of violoncellos of his time, in Stradivarius’ pupil, Domenico Montagnana. The “mighty Venetian,” as Mr Charles Reade called him, found the market too much

monopolised by his master, and after a short trial in Cremona removed to Venice. He soon attained great popularity there, and during the latter part of Stradivarius' life sent out magnificent basses and violoncellos from his workshop. His knowledge of thicknesses, material, and varnish, which he brought with him from the great Cremona school, placed him head and shoulders above his Venetian contemporaries. The gentle curves of his model, the grandly cut scroll—which even surpassed the beauty of his master's work—and, above all, the rich tone, are the qualities which combine in making Montagnana's violoncellos perfect instruments. The late Mrs Lewis Hill was the owner of one of the finest known violoncellos by this maker. It belonged for many years to the French musician and composer, Félicien David (born 1810, died 1876), and after his death it was sold to the well-known French violoncellist, M. Francois of Douai, who retained it for some years and then sold it to an amateur, Signor Parenti, who ultimately sold it to Messrs Hill & Son. In 1902, Mr W. H. Squire purchased it of that firm on behalf of Mrs Lewis Hill, in whose possession it was employed to complete her fine Quartet, consisting of two Stradivarius violins, an Amati viola, and this violoncello. The instrument is a typical example in every way, the proportions being untouched, and is now the property of Mr W. H. Squire, to whom it was bequeathed by Mrs Hill.

Rome claimed David Tecchler as the maker, *par excellence*, in Stradivarius' time. He continued to be the most prominent maker of that city of dried bones and priests, for quite half-a-century, and gained repute as a maker of handsome basses and violoncellos—the latter mostly large sized. He also gained experience in Venice, and Salzburg, gathering his knowledge of good timber from the first, and an unfortunate stiff sound-hole from the second.

Returning to Cremona towards the latter years of Stradivarius' life we find a new and excellent maker—his pupil, Carlo Bergonzi—firmly established near his master. At one time he was deemed Stradivarius' best pupil, whereas the Cremona master's son, Francesco—whose work has been frequently attributed to Bergonzi—in reality surpassed his. The beauty of form and rare quality of tone which characterise Bergonzi's violoncellos bear testimony to the great school in which he was trained. He believed in putting plenty of wood in his instruments, a practice which has allowed them to withstand the wear and tear of centuries of usage better than those of many of his contemporaries. The Manchester violoncellist Herr Carl Fuchs—a favourite pupil of Davidoff—had a grand Bergonzi violoncello, a couple of years ago, and the instrument usually employed for concert work by Mr W. H. Squire is also a fine example of this maker, which he purchased from the widow of Herr G. Libotton.

While all these makers were occupied in developing the instrument itself, there were other influences working to bring it to more worthy uses. The rapid progress in violin playing, and the establishment of a clearer and better method of fingering, had its effect on the violoncello. With a surer system of shifting came a firmer grip of the hand and a more sonorous tone. The old violists could think of no other way of balancing the incongruity of sound which existed between the "shrieking violin" and its duller companion, than by the use of double the number of bass-viols to prevent its "outcrying" the lower parts. Never employ the violin, cautions Thomas Mace, "but with the proviso, viz. Be sure to make an equal provision for them by addition and strength of basses so that they may not outcry the rest of the music (the basses especially)." A thorough musician, and an artist, *jusque au fond*, Corelli was one of the earliest composers to realise the ineffectual use of the bass-viol with the violin; and did not scruple to discard its services for that of the violoncello. Besides his employment of it in his numerous sonatas for *due violini e violoncello*, etc., he also adopted the custom of an accompanying violoncello for his solo performances. For a long time this rôle of travelling about and accompanying violinists, was played by violoncellists, who—although they were not always exact in their execution or accompanying—by this means, at least, raised it out of its low position in the orchestras. The possibilities of the instrument for solo purposes began to suggest itself to performers, and the shortcomings of the gamba more comprehended. As early as 1691, tentative efforts to bring the violoncello forward as a solo instrument were being made, and a method, or treatise, on the art of playing the instrument in this manner was written by a gifted artist in Parma in that year. Among the many works in connection with this subject which we have perused, we lately came across a rare pamphlet describing three interesting old musical instruments—*i.e.* a harp, a carved violin, and a carved violoncello—preserved in the Museum

Artistico Estense in Modena. This little *brochure* came from the pen of Count Valdrighi—one of the most industrious and indefatigable of musical historians—and was printed for private circulation only. It is altogether a most fascinating little pamphlet, and, although numbering but fifteen pages, lacks none of the flowing metaphor and grace so indelibly associated with Italian literature; moreover the description of each instrument is supported by excellent photographs. The exquisitely carved violoncello of which we have a picture before us (p. 174), owes its rich ornamentation to Domenico Galli of Parma, a wood-carver of great repute at the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth. According to Count Valdrighi, Galli made this sumptuous violoncello for Frances II., Duke of Modena, and presented it to him together with a treatise on the violoncello as a solo instrument entitled *Trattenimento musicale sopra il violoncello a solo ausaciato all' Altezza Serima de Francesco II. duc di Modena Reggio*. The title-page of this interesting MS., which is preserved in the Bibliothèque of the Estense Museum, is gracefully decorated by Galli himself, and the date, 8th September 1691, furnishes us with the information that this work is the earliest known attempt at a method for the violoncello. The wealth of carved ornamentation on Galli's violoncello and violin were designed with a special purpose. Thus, while the exquisite little figure of Orpheus which adorns the centre of the back of the violin alludes to the peace enjoyed by the people of Modena under the temperate government of Frances II. and also to the musical tastes of the Duke, the violoncello dabbles in politics and religion. Hercules slaying the hydra is meant to depict the character of the Duke's nephew, while the figure of Minerva with the cloak of Pallas about her shoulders represents Mary Queen of England, who had assumed her father's rights. The lions are symbolical of Mary's father, James II., at that time an alien under the protection of Louis XIV., *Le Roi Soleil*, portrayed by the sun supported by two figures, over the carved form of Hercules. Besides the main point which Galli strove to represent—namely, a strong desire that the Catholic party might be victorious and the house of Este restored to the throne of England—the violoncello is covered with delicately carved representations of all things appertaining to the mineral, vegetable, and animal world. Flowers, fruits, shells, nymphs, satyrs, form a thickly encrusted background to the main theme. The fairylike execution of these is amazing, and worthy of a Grinley Gibbons. If fault were to be found it lies alone in the over-generous details of the design, yet the whole is so skilfully wrought that this cannot be looked upon as a defect. Not a petal of the flowers, not a line in the delicate shells, not a lock in the sirens' hair that is not perfect, and well fitted to be the satellite of the main scheme. The ribs of the violoncello are as profusely covered with similar embellishments as the back.

CARVED VIOLONCELLO BY GALLI.
MODENA, 1690.

Truly “a thing of beauty is a joy for ever,” and time only increases its loveliness when it is cherished. Galli’s *chefs-d’œuvre* will always find admirers, as indeed will all the gracefully decorated musical instruments of past centuries. Look at this *gamba de luxe*, one can call it nothing less, close beside us. Where will you find more faultless inlaying in ivory and tortoise-shell? Most pleasing to the eye, is it not? Yet its very beauty exemplifies one of the greatest pitfalls of the older *luthiers*. To the ancient maker, ornamentation was as irresistible as was the Lorelei’s golden hair to the sailors of the Rhine. Most Italian makers had realised the deleterious effects of inlaying and carving before Stradivarius’ time, but many of the great Cremona master’s German contemporaries were still caught in its delusive toils. Dwelling in Hamburg there was an unequalled stringed-instrument maker named Joachim Tielke, who fashioned his lutes of real ivory and ebony, inlaid the necks thereof with gold, and silver, and mother-of-pearl, while the pegs were formed of the finest tortoise-shell. These lutes were destined for the slim hands of the satin-clad dilettanti of the day, who boldly faced the many difficulties and intricacies of the instrument for the sake of its beauty. According to Mattheson,[31] if a lutanist attained the age of eighty, one might be certain that he had spent sixty years in tuning; a tedious operation, as the lute never remained long in tune. An older writer, Thomas Mace, in his “Musick Monument,” London, 1676, discussing the shortcomings of the lute, seriously advises that it should be kept, in the daytime, between the rug and blankets of a bed which was constantly used. It is hardly surprising that the exasperating sensitiveness to atmospheric changes to which this instrument was subject was at once the delight and despair of its votaries, and that makers observing these difficulties should attempt to please their patrons by ornamenting other less fragile instruments in lute fashion. Tielke of Hamburg at all events transferred his lute decorations *en bloc* to his gambas, as this instrument and some others reveal.

The gamba of this make which is before us has unfortunately been fitted by some vandal with a

machine head, but otherwise is as perfect as when it left Tielke's hands over three hundred years ago. No doubt, the original pegs were of ivory tipped with a dainty jewel to correspond with those which were let into the neck. Before it became the property of the South Kensington Museum it was owned by Mr Simon Andrew Forster, the joint author of the well-known "History of the Violin." Two excellent pictures of this instrument are included in this volume, and also the information that Mr Forster purchased it from Mr John Cause, the artist, who had lent it to the directors of the "Ancient Concerts," held in the Hanover Square Rooms in the spring of 1845. These concerts were organised to take place in this obsolete concert hall by a small body of aristocratic music lovers headed by the Prince Consort, and it was under his auspices that the second concert of the season was not only devoted to the sixteenth-century music, but was performed on the ancient instruments themselves. M. Fetis, at that time director of the Brussels Conservatoire, supplied a number of old instruments from the Musée of the Conservatoire, and the orchestra on the evening of the 16th April 1845, presented,—what *The Illustrated London News* terms,—"a grotesque sight." There was a "Violino Francesi," says the above authority, a "viola da gamba" (now before us), a "viola d'Amore," and a "viola da Braccio," a "Theorbo," "violino," "guitar," "harp," and an "organ," played respectively by Messrs Loder, Hatton, J. F. Loder, Ventura, Dragonetti, Don Cubra, T. Wright, and Lucas. The complete programme of the concert may be seen in full in *The Illustrated London News* for 19th April 1845, suffice it here to say that the two *pièces de résistance* comprised a concerto, played on Antique Instruments, and composed by Emile del Cavalieri (1600), and an anonymous fifteenth-century Romanesca, performed in a like manner. Both Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort, appeared to be highly delighted with the concert, and at the end, invited Mr Hatton to play a solo on his viola da gamba in the tea-room.

Since this galaxy of musical instruments of the past astonished Londoners, we have had many other interesting attempts at recalling the ancient viols to the concert platform, but notwithstanding the success of these appearances, there is no danger of the gamba ever getting the upper hand of the violoncello again. The latter has steadily taken its place as the leader since the first half of the eighteenth century, when the great Italian *luthiers* busied themselves with its graceful form, and the performances of Franciscello first enchanted Scarlatti in Rome, and then astonished all Italy. From that time until the present, makers and players have gone hand in hand. Franciscello's marvellous achievements inspired others to emulate his powers of attraction, among others Antonio Vaudini, who was Tartini's great friend and travelled about with him for some time, for the sole purpose of accompanying him. This eccentric association of the high and low instruments belonging to the string quartet led to violoncellists adopting the system of fingering employed for the smaller instrument. The old way of holding the bow in the manner of the viol players—*i.e.* as double-bass players frequently hold it now—was also discarded for the violinist's method. Then Antonionetti of Milan and Lanzetti, violoncellist to the King of Sardinia, published some sonatas for the violoncello, which, according to Monsieur Vidal in his "Instruments a Archét," reveal that the capacities of the instrument to the extent of an octave and a half were known to them. Curiously enough, at this point the zeal shown by the Italians in developing the violoncello somewhat cooled, and the important invention of employing the thumb was left for the Frenchman—Berteau. A few years before this violoncellist's death in 1756, Michael Corrette published his "Methode, theorique et pratique, pour apprendre en peu de temps le Violoncello ..." Paris, 1741, a work which was the first of its kind. He still adhered to the system of fingering the diatonic scale by stopping whole tones with successive fingers, and his remarks relating to the several systems prevailing among violoncellists, together with his instructions, for *three ways of holding the bow* , are indicative of the unsettled state of technique at that time. This condition of uncertainty among players continued until towards the end of the century when Jean Louis Duport published his carefully written "Essai sur le doigté du violoncelle, et sur le conduite de l'archét." This was the first method in which the correct mode of fingering—*i.e.* a finger for each successive semitone—appeared. Duport's system was too sound to be anything else than universally adopted, and each successive writer of violoncello schools—Romberg, Dotzauer, Grutzmacher, etc.—have retained the fundamental principles laid down by Duport. To-day there is little executed by violinists that virtuosos of the violoncello cannot accomplish, if they are inclined,—but,—talking about the obvious is always tedious especially at the end of a long day, and we feel that it is nearly time to bid you adieu. So

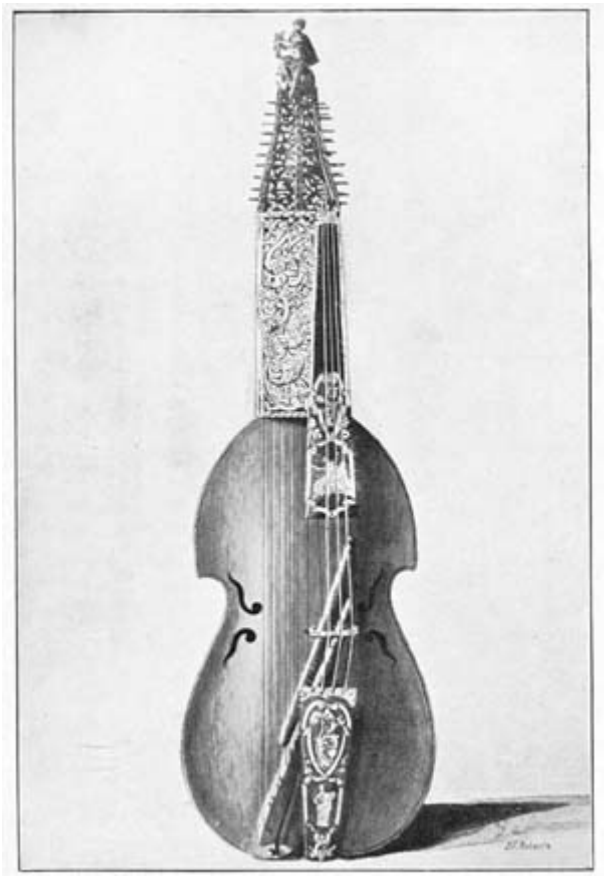
much has already been written by eminent writers on the subject of makers and players subsequent to Stradivarius—of the German, French, and English schools—that it would be superfluous to give a descriptive list of them here. The question as to whether Jacobus Stainer and Joseph Guarnerius del Jesu made violoncellos will always be one of the many subjects to argue about. Yet, apparently they have left evidence that they did make violoncellos. This and other doubtful points may be found adequately discussed in such works as Laurent Grillet's "Les Ancètres de Violon," George Hart's "The Violin," Anton Vidal's "Les Instruments a Archét," Von Wasielewski's "Die Violoncelle," Luigi Farconi's "Il Violoncello, il violoncellesta e Violoncellesti," etc., and to those who seek to dig deeper for themselves, there is the British Museum, and the many Museums, and storehouses, of information, to be found in every country.

Our chief aim during these chats has been to seek out the uncommon rather than to preach, therefore we will end as we have begun, and before parting call your attention to the handsome violoncello belonging to that gifted artist Herr Paul Ludwig, made by a maker of the name of "Chioddi" of whom we can find no record, and as we bid you a regretful adieu, present you with the history of two eminent women gamba players, and the first violoncello prodigy known in this country.

The fog has cleared and we may now dash through endless slush to our respective homes. The pleasant hours are over, let us hope for future meetings, but if this may not come to pass, the memory of to-day will be ever cherished by us.

"FEMALE violinists are rare, the violin being we do not know why deemed an unfeminine instrument....

"Female violoncellists are rarer still, and we have never met with one. A young German lady, Mademoiselle von Katow, is delighting Paris by her performances."—*The Spectator*, 14th April 1860



VIOLA DI BORDONE.

A variety of the Viola da Gamba peculiar to Germany and favoured by amateurs in the Eighteenth Century. This instrument is in the South Kensington Museum.

CHAT THE FIFTH

Two Eighteenth-century Women Players of the Viola da Gamba

THE Empress of Germany well defined the attainments of Pericles' ideal woman—who was to be prized if no one spoke of her either in praise or blame—when she announced that a woman's life should be made up of clothes, children, cooking and church. A century or so ago, such a statement would have been quite unnecessary, for our great-grandmothers welcomed each of these obligations as the sweetest duties of life. But, somehow, for some unaccountable reason, much of woman's tender grace seems to have faded with the Victorian era, and to-day "*nous avons changé tout cela*." Children, clothes, cooking, are the very things—except the clothes—that the modern woman, with her club and other interests, deals with most lightly. She would far rather rush into the battle of life and fight like her Amazon ancestry. She would far rather assume some definite career like her brethren of the sterner sex. Perhaps she does not cut quite such a good figure as she did fifty years ago, but her unceasing efforts to attain prominence have revealed her to be dowered, now and again, with an intellect capable of undertaking all the duties dear to her departed sisters, and rendering service in other provinces besides.

The emancipation of woman is a steady growth, and to-day there are few professions in which she does not compete side by side with man. In the rough and tumble of the battle, she must lose much of her ephemeral qualities, but, fortunately, there are careers open to her in the sphere of Art where her feminine evanescence is the principal charm of her work. In music more especially, her emotional value and quick instinct are indispensable, and here she retains her personality with ease. Whatever may be the general opinion of woman's work in the realm of musical composition, her success as an executant is undeniable. She cannot perhaps build Masses like Bach, or Oratorios like Handel, but she can interpret the works of the great masters with much spontaneous insight, and one cannot forget that she has written some of our most popular songs. "Annie Laurie" was the work of Lady Jane Scott; Lady Arthur Hill wrote "In the Gloaming," and Lady Scott Gattie composed the widely-known ballad "Douglas, Tender and True." "The Campbells are comin'," "The Land o' the Leal," and "The Laird o' Cockpen" were all the work of Lady Nairne, while the languorous melody of "Juanita" emanated from Mrs Elizabeth Morton's pen. Undoubtedly woman's most appropriate place in music is as a singer, for, look back as far as you will, you will find her occupied in singing. The Egyptian women danced and sang to the accompaniment of clapping hands. The Hebrew women pointed the story of their songs with dramatic actions; they sang gaily at festivals, and chanted dirges at funerals, and, although the men—mark you—*might* join in if they felt inclined to do so, yet the women were the acknowledged leaders. Then, again, one of the cherished duties of those graceful women—the Greek Muses—was to sing songs at the banquets of the immortals, and the principal occupation of the Sirens, who sat upon rocks, was to sing ditties to the passing mariners. The record of woman's singing is certainly ahead of man's, and it is regrettable that in these days she does not continue to be ahead of him. It should be woman's prerogative to sing, while men could monopolise the more technical branches of music, such as composing, and playing the flute and string and brass monsters. Go to one of the fashionable concerts devoted to that poor pale thing, "The Modern Ballad," and see if the incongruity presented by six feet of muscular manhood warbling about stars kissing, and moons flirting, does not jar your sense of the fitness of things. Listen to the same sentiments voiced by a woman, however, and you will find the incongruity vanishes, and mere trash becomes sentiment.[32]

Unfortunately every woman is not blessed with a melodious singing voice, yet the instinct to sing being in her, she has turned to the best imitation of the human voice she can find—*i.e.* the violin and the violoncello. To-day these instruments, and even the viola, count innumerable votaries, both professional and amateur, among the fair sex, but who was the first brave lady to "saw the catgut with the horse's tail" history does not recount. Where history fails however myth steps in and supplies us with the information that the invention of producing musical sounds from a stretched string originated in the twang of Diana's hunting bow. Then the beautiful poetess Sappho—whose

name has been handed down to us much besmirched for the reason that she was in advance of her time—is assigned the honour of inventing the fiddle-bow mounted with horse hair. St Cecilia—whose name now graces numberless Musical Societies—is said to have united instrumental with vocal music in divine worship, about the year 230. Little is known accurately of this saint, but legendary lore pronounces her to have been a noble Roman lady who embraced Christianity, and was forced by her parents into a union with a pagan named Valerian. She eventually converted both her husband and his brother to her faith, and they all three suffered martyrdom for their convictions. The passing phase in her history which relates that she frequently united instrumental music with that of her voice in praising the Lord, has inspired artists to paint and mould her in an attitude of praise with the organ and other musical instruments by her side. Whether she played the viola da gamba, or indeed any instrument, is a fact now lost in oblivion; in any case Domenichino has exquisitely represented her in the act of drawing the bow across a handsome bass-viol in his immortal picture now in the Louvre Collection in Paris. After St Cecilia a prominent English lady, who was the daughter of "Old King Cole" of fiddling fame, was a skilled musician according to Geoffrey of Monmouth. She is apparently a solitary example of feminine musical talent in England at that date.

The position occupied by woman in the music of mediæval times had greatly deteriorated from that occupied by St Cecilia, yet she was still thought worthy of portrayal, and we find a picture of her playing a viol with four strings on the painted roof of Peterborough Cathedral, which dates from about the year 1194. Two years later the names of several lady minstrels or "jongleuresses" figure in the code of laws which the Corporation of Minstrels presented in 1321 to the "Prefect" of Paris for signature. Heading the women is "Isabel la Roufelle," and after her "Marcel la Chastaine, Liegart, fame Bieuveignant, Marguerite, la fame au Morne," etc., and lastly "Adeline, fame de l'Angloise" and "Isabian la Lorraine." The significant "fame" (wife) which occurs several times in the above list helps us to a peep at the life of the faithful spouse of the jongleur. Decidedly her attainments as a female jongleur, roaming the country with her husband, were absolutely opposed to the dictum of Pericles. The lives of these women were hard, and they were but poorly paid in comparison to their male brethren. It is on record that the Queen's male "fiddler" in 1497 was paid "in rewarde" £1, 6s. 8d. while the two shillings paid by Henry VIII. to "a woman that singeth with a fiddle" is a pathetic revelation of the proportionately low value set upon woman's artistic efforts at that time.

Among early amateurs of the bass-viol we find Anne of Cleves, who frequently amused her self by playing on a viol with six strings after her retirement from the turgid trials of her matrimonial life. The picture of a lady similarly occupied, which occurs in a fifteenth-century manuscript entitled "Les Echecs Amoreux," shows us that the French ladies were also votaries of the viol at that time. In truth, the bass-viol was then a very fashionable instrument both in Europe and England. Shakespeare, who echoed the doings of the day with unerring exactitude, frequently employs the viol in a synonymous sense as, for instance, in *Pericles*, where the character that gives the title addresses his daughter, Antiochus:

> "You're a fair viol and your sense the strings
> Who, finger'd to make man his lawful music,
> Would draw heaven down."

Again in *Richard II.* the Duke of Norfolk, upon realising the full despair of the word "banishment," bursts forth into the grand speech beginning:

> "And now my tongue's use is to me no more
> Than an unstring'd viol or a harp."

In *Twelfth Night* playing the viola da gamba is mentioned as significant of good character. When Maria calls Sir Andrew Aguecheek a fool and prodigal, Sir Toby Belch defends him with:

> "Fye, that you'll say so! he plays o' the viol di gamboys...."

In a ballad of the time of Charles I., which occurs in Mr Chappelle's book, "Music of the Olden Time," among the lady's numerous accomplishments it is recorded that:

"She sings and she plays
And she knows all the keys
Of the viol de gambo, or lute."

In Mr Pepys' day, ladies cultivated the viola da gamba with great zest, and were not frowned upon for doing so, but the woman was bold who dared to play the violin. Indeed, the antipathy against that instrument for ladies was still felt at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Spohr, writing from Gotha in 1806, mentions his beloved Dorette's skill as a violinist. But although admiring her aptitude for that instrument he was averse to seeing his future wife adopt it: "I advised her to discontinue the practice of that instrument so unbecoming to females," he remarks in his most lofty manner. Mr Pepys, under the date 6th June 1661, makes a similar allusion to women playing the violin: "Here came two young gentlewomen to see Mr Holland, and one of them could play pretty well on the viallin, but how these ignorant people did cry her up for it!" Very different is the diarist's manner of recounting the performance of a certain Mrs Jaggard on the viola da gamba: "After dinner I to the office ... but business not coming we broke up, and I thither again and took my wife ... to visit my Ladys Jemimah and Paulina Montagu and Mrs Elizabeth Pickering, whom we find at their father's new house in Lincoln's In Fields; but the house all in dirt. They received us well enough; but I did not endeavour to carry myself over familiarly with them; and so after a little stay, there coming in presently after us my Lady Aberguenny and other ladies, we back again by coach ... and thence to Jaggards again where a very good supper and great store of plate, and above all after supper Mrs Jaggard did at my entreaty play on the Vyall, but so well as I did not think any woman in England could and but few masters. I must confess it did mightily surprise me, though I knew heretofore that she could play, but little thought so well." Mr Pepys himself took keen pleasure in playing the viol, and prided himself in being the possessor of "as good a theorbo viall and viallin as is in England." Mrs Pepys was also permitted by her lord to play the viol, and a certain Mr Gregory, carefully selected by Mr Pepys, "he being an able and sober man," gave her lessons. The third member of the Pepys' *ménage* to play the viol was Mrs Pepys' maid, the coquettish Mercer, who had as pretty a talent for dancing a jig which, according to the gallant Mr Pepys, "she does the best I ever saw," as playing on that instrument. Professional lady gambists were apparently few in England in the eminent Diarist's time, but in France they already figured in the Musique du Chambre du Roi, as a Mademoiselle Heléne Sercamann is mentioned among the "Basses de viole" in 1694. A year later there were three lady "Basses de viole," Mademoiselles de Caix l'aîne, de Caix cadette, and de Caix troisième, with their brother in the same band. The French viola da gamba player, Sainte Colombe, had two daughters who played with him at concerts at his house. One of them, says Titon du Tillet, played the viola da gamba and the other the "dessus" or treble viol, and together with their father they frequently played trios.

In the eighteenth century the cult of the gamba amongst English ladies was at its height. It became an indispensable piece of furniture in every house, and no drawing-room was complete without a viola da gamba hung upon the wall, and oh! what a godsend it proved when a dull visitor strained the hostess's powers of entertainment to their last point.

It was in this century that Dr Burney in his colossal "History of Music" says: "This year and the preceding year [1721-22], Mrs Sarah Ottey frequently performs solos at concerts on three several instruments: harpsichord, bass-viol, and violin." Although this little paragraph has been frequently quoted, no one appears to have cared to peer deeper into Mrs Ottey's career. For some reason she has been allowed to live solely on the reputation of these few lines. Thanks, however, to the fact that our British Museum owns Dr Burney's valuable collection of newspapers, the felicity of digging up a little more of Mrs Sarah Ottey has been possible to us. Apparently her first appearance took place on the 9th March 1720, for *The Daily Post* of 5th March of that year contains the following advertisement:—

> At Stationers' Hall, near Ludgate, on Wednesday next being the 9th of March, will be performed a Consort of Vocal and Instrumental Musick by the best Masters. For the benefit of Mrs Sarah Ottey, wherein she will perform several Pieces alone on the Harpsichord, Bass Viol, and Violin. To begin exactly at Six a Clock. Tickets to be had at

5s. each, at Mrs Anderson's at St James's-Gate, at Rosine's, White's, and Williams's Chocolate Houses, at Mr Hare's in Cornhill, Mrs Ottey's in Honey-Lane Market, and at the Hall-Door the said night.

Her next important appearance took place two years later at the "Theatre Royal in Lincoln's Inn Fields," where she performed on the three several instruments on the 27th of February 1721. The entertainment was announced "For the Benefit of Mrs Ottey." A year later she is advertised to play at the same theatre, and the announcement gives the added information that Mrs Ottey's husband had something to do with the "Carpenter's Arms," and that it is her last appearance. These quaint old advertisements are always amusing, so we will not hesitate to give the announcement of the fair gambist's final appearance in full.

FOR THE BENEFIT OF MRS SARAH OTTEY[33]

At the Theatre Royal, in Lincoln's Inn Fields, on Tuesday being the 27th February, will be perform'd a comedy call'd Love makes a man, or The Fop's Fortune, in which will be performed several pieces of musick on the bass-viol, harpsichord and violin by Mrs Ottey (being the last time of her appearing in publick), with several entertainments of dancing.

Tickets to be had at Mr William's coffee-house in St James's Street, and at Mr Ottey's at the Carpenter's Arms in Honey-Lane Market.

Apparently Mrs Ottey's career as an *artiste* extended over but three years—that is, of course, if we are to believe the announcement that it was her last appearance in public on the 27th February 1722/3. In these days such a statement would imply that the said *artist* or *artiste* was good for several farewell performances, and a tour round the world as well. But the subjects of King George I., being far removed from twentieth-century customs, were perhaps more veracious in their notifications. Mr and Mrs Ottey having feathered their nest at the Carpenter's Arms, where the lady's talented performances were a great attraction to the patrons of the tavern, a little stretch of the imagination may easily see them migrating to a snug little farm in the country, where their dreams of rose bowers and new milk could be indulged in freely for the rest of their lives. Whether this was the true cause of Mrs Ottey's withdrawal from public life or not, we cannot say, but certain it is that she kept her word, for there is no trace of any further concert appearances in London after the 27th February 1722/3.

About fifteen years after Mrs Sarah Ottey's last bow to a London audience, a baby, who was destined to become a beautiful and talented woman, was presented to Thomas Ford by his wife, *née* Champion. The auspicious event took place in a house near the Temple, on the 22nd February 1737, and created the usual stir among the happy couple's relations, who moved among the *haute monde*. Thomas Ford himself was a clerk of the arraigns, one of his brothers was the Queen's physician, and the other—Gilbert Ford—occupied a high position as Governor-General of Jamaica. As niece of two such eminent men, and also being dowered with a wealth of beauty and talent, Ann—as her parents christened her—grew up among gentle surroundings, and was received by, and made a favourite of, the most fashionable society. Long before she was twenty, she had tasted of the intoxicating delights of admiration to an extent which would have been sufficient to turn most young girls' heads. Hone had painted her in the character of a muse, the Earl of Chesterfield had extolled her dancing, and many a lordly *beaux* had fluttered at her feet. But although she flirted, and played many a dangerous game with her admirers, Ann Ford was endowed with an intellect that sought for something else besides the pastime of varied flirtations. "She is excellent in music, and loves solitude," wrote one lord to another about her, "and has unmeasurable affectations."

Not the least of these so-called "affectations" alluded to by her adorer, were Ann Ford's musical gifts, which she developed with all the powers of her culture-loving mind. Her voice and singing were praised by the most excellent critics of the day, and by many she was esteemed to be quite equal to the favourite Mrs Billington as a vocalist. In one respect, there is no doubt that she

surpassed the latter, for one of Ann Ford's most admired characteristics was the delightful manner in which she could accompany her songs on the guitar or viola da gamba. Like attracts like, and it was only natural, the talents of this clever lady in due course drew the attention of the best musicians of the day. She established a sort of musical *salon* which was held each Sunday at her house, and to these came Arne, Tenducci, Rauzzini, Pinto, and a host of musical celebrities and fashionable dilettanti. Nothing delighted the music-loving hostess more than these weekly opportunities of welcoming her artist friends, but there was one sting to be found in her cup of happiness, which took the form of her truly British parent, Ford *père*. He objected strongly to his daughter's public display of her talents, and neglected no opportunity of showing his disapproval. In spite of his remonstrances, in spite of his displeasure, his spirited daughter still continued to hold her *réunions* each week, and also frequently performed at her friends' houses.

The abrupt ending of a more than ordinary *affaire de cœur* with a married man, "a Person of Distinction" brought the climax. Ann Ford decided to fly in the teeth of her parent's displeasure. She would give a series of Subscription Concerts at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket. In vain did the father forbid the whole thing, and finally resorting to threats, the daughter flew from the paternal roof to the house of a friend. Immediately Ford *père* procured a magistrate's warrant wherewith he secured the person of his wayward child and brought her home. But neither warrants, nor lock and key, could deter Ann Ford from her purpose, and she managed to elude her father's vigilance and escape again. The sensationalism caused by these incidents brought friends old and new thronging round the distressed lady. The heart of aristocracy was touched, and the first of Ann Ford's series of subscription concerts on the 18th March 1760 furnished her with £1,500. Still her troubles were not at an end, for her father, on the night of the concert, employed a number of ruffians to surround the theatre and these were only dispersed by Lord Sackville's threats to send for a detachment of the Guards.

The programme of this first concert was included in the following advertisement which appeared in *The Public Advertiser* on the 17th March 1760:—

MISS FORD'S FIRST SUBSCRIPTION CONCERT

> will be to-morrow the 18th instant at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket. As the Pit, Boxes, and Gallery are the same Price, the latter will be equally illuminated with wax-candles.
>
> First Part. Overture of Pasquali: Song by Miss Ford, Voi Legete; Concerto Hautboy, Mr Simpson; Song, Miss Ford, Gentle Youth, etc.; Solo, Miss Ford, on the Viol di Gamba.
>
> Second Part. Concerto Bassoon, Mr Miller; Song, Miss Ford, Sparge Amar; Solo Violin, Mr Pinto, Song, Return O God of Host, Full piece of French Horns.
>
> Tickets at half-a-guinea each, to be had at the Theatre; at Mr Deard's; at Mr Garden's in St Paul's Church Yard; and at Mr Walsh's in Catherine-Street. No Persons to be admitted behind the Scenes.
>
> To begin at Seven o'Clock.
>
> No more tickets will be delivered than the house will contain.

The second concert took place on the 25th of March, when she is announced to take the "Vocal Parts" and play "a solo on the Viol di Gambo" as well as "a Concerto on the Guittar."

Money being plentiful, the announcement of Ann Ford's third concert on the 7th April is more lavishly displayed, the solo on the "Viol di Gambo" being, in particular, inserted in large type as a special attraction. For Monday, the 14th April, she requisitioned the services of three other artists. The programme for this concert appears in *The Public Advertiser* of Friday, 11th April 1760, in the following order:—

MISS FORD'S FOURTH SUBSCRIPTION CONCERT

will be on *Monday* the 14th instant, at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket.

The vocal Parts by Miss Ford, who will play a solo on the

VIOL DI GAMBO

Overture

Non fai qual pena fia. Song. Concerti Traversa by Sen. G. Sweet Bird. Song. Solo, Viol di Gambo. Concerto Violoncello, Sen. Pasqualini. Hush ye pretty warbling Choir. Song. Solo Violin, Mr Pinto. Duetto, Caro Spiegar Voirei.

Lesson on the Guittar, and (by particular Desire) the 104th Psalm.

FULL PIECE

Tickets to be had.....

To begin at Seven o'Clock.

Her fifth and last concert took place on Tuesday, 22nd April, when, besides taking the "vocal parts," she played a solo and accompanied herself in a song ("Oh! Liberty thou choicest treasure") on the Viola di Gambo, also performing "a lesson on the guittar" and singing "a Hymn set by herself," which she accompanied on the lute.

These five concerts completed the series announced and for the rest of that year Ann Ford abstained from further appearances on the concert platform. During the interval, she occupied herself in addressing a brilliant little pamphlet to her former lover, which was intended to contradict the scandalous imputations which were being noised abroad concerning her friendship with the married man. This letter was published in 1761, under the title of "A Letter from Miss F..d to a person of distinction." The pathetic manner in which she chides his lordship for his attempt to overthrow her virtue, and her gentle despair at his sudden unfriendliness towards her, reads more like the attempt of a clever woman to raise public sympathy on her behalf rather than genuine dejection. The "person of distinction" whom she addressed replied to her in a somewhat derisive letter, in which he endeavours to reveal Miss Ford's *pique* to arise from the fact, that he and his spouse did not support her subscription concerts handsomely. The publication of such letters certainly did neither party good, though from the point of view of literary excellence, Ann Ford surpassed her lordly lover.

Having become entirely dependent on herself through her direct opposition to her father's wishes, Ann Ford again made another bid for public favour at the end of the following year. From the 24th to the 30th of October she was announced to sing "English airs accompanying herself on the musical glasses" daily in the large room, Cock's Auction-room, Spring Gardens, and before the following year she published her "Instructions for playing on the Musical Glasses." This was before the introduction of the "armonica" by Marianne Davies, so that the instrument employed by Ann Ford consisted simply of a series of glasses containing various quantities of water. This sort of art could have hardly been to her taste, and she very soon threw it up. In the following month she accompanied her friends, Lady Elizabeth Thicknesse and her husband, Philip Thicknesse, to Landguard Fort, of which the latter was Lieutenant-Governor. Shortly after their arrival Lady Thicknesse gave birth to a son, whom she lived to see only a few months old, as she died on the 28th March 1762. Circumstances thus threw the whole care of the child upon Ann Ford, and so devoted and sympathetic a foster-mother did she prove herself to be that, six months after his wife's death, Philip Thicknesse made Ann Ford his (third) wife.

For some years after this event Ann Thicknesse lived a life of peaceful happiness, residing in the summer months at Felixstowe Cottage. This residence was the subject of an enthusiastic article in "The School of Fashion," 1800, and Gainsborough's sketch of it was published in *The Gentleman's Magazine* (vol. ii. 1816). During the years of her married life, Mrs Thicknesse turned her attention to literature, and while residing in Bath, from 1778 to 1781, wrote her sketches of the "Lives and Writings of the Ladies of France," which filled three volumes.

In 1792, an abrupt ending to this placid existence was caused by the sudden death of Philip Thicknesse at Boulogne, where Ann and her husband had made a temporary halt on their way to Italy. In spite of the danger entailed by English people in France at that time, Ann Thicknesse intrepidly remained in that country after her husband's death, and paid for her temerity by arrest and confinement in a convent, where she remained for two years. With the execution of Robespierre and the liberation of all prisoners who could prove themselves capable of earning their own living, Ann Thicknesse easily gained her liberty and returned to England. In 1800 her novel, "The School of Fashion," in which she introduced many well-known characters under fictitious names (she herself figuring under the guise of Euterpe) appeared.

The latter years of this brilliant woman's life were spent with a friend who lived in the Edgware Road, and she died there, at the age of eighty, on the 20th January 1824. It is given to few to pass through such an eventful life as Ann Ford's, and live to such ripe years. Beautiful, popular, a gifted linguist and musician, all these conspired to make her a prominent figure among the women of her day. Hone and Gainsborough painted her portrait, fashionable society raved about her and read her writings, and—she played upon a favourite viola da gamba "made in 1612, of exquisite workmanship and mellifluous tone."

By Particular Desire
At the little Theatre in the Haymarket.
This Day, April 23, there will be a Concert of
VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC.
The vocal parts by Signor TENDUCCI, Signora CALORI,
and Signor QUALICI.

THE Solos by young Performers, who never appeared in Public, as a solo of Signor Giardini's on the Violin by his scholar, Master Barron, thirteen years old; a Lesson on the Harpsichord by Miss Burney, nine years old; with a Sonata of Signor Giardini's accompanied by a Violin; a Sonata on the Violoncello by Master Cervetto, eleven years old; a Duet on the Violin and Violoncello by Master Barron and Master Cervetto; a Quartette by Miss Schmeling, Master Barron, Master Cervetto and Miss Burney. With several full Pieces by a select Band of the best performers.

The doors to be opened at five o'clock. To begin at seven. Pit and Boxes laid together at Half-a-guinea. Gallery, Five shillings. Tickets to be had at Arthur's, St James's Street; at Mr Walsh's music-shop, Catherine Street; at Mr Johnson's music-shop, Cheapside, and at the Theatre; where Ladies are desired to send their servants to keep places. —*Public Advertiser*, 23rd April 1760.

Thos. Jenkins, Pinxt. *Js. McArdell, Fecit.*

BENJAMIN HALLET.

CHAT THE SIXTH

An Eighteenth-century Violoncello Prodigy

"CHILDREN brought up in musical families entertained by the sound of musical instruments so soon acquire a musical sense as in some instances to be regarded as prodigies. Mozart began to compose at the age of five; and in a paper read by Dr Burney before the Royal Society, it is affirmed that Crotch played the air of 'Let ambition fire thy mind' when only two years old." Thus does that enthusiastic musical amateur, Mr William Gardner, half-a-century ago remark on the environment calculated to produce that overwhelming phenomena of modern times—the prodigy. So accustomed have modern audiences become to the appearance of child *virtuosi* on the concert platform that the announcement which appeared the other day, of a concert at the Alexandra Palace where the orchestra would be entirely composed of 1000 girl and boy violinists, did not create any sensation. Certainly the novelty of the prodigy has somewhat worn off, and for this reason it is not a little refreshing to look back and see him when his numbers were less numerous.

In the accompanying illustration, reproduced from an old print in the possession of Dr William Cummings, we have the dual interest of a boy under nine years of age who could play both the violoncello and flute, and affected a certain sensationalism by clothing himself in petticoats. No biography of this youthful wonder—who was apparently the *first* violoncello prodigy—is extant, but by the aid of newspaper advertisements it has not been difficult to trace some of this interesting little boy's youthful career as an artist. In the first place it may be noticed that the picture is engraved by M'Ardell, one of the most celebrated engravers of his day, after the painting of Thomas Jenkins. The latter was a Devonshire man who studied in London under Hudson, but eventually gave up painting, and went to Rome, where he set himself up as a banker and dealer in antiquities. He was not particularly prosperous in his new undertaking, however, and his misfortunes came to a climax when the French occupied Rome in 1798, and confiscated all his property. At the foot of the picture is written "Benjamin Hallet, a child not yet five years old, who, under the tuition of Mr Oswald, Performed on the Flute at Drury Lane Theatre An^{o} 1748, for 50 nights with extraordinary skill and applause, and the following year was able to play his part in any Concert on the Violoncello" truly a most accomplished little artist, and worthy pupil of Mr James Oswald—popular composer, flautist, and music publisher of the day.

Looking among the advertisements to be found in *The General Advertiser* for the year 1748-1749, we came across the following which occurs frequently in that year and confirms part of the statement on the picture:—

DRURY LANE

Not acted there.

By His Majesty's Company of Comedians. At the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane this day will be performed the last new comedy called

THE FOUNDLING

Young Belmont by MR GARRICK.

Sir Charles Raymond, Mr Barry; Faddle, Mr Wodward; Col. Raymond, Mr Havard; Sir Roger Belmont, Mr Yates; Villian, Mr Winstone; Rosetta, Mrs Pritchard, and

Fidelia by Mrs Cibber
With Entertainments, viz.
Act I. (By Desire) A piece of Music on
the flute by *the child*.

Again on the 23rd January in the same paper we find *A New Way to pay Old Debts* advertised to be performed at the same theatre, and among the items included in the entertainment section are,

Act I. A Concerto on the Flute by *The Child*.

Act II. A Piece of Musick by *The Child*.

The 'Piece of Musick by the Child' was evidently a youthful composition and may be the identical MS. mentioned by Musgrave in his "Obituary." Musgrave's entries meant a great deal to himself, but they are very puzzling to those not initiated into the secret. Thus the entry "Benjamin Hallet, MS. (Music)" without date and no indication as to where it may be found, led us to a good deal of research which proved quite fruitless.

To be associated with such shining lights as Garrick, Yates, and the charming Mrs Cibber was an excellent send-off for "the child" and he was doubtless the recipient of much petting from the men and women of birth and genius who frequented the theatre. Who little Hallet's parents were, we have been unable to discover, the only likely clue to his father is found at the foot of Benjamin's "benefit" programme quoted later. There it is announced that tickets may be had of Mr Hallet in Exeter Court, near Exeter Exchange, in the Strand, but what was the exact relationship between this gentleman and the prodigy is only a matter of conjecture. The London Directory for 1749, gives the name of "Crowley Hallet, Old Swan Lane, Thames Street," and that of the year 1752 announces that "Crowley Hallet was living near Fishmongers' Hall, Thames Street." In the year 1754 there was a "Captain John Hallet, Royal Exchange, Assurance Director, and Ships' Husband" living in "Love Lane, Aldermanbury." Of these two, Crowley Hallet—whose address presupposes him to have been a tradesman—was more likely to have been Benjamin's father, for the advertising genius of the day was a great stickler for *class distinction*. If a person of genteel birth appeared—by chance—on the stage or concert platform, they were invariably announced as a "gentleman," or "gentlewoman," or as in the following advertisement of a seventeenth-century prodigy, in *The London Gazette* for 26th November 1694:—"The Consort of Musick in Charles Street Covent Garden will begin again next Thursday with the addition of two new voices, *one a young gentlewoman of 12 years of age*."

Had Benjamin Hallet been able to claim a "Captain" for his father, he would certainly have been accorded the distinction of being a "*young gentleman not yet nine years of age* ." But surmise is of little use, for Benjamin's parents have faded into the land of oblivion and left no trace of themselves except in their talented offspring.

The next we hear of "the child," is three years later when he is announced in *The General Advertiser* to appear in "The Old Woman's Oratory, conducted by Mrs Mary Midnight." This entertainment was one of the most humorous and up-to-date amusements of the period. It continued to exist for many years on and off, and was eventually taken up by Colley Cibber, whose drolleries gave it a further lease of life. The names of the original promoters do not appear on the playbills, but the name of "Mrs Mary Midnight" perhaps but thinly veils the half-crazy personality of Christopher Smart, the leader and prime spirit of the choicest wits of the day. Poor Smart was twice confined to Bedlam for taking the injunction, "pray without ceasing" too literally, but in spite of his evident madness on this point, he was otherwise sane, and few could surpass the neat wit and epigram that flowed so freely from his ready pen. Under the pseudonym of Mary Midnight (a name said to have been suggested to Smart by some booth at St Bartholomew's Fair) he brought out a magazine which he called *The Midwife, or the Old Woman's Magazine* by Mrs Mary Midnight. This purely satirical weekly was published by good John Newberry whose name Goldsmith epitomised in the lines:

> "What we say of a thing that has just come in fashion,
> And that which we do with the dead,
> Is the name of the honestest man in the nation,
> What more of a man can be said."

On the 24th of December 1751, a long list of the attractions to be found at "The Old Woman's Oratory," is given in the front page of *The General Advertiser*. The entertainment is announced to take place at "the New Theatre in the Haymarket, and to be conducted by Mrs Mary Midnight and her family. Being the second time of their appearance in public." The first act opened with "A grand

piece for the Kettle Drums and Trumpets," after which, "Mrs Midnight made her Inauguration Speech." The third act consisted of, 1. "Speech of Old Time to the Good People of Britain. 2. Solo on the violoncello by Cupid" [the God of Love was impersonated by little Hallet]. "3. A Song by Mrs Midnight. 4. Another Solo by Cupid. 5. Overture to Alexander. An occasional Prologue by a Gentleman, and an Epilogue to be spoken by Master Hallet in the character of Cupid. The doors to be open at Eleven o'clock, in the morning, and the concert to begin exactly at Twelve."

The hour at which this entertainment took place was prohibitive to the city clerk or tradesman, but to the beaux from the neighbouring coffee-houses, and the *belles dames* fresh from their lengthy *toilette*, Mrs Midnight's entertainment proved vastly amusing. Thus little Hallet was again amongst the *élite* of the land.

The Midwife, or Old Woman's Magazine for 1752, which claims to contain "all the wit and Humor, and all the Learning, and all the Judgement that there was ever, or ever will be inserted in all other Magazines or any other book what-so-ever. So that those who try this book will read no other. Published pursuant to several Acts of Parliament, and by the permission of their most Christian and most Catholic Majesties: The Great Mogul and the States General.... Printed by Mary Midnight and sold by T. Carman in St Paul's Church Yard, Price three Pence," gives several of the poems and pieces said to have been spoken at the "Old Woman's Oratory." Among these we came across the following lines, which were assigned to Benjamin Hallet in the character of Cupid:—

EPILOGUE

"From fair Venus on Wing,
A joyous Embassy I bring,
Her Majesty this Mandate sends,
'That Virtue now and Love be Friends,
That Beaux and Belles should cease to roam,
And every heart should find a Home;
That their joint labours they bestow
To make more business for my bow.
That Men mayn't fail by lewd Transgression
But grow immortal by Succession.'
Now while to the ethereal Sky,
By Mammy's Order, swift I fly,
Let Mary Midnight o'er the Nation
Reign Queen of Love by Deputation."

A footnote at the end of these lines states Hallet to be "a child not nine years old, who plays upon the violoncello, and in every other respect has a capacity greatly beyond his Years. N.B. He is shortly to have a benefit, at which 'tis hoped all Mrs Midnight's Friends will do him the Honour of their Presence."

Benefits were far more common in Hallet's time than they are now. From the great Garrick down to the scene-shifter, all the *personnelle* of the Theatres had their "Benefit" in the Autumn. Concerts were not so numerous, but concert artists also not infrequently adopted the practice. Contemporary with Hallet Dr Arne's little son, who was possessed of a wonderful singing voice, gave benefit concerts at which he both sang and played the organ. Then again, there was a sweet singer, Master Mattocks; and a Miss Davies, "a child nine years old," who gave a concert in the Great Room in Dean Street, Soho, and distinguished herself by playing a "concerto of Mr Handel's on the Harpsichord"; and a youthful dancer called "The little Swiss," all of whom had their benefits. Hallet was not "alone in his glory," there were several child prodigies for him to compete with, and one cannot help admiring him all the more, for a talent that can cope with rivalry and hold its own, must be of no mean order.

Unfortunately musical journalism did not begin in England until the beginning of the last century, so there is no possibility of gauging Hallet's capacities in this manner, but, doubtless, his benefit concert met with a large measure of support and success, for the following programme given in

The General Advertiser for 6th February 1752, is of an attractive character:—

At the particular desire of Several Persons
of Quality

For the Benefit of BENJAMIN HALLET

A child of Nine Years of Age

At the New Theatre in the Hay-market

This day will be exhibited a Grand Concert of

MUSICK

By Gentlemen mask'd after the Manner of the
Grecian and Roman Comedy. Boxes 5s. Pit 3s.

At the same time will be performed

THE OLD WOMAN'S ORATORY

To be concluded by Mrs Mary Midnight and
her family.

To be divided into Three Acts.

Act the first will contain

1. A grand Piece with Kettle-Drums and Trumpets. 2. Solo on the Violoncello by Cupid. 3. The Inauguration speech by Mrs Mary Midnight. 4. Concerto for two Clarinettes. 5. Mr Handel's Waterpiece, with a Preamble on the Kettle-Drums.

Act the Second

1. A full piece. 2. A piece by Signor Bombasto. 3. The Speech of Mrs Midnight in Defence of her Existence. 4. Solo on the Cymbalo. 5. Overture in Otho. 6. An Oration on the Salt-Box by a Rationalist.

Act the Third

1. An Italian Song by Signor Bombazeno. 2. A new dissertation by Mrs Midnight. 3. A French Horn Concerto. 4. A Declamatory Piece on the Jew's Harp by a Casuist. 5. March in Judas Maccabeus, with the Side-Drum.

With a new occasional Prologue written by a gentleman of the University and an Epilogue to be spoken by Master Hallet in the character of Cupid.

The Doors to be opened at Six o'clock; and the Concert to begin exactly at Seven.

The House will be made very warm, and illuminated with Wax Lights.

Then follows the same remark about Benjamin Hallet's capabilities which we have already quoted from *The Old Woman's Magazine*, ending with the announcement that tickets could be had of Mr Hallet, in Exeter Court, near Exeter Exchange, in the Strand.

It is noticeable that this magnificent affair began at seven o'clock, an arrangement calculated to admit the *Hoi polloi*, and augment the managerial receipts, and also that the programme reveals little Hallet to have been possessed either of a large amount of modesty or perspicuity, for out of the fifteen or more items there announced only two were appropriated by himself. It must be

remembered that although such masters as Handel, Buononcini, Arne, etc., had their numerous admirers among the more cultured musical amateurs, still, much of the British public were just as pleased with the Jew's harp, marrow bones, and salt-box as with an oratorio of Handel's or an aria of Arne's. Benjamin probably realised the preference generally felt for these instruments, and for this reason put himself and the graver violoncello in the background at his concert, allowing the Jew's harp and other grotesqueries the place of honour. A most amusing satire—among others—on the general taste for these caricatures of musical instruments, was written by Bonnell Thornton, whose wit would have been supreme, but for his contemporary, Kit Smart. With excellent humour he burlesqued the use of what he termed those "Ancient British instruments," in an amusing lampoon entitled "Ode on St Cecilia's Day, adapted to the Ancient British Musick: the Salt Box, the Jew's Harp, the Marrow Bones, and Cleavers, the Hum Strum or Hurdy Gurdy" (London, 1762). No one appreciated this sally more than Dr Johnson, who, it is said, delighted in repeating extracts from it by heart. A number of Bonnell Thornton's quaint conceits appeared in his magazine *Have at you all*, or *The Drury Lane Journal*, which emulated Fielding's *Covent Garden Journal*, but was neither so long lived nor so successful. Under the pseudonym of "Mrs Roxana Termagant," Bonnell Thornton pursued his editorial labours, and introduced into its pages many a burlesque skirmish with his contemporaries' magazines, *The Midwife* and *The Covent Garden Journal*, and in the year 1752 a witty account of a visit made by "Mrs Mary Midnight" to "Madam Roxana Termagant" appeared.

Little Hallet was evidently a favoured *protégé* of all the wits of the day from his connection with one of the most popular entertainments then in vogue, and there is little doubt that he proved an attraction, as his name appears among the performers during the whole of the first season and again in the following season. On the 10th April 1753 *The Public Advertiser* announces a concert:

For the Benefit of
Master Benjamin Hallet and Sig. Gapatuns
At the New Theatre in the Hay-market.
This Day will be exhibited
Mrs Mary Midnight's Concert

With a new occasional Prologue, to be spoken by Master Hallet, in the character of Cupid; and an Epilogue by Mrs Midnight on a Jack Ass; likewise a new Song called *The Dust Cart*, by Mr Joe, accompanied by Sig. Bombasto. To which will be added a Grand Dance in the old British Taste, and a hornpipe by the great Mons. Timbertoe.

Boxes 5s. Pit 3s. Gallery 2s.

Tickets to be had at Mr Johnson's Musick-shop in Cheapside; Mr Peter Thomson's in St Paul's Church-yard; Mr Jones's in Holborn; and at Mr Waylett's in Exeter Exchange in the Strand, and at the Theatre.

This will be the last time except one, that Master Hallet will perform at this Theatre.

The above was in verity Hallet's last appearance but one at the "Old Woman's Oratory." He must have been at that time nearly eleven—possibly more, for the published age of a prodigy is always of doubtful verity—and was beginning to assume proportions quite unfitted to the character of Cupid, so the management were compelled to find a new *protégé*. The last appearance of little Hallet on any concert platform is to be found in *The Public Advertiser* for Monday, 12th November 1753, at an entertainment given at "The Five Balls," New Church in the Strand.

For the Benefit of a Gentleman who has
wrote for the Stage.
To-morrow, the 13th of November, will be a
Concert of Vocal and Instrumental

MUSICK.

In Act I. an overture of Mr Handel's accompanied with French Horns. A concerto of Geminani's on the violin. *God gave great George our King*, by Signor Bascado Squeekerini. The act will conclude with a grand Piece of Musick. In Act II. a trio on the Viol d'Amore by Mr Grosman. A Solo on the little Flute by MasterHALLET. *Would you take the Moon-tide Air*, by Signor Bascado Squeekerini. A Concerto on the French Horn will conclude the Act. Between Act I. and II. will be hum'd aHUMEROUS FISK. In Act III. a Concerto on the Bassoon by Mr Baumgarten. *The Sweet Rosy Morning peeps over the Hills*, etc. by Signor Bascado Squeekerini. The March in Judas Maccabeus, accompanied by the Side-Drum, concluded with a Preamble on the Kettle-Drums.

This is the last time Benjamin Hallet is advertised to play either the flute or the violoncello in that year, and many years to follow. As far as we have been able to discover, this appearance marked the end of the career of this first violoncello prodigy.

His activity extended only over five years, beginning at Drury Lane Theatre where he played the flute, and ending with the above concert where he again reverted to the first instrument of his adoption.

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FOOTNOTES:

[1] “History of the Violin,” by Sandys and Forster.

[2] Monteclair first introduced the double-bass into the Paris Opera orchestra in 1730.

[3] “Memories of Music.”

[4] *Vide* “Flowers from a Persian Garden,” by W. A. Coulston. London, 1890.

[5] Samuel Butler in “Hudibras” says—that brave Crowdero’s

“Grizzely beard grew long and thick
From whence he strung his fiddlestick.”

[6] *Vide* A. Christianowich: “Exquise Historique de la Musique Arabe.” Cologne, 1883.

[7] “The Troubadours and Courts of Love,” J. F. Rowbottham. London, 1895.

[8] “The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians,” Edward W. Lane.

[9] Persian Treatise on “The Reasons of Modulations in Chants,” by Abd-ul-cadir, 1418. This MS. is in the University of Leyden.

[10] An interesting and authentic rebec, is to be seen in the Donaldson Museum, at the Royal College of Music.

[11] “Lettres de Remission,” quoted by Laurent Grillét, “Ancêtres du Violon.”

[12] This play was first performed at Chambord, 14th October 1670.

[13] There is a fine Kerlino viola included in the Donaldson Collection, dated 1452. This was shown at the South Kensington Special Loan Exhibition in 1872. A similar example of the maker’s work, though not in such a high state of preservation, is in the Musée of the Conservatoire de Musique in Brussels.

[14] A facsimile representation of this viol and the title-page is included in Mr Heron Allen’s “De Fidiculis Bibliographia,” and “The Violin,” No. 5, a monthly, edited by Mr J. M. Fleming.

[15] I lived in the woods, until I was slain by the relentless axe. Whilst I was alive I was silent, but in death my melody is exquisite.

[16] Reproduced in Von Wasielewski “Die Violoncelle.”

[17] All trace of this composition is apparently lost.

[18] Play the Crwth.

[19] “The Nursery Rhymes of England,” edited by James Orchard Halliwell.

[20] The “Archives Curieuses,” by Cimber et Danjou records the gift of 300 livres to De Bäif by Charles IX., “en consideration des services qu’il lui a de longtemps faits en sondict état.”

[21] By Cimber et Danjou.

[22] Mr Betts made a copy of “The King,” which is now in the possession of a lady of title in Scotland.

[23] Contralto-viol.

[24] Low tenor-viol.

[25] High tenor-viol.

[26] Tenor-viol, which later became the tenor violin or viola.

[27] Tailles were tenor and contralto viols.

[28] “The Violin.” Fifth Edition. Bernard Goodwin. Glasgow, 1895.

[29] *Vide* “Gio. Paolo Maggini,” by Lady Huggins, published by Messrs Hill & Sons.

[30] These letters have been collected into a neat little volume, entitled “Readiana,” by Chatto & Windus. London, 1882.

[31] “Das Neu eröffnete Orchestre.” Hamburg, 1713.

[32] Henry C. Lunn, in his “Musings of a Musician” (London, 1846), admirably describes the way “to make a Fashionable Ballad” in his “Proposals for a Musical Cookery Book”: “Having procured some words, pick them to pieces and pare them down to your liking. Then spread them out upon a sheet of paper, and take a handful of sweet passages (which all good cooks keep by them in a drawer) and sprinkle them over the paper. Add as much spice as will lie upon two shillings, and garnish with any little embellishments you can think of.”

[33] *Daily Courant* of 17th February 1722/3.